

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE
Vol 23 Issue 38 2015-09-18

Meeting the Minds

Getting Personal with Dr. Jon Dron

The Golden Age of Piracy

Talk Like a Pirate for Canadian Elections

AUSU for Get Out the Vote

Pledge to Make a Difference

*Plus:
Tuition Freeze
Primal Instincts
and much more!*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

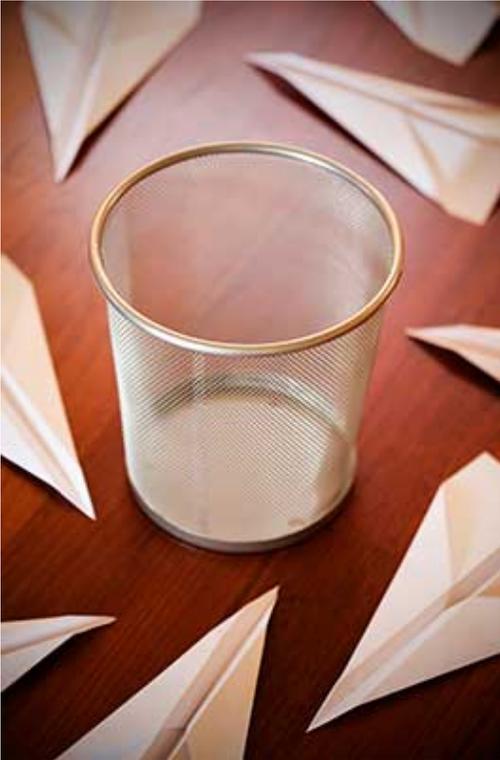


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EDITORIAL

Things Unknown

Karl Low



As I write these words, our website is still down. Put simply, the site was hacked, and somebody was using it for a phishing site for a time. Our hosting service (rightly) took the site down to prevent more people from being victimized. Why phishing sites still work, I have no idea, as you would expect that with all the attention they've received people wouldn't still blindly click a link that arrives in their email without being very careful. Still, I guess some do.

Currently, AUSU's hired coder is busily at work doing a security audit, finding the hole that the hackers got in through and patching it up. Once that's done, I can see about putting up the web-version of *The Voice Magazine*. Until then, I hope you enjoy the PDF, and, if this is your first encounter with it, welcome! You'll find it's all linked up pretty to make reading it and bouncing back to the table of contents a breeze.

But speaking of the web-version, there's probably a number of things you don't know about it, especially because as I look at the volume number of this issue, I realize that this is the magazine's 23rd year of publication. Way back in the day, the Voice was a print publication. But that was quite expensive to so, so it only came out four times per year.

On the plus side, it was mailed to every single student. (Of course, at only four times per year, it was entirely possible for some students to never see a single issue.) When we first went online, the paper was a hugely laborious set of simple web pages, each one having to be hand coded with a lot of copy and paste going on. Over time, we advanced, somewhat, and eventually came up with what the current Voice website is. If you think it looks old, you're right. It was actually one of the first content management systems developed for the web. The whole idea of blogging hadn't taken off yet, so AUSU essentially had to have the site custom coded to meet the needs of *The Voice Magazine* of the day.

Something else you might not know is that *The Voice Magazine* has a Facebook page. That's right. Just look for [AUSUVoice](#) on Facebook and you'll find where I post any updates about publication or other tidbits that you just need to know right away. Also, if you find the "[Email Signup](#)" link on the Facebook page, you get access to a pithy reminder each week when the Voice is available for viewing. (But I'll never mail more than once a week and never unless there's a new issue out. After all, I know how badly my own mailbox fills up, and I don't want that to happen to yours.)

More importantly, once you're signed up to our email reminder/subscriber list, you'll get information on our occasional secret contests and surveys. Each year there's usually at least one survey or contest that's only announced to subscribers. And the prize is usually something pretty sweet, like a small tablet computer, suitable for reading *The Voice Magazine*, oh, and your AU e-texts, while on the go.

Finally, if you're not all Voiced out already, you can also follow our little twitter reminder at [AUSUVoice](#). This is where I practice bad twitter poetry to announce new issues. Some people like it, apparently. Don't ask me why.

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



Back in February, The Voice Magazine interviewed Dr. Jon Dron about his approach to teaching. Marie Well has since conducted a follow-up interview that looks more at exactly who Dr. Dron is beyond just the academic work. If you're curious about what type of person becomes a course designer and wins a National Teaching Fellowship from the UK, read on!

Marie: Dr. Dron, you have the most innovative course designs possibly throughout the entire Athabasca University. To begin, what prompted you to go with a course design that resists giving grades and that emphasizes projects?

Dr. Dron: I'd like to flip that question about grades. Why on Earth *would* anyone give them? I know of no evidence *whatsoever* that they have any value at all in learning, while there is a vast body of substantial proof that they are very harmful indeed, especially to motivation. Useful feedback is very helpful in any learning process, but grades are not useful feedback. They are simply judgement, and controlling judgement at that, and they almost always become the reason for learning, not the result of it.

There is, of course, a completely separate issue of accreditation whereby we are expected to certify the competence of learners for the benefit of others. I don't want to get rid of such certification—it's useful—though I would like it to be surgically removed from all of our teaching. Teaching to the test is not a great model if we want our learners to be passionate and creative.

With regard to projects, perhaps the most central pattern in all of my teaching is to try to give more control to learners. I want to support people in learning things and skills that are meaningful to them, that have divergent as well as convergent outcomes, that can encourage them to challenge themselves, to take different paths, to play, and to have a chance to engage with other people in the process. I don't always use projects for that, by any means. I have one course that is almost nothing but different kinds of argument, for instance, and another in which the course group decides with me what and how we study together. Though I don't always use projects, I do fairly consistently use evidence-based portfolios for the final summative assessment because, instead of being separate from the learning process, portfolios can contribute very directly towards learning, while providing useful proof of competence for the purposes of certification. Moreover, it is possible for learners to use lots of different kinds of evidence so they have lots more freedom to take different paths, rather than simply doing what the teachers tells them to do. It's about empowerment and celebration of the uniqueness of every learner.

Marie: *You've been heavily influenced by the perspectives of Alfie Kohn, who wrote a book called **Unconditional Parenting**. How has Alfie influenced not only your teaching but your prospective parenting style?*

Dr. Dron: I'm a great *fan* of Alfie Kohn because he is a very eloquent and accessible writer in the field of self-determination theory (SDT), but it is the theory, not the man, that has influenced me most. SDT is one of those very rare psychological theories that consistently stands up to both repeated study and controlled experiment. One of its central tenets, in common with several other theories of motivation (some of which, like Csikszentmihalyi's ideas about flow, are fully compatible with it), is that motivation can be intrinsic (done because we like to do it) or extrinsic (done for some further purpose). What is most distinctive about SDT is that it identifies the conditions needed for intrinsic motivation and it also delves deeply and usefully into the different ways we can be extrinsically motivated, ranging from the very bad - reward and punishment - to the pretty good, such as doing things you don't find inherently engaging because they align with your sense of identity and beliefs. The best thing, though, is always intrinsic motivation, and there are three main prerequisites that are necessary for that to occur: when you feel you are in control (the need for autonomy), when you feel that what you do has social value (the need for relatedness), and when you feel you are gaining competence in understanding or controlling your environment (the need for competence). Take any away, and it evaporates. Unfortunately, among the best ways of taking it away is to reward or punish someone—such as through grades—or to tell people what they must do, as too many of us do through a course process.

Once intrinsic motivation is gone, it is incredibly hard, if not impossible, to ever get it all back again. We can reduce the harm, especially by giving learners as much control as possible, enthusing them, caring about them, and helping them to see how the learning aligns with their personal beliefs and goals, but it is much harder work than if they are intrinsically motivated in the first place. Teachers have not only to come up with ingenious designs to diminish the dangerous effects but also to "unteach" students so they can unlearn the terrible habits of dependency that schools and other university courses have taught them. We make rods for our own backs.

If I had known more about all of this 30 years ago I would have brought up my kids quite differently. Like most parents, we did our best, but we did use rewards and punishment coercively, far more than I would consider doing now. On the bright side, we mostly did so out of love. My next book focuses on one crucial and central thing that trumps almost everything else when it comes to education—it ain't *what* you do, it's the way that you do it. Basically, you can do the wrong things well, and the right things badly. I may be just a tad biased, but I reckon that our kids did turn into the most delightful, caring and curious adults. However, I think that is despite anything we did as parents as much as because of it. Perhaps the most important thing is not what we did as parents so much as the environment, the conditions and examples we created for our kids, and, above all, the fact that we cared for them deeply and unreservedly. The same is true of teaching: if you care about your students' learning and you care about the subject you are teaching, and the conditions that you provide are not too poisonous, then everything else is secondary. I have seen many examples of people using the most atrocious teaching methods but none-the-less being brilliant teachers, simply because they care. It's like music or painting: technique is useful but, beyond a very basic level of competence, passion and soul matter more.

Marie: *If you could wish one thing on your students, what would it be?*

Dr. Dron: A deep and passionate love of learning.

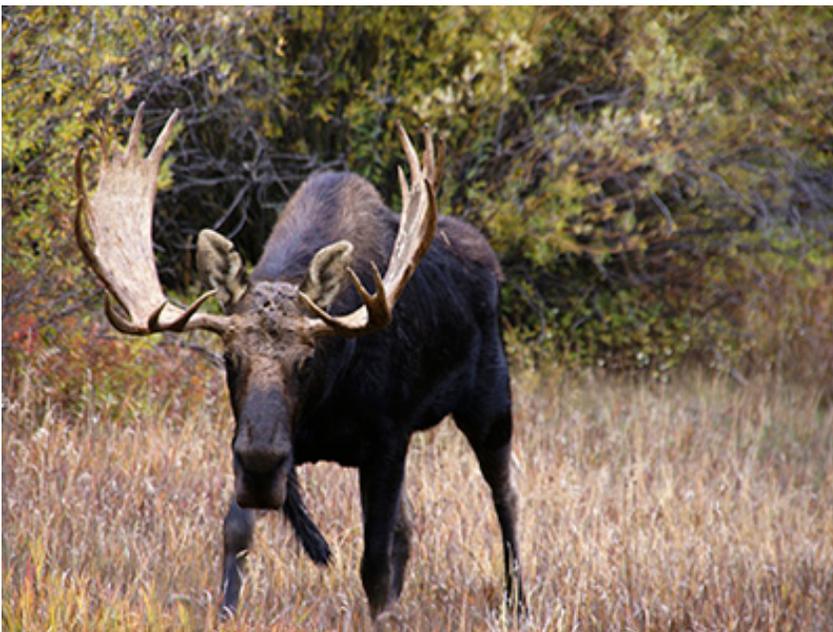
Marie: What is your favorite hobby?

Dr. Dron: That depends on which way the wind blows, sometimes quite literally – one of my hobbies is sailing. A hobby for me is not normally about doing something I know how to do so much as doing something I don't know how to do or could do better.

Whenever I get too good at something I tend to lose interest in it. I have quite eclectic interests. I love to play music so much that I used to sing and play guitar for a living. I have been learning at least one musical instrument every year for a few years now, with varying degrees of success. I like computers because they are endless and bottomless machines—they can be and do pretty much anything. I like to take photos, sail, cook, write, read, watch movies, tinker, build, design, cycle, program, and the list goes on. I love to challenge myself to discover new things, to develop knowledge and skills, and cultivate new ways of seeing. I'm an inveterate learner.

Marie: What were some of your childhood passions?

Dr. Dron: I'm not sure my childhood is quite over yet. At various different times when I was a kid I was a passionate writer, photographer, footballer, sailor, musician, jewellery designer, actor, chess player, inventor of games, philosopher, cyclist and much more besides. I tended to be pretty obsessive about whatever interested me at any one time. Some interests persist. On reflection, I like to be challenged and I like to be liberated. I'm not a natural stamp collector or bird watcher, though I did very briefly dabble with both of those when I was a kid, but cumulative, carefully catalogued knowledge has never really appealed to me as it has never challenged me enough and I've never found it liberating. I do love reading, though, and have done so obsessively since at least the age of three. Whenever I found an author I liked as a kid I would typically read everything they had written, often consuming several books in a week. It is still not that unusual for me to stay up all night reading a book that I'm enjoying. This gets back to the learning thing again. Reading opens up vistas of possibilities, though it is also about the joy of being lost in a different world, thinking like a different person. Liberation, again.

**Primal Instincts****Deanna Roney**

One of the things I love about Athabasca University is the flexible schedule. For the first week of September I packed my bags and headed on a five night, six day, kayaking trip around The Bowron Lakes Circuit. This trip is incredible; going out into the wilderness for any length of time tests your resolve as a person in a primal way.

This was my second time around the circuit. The first day was beautiful, the sun was shining, the rain fell, and we were hailed on—but only for a few moments. The first evening, however, tends to overshadow the entire day. Minutes after arriving to camp the rain started, the thunder crashed overhead and we questioned ourselves as we

stood on the edge of the lake, under a tree, exactly where you do not want to be in a lightning storm. The rainstorm tested us. It chilled us to the bone, and we soon discovered just how fast we can set up a tent. We worked as a team to set up both tents as quickly as possible, attempting to keep them dry; as a team we unpacked each kayak and tossed the necessary gear into the tent. Amazingly, the gear stayed relatively dry.

The following day the lake was covered in dense fog meaning we could not leave camp until about noon. Which worked out well as I roasted my socks over the fire we got started, drying out both them and my shoes, as well as another ladies shoes. We found great comfort that night in the form of a cooking shelter. It was a solid roof with a fireplace, perfect, we rejoiced in the simple comforts and dried the remainder of our gear by this fireplace. The first few days tested our will and our determination. We stayed as dry as we could and while we could have turned back we prevailed. Our determination to carry forward was rewarded as the largest lake, Isaac Lake, was as smooth as glass. This lake is notorious for getting rough which we had learned last year when we were literally blown off the lake.

These trips do not only test one's personal determination through the unpredictable weather, but through the obstacles it throws at you. On our third day we were heading down the Caribou River. We have experience kayaking lakes, and this river, last year, but rivers have a tendency to change rather quickly and our experience on rivers is limited. Still, we were not going to let nerves deter us, so we pointed down the river, dodging rocks, trees, floating logs, and logjams as we went. And we all arrived safe and dry at the other end. This wasn't assured, however, as there was another group behind us who ended up dumping their kayaks three times in a couple sections of river. They arrived in camp all smiles—though frozen. The attitude of people out here is incredible. When you are out in the middle of nowhere priorities change becoming simplistic and beautiful.

Our last test would come on our final night. On our final night we arrived into camp late, eating our dinner by the light of our headlamps. After dinner we packed our food and headed to the bear cache to store it for the night. We had heard some splashing but passed it off as fish, or ducks, nothing of concern. As we approached our tents my headlamp cast light across some bushes, behind which was the lake, but what I did not expect was to see two eyes looking back at me. Two eyes accompanied by a very large rack. I stopped, stuttering to my companions that there was a very large moose "Right there!" This moose was not alone and had an exceptionally large friend. We were looking at two large, healthy, bull moose. And rutting season about to start. The moose stood about ten feet away; we hollered at them to move on, as this tactic would send most moose scurrying away as fast as their hooves would carry them. But this drew them closer as they ran from one side of the spire of sand to the other. We stood together, holding our canisters of bear spray, listening for movement, unable to see beyond the bushes—beyond our light—while the moose stood grunting at us from somewhere in the darkness. It was a standoff, and we could not help but feel we were at a disadvantage as we selected which tree would be easiest to climb.

We spent the night dodging moose as they ran from one side of our bit of land to the other. Deciding they were not going to move on, we built a small fire to keep them at bay and then had to move our tents closer to it before we crawled in for what was left of the night; the moose had won this stalemate. We know when we enter this primal environment that we may be faced with numerous obstacles. We know before venturing into the wilderness that, out there, the wilderness rules, and we are merely visitors to its land. This is what makes the adventure, removing technology, removing security, and allowing ourselves to become enveloped by the natural world: a world where we do not stand on top.

Deanna Roney is an AU student who loves adventure in life and literature

Primal Numbers Tattoo You

S.D. Livingston



Tattoos have come a long way in popular culture. From their image as the disreputable domain of bikers and hoodlums, they're now worn proudly by people of all ages and occupations. But while consumers know enough to look for health inspections and clean needles before getting that hummingbird on their ankle, there probably aren't many who know where that ink will end up. The science on it might surprise you.

In case you don't know, the modern method of tattooing involves an electric motor that pushes a needle into the skin anywhere between 50 and 3,000 times each minute. A

tube feeds the ink through the needle and deposits it in the dermis, the second layer of skin. Whenever the skin is punctured there's a risk of infection, but reputable tattoo artists are diligent about sterilizing equipment and using gloves, sterile needles, and single-use containers of ink and ointment.

But here's the interesting thing: the ink that's injected into your skin doesn't stay put. In fact, researchers at the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment have studied corpses with tattoos that were several decades old. As the [CBC reports](#), the researchers found that "up to 90 per cent of the ink has disappeared from the skin."

Where does it go? Researchers haven't figured that out yet. One possibility is that gets carried through your bloodstream and deposited in your organs. It could also get passed out with body waste. Scientists have discovered, though, that certain [pigments](#) are more likely to end up in your lymph nodes.

That might not sound like a big deal, especially if your tattoo artist uses vegetable-based inks. The trouble is, even the most meticulous tattoo artists can't guarantee the ingredients in the product. That's because, like other items classed as cosmetics, tattoo ink isn't highly regulated. Standards vary widely from one country to the next. As this [Globe and Mail article](#) notes, even the US has "no industry standards for ink ingredients."

Believe it or not, the Centers for Disease Control [report](#) that some tattoo inks have even been found to contain printer or calligraphy ink. Definitely not the kind of chemicals you'd want injected into your skin.

But that doesn't mean you should run out and get your tattoos removed. All that would do is fracture the pigments faster, dispersing them under the skin much sooner than would happen naturally.

However, if you're thinking about getting a new tattoo, the research on ink dispersal—and the lack of regulation—should give you pause. At the very least, consider the size of any tattoos you might be getting. The more ink that goes into them, the more ink that's going to leach out over time. And until researchers can find out for sure where all that ink is going, an ounce of prevention now could pay off big time later.

The good news is that you might not have to give up the fashion statement of a beautiful tattoo. Designers have embraced the trend of high-end temporary tattoos, and the best ones rival the real thing, as these flash tattoos show.

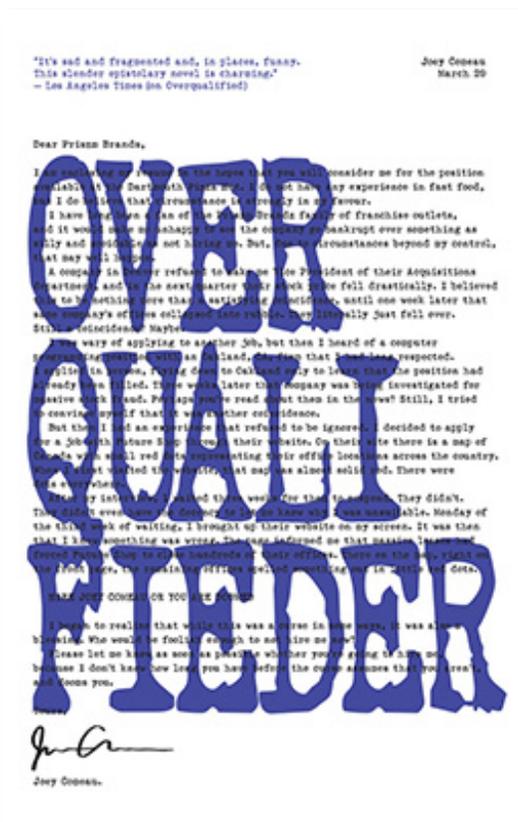
So, before you commit to getting permanent ink, consider where those brilliant pigments could wind up. Because a tattoo of a heart is one thing, but the possibility of ink in your bloodstream is quite another.

S.D. Livingston is the author and creator of the *Madeline M. Mystery Series* for kids, as well as several books for older readers. Visit her website for information on her writing.



The Mindful Bard Overqualifier

Wanda Waterman



Book: *Overqualified*

Author: Joey Comeau

"Also worth noting: b) every one of these letters was actually sent to a company, and not one of them ever replied. It breaks my heart."

- Joey Comeau

Almost as soul-crushing as a real job is the process of *looking* for a real job, which is why *Overqualifier* and its predecessor, *Overqualified*, are so satisfying on so many levels.

These aren't just job application cover letters; they're also confessions from a psychopath who just can't seem to keep his crimes secret, even in the straitened context of the job application cover letter. Sexist, misogynist, perverted, violent, entitled Joey just can't seem to get a job. His dad tells him it's because he's not a gay cripple.

The above quote comes as a bit of surprise, because one might expect a police cruiser to arrive at the Comeau residence after certain of these missives— for example, the one wherein he

confesses to threatening his roommate with death, or the one that suggests that more geriatric clients be created by pushing healthy elderly people from speeding cars.

I loved Comeau's preceding book *Overqualified* so much that I recommended it in the Mindful Bard, and when ECW announced that *Overqualifier* was soon to hit the stores I had to have look. It was every bit as juicy, brilliantly easing our existential angst while mocking the hands that could feed us but probably won't. The second book shows the same refreshing disregard for all that counts as success in this vale of tears.

Whereas the first book actually masked a novel about the author's life story, providing a detailed background

as to why he's as messed up as he is, *Overqualifieder* paints a detailed character sketch of someone who glides easily between naiveté and sociopathy, inadvertently evoking the dark side of every disappointed job hunter. It also helps us feel less like losers. How, for example, could you sink lower than this:

"I drink to ignore my problems. I spend more time with my computer than with my friends. I am angry and lonely, but I can wash dishes just fine. I'm being honest. Please don't be an asshole about this.

Yours, Joey Comeau."

Yes, it's a light piece of sophisticated entertainment, but it has a deeper meaning in today's world. The power that these companies wield deserves our mockery and defiance. What if, instead of groveling at their feet, we blatantly lie? Or confess to horribly violent crimes we've committed—or would like to? What if we bare our souls, or show our true feelings, as if it isn't a CEO before us but rather a parish priest?

The author is proactive in finding solutions to the catastrophes that have befallen him. A guy who lost his job after going postal and killing his family has set up a post office in his basement, and now he wants a job with the company from whom he's bought the equipment.

One of the best letters is an application for a job as Environmental Art Designer. Joey happily claims to know about the field well, having worked for a company that contributed generously to global warming. In the letter he explains how the recruiter kept him from fleeing the job:

He sat on the edge of my couch, drinking a glass of water, and he said that we were creating an atmosphere that would retain the radiation reflecting off the surface of the earth. We were melting the edges of the ice caps, cooling down the northern seas. We were slowing the Gulf Stream, dramatically changing the way the environment behaved. He grabbed my shoulder and said, 'Isn't art supposed to move you? Isn't it supposed to shake you by the hair and say, "Aren't you afraid?"'

The cherry on top is the occasional uplifting poetry, for example, "For life is a grey slug lifting weights to impress a lady unicorn," in a letter to Amazon.

Serendipity.

Overqualifieder manifests four of The Mindful Bard's criteria for books well worth reading.

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It provides respite from a cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavor.
- It displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.

Wanda also writes the blog *The Mindful Bard: The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self*.

The Golden Age of Piracy is Nigh

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Is it coincidence that Talk Like a Pirate Day falls in the middle of the Canadian Federal Election campaign? Arrr, mateys, I think not!

Talk Like a Pirate Day falls on September 19, exactly one month before voting day for the Canadian federal election. The now-international observance of Talk Like a Pirate Day (ITLAPD) is a nod to the Golden Age of Piracy. (Resemblance to any current or future government is strictly coincidental, of course.)

The holiday started as a lighthearted romp by John Baur (aka Ol' Chumbucket) and Mark Summers (aka Cap'n Slappy) of Oregon. Although the idea

was conceived in June of 1995 in a "moment of temporary insanity," the date of September 19 was selected due to the—perhaps coincidental, perhaps not—birthday of Summers's ex-wife.

The notion really took off when witty writer Dave Barry endorsed the idea in his Miami Herald [column](#) in 2002. Once the media got hold of it, the ITLAPD took on treasure chest proportions. These days, wannabe pirates can visit the official [website](#) or follow the Facebook [page](#) to learn how to talk pirate. You can even order pirate merchandise, including "Prepare To Be Boarded" t-shirts, "Blow Me Down" boxer shorts, and—because every pirate needs a place to store their rum—"Talk Like a Pirate" beverage flasks. Or you could just learn to throw around words like "avast," "bilge rat," "grog," and "wench" (using the last advisedly.)

Any connection between Talk Like a Pirate Day and the Pirate Party of Canada is strictly coincidental. True, they both contain the word "pirate," both flog cool t-shirts, and there's that Golden Age of Piracy thing, but other than that, there is no resemblance. None. Whatsoever. A bit strange though, that there's no Talk Like a Harper Day, or Talk Like a Justin Day (and one hopes there will never be a Talk Like an Elizabeth May Day, but every day seems to be Talk Like a Mulcair Day.)

The Pirate Party of Canada—yes, really—is running candidates in the 2015 federal election. The Pirate Party, which had its inspiration in the Swedish political party of the same name, was officially recognized by Elections Canada in 2010. The first candidate, Jeff Coleman, ran in the Winnipeg North by-election in November 2010. With 94 votes, Coleman didn't win, but he did beat both the Communist Party and Christian Heritage Party candidates. So, arrrgh!

In the 2011 Federal Election, the Pirate Party of Canada ran ten candidates in ridings across the country. They didn't win any seats then either but, with 3198 votes, they smoked the Marijuana Party (1864 votes) and damned near beat the Rhino party (3819 votes.)

In the 2015 election, Pirate Party candidates are once again seeking election in ridings from British Columbia to New Brunswick. The Pirate Party of Canada is running on a platform that includes open culture and individual privacy. Pirates (can we call them pirates?) are anti-monopoly and pro-equality. In a topical press release on

September 10, 2015, the Pirate Party of Canada revealed its [Policies for Combating Commercial Piracy](#). You can read the full Pirate Party manifesto [here](#) and order some really cool t-shirts [here](#).

To find if a Pirate candidate is running in your area, check the [map](#) on the Pirate Party [website](#). If there is no candidate in your riding, you could register as a Pirate candidate yourself: instructions and the forms needed to register as a candidate are on the site.

Pirate opportunities abound in the next month. Whether you want to talk like a pirate, dress like a pirate, or vote like a pirate, you're sailing into a Golden Age of Piracy. All together now, "Arrrghh!"

Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU student. She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario. Follow Barbara on twitter @ThereGoesBarb.



AUSU Encourage Students to Get Out The Vote

Carla Knipe



Recently, AUSU became a member of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. CASA meets regularly with the policy makers and elected officials who have a direct impact on the access and scope of post-secondary education in Canada. CASA realized that these policy makers were not listening to the views of students but, conversely, post-secondary voters were following the larger Canadian trend of not participating in politics. During the previous Federal election, voter turnout was 61% in Canada. This was estimated to be the third lowest in Canadian history. The "youth vote", or demographic between ages 18-24, was calculated at approximately 40%. Experts believe that these numbers across all demographics will be much lower in this upcoming election. CASA's response was to create the "Get Out The Vote" campaign.

Get Out The Vote (GOTV) was collectively launched across Canada through 23 university student associations, including AUSU, to help address the issue of voter apathy. These student associations represent approximately 300 000 students. The idea behind the 2015 GOTV campaign is to, collectively, show elected officials that they should be listening to the views and opinions of organizations like CASA as well as the voice of younger voters. The goals of the initiative are to educate voters on who is running and their beliefs, how to register to vote, and when and where to vote. The campaign emphasizes a strong non-partisan stance. University campuses plan rallies and booths to raise awareness ahead of the upcoming election; however, the largest aspect of the campaign is encouraging students to take the time on election day to get to a polling station and cast their ballot. The goal of Get Out The Vote is to get as many students as possible to sign the voting pledge and commit to vote.

Shawna Wasylyshyn, AUSU President, aims to gather an impressive number of pledges to show the collective strength and commitment of the AU student body to the democratic process in Canada. AUSU has partnered

with AUGSA to create a unified group of pledges from students studying online through AU. For more information and to sign the pledge, go to <http://ausu.getoutthevote.ca>

To find out more about the national Get Out The Vote campaign, the following links will help:

<http://www.apathyisboring.com/home>

<http://casa-acae.com/federal-student-organization-launches-get-vote-campaign/>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/vote-compass-2015-canada-election-1.3204489>

<http://www.elections.ca/home.aspx>

How To Be Political—Without Running For Office

Besides registering and committing to vote, there are other ways to help become more active in our communities that make a real difference. Here are several ideas:

- Read and listen to the information about the candidates — cast an informed vote.
- Educate yourself on the issues, especially at a local level.
- Read books and magazines on politics and find out what is happening in all levels of government.
- Consume media with a critical eye.
- Ask questions of candidates and elected officials. If your community holds a candidate forum, attend it. If it doesn't, organize one.
- Attend a rally for a cause you believe in.
- Write a letter to the Editor of a newspaper or even your community newsletter
- Participate intelligently in social media debates.
- Don't hesitate to tell officials when they've done something you don't like, and why.
- Thank officials when they do something you do like.
- Circulate written petitions or sign online petitions about issues you believe in and join with others who think as you do.
- Attend the monthly meetings of your local town/city council or neighbourhood community association.
- Volunteer in your local place of worship, a local charity, or your children's school councils to help make your neighbourhood better.
- If you support one particular party, volunteer for a campaign "behind the scenes." Even small jobs like stuffing envelopes and answering phones for an hour or two are important.
- Live sustainably; think co-friendly and local. Make smart purchasing decisions (or, vow not to purchase so much "stuff"). Boycott products that you feel do not align with your values.
- On Election Day, make going out to vote a social experience for you and your friends. Get a group together, go vote and then co for coffee afterwards. Or, offer your neighbor a ride to the polling station or watch their kids while they go vote.

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Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

How to Turn a Paraphrase, Respond to Objections, and Organize Your Paper

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to learn the arts of paraphrasing, objecting to naysayers, and organizing your reasons to support your claim.

Well, in these articles, as The Study Dude, I'll try to give you the study tips you need to help make your learning easier. I'll also give you straight and honest opinions and personal anecdotes—even the embarrassing ones that you wouldn't ever dare read about from any other study tip guru.

The book *The Craft of Research* by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams gives rise to part three of the Study Dude article. The book provides essential advice on the gamut of writing essays, researching, and citing. If you ever wondered about the nature of a thesis statement, for instance, this book will respond to all your musings and more.

What to Say to the Naysayer

When I wrote papers, I never inserted an opposing view. I might have hinted at data that didn't go with the grain or that was anomalous, but I never actually entertained another author's contradictory views. Why? No one ever told me that responding to a naysayer makes for a stronger paper.

Recently, I interviewed authors Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein who wrote the book *They Say; I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, and they exhort you to entertain all kinds of different views related to your topic, to enter a conversation. Yes, your views matter, and your views may put a different spin on a topic, so be sure to include your response to the naysayer's views in your paper. Respond to those views as best as you can, with data, with secondary citations, with your own reasoning followed by evidence from the literature—with whatever evidence you can pull out of your opinion arsenal. But beware: a reason without eventual support or evidence from facts, data, or sources, is, in academic speak, a reason with little substance.

When Booth, Colomb, and Williams, in their book *The Craft of Research*, supported the view that you should engage with the naysayers, I knew this little tidbit needed to be drawn to your attention. I knew this because I had once been oblivious to the value of responding to objections. As follows is what Booth, Colomb, and Williams say about responding to naysayers, whether they be from other authors or imagined from your readership:

- Try to bear in mind any way that your reader might object or offer an alternative perspective to your view. Address these objections and alternatives in your writing. By addressing the objections, you strengthen the ethos of your paper.
- Wait until after you've composed your key argument, your thesis and evidence before responding to perceived objections. This way, the objections don't debilitate you in the drafting process.
- Readers will want to see a close fit between your research problem and solution. Readers will not want you to overstate your claim. If the reader can question your claim's merit, you'll want to either rewrite your claim or address that question in the context of your paper.

- Imagine as many questions as your reader could possibly pose against your claim and evidence, and address the biggest ones. Imagine that you present data to support your views and the reader wants some other form of data. For instance, say you provide a secondary quote and your reader wants something more statistical. If you can provide that additional support, your paper will climb in quality.
- If you think your reader won't agree with your view, compile even more evidence.
- Pay attention to when the author you encounter takes an opposing, or at least different, view to yours. This opposing or differing view can help you strengthen your paper. If you both agree or disagree with a topic, but the views take somewhat different approaches, you can strengthen your paper by adding this alternative view.
- If you respond to naysayers, add to your response a claim, reasons supporting your view, evidence supporting your reasons, and even a warrant that logically connects the reasons with the claim.
- If your claim sucks, and you find on investigation it's proven wrong by counterviews, one method to salvage your paper is to transform your claim into a hypothesis or a research question that you prove to be wrong.

How to Organize Your Reasons Supporting Your Claim

I had this cunning, yet delightful, professor who discovered the trick to organizing your paper so that your weakest point gets buried, almost unnoticed, in your paper, and your strongest points resonate. This crafty professor argued to use the formula where you start with a bang with your second best point, follow with your third best, and so on, until you get to the near end of the paper. Near the end, you insert your very worst, weakest point just before the final point, consisting of your very best argument. Now, I followed this formula, trying to mask my one weakest, most unsubstantiated point by following it with the concluding zinger-- the very best point I could possibly muster. The zinger would dazzle the professor marking the paper, lending to amnesia concerning my weakest point. Rule of thumb: Baffle the professor. Yes, you heard it from the Study Dude.

Although the formula seemingly cut some slack in my own mind, nowhere in the literature do any of the authors espouse this professor's strategy. He's a lone wolf. In the long run, I'm not sure his strategy reflected as well on my grades as I might have thought. The wiser course of action involves ensuring that all of your points shine.

Booth, Colomb, and Williams suggest the following advice on organizing your paper:

- You can structure your paper from the simplest reasons to the most complex or the shortest reasons to the longest ones. Readers like to ease into the material.
- Another structural form involves moving from the most familiar reasons to the more confounding ones.
- You can also structure from least controversial to most controversial to warm up readers for your zingers.
- You can structure your paper in order of relevance, from most to least or least to most relevant.
- Another structure involves starting with an overview and following it with specifics.
- You can start your paper with the easy stuff and conclude with the most complex.
- Lastly, you can do the traditional chronological order.

How to Properly Cite and Paraphrase

Being a computing science student for the last while, I had almost forgotten how to introduce paraphrases and citations in essays such that originality entered the equation. Also, I struggled with how to write up an outline that was stacked with quote after quote into some sort of logical structure. I knew that I preceded each quote

with some commentary of my own, but, in hindsight and years later, I could hardly remember the nature of the commentary. And how did I insert my own views in between quotes to stamp out my originality?

In last week's article, I showed how Booth, Colomb, and Williams revealed how you could take a claim where you state your position and then follow your claim with the word "because" followed by your reason(s) for your position. This structure formed your thesis, although you strengthened your thesis if you also addressed an objection at the beginning in the form of "Although..."

This week, I came to understand that whatever followed the "because", or the reasons, constitutes much of your originality. Of course, those reasons need to be supported by a lot of evidence in the form of data, facts, and sources later on, but the way you synthesize all that evidence in the form of your reason counts for originality.

For instance, the claim that *Socrates reflected the ancient Greek ambivalence toward women's worth* could be followed by your "because..." statement. What follows the "because" are your reasons. This "because" statement would not typically contain any quotes or support just yet. This "because" statement would just state your own reasoning in plain English--no citations. This "because" statement marks your synthesis. Later, you will devote an entire section to each of your "because" reasons, providing ample support in the form of facts, data, and primary, secondary, and tertiary citations.

Also, your commentary preceding citations could also contain a lot of originality and synthesis. By ensuring your own voice—your own reasoning—gets inserted in the writing, you avoid the pitfall of making a patchwork of citations (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2008).

What follows includes Booth, Colomb, and Williams' take on how to properly cite and paraphrase:

- Some disciplines emphasize direct quotes while other emphasize paraphrasing.
- Paraphrase when you can clarify or simplify a quote better than the author can.
- Use direct quotations when the author is an authority or when the author writes exceptionally well.
- Always use direct quotations when you are about to pounce upon and tear apart the author's views. This way, you give an accurate portrayal of the author's position.
- Don't write quote after quote—patchwork—without your own words introducing and/or explaining each quote.
- Try to precede the quote with the words "The author says..." or something similar. Even better is to "introduce a quotation with a sentence that interprets or characterizes it" (p. 189).
- Use square brackets to insert your own words inside a direct quotation or a block quote.
- Better than just a sentence before a quote is making a claim and providing one or more reasons that characterize the quote. Don't expect readers to naturally make the connection between your quote and your own reasoning for including it. Spell it out.
- Use lots of citations. Don't hesitate to cite someone's work. Citations look great on your paper, so be overly generous with ensuring other author's contributions get recognized at every instance. Just ensure that you insert your own words to introduce quotes, your own synthesis, as described above. Your own interpretations comprise your original contribution.

So, there's nothing to fear. The Study Dude is determined to make right for you all the wrongs I made in grad school—one A+ at a time.

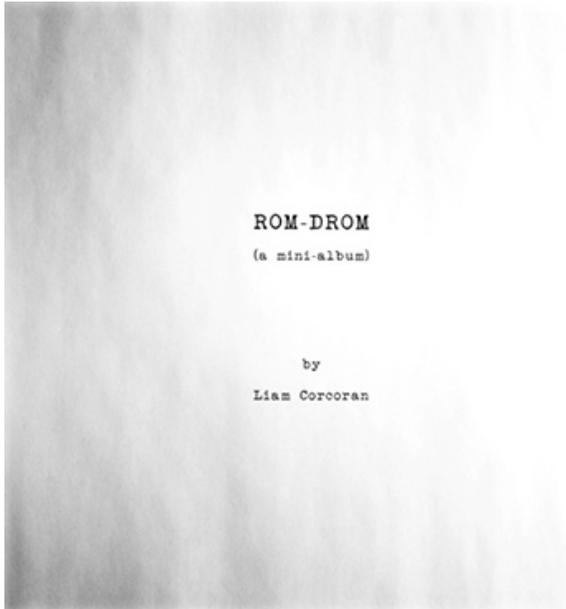
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Music Review

Liam Corcoran

Samantha Stevens



Composer: Liam Corcoran

EP: *ROM-DROM*

Sometimes the best music is created using the most basic sounds and elements. The simplicity of poetic lyrics, gentle piano, and folk-inspired guitar and drums used together often creates music that is incredibly relaxing and laid back. *ROM-DROM* is a mini-album that uses these feelings to bring to life some of the best folk and alt-country music that I have heard in a while.

Liam Corcoran is based in Charlottetown, PEI, and *ROM-DROM*, his first solo EP, was released September 4th. Liam was the co-founder and lead singer of the indie-pop band Two Hours Traffic, a band that was fairly popular in the indie circuit in Atlantic Canada. Although Liam's music sounds

quite different from what he played with Two Hours Traffic, a couple of his former band mates also contributed to *ROM-DROM*, as well as other popular PEI musical talents like Kinley Dowling from Hey Rosetta. The music on *ROM-DROM* reminds me of a mix between Rawlins Cross, Crash Test Dummies, and Blues Travellers.

ROM-DROM features seven of Liam's songs, and is a wonderful introduction to his talents. Liam's music captures that easygoing feeling that is the mark of many Atlantic Canadian musicians. However, it was Liam's lyrics that captured my attention. Liam touches on many of the feelings and emotions that come with being separated by long distances from those you love. Not an unfamiliar theme in music, but Liam's poetic representations of these feelings demonstrate his incredible talent as a songwriter.

"Out of this World" and "Thru the Dark" are my favourite songs on this album. "Out of this World" features a somewhat sombre tune that uses the piano to convey feelings of loneliness and sadness. The pairing of the piano with the softened guitar and drums creates beautiful music that is sure to capture listeners' hearts. As well, the female backup singing in the chorus adds a dimension to the song that also tends to lift listeners' spirits, preventing the song from being overly melancholy and depressing.

"Thru the Dark" is more light-hearted, and I absolutely love the use of the violin. The guitar, drums, and vocals are still fairly central to this song, but the violin that resides in the background gives the music a somewhat grander and historic feeling. However, the overuse of repetition in the lyrics was a bit of a letdown.

Overall, Liam's first EP showcases many of his talents as a singer and songwriter, and I look forward to future album releases. If you are a fan of folk and alt-country music, or if you are planning on taking a road trip this fall and are looking for music to add to your playlist, I highly recommend checking out *ROM-DROM*, available on iTunes and Spotify.

Samantha Stevens is an aspiring writer who loves combining her love for literature with photography, painting, music, and all creative pursuits.

Fly on the Wall: Lost and Found in the Moment

Jason Sullivan



Education and the Search for Epiphany

Snorkeling in clear and bright Okanagan Lake the other day allowed me to ponder future course opportunities and dream up esoteric 'Fly On the Wall' Topics. Just as I began to suppose that I'd see no fish on this swim, a huge carp glided into my peripheral vision. Had it been watching me and decided to investigate? Instantly I wished for my camera, yet, in a flash, realized that the moment itself was special. A wise person had recently counselled me that some moments really are meant just for us as individuals. I began to wonder how to approach meaning in terms of photographic journaling and my educational journey.

Whatever 'meaning' means in a teleological sense (meaning can merely be our own creation as we experience life, or meaning can have some cosmic 'everything happens for a reason' significance), the fish did clarify my sense of wonder at the joys of under-lake reality. Within a few seconds my mind had traversed boundaries of thought and emotion; I thought of Henry Miller's line: "tremendous voyages sometimes occur without the person moving from the spot" (Miller, 1964, P. 121).

I then turned my attention to how capturing a moment with a camera is a bit like fishing for enlightenment through education; the purpose is in the pursuit, the chase, as much as in the result. Yet the horrifying potential of an empty bucket at the end of the day drives us onward.

The carp set me to thinking about social theory too, and how in our media-saturated century even the perfect image may drown in a sea of other pictures posted online. And we may capture the fish, but do we really share the essence of the moment? Ubiquitous digital cameras mean that sublime beauty doesn't stand alone on a wall the way it might have in art galleries of yore. Walter Benjamin's famous late-1930s essay 'Art and Mechanical Reproduction' was already lamenting the decline of what he termed the "aura" of art, as print reproductions of paintings and photographs made any particular visual image available to all and sundry (Benjamin, 1936, P. 423). Mona Lisa prints are available in big box stores; a person can watch YouTube videos and claim to have learned the course material of a post-secondary course. Technology has opened the floodgates of self-education and yet there's still tangible and intrinsic value in taking a course 'for credit' at an institution like AU. Like an artist who feels pride at the completion of a work, we students attain real gratification at passing real courses at official institutions. With the wonders of the internet's dissemination of knowledge comes a loss of the aura from successful completion of post-secondary degrees. Benjamin stated that "to pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose 'sense of the universal equality of things' has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction" (Benjamin, 1936, p. 424). The unique object, in this case, is university, which today may seem watered-down in the face of all the content (if not experience, form, or expectations) available free for all online.

The visual arts uniquely reflect the desire for expression, which can be both artistic and academic. Benjamin asserts that, at root, a painting seeks to convey the actual lived experience of the artist; likewise, students learn to express their lives in new ways by becoming educated. "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (Benjamin, 1936, P. 422). Were I to capture the carp for all time with my camera, my Facebook friends

would lack the full content of the moment. The daydreams and ponderings leading me to drift out of full conscious awareness would be lost. So too would my pleasure at seeing this huge creature after beginning to doubt that I'd see any fish at all. Even the play of light upon its smooth, dark body would be restricted to the precise snapshot moment which the lens had lassoed. In this same way, the abstract sensation of "being there" in a class (even an online course!) contains perhaps a unique experiential kernel. Maybe the possibility of failure, contained in authentic life experiences, gives real moments their varnish of authenticity.

Then there is the matter of whether any moment or topic can ever really be caught. Photos give us the eternal present, yet they lose the past and future which brings the present to life. Benjamin claimed that "the presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity" (Benjamin, 1936, P. 422). Yet the original representation of a moment only implies the moment itself. Imagine a safari bus full of tourists snapping photos of elephants and zebras; each individual is deferring their own personal present into the photo. The split-second that the lens clicks becomes a moment put off for another day, a procrastination until the picture is shared with another person who, even then, will only be seeing a simulation of a split-second in time. One that never happened in that the photographer was never really there in the way the photo presents the event. The photographer was busy taking a picture even as the reality depicted occurred within the picture itself. A tourist taking a photograph wasn't there looking at the wildlife in the sense that the camera conveys. She or he was busy taking the picture which functions only as a simulacrum of the moment of awe in the face of nature. We know the aura of the moment is there, but it's easy to forget that the picture is only a pale imitation; we know we've read the textbook, but not whether we've fully grasped the author's intent.

Baudrillard discusses this hall of mirrors, whereby simulacra reflect off of each other and exist detached from original, authentic existence in his 1981 book 'Simulacra and Simulation'. With regard to the post-modern proliferation of visual images (such as occurs on Facebook) he wrote that "the whole system becomes weightless, it is no longer anything but a gigantic simulacrum - not unreal, but simulacrum, that is to say never exchanged for the real, but exchanged for itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference." (Baudrillard, online). This culture of simulacra may be akin to randomly looking up an academic topic without it being tied to a full syllabus and program of study. A reproduction of authentic experience stands in for the real unmitigated awe of the viewer-student lost in the spectacle of education.

Then there is the matter of whether any moment or topic can really be caught. ... The very act of seeking to reflect a moment by taking a picture may tarnish its original sheen

The very act of seeking to reflect a moment by taking a picture may tarnish its original sheen; "the quality of its presence is always depreciated" at the moment we seek to share it (Benjamin, 1936, P. 423). A picture may be worth a thousand words, yet, just as some things are beyond words, Benjamin suggests that some instances are also beyond pictures and hasty interactions. To learn from life we have to be there, 'all in' with the moment. In real school courses we can't just flutter (or Twitter) away from the material and never come back; likewise, wonderful glimpses of nature are irreducible to mere snapshots for other Facebook users to rifle through at their leisure.

Finally, nature's spectacle is often itself; nothing special, just nature being natural. Benjamin sensed this; he reminded the reader that we have to be there to really 'get' what an artist strives to explain visually about the natural environment. (In this sense emotional connections become a wonderful artistic thematic; we all feel human emotions and need only a flower or mountain or fish to strike a chord in our hearts.) Benjamin summarizes the wonders of nature as follows:

"We define the aura of the latter as the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be. If, while resting on a summer afternoon, you follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon to a branch which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of these mountains, or that branch. This image makes it easy

to comprehend the social bases of the contemporary decay of the aura...the desire of contemporary masses to bring things "closer" spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction...Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction." (Benjamin, 1936, P. 424)

It helps to remember that representations merely point us to authentic experience. Likewise, when we love the feeling and appearance of something it's easy to get too close and destroy the distance between ourselves as subject and it as object. Rainbows are not graspable to the touch; a lifetime of study in no way guarantees mastery of a topic. To appreciate something of interest, be it the fish in a lake or the intricacies of a school of thought, requires a headlong immersion with the material and concurrent possibility of failing the course. AU provides this brimming potential for academic experience in a way that merely sifting through the webosphere only hints at.

Yet, as students and life-artists, we must remember that the value we attain from our education depends in great part on us alone. If we expect education to magically alter our lives we may be disappointed. Baudrillard hinted at this when addressing post-modern disenchantment: "one can live with the idea of distorted truth. But their metaphysical despair came from the idea that the image didn't conceal anything at all." (Baudrillard, online) It's up to us to find meaning in whatever lies in front of us; it won't always appear on its own. Camera or no, the mind is where our imagination brings the world to life.

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Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.

Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

Following what's hot around AU's social media sites.

AUSU Student Forums

In the Welcome and Introductions forum, Michelle seeks to develop a network of Alberta students. Over in the Ask AUSU forum, Michelle wonders how much AUSU is doing to promote the forums, which she recently discovered and finds "amazing." Elsewhere on the forums, discussions continue on e-texts, and finance courses.

AthaU Facebook Group

Carolyn is curious how much feedback to expect after an exam is marked. Kelly wants to know what effect a course withdrawal has on student transcripts. Rachel seeks info on what to expect at the exam centre.

Other posts include tuition increases, Rick Mercer, purchasing hard-copy texts, and courses ADMN 233, MATH 215, POLI 350, and PSYC 350.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "AU's Dr Mohamed Ally trains stdnts/teachers in rural Pakistan on grid-free mobile learning services server <http://ow.ly/SfojT> #ROTA #COL." @AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Download your FREE MOBILE APP for AU Students, courtesy of AUSU and AUGSA! <http://bit.ly/1UEH2h3> #AthaU" and "AUSU's first and foremost role is student advocacy! If you have a concern, let us know! <http://bit.ly/1f8sbbM> #AthaU."



Tuition Freeze

Philip Kirkbride



There's been much excitement here at *The Voice Magazine* and among the student population in general since the provincial election in Alberta. The long-running Conservative Government had come to be seen by many as anti-education thanks to a series of cuts. To many students, including myself, the change in government came with a sigh of relief.

While the NDP hasn't been specific on how it will support our financially troubled university, it has promised assistance. Advanced Education Minister Lori Sigurdson has stated that the current problems cannot be allowed to continue and that the province will step in if need be. An improvement from the

previous government's attitude that AU should just 'tighten its purse strings'.

We haven't heard much with regard to new policy which will affect AU students, but that's changed as of last Wednesday when the NDP announced an Alberta wide tuition freeze. The freeze will affect tuition rates for the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 school years. While the news is far from a complete solution to the current problems facing AU, it does seem to be a step in the right direction. The NDP has acknowledged the solution as temporary, saying they'll continue to review the current funding model of post-secondary institutions in Alberta.

In some ways the tuition freeze may make it even more difficult for an already cash strapped AU to balance the budget, if the NDP does not also provide extra funding to make up for the shortfall. The other damper on this positive news is the fact that it only applies to residence of Alberta. A large portion of students at AU, like myself, are from out of province and while tuition may be frozen no such guarantee has been made for the various out of province fees that most AU Students have to pay.

According to Statistics Canada, Albertans currently pay an average of \$5700 a year. That's about \$1800 cheaper than tuition in Ontario, which is the highest in Canada at \$7500. But that's still significantly more expensive than tuition in Newfoundland (\$2600), Quebec (\$2700), and Manitoba (\$3900).

Shawna Wasylyshyn President of AUSU says the tuition freeze is great but won't solve the current problems facing AU:

"A tuition freeze is great news for all post-secondary students, as it helps to control student debt levels. What the Alberta government must clarify is how they will be supplementing the revenue to Alberta's colleges and universities. Most importantly for Athabasca University is how the government will assist AU toward their goal of sustainability and if they will introduce a special funding model to address the number of distance students at our University."

Despite these new developments having little effect on myself and many other AU students I remain optimistic. The change, however small, is a symbolic move showing that the provincial government is acknowledging the problems facing students in Alberta.

Philip Kirkbride is an AU Student, now AUSU Councillor, with a penchant for travelling the globe while doing his AU courses.



Revert to Routine

Most of us gravitate to the familiar. We stick with a favourite route to work or the store. If we find a doctor, hairdresser, shoe shop, or dentist we like we keep going back until they miss a diagnosis, take too much off the top, sell us stilettos, or yank out the wrong tooth. Most of us hang in there with 'the devil we know' rather than risk change. Change translates into uncertainty. Uncertainty begets fear. Most of us will do almost anything to avoid those things we fear.

Other times, life forces us back to (or into) the things we'd rather avoid if we could.

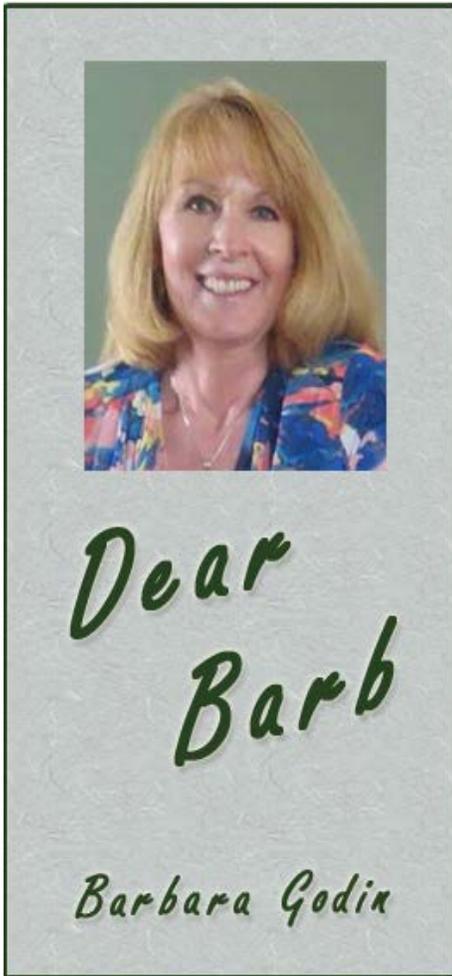
Checking into what was causing my heel and ankle pain led to the miserable diagnosis of heel spurs. That led me back to a physiotherapist for help. Since the months of treatment following rotator cuff surgery in 2006, I hadn't darkened the doorway of a therapy department. I forgot the apparent chaos of each therapist having multiple patients on the go at the same time. I forgot the privacy shattering reality of curtained cubicles. I forgot that the whole world sees everyone else's appendages, braces, splints, limps, and wretched movement. I forgot the power and the evil of an ice pack, the comfort and warmth of a hot pack. I forgot about the invisible benefits of ultrasound and TENS. I forgot about the therapist's insistence that the patient be part of the solution through faithful and regular adherence to the tortuous exercises shared on handouts. I did not need any of this.

Then I decided to upgrade from my crank-start laptop (slight sarcasm) to something faster. The buying and the installing is never fun but I have to say I've gotten better over the years. No meltdown. No calls to children or tech support. Short-term pain until the next update.

Another less than pleasant experience was going new car shopping with Hilary. She's ready to part with her 2005 Honda Civic and make the move to an SUV. She and her brother did one day of test drives. Then, with rain stopping the harvest before it could get started, we spent last Sunday hitting three more dealers with her. She's settled on an Acura RDX but hasn't done the deal yet. That's usually the sickening part: the make me an offer, I'll take it to my manager song and dance. What I was shocked by at every dealership was the lack of product knowledge. The young bucks couldn't answer basic questions about features. Finally I said I thought all young men loved cars and knew all the specs. Well, there are a lot of cars, one guy said. Wow. If my livelihood depended on knowing more than the customer knows I'd be cramming and asking questions during all the downtime between customers. But that's me.

In the meantime I'll revert to my routine of writing grant applications and reports, running a combine, and dreaming of a winter getaway, from where I sit.

Hazel Anaka's first novel is Lucky Dog. Visit her [website](#) for more information or follow her on Twitter @anakawrites.



Talkie Movie Issues

Dear Barb:

My girlfriend and I went to the movie theatre last week and she hasn't spoken to me since. While the movie was playing she kept talking to me. I tried to ignore her and watch the movie, but she kept on talking. She always does this when we go to the movies and I try to tolerate it, however this time I really wanted to see the movie, so I told her to be quiet. She clammed up and has not spoken to me since. Don't you think that's an overreaction? I have tried to explain to her that I wanted to watch the movie and she just won't speak to me. She has given me the silent treatment before but for different reasons. I find it so frustrating when people treat others like this. How can anything ever get resolved if you don't communicate? I really don't know what to do to get this behaviour to stop. I really love her and for the most part we get along great and have been talking about marriage. Do you have any suggestions on how we can communicate better? Thanks, Brody.

Hi Brody:

I hear your frustration and yes I would say that is definitely an overreaction. The silent treatment is such an abusive way to treat someone. It renders you helpless and them in control. You need to resolve this behaviour before you get married, or you are going to have a very unhappy life unless you do everything your partner wants. Your girlfriend may have some emotional problems that are causing her to react in this manner, or she simply may have learned this from her family, and needs to find a better way to resolve difficulties. I would suggest you look into some couples counseling before you make any wedding plans. You might want to show your girlfriend the question below. Good Luck Brody.

Dear Barb:

Saturday night my husband and I decided to go out to a show. The theatre was pretty crowded, but we found a couple of spots in front of two older couples. Unfortunately they were quite annoying with talking and carrying on like they were the only people in the theatre. The noise from them digging into their bags of candy was very irritating. I kept turning around and giving them dirty looks in the hope that they would realize what they were doing. I could tell everyone around these two couples were also bothered. We didn't say anything during the preshow, even though I would have liked to have heard the previews of upcoming shows, but when the main feature came on my husband turned around and said "the movie is on now, can you please be quiet." We never heard a peep from them again. I don't get it, why are some people so oblivious to their surroundings and what's worse is these people were probably in their sixties. Just venting I guess. I don't know if there was a more effective way to handle this situation. Anna

Hi Anna:

Obviously the manner in which you handled this was very effective. Another option would have been to tell the usher and he could have approached the couples, that way you would not have been put in an uncomfortable situation, and the couples would not have known who reported them. Some people are just very self-absorbed, or lose track of how loud they are. Situations such as this are just a regular annoyance of everyday life. Thanks for sharing.

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.

THE 10 ESSENTIAL WARDROBE ITEMS OF THE DEPRESSED POET

1.

Dark glasses, to hide behind and also to suggest excessive drinking and fighting



2.

The colour black, the favourite shade of the morbid and morose



3.

Heavy eyeliner, to grant a decadent look



4.

A fedora, because of film noir



5.

A sober facial expression, because you're writing a poem in your head (or judging everyone harshly)



6.

For women, a veil. A bit retro, but speaks volumes about your profundity



8.

A top hat. Parties only, but nothing evokes the symbolistes like this classy topper.



The fetal position. If you're not seen going into this at least once a year, your career is toast.

9.

A hood, hiding as much of your face as possible. To be worn with downcast eyes.



10.

A violin. If you don't play, just carry an empty case, and roll your eyes at anyone who asks you about it.



This space is provided free to AUSU: The Voice does not create this content. Contact ausu@ausu.org with questions or comments about this page.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Sept 31:** Deadline to apply for course extension for courses ending Oct 31
- **Oct 10:** Last day to register in courses starting Nov 1
- **Oct 15:** Deadline to complete degree requirements for graduation in November
- **Oct 19:** Federal Election – [GET OUT AND VOTE!](#)

Get out the Vote!

If we don't speak up, we cannot expect to be heard.

It is very important to speak up in the upcoming federal election. By **pledging your vote**, you help give AUSU and CASA a stronger voice with the national government, which in turn helps us to advocate on your behalf.

Learn more [here](#):



On October 19, join us in having your voice heard. **Pledge your vote** [here](#)!



AUSU Forensic Audit Committee – Call for Volunteers!

AUSU Council has formed an ad hoc Committee to study the issue of a **forensic audit** as described in the members' motion from the 2015 AGM.

The Committee will make recommendations to Council that will ensure the best interests of AUSU and its members are served, and assist in Council's decision regarding the motion.

We are seeking two current AUSU members to sit on this committee. If you are interested, please:

1. E-mail ausu@ausu.org to request a copy of the committee terms of reference and application form. Documents will be sent by return email within 24 hours of the request.
2. Return the completed application to ausu@ausu.org by 5:00 pm MDT on Sunday September 27, 2015.

Email ausu@ausu.org for more information or to apply to join the committee.



CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@voicemagazine.org for more information.

Views and articles presented here are those of the contributors and do not represent the views of AUSU Student Council

THE VOICE

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