

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 25 Issue 28 2017-07-14

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

BC's Wildfires

A BC Student's Report

Invigilators

A Personal Experience

Plus:

Fly on the Wall

Interviewing Neil Cowley

and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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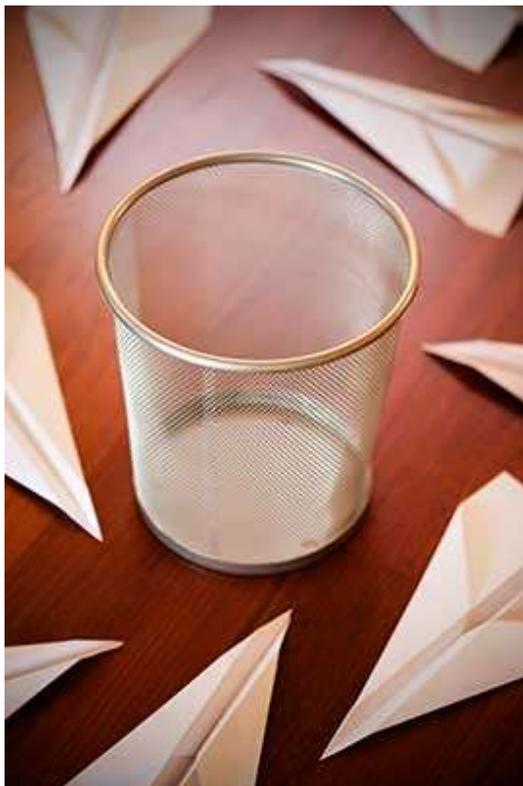
Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?

No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.

EDITORIAL

Karl Low

The Burning Question



For students affected by the wildfires in BC, like those in Fort McMurray before, Athabasca University is offering help in the form of free extensions or exam rebooking fees, free replacement of materials, and even allowing full refunds for students who decide they'll need to withdraw from their studies for a time while they sort out whatever changes the fires have forced on them. While a tremendous boon for those affected students, and an admirable act of generosity on AU, it makes me wonder if the policy is a sustainable one. When you consider the effects of climate change, making weather conditions more severe, and the global reach of Athabasca, the idea that this policy might be invoked whenever there's a large-scale emergency anywhere in the world could be a difficult one to maintain.

Most brick and mortar universities, after all, only have to worry an emergency in their immediate geographic region. For AU, however, a natural disaster anywhere in the world could affect students. Will this policy take effect when hurricanes rip through the east coast again? Or perhaps with the tension happening in Eastern Europe, war may break out affecting students from various countries. Will this policy apply then?

I certainly hope so, of course, but it does raise the possibility that there may be multiple areas under these kind of disaster response policies at once, and what does that do to Athabasca's business model? At a brick and mortar university, if a large-scale disaster happened in an area that would affect it, there would likely be government help made available for the university to deal with the consequences. Not so with the disasters that affect AU students. Then again, maybe this is something that must go beyond economics. Maybe it's something that can help AU to stand out, especially as more schools start using online courses and the growth of the earth's population means any disaster will be affecting a greater number of students. It's unlikely many other institutions have thought about this to the extent of making it a policy. Indeed, Thompson Rivers University, based in BC, has a response page, but it appears that the support they give is being administered on an ad hoc basis. Online students there are being urged to contact the university directly with any difficulties, and the institution's facilities in Kamloops remaining open while classes proceed as normal.

We continue to explore the wild-fire's effects on AU students with an article by Deanna Roney, who lives in Northern BC, and, while not directly affected (yet), can't help but empathize with those so close who are.

Then our feature article this week is our interview with recent graduate, Diana Longman. A fellow procrastinator, Diana used the flexibility of AU to combat her predilection, something many of us know very well.

Those, along with a new Fly on the Wall about educational domestication, an article about how invigilation can get personal, and, of course, news, interviews, reviews, advice, and plenty of things to make sure your own inner procrastinator has ample material to keep it occupied. Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl".

MINDS WE MEET



Diana Longman recently finished her Bachelor of Professional Arts: Communications degree through AU. Born in Fort McMurray, she has lived in Spruce Grove, Alberta, a small city just outside of Edmonton since she was a small child. She enjoys travelling far distances and has been lucky to travel to New Zealand, Japan, and many places in the United States. She strongly suggests feeding the travel bug when opportunity presents itself to open your eyes in so many ways.

What has your post-secondary journey looked like?

Oh, well, I could go on for a lengthy amount of time describing my university life between my first year of university at MacEwan to finishing at Athabasca. To save everyone the novel, I'll summarize. In 2014, I completed the Legal Assistant diploma at MacEwan University. Realizing that Athabasca offered me an opportunity to apply my diploma, I began my two-and-a-half-year journey to completing my degree while working. It was a struggle from time to time, but, despite the struggles, completing my degree has given me an immense amount of satisfaction.

What's the hardest choice you've had to make as an AU student?

There wasn't any one decision that was harder than the other. It was the daily decisions. Rain checks with friends, understanding when to have a break and when to push through, all those little decisions. I am incredibly blessed to have friends and family who understood and supported me even when I had to prioritize school over quality time.

What has been your favourite or most memorable AU course?

I think my favourite courses were my creative writing courses, particularly creative essay writing. While I had enjoyed writing creatively in my spare time, it was interesting doing the so in an academic setting. I was surprised to find how much I enjoyed writing short form essays.

Who in your life has been the greatest influence on your desire to learn?

My grandmother, the ultimate "cool lady". I've had support from my friends and other family members but my grandmother has such a passion for lifelong learning that I found that when I needed the strength, I remembered how proud she was of me. At 84 she made the long trek up from Calgary to attend my convocation!

What parts do you like about online learning through AU?

I appreciated being able to work at my own pace. I am a true procrastinator through and through so distance education allowed me to skip often lengthy and sometimes pointless lectures held at brick and mortar institutions and focus on what was important.

And dislike?

On the flip side of what I enjoyed most about AU, I felt a touch unconnected to my tutors. While they were always available to answer any questions that I had, not having the chance to meet them in person made the distance feel much larger.

Describe your relationship with AU tutors:

They were lovely, supportive and available when I had any questions or concerns. I wish I had the opportunity to meet with them face to face as they were often incredibly interesting people.

How do you motivate yourself when it comes to studying?

Equal parts focusing on the end goal and panic!

Do you have a study spot? What makes it your best place to focus?

My cubicle at work became my haven for studying. While I did/do have a dedicated workspace at home for studying, I found being able to separate school from home was key for my anxiety. Work and schoolwork occupy the same space in my mind so dovetailing them became second nature.

What is your mantra in life?

The difference between you and the most successful people you know is the recognition of opportunity. Hard work, discipline, and commitment play a large part in completing a goal but understanding when an opportunity has presented itself is just as important.

What is your favorite book and why should everyone read it?

Steve Jobs by Walter Issacson is a wonderfully in-depth biography of one of the most enigmatic business men of our time. What made the book particularly compelling was how it did not shy away from how manipulative, condescending, and often unpleasant Jobs could be while, at the same, recognizing the importance of his role in modern computing. Even if you are not interested in computers, I highly recommend it as a character study of a highly unique individual.

What is your third favorite movie? Why?

Oh jeez, tough question. I would have to say Hot Fuzz. It's a fantastic satire of over the top American action movies through the lens of dry British humour. There is something truly in it for everyone!

Book or movie – which is better? Why?

Whew! Asking a communications major that puts you at risk for lengthy discussion! I would say it depends. Quality trumps the medium, in opinion. Both books and movies are forms of art so it completely depends on your preference.

Laura Nelson is a marketing analyst by day and a bibliophile by night. She is in her final stages of completing her BA with a major in English through AU.

BC's WildFires

Deanna Roney



In the southern interior of BC wildfires are raging. There have been, according to recent reports, about 10,000 people evacuated from their homes. What makes this so difficult to fight is that there are so many fires, it isn't a single blaze that is threatening but several, meaning resources are being spread across the province.

I have spent the past few days glued to news articles, reports, and social media feed about the devastating fires down south. The fires are all a long way from me but I have friends who are affected and seeing entire communities being evacuated is heartbreaking. In these times, though, there

is a surge of compassion; so many are stepping up to help where they can.

Just a year after the Fort Mac fire, the news articles still fresh in our minds, the terror of those who fled still healing, these fires have prompted aid from Fort Mac residents themselves. I saw a twitter post where they had collected so many supplies from their community that they had to build walls onto their flat deck trailer to hold them all.

People have been offering their homes, their yards, barns—anything and everything they can—to house displaced animals and people. I have seen those that fled Fort Mac providing a list of things that should be taken with you, from insurance papers to medications, pet supplies, clothes. I can't imagine being in that situation, deciding what to take, and what gets left.

The most important thing to grab is anything that feels irreplaceable, photos, memories, an object from a passed relative. Of course, your pets and livestock. Another recommendation I have seen making its way around is to take pictures or a video of your home, your possessions and keep that with you in case you need to make a claim and then you have that showing exactly what was lost.

In the mix of the chaos, those fleeing, those hearing things third hand, there are contradicting news reports. Google maps had even posted that a highway was closed when it wasn't, causing panic among those trying to get to the evacuation zone. It's important to look at reliable news sources, your local community page, bcwildfires.ca, and try to not spread misinformation.

There are so many on the ground and in the air fighting these fires, organizing and aiding evacuees, and driving donations from one province to another. The compassion of people during these times is inspiring. One video that will stick with me is of a fuel truck driving through the fire. Fire was on both sides of the highway, and they were delivering fuel to the helicopters so they could continue to battle the blaze. I couldn't imagine driving through there with aviation fuel behind me, to be fair, I couldn't imagine driving through there at all.

I think the best news now would be rain (free of lightening) in the forecast, and lots of it.

Deanna is an AU graduate who loves adventure in life and literature. Follow her path on the writing journey at <https://deannaroney.wordpress.com/>

The Fit Student

Warp Speed the Mormon Way

Marie Well



What if you could warp speed toward success? I mean, go from student to celebrity overnight? Well, it's possible. Shane Snow shows how in his book *Smartcuts*. He tells how game developers create "Warp Tunnels"—holes hurling players from world to world—in a flash. Why? For debugging purposes. So, warp tunnels exist in games, says Snow. *Why not in real life?*

In my life, I warp tunneled dreams during grad school. But when one goal got stuck, I fluttered to the next.

My first aim? The summer before grad school, I took a break. Instead of preparing to TA, I spent the summer trekking on my ten-speed. While a lack of TA preparation took a toll, cycling became a passion. Later, a fellow student urged me to cycle Canada—for charity. So, in preparation, I cycled all winter. With a frost-bitten face and brakes that failed on the highway, my big day never came. Warp drive faltered.

My next dream? With little training, I warp drove my way into dance. I joined a ballet troop. One taught by a revered Russian. Yet, I tottered while they pirouetted. Later, I auditioned for a dance minor—but was disqualified in the first round. Not accepting defeat, I hired dance student choreographers. Within six months, I danced at a creative conference. Warp speed worked halfway.

My next goal? I marched into the world of music. Twice a week, I rushed to private singing lessons, stopping along the way to sing-a-long with some Christian singers. Next, I auditioned for the university choir—getting placed alongside low altos. Inspired, I formed a band—of half-hearted rockers. Warp drive failed before it began.

The last ambition? Film. I signed up for a film workshop, and wound up co-starring in a documentary. I then secured my professor a role as the next David Suzuki. Although hired to write his script, I had a change of heart. Warp drive shied away.

Like me, Mormons move from goal to goal, not stopping when the door gets stuck.

Shane Snow uses Mormons and warp tunnels as metaphors in his book *Smartcuts: The Breakthrough Power of Lateral Thinking*. Let's tunnel toward success, the Shane Snow way:

- Mormons have a game called "Bigger and Better." In this game, they knock on doors to trade something small for something "bigger and better." For instance, a string might exchange for a stick of gum. A stick of gum might exchange for a book. A book for a toaster. And so on. If someone says no, the Mormon moves to the next door—quickly.
- When you fail once, you don't get an edge the next time around. In fact, you're as equipped next time around as someone who never even tried.

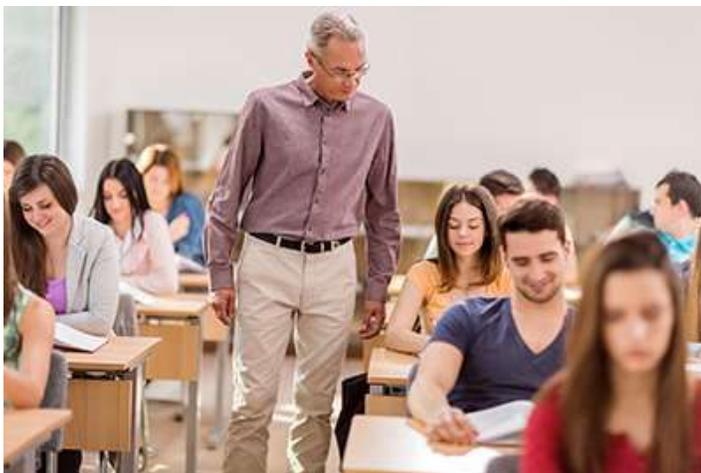
- But, when comedians fail at weekly performances, they get feedback that refines them for the big show. So, failing with feedback helps refine you for the big goal.
- And one small win begets another. Get small wins daily. Small wins add up to momentum.
- When one door closes, open another. Don't pound on a bolted door until you bleed.
- Find mentors who come naturally. Don't force them. If the feminist instructor loves your cookies, you've made more than chocolate chips. You've made a mentor.

My warp speed got tempered in time. Full-time work and a thesis left no time for play. But daily small wins make for big momentum. So, when you desire a dream, warp speed the Mormon way.



My Friendly Neighbourhood Invigilator

Barabara Lehtiniemi



Driving home from my most recent AU exam, I reflected on how lucky I am in my choice of invigilator. Because I've used the same invigilator for around a dozen AU exams, the process is familiar and stress-free. And stress-free is what I need on exam day!

My current invigilator wasn't my first choice. For my first AU exam, I selected the nearest invigilator to me at the time, which was at a public library in another municipality. That invigilation fee was \$60, which is pretty expensive for a library. However, for that fee I got a dedicated staff member to watch over me while I wrote my exam in a private room.

Because that location was over 60 kilometres from home, for my next exam I decided to try my own municipality's library system. They offered invigilation services but were not yet on AU's invigilation network. After some back-and-forth between the library and AU's exam unit, the library received its AU invigilator number.

Now I write my exams 10 kilometres from my home (13 if you count the essential detour through Tim Horton's drivethru) and I only pay \$30 per exam. I have the same person act as proctor each time. She knows the routine, and so do I.

We've developed a comfortable proctor-student relationship. I give her lots of notice for each exam, and we're always able to book a mutually acceptable time. My proctor doesn't impose any draconian rules beyond the normal safeguards against potential cheating. I bring my "exam care package" of take-out coffee, water, snack, wristwatch, scrap paper, and ear buds.

The ear buds aren't for listening to anything, but to block out noise. The only drawback about my local library is there is no private space for exam-writing. The library is usually open during my exam, although I can sometimes write the first hour before opening time. The ear-buds help to reduce noisy distractions, and also discourage other library patrons from speaking to me. (I also put a big sign next to me advising others that I'm writing an exam and must not be disturbed.) My proctor and other library staff are helpful with discouraging people from disturbing me.

I choose the same work station each time. With my back to a wall and facing the entrance, nobody can startle me from behind. My work station is also adjacent to the public washroom, so quick trips to the washroom don't chew up too much exam time.

I didn't realize how fortunate I was with bathroom access until I read a recent discussion on the [AthaU Facebook group](#) page. Apparently, students who use ProctorU to supervise their exams aren't able to take bathroom breaks. While that makes sense, given the way ProctorU supervision works, I can't imagine giving up bathroom access for the duration of a 3-hour exam! At the very least, such a restriction would mean not writing exams in the morning, which is my best brain time but most active bladder time (both of which may have something to do with coffee consumption.)

One more exam is over, and I've only got a few more to go. Because I found a friendly neighbourhood invigilator, my remaining exams will be as stress-free as they can possibly be.

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



Traditional Condiments in Non-Traditional Uses

Xin Xu



The season of outdoor barbeques comes with a few obligatory condiments. But what happens when the guests go home and the inside of your fridge door is congested with litres of unused condiments? Either you can use it once in a blue moon or you can maximize its potential with some of these handy tips. We've dissected the four most common barbeque condiments and their unconventional uses.

Ketchup

Thought ketchup was only for dipping fries or chicken nuggets? Think again! Ketchup goes great alongside any dish that requires a sweet and sour flavor. For starters using this on barbeque ribs when in short supply of

barbecue sauce makes an impeccable substitute. For the more adventurous, try the sauce in your favorite sweet and sour stir-fry and easily witness the taste transform. Some classic British baked beans dish (similar to Heinz canned beans) can even be made with ketchup in lieu of tomato paste. The point is, don't underestimate ketchup. You can easily work it into your home-made gourmet dishes and get compliments from your family or dinner guests.

Mustard

I remember growing up avoiding mustard. Only until my early teens did the sharp, bitter flavor grow on me. Again, this condiment has more potential than your average hot dog topping. If you feel your Costco-size mustard bottle could use some help, there's quite a few possibilities. Sprinkling some simple ingredients like salt, honey, olive oil, and black vinegar with mustard makes a perfect honey mustard seasoning for your salad. Otherwise, my family have experimented with mustard and a variety of baked proteins including chicken and lamb. Pairing mustard and mayo with a cheesy topping creates a smooth, creamy Dijon dip that's sure to please any foodie.

Relish

One of my biggest guilty pleasures is devouring the fish burger from McDonald's. Have you ever wondered what goes into that tangy white sauce? Hint: It has something to do with relish. If you're concerned about the overwhelming amount of relish leftover at each summer barbeque (as any good host would), look no further for creative ways to consume that half a litre of relish. Combining relish, onions, mayo with your favorite herbs such as cilantro, scallions and parsley produces a versatile dip for any seafood dish. For the adventurous you can try adding relish to potato salad, egg salad and grilled salmon dinners.

Mayonnaise

You either love it enough to spread it over all your favorite carbs or you take it out of the fridge only to check the expiry date. If you're the latter like me, there's plenty of ideas for the mayonnaise that's a month away from expiry. I've already mentioned some ways it could be combined with other condiments, but you'd be surprised what improvisations are possible with mayonnaise. For one, sriracha and mayo combination along with fresh lemon juice is to die for on top of curly fries or sweet potato chips. If the ranch or Italian salad dressings sound boring to you, try adding a few spoonfuls of mayo to create a smoother, creamier texture. Slow-cooked chicken (or any protein) with mayo, curry and herbs add a creamy kick to any dish that's sure to wow your guests.

Xin Xu is a post-graduate health-science AU student, aspiring clinician, globe-trotter, parrot-breeder and tea-connoisseur.



Technical Observations

Dakota Soares

Interlude



I am going to digress from our series on browsers and get into something a little more practical. As AU students, we probably rely on technology more than other university students. So it becomes crucial that our school files are properly backed up and ready in an instant if the need arises. I have heard far too many stories of school work lost, data corrupted, and arduous work gone in a millisecond because of some unforeseen issue suddenly erasing school files. I have experienced this myself and am sure many of you have too (and for those who have not, I hope you never will!)

You need a way to keep your data safe from harm and easily accessible. A backup plan, if you will. To create this backup plan, you'll need a storage device and a way to easily back up your files. Here are some ideas for both:

First, our storage device. With the many different storage options on the market, it can be confusing to sift through them all. So what should you look for? First, find out how much space the device you use has. Try to purchase an external storage device that has at least the same amount of space, preferably double, than the computer you're using. So if your laptop has a 1 TB (TB means terabyte, which means 1000 GB (gigabyte)) drive, aim for a 1 TB backup drive, preferably 2 TB. If your laptop has an SSD drive that can hold 256 GB of data, get a backup device that holds 750GB – 1 TB of data. The bigger the better. After you have nailed down how much space you need (or want), your second consideration should be price range. Do I want a Lacie External Drive that is 1 TB, but costs \$200? Or a 1 TB Seagate drive that costs \$70? Figure out what you want to spend, knowing that sometimes higher prices mean faster access speeds (not really critical for backups) or better reliability.

Below is a table of price ranges for drive sizes that can help you see how this works (A note here. I do not recommend using an SSD (Solid State Drive) drive as a backup device. Though faster, if they fail, all data will be lost instantly and is not retrievable. "Cloud" backups are prone to being hacked and I would not use them for regular backups either. For the sake of backups for protecting sensitive data, we will stick with regular hard disk drives (HDD):

External HDD Drive Sizes:	(dollar approximations in CAD – taxes not included)
250–500 GB	30.00–70.00 dollars
501–750 GB	60.00–80.00 dollars
751GB–1 TB	75.00–90.00 dollars
1.1 TB–2 TB	95.00–110.00 dollars
2.1 TB–3 TB	120.00–150.00 dollars
3.1 TB +	160.00–

Once you have decided on the price and the size, consider where you are going to use it. Will you be traveling with it? If so, an ADATA shock-resistant drive from Canada Computers may be helpful. If not, a WD Passport from BestBuy may do. Remember that any drive above 2 TB must have a power cable as well as a data cable. If you have a computer with a large amount of storage space, and you need something above 2 TB, yet you travel a lot, consider only backing up school files. Bigger drives use more power and are less easy to carry around. Remember to balance what you need with what is portable.

Secondly, what program should you use to backup your files? There are so many on the market for both PC's and Macs! With a Mac, you can use the built in Time Machine utility, or just copy your files over manually. On a PC, I recommend either the Comodo Backup or Cobian Backup software. Both are free. With Cobian, you can set what files or folders you want backed up, and you can even automate the process if need be. Whichever program or method you choose, remember to hook it up and do it regularly. I would recommend doing it every two weeks or at least once a month.

On other devices, such as an Android mobile device, if you can find a dongle that can convert your charging port to a USB port, then you are good to go. You can backup files straight to it by copying and pasting them to the external drive through the built-in file manager. If you have an iPad or an iPhone, backing up your data is limited to cloud options. Apple's iCloud, Microsoft's OneDrive, Google's Drive, and Dropbox are all services you can use to backup files.

Finally, remember to store your backup safely away from your computer – not right beside it if you can help it! One other thing is that a USB thumb drive may be ample as well if you just want to backup school work. A 64–128 GB Thumb drive should be ample space; they are small, and they can be taken everywhere.

Dakota Soares is an entrepreneur taking his BSc through AU, and has many interests including music, information technology, and chicken producing.



Fly on the Wall

Brick & Mortar Domestication

Jason Sullivan



Studying on a summer day is not everyone's glass of ice tea. We at AU may be elite at managing our time, but July heat can drive a wall between our studious desires to further our education and our carnal drives to go out and play. At such moments, it's helpful to reflect on the visceral struggles facing traditional post-secondary students, immured as they are in brick and mortar fortresses posing as ivory towers of higher learning. Whereas we at AU are free to range and make almost any place our classroom, ordinary students must promptly appear and attend to the expectations of time and place set out by their institutions and their professors. In this sense, education entails a form of domestication. While

we at AU face the task of training ourselves into regimes of success, we at least are masters of our methods.

Bringing underlings to heel is nothing new in hierarchic settings such as schools. Domesticating his nobility, who each considered themselves lords over their own private domain, was the stated goal of Louis XIV when he built the Palace of Versailles (Western Civilization, online). Aristocrats were expected to visit Court each winter and often attended to all manner of the Kings, er, *whims*. "They did gardening work, served at the king's table, and even emptied the king's chamber pot (potty) to get the king's ear and earn royal favors" (lisahistory, online). Now, one might protest at a comparison between the demanding guidance and tutelage of a classroom professor (or AU tutor!) and the dutiful scrubbing of a monarch's bedpan, but the fact remains: to achieve "patronage", subordinates had to tow their sovereign's line (lisahistory, online).

In classrooms, we often must learn to appease the private yarns or public aims of professors in a way that greatly exceeds the expectations placed on us by our AU tutors. In the first place, tutors are there to advise and mark rather than to conscript us into their ideological or pedagogical regimes. Compare your average experience of note-taking with this horror story published at McGill University in Montreal:

"Instructors' justifications for banning laptops in classrooms are almost always of the following variety: there's research that shows students who take manual notes perform better academically, and students use their laptops for purposes other than note-taking, which is distracting to other students. Or, in translation: "I'm going to use my position of power as the instructor of your course to make paternalistic decisions for you, an adult, because I don't trust you to use a laptop responsibly...I had to run to a library immediately after a lecture to type up my illegible handwritten notes-a complete waste of time that did no aid my learning in the slightest." (Khoshroshahy, online).

What crap, right? Uncomfortable as it is to write an essay on a luxuriant summer afternoon with countless pleasurable options in the offing, at AU we at least decide how to take notes, and how many times to check our

social media accounts while doing so. No wonder professors can resonate as monarchs needing diapers; the diarrhoea of their long-winded lectures can be, at times, a fair match for the flow abiding in a royal hall.

Seriously, though, I have had some wonderful professors in classrooms and they have enriched my life. And others who, well, pushed interested students away from disciplines like philosophy or sociology because their dissertations involved soporific delivery, hyperbolic screeds, or both. Dan Denesiuk, a Master's graduate as of last week at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, told me that, in his view "25% didn't add anything beyond slides" to the lectures their students attended in class (Denesiuk, personal communication June 2017). Now, having to be in a certain place at a certain time is domestication enough. But realizing that, instead of sitting in a stuffy classroom you could have observed the very same PowerPoint presentation under the shadiest of trees on the softest of grass has got to take the ice-cream cake. No wonder brick and mortar schooling occurs over winter; it's cold enough outside to make attending indoor classes seem a plausible invitation.

Brick and mortar professors make the classroom their domain, and not always to benefit of students. Some will hand out notes before class while others post the notes online and still others expect students to sit and take notes as the lecture is being given. Having experienced all three methods with success I can say that for me the latter method required the most study after the fact, simply because handwriting takes longer than typing. However, as Denesiuk, notes, there is something especially effective about handwriting when it comes to retaining information. This has been discussed by one of the most prominent philosophers of the 20th Century: Martin Heidegger. Known for a propensity to chase his own tail on subjects such as the nature of our being as humans, Heidegger understood what it is to be enveloped by a subject and feel its percolation by a sort of intellectual osmosis. We just have to be open-minded in a way that suits us. Technology, and as AU students online delivery is the technological essence of our scholastic schemata, is central here. Heidegger wrote that: "when writing was withdrawn from the origin of its essence, ie from the hand, and was transferred to the machine, a transformation occurred in the relation of Being to man...It is no accident that the printing press coincides with the inception of the modern period...In the typewriter we find the irruption of the mechanism in the realm of the word..." (Heidegger, P. 85)

At AU, we benefit from computer technology while still choosing how to absorb the actual material. Intermediary professor egos are absent, such that we can directly touch the topic; there is one less barrier between us and the object of our study. Whether you prefer cutting and pasting from a pdf or writing in the margins of a paper textbook, the relation of hand to material is one we choose for ourselves. Without this direct visceral contact, we aren't reading as actively, and may have to reread or reabsorb material. In this way, taking classroom notes but having to later revisit them, in a sense, reduces us to the level of machines.

As the saying goes, an infinite number of monkeys typing would eventually type the complete works of Shakespeare (Collins, online). Maybe so, but we aren't monkeys, and we deserve better than to be domesticated for some professor's pet project. One great thing about AU is that we aren't reduced to a state of servility. We may miss out on summer fun as we take courses but at least we choose where our scholarly minds are caged.

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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.

In Conversation .. with Neil Cowley

Wanda Waterman



Neil Cowley is a British pianist-composer with a large cult following. He's sometimes described as the "most heard" pianist on the planet right now because of his piano work on Adele's recordings. His own compositions, recorded with the aid of the brilliant Neil Cowley Trio, are milestones of innovation and beauty, his piano style moves effortlessly between jazz and his own more personal musical messages. Cowley's latest album, *Spacebound Apes*, is a musical wonder (see the *Voice* review [here](#)), and forms the soundtrack to his science fiction novel, *Lincoln*.

Cowley met with Wanda Waterman during the Montreal International Jazz Festival to share his views on jazz, current events, the new album, and why he doesn't like working with singers.

You've often said you don't like working with singers. Is the issue musical or personal?

Personal. And I sympathise, really, because they only have one instrument, the voice, and so they need to keep themselves entirely protected. You have to tiptoe around them, and I'm a bit heavy-footed. I have a very low boredom threshold.

There's also a practical reason behind it. I saw Zero 7 create a massive album with *Simple Things*, and they worked with Sia, who's now a megastar, and Sophie and Mozez—all their songs were recorded with these singers. As soon as you do that you create a very short shelf life for yourself; these singers weren't integral to the band, and they had their own careers. So the moment the singers were too busy or too preoccupied with their own bands they couldn't play them live; they were completely at their whim. When I was thinking of creating my next project I thought, "I don't want to be held to ransom by singers and careers."

I wanted it to be about what I do. I wanted to make my instrument the solo instrument. That way I only had to rely on me.

What about Adele? Does she fall into the same category as other singers?

By the time I worked with Adele I was clever enough that I only needed to work on the bare essentials. I also had this band (the Neil Cowley Trio) up and running, and this band has always been my main passion. The amount of time I spent with Adele recording, if you compressed it, it would probably be about three days. Her last album took about three afternoons.

How were you chosen to play for her?

In 2007 I got a phone call from an old friend saying, "We're going into the studio on Monday morning with this girl named Adele. It's her first recording. She has a piano player in her band, but the piano player doesn't think the band is going anywhere so he's decided to keep his job at the supermarket. Would you help out?"

I was doing sessions at the time so I said alright, and they set me up on one side of the studio and her on the other, and we did "Hometown Glory" virtually in one take. I said, "She works at my place and my level!"

Not to be conceited, but as I said I do have a low tolerance for boredom, and I do things very quickly. Adele does things very quickly, too. It was no surprise to me when she did that big *Brit Awards* performance and became a megastar; every take is a one-take with her.

It's a pain in the backside sometimes because every restaurant I walk into now they're playing me, and I hate that, but the perks are great.

Even though you're known as a master of jazz piano, your latest album, *Spacebound Apes*, contains no jazz. Why is that?

On *Spacebound Apes* I was really trying to create a concept album.

My love of jazz comes from things that swing. I listened to Erroll Garner as a kid. I adore playing that stuff and I'm actually good at it, but I no longer do it openly because I don't think it fits with how we're living now. It feels like it comes from an age gone by, and I wish it wasn't. It would be glorious for music to be that happy, but it's just not the zeitgeist of the age now.

I taught myself everything beyond classical music. I'm slightly cockeyed, slightly cack-handed, as my mother would say. I have a very roundabout way of getting to where I want to be, and I waste a lot of energy doing so, but hopefully I come up with something a little different, something authentic— something that's of me.

There's a sadness in *Spacebound Apes*. Is that somehow a response to what's happening in the world now?

I've been musing about that the last few days. Moodwise I'm very fickle. Part of the poignancy comes from the fact that I make my music alone in my room at the end of my garden. I love people, but when I write it comes down to me and the piano, and quite a lot of loneliness.

I don't know if it's age, but things really do feel very stark and bleak right now. It's easy to get bogged down by it.

Wanda also writes the blog The Mindful Bard: [The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self](#).

Women of Interest

May Britt Moser was born January 4, 1963, in Fosnavag, Norway. She is a psychologist and neuroscientist who, along with her then husband, shared half of the 2014 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their work on grid cells and neurons. Being aware of a person's location and the ability to find their way around is vital for both humans and animals. May Britt Moser and Edvard Moser discovered a cell, located in the center of the brain, that is important for determining position and for the encoding of space and for episodic memory. This work provides scientists with the ability to gain new information about the cognitive processes and spatial deficits associated with neurological conditions such as Alzheimer's disease. The Moser's were one of five couples to receive a Nobel Prize. Throughout her career Moser received many honours and awards.

Further information about this accomplished woman may be found at the following websites:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May-Britt_Moser

https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/2014/may-britt-moser-facts.html

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/May-Britt-Moser>

The Creative Spark!

Read Out Loud

Marie Well



"[T]he most productive writers typically write several times a week for one to three hours per session" (Hartley and Braithwaite, 1989; Kellog, 1994 as cited in Sword, 2017).

And I thought it took 10,000 hours to write like a star. Whew.

But how do you write like a hero? Well, write in any way that works for you, says Helen Sword in her heavily researched book *Air & Light & Time & Space: How Successful Academics Write*. Sword topples the rules that say *write every day* and *write first, edit later*. Instead, she says, anything goes—if you get results.

What is my approach to writing? I used to draft outlines, insert citations, and then write. But lately I've procrastinated—infested with doubt and

perfectionism. So, I tried a new approach: lay out a rough sketch and then read aloud to edit.

I repeat, read aloud to edit—alongside a thesaurus, that is.

Many books on writing urge you to read aloud. By doing so, you'll correct mistakes, lack of rhythm, and long clunky lines. You'll make your musings musical. And if you're like me, reading aloud will flip-flop editing into playtime.

But reading aloud might not be your style. Instead, you might edit by reading your writing backwards. Or you might edit by adding imagery tapped from your bio. What's best? Whatever works for you, says Sword.

So, what is your approach to academic writing? Well, authors say keep your sentences short—and lavishly use one-syllable words. But what about academic writers? They get pats and claps from muscling in clauses and ginormous nouns, don't they?

Well, one of my profs mocked the big-word rule. She told me to write simply, clearly. She showed me her writing. I was unimpressed. Not a single Latin word in sight. Not a single word worthy of a head scratch. Only a touch of jargon. So, I chose not to heed her advice. She's now Dean. And me? Well, I had a contract to teach at the McDonald's of colleges. One with unhealthy dough and a smorgasbord of turnovers.

Helen Sword talks about ways to write in her book *Air & Light & Time & Space: How Successful Academics Write*. She crafts a new paradigm for writers, while sharing her own story.

-
- Helen Sword says she writes 100 words per hour. (I write 100 words per hour, but when I tweak writing, I take up to two hours. It takes me five hours to write an article, and another five to research it.)
 - Make your writing more than essays; make it fun. Yet, bear in mind that even prolific writers struggle with the craft.
 - Boice did an experimental study (as cited in Sword). His first experimental group wrote in large, steady chunks at a time. His second experimental group wrote in 30-minute stints daily, logging results. His last experimental group wrote in 30-minute stints daily, but with Boice checking on progress twice weekly. The results? The last group output 2X the writing of his second group and 9X the writing of his first group.
 - Stephen King writes four-to-five-hour daily marathons.
 - Helen writes a daily paragraph before breakfast. She says these paragraphs add up.
 - Why write daily? Less procrastination, less fear, more new ideas, fresher recall, clearer thinking. Plus, 300 daily words adds up to 6,000-word articles each month. Anyone up for the role of Dean? But many Deans write less than daily.
 - Only 12% of Helen's highly accomplished writers wrote daily: 7/8 don't. Daily writing isn't "a clear predictor of productivity" (p. 15).
 - Write at any time of day you desire and any spot you prefer. Now, night owls no longer need to feel shame. If you write best at 3 a.m., more power to you. Certain profs scribble at 3 a.m., too.
 - If you wish, write only during summer months or in fifteen-minute daily stints. Do whatever works.
 - Find a spot to write, say a coffee shop. If you visit that spot often, then it's easier to write in other places with at least one thing in common. For instance, if you write in coffee shops playing jazz music, you'd likely write well in motels playing jazz music.
 - Try writing at times you wouldn't normally. By doing so, you may crack open precious minutes of productivity.

In prior articles, I argued for fifteen-minute cleaning and study stints. But Sword shares a new paradigm: do whatever works. A paradox? I call it a creative spark!

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Scholarship of Academic Excellence

Sponsored by: Monica's Health Magazine

Deadline: August 30, 2017

Potential payout: \$2500 USD

Eligibility restriction: Open to students worldwide. Applicants must be enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program at an accredited university or college. See Application and Award Eligibility section for full eligibility criteria.

What's required: An online application form, along with a 2000- to 2500- word essay outlining the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

Tips: Spelling counts! Essays with errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation will be deemed ineligible.

Where to get info: www.monicashealthmag.com/scholarship/



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

Following What's Hot around AU's Social Media Sites.

AthaU Facebook Group

Manuela talks about her first ProctorU exam and notes that the no washroom rule had her dancing on her seat, and not from joy. The conversation ranged from how the exams could be made better, to AU's credibility, and even to their accommodation for third world countries where internet is not as responsive, especially for online quizzes.

Heidi shared a link about AU's response to the wild-fires, which started some conversation from students dealing with the effects of it and realizing they were near neighbours, as well as comments from those who had experienced other fires.

Also, questions about psychology courses, jobs in health without a degree, moving from AU to a Bachelor's of Education, WGST310, FREN375, and PHIL367

reddit

jacxy asks if anybody's used AU's Virtual Office Hours at <https://athabascau.adobeconnect.com/virtualoffice>

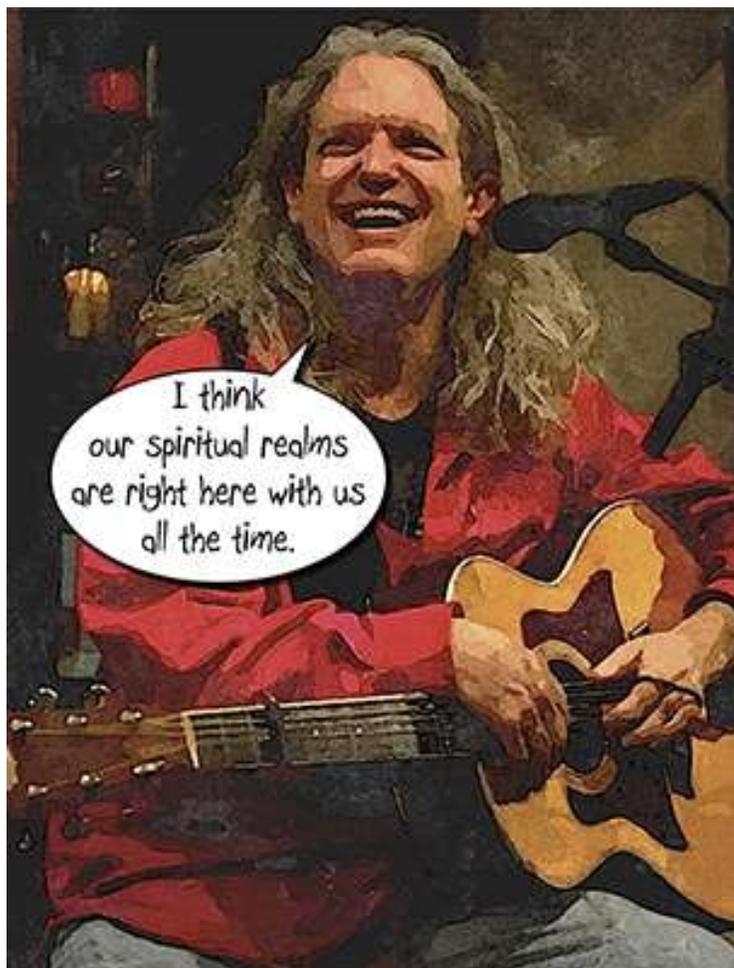
Twitter

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: The @AthabascaU Library has a scheduled outage for RefWorks and ProQuest databases on July 29 from 1pm - 10pm MT. FYI!

@AthabascaU tweets: "Note to students living in proximity to B.C. wildfires: AU has a disaster contingency plan. Full statement here: <http://ow.ly/M0Ej30dxzhU>"

All the Music Be Happenin' Now Life in the Time of Terror

Wanda Waterman



*I try not to use a word like 'wrong,'
But I carry a torch.
It burns my hand.
I'd like to lay it down
In the Promised Land.*
—Sam Baker in his song "Angel Hair"

The first 20 years of the new millennium have witnessed 9/11, the Istanbul explosions of 2003, the New Delhi and London bombings of 2005, and other attacks in Norway, Moscow, Madrid, Mumbai, not to mention many smaller attacks worldwide, carried out by a range of terrorist groups with different stated motives but sharing the goal of confusing and crushing the enemy's spirit by force, without negotiation or compromise.

Despite the fact that terrorism has proven itself futile in the pursuit of political goals, marginalised young people the world over are still being persuaded to sacrifice their lives to kill and destroy in the name of religious dogma, nationalism, and ideology. Terrorists are the new barbarian invaders, and the whole world has become a Rome in decline.

What does all this have to do with music? To start, the elements that have completely changed the making and experience of music in our time (i.e. the giant leaps of digital technology) are the same elements that have changed the nature of terrorism, making recruitment and logistics easier, faster, and cheaper, and the experience more immediate, universal, and lasting.

According to Ian Johnson's, *A Mosque in Munich: Nazis, the CIA, and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in the West*, the Holocaust and Cold War puppet-masters didn't retire with the Allied victory: their legacy lived on in a series of little known political strategies resulting in today's international terrorist groups using the same weapons, training methods, tactics, and even aggression-inducing drugs that the Nazis, Stalinists, and the CIA used to train their predecessors in the service of their own attempts at global dominance. And just as their Nazi, Stalinist, and CIA trainers before them, the new terrorists regard their followers as just so much cannon fodder.

Digital technology and the Internet have also rendered the *experience* of terror more effective and permanent. Not only do we live in fear of unwanted surprises, when the nightmares arrive we can then watch them again and again on YouTube, to the detriment of collective mental health. Despite advances in technology and reams of research suggesting that trauma must be treated immediately, psychological services the world over have woefully failed to step up to the bat.

How might musical artists help us heal and get back to the garden, if in fact we'll find a garden in the end? It's complicated, which is why we're looking at the story of one who survived a terror attack, emerging with an awakened sense of what really matters.

Sam Baker is a singer-songwriter whose perspective changed while recovering from a bombing by Peru's Shining Path, a militant communist group. Carrying in his body the wounds of a country long at war with the unknown, Baker's terrible suffering had the effect of deeply connecting him with humanity.

He's not the first American terror survivor, but he's certainly one of the most eloquent, his slow recovery coinciding with the burgeoning of a compassion that informed his songwriting. Though rightfully hurt and angry, Baker moves past blame and bitterness to envisage a world wherein we awaken from the collective nightmare to accept and love each other in all our beauty and baseness.

In an [interview](#) with Dan Forte for *Wood and Steel Magazine* Baker described what it was like being close to death for weeks, unable to move: "It was an interesting time. Very introspective. The only thing that came in loud enough to really get through that haze or fog or internal trauma I was dealing with was the raw suffering of others."

Sam's spiritual focus suggests one of the most prominent but hard to realise teachings of Zen Buddhism—the importance of living in the now. As he said in the [Voice](#) interview:

"What if everything is perfect right now? By perfect I mean whole and complete, all you need available to you at this very moment. It doesn't mean you're not responsible for making things better. We should all be more responsible and more compassionate, but what if it's you in the face of God this second? You can then get outside of yourself. This whole thing where you and I are separate and look at ourselves as if we were players on a football field—we can get past that.

"God is in every face we meet, and not just in every face—in every plank of cedar that's tacked onto the outside of our houses, in the rosemary that grows in the yard. The question then becomes: *How can I learn not to turn away?*

"What I saw in that terrible thing in South America is that we're all essentially connected. There's an attitude that says, 'I'll wear this red hat or this white hat and because of that I have something that gives me access to a different spiritual realm.' I think our spiritual realms are right here with us all the time."

His songs, slow, tender, minimalist, and reverent, manifest a grittily beatific vision of the saints and sinners of Texas, a rich microcosm of the world at large. The cryptic lyrics are set to music so evocative of the open prairie that you can almost smell the sagebrush.

Yes, Sam Baker was a milestone in my career as a professional listener. But the subject of senseless violence wasn't done with me. An online encounter with Kurdish oud-player Mustapha Mallabozan at the start of the Syrian Civil War opened my eyes to a truth almost too frightening to acknowledge.

Wanda also writes the blog [The Mindful Bard: The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self](#).



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Bottling the Tension

Dear Barb:

We have some friends that we hang out with occasionally and lately I've noticed some tension between them. When we get together we often go to an event and have some drinks. The last couple of times we went out I've noticed that Brig seems to be monitoring how much alcohol Cindy is consuming. When I ask Cindy if she would like a glass a wine, Brig answers for her, and often says she will have just a little bit. Meanwhile Cindy says sure I'll have a glass. I ignore Brig's comments, as I feel Cindy is an adult and she can answer for herself.

I don't think Brig likes that and it is creating tension between us. As the evening progresses and Cindy drinks more it becomes obvious that Brig is annoyed with her. I must admit she does seem to be drinking more lately, she had some traumatic stuff happen recently though. I don't find Cindy confrontational or argumentative when she drinks, but more talkative and a little rougher around the edges than when she is not drinking. So her personality does change a bit. My husband and I really like them as a couple but we don't like this tension developing between us. What is the right thing to do, should I do what Brig wants or what Cindy wants? Help, Carla.

Hey Carla:

You say your friend has gone through a difficult time, perhaps this is just a temporary situation, however alcohol is not a healthy way to cope. I don't think you should do what your friend's partner wants you to do, but you also have to be responsible. If your friend becomes belligerent or is causing problems, or is attempting to drive, then you need to say no to the alcohol when they are at your home. I don't see any evidence of that in your letter. Possibly this bad behaviour begins when they leave your home and Brig is trying to prevent this before it begins. You could go out for coffee with Cindy and discuss the situation as you don't want to have this discussion where alcohol is available. She may agree that she is drinking too much and that Brig is only being helpful. If that is the case, then you know what to do. If she says he is trying to be controlling and she doesn't appreciate it, and doesn't feel there is an issue with alcohol, then you need to make a judgement call and decide what you want to do. Perhaps you could do some activities with them that don't involve alcohol and you can determine if there is a problem within the relationship. If the tension between them only occurs around alcohol then there very well may be an alcohol problem. Ultimately the problem is with the other couple and they have to work it out, so possibly step back from the relationship a bit and see what happens. Thanks for writing Carla.

Follow Barb on twitter @BarbGod

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IMPORTANT DATES

- **Jul 14:** [August degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Jul 31:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Sept](#)
- **Aug 8:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Aug 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Sept 1](#)
- **Aug 15:** [September degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Aug 31:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Oct](#)
- **Sep 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Aug 1](#)

B.C. Wildfires Contingencies

Our hearts go out to all those students who are affected by the wildfires blazing in British Columbia.

For any AU students who have been evacuated from their homes, AU is offering:

- Free course extensions
- Free exam rebooking
- Replacement course materials
- Free late course withdrawals.

Find out more information about this on the AU website [here](#) or call them at 1-800-788-9041.

Financial Aid?

AU offers a [Natural Disaster Bursary](#) to assist students affected so they can continue their studies uninterrupted.

AUSU offers an [Emergency Bursary](#) to help pay for course extensions and supplemental exams for students in need.

Need someone to talk to?

AUSU's free [Student Lifeline](#) service is there to help any members in need. This includes 24/7 support, free short-term counselling, community resources, and many other resources to assist you.

Call 1-877-418-1537 to talk to someone anytime.



AUSU Forums

Want to help launch a thriving new AU student community? AUSU recently launched new online forums, and we need members like you to help it thrive! Register today and start chatting!

The forums are on the AUSU website [here](#).



AU Quick Links

Ever have trouble navigating AU's website? AUSU had an AU Quick Links page with easy to access links to important services and resources available to students.

Check out our AU Quick Links online [here](#).

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