

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 25 Issue 31 2017-08-11

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Breaking Trail

The path to a career may not be marked

Mi CASA es su CASA

The who's who in CASA

Plus:

*What is Your Education Worth?
The Not-So Starving Student
and much more!*



CONTENTS

The Voice's interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

Minds We Meet: *Dani Paulich, Motivated by Wine* 4

Articles

Editorial: *Look it Up* 3
 Mi CASA es su CASA: *Part II* 5
 On Target: *Enrolling in my Final Course* 7
 Break Trail..... 12
 All the Music be Happenin' Now: *The Kurd's Tale* 20

Columns

The Fit Student: *Poor, Poor Rich*..... 8
 The Not-So-Starving Student: *Rewind – Taste of Edmonton* 13
 Fly on the Wall: *What is Your Education Worth?* 15
 The Creative Spark: *Now Where Did I Put my Memory?* 18
 From Where I Sit: *Sad and Troubling* 22
 Dear Barb: *Gifting Honesty*..... 23

News and Events

Canadian Education News 10
 Women of Interest 14
 AU-Thentic Events 17
 Scholarship of the Week..... 21
 Student Sizzle..... 24
 AUSU Update 26

Graphic

Politically Bereft: *Pro-Life*. 25

The Voice Magazine

www.voicemagazine.org
301 Energy Square
10109 – 106 ST NW
Edmonton AB
T5J 3L7

Email
voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher

AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief

Jodi Campbell

Managing Editor

Karl Low

Regular Contributors

Hazel Anaka, Barb Godin,
Carla Knipe, Scott Jacobsen,
Barbara Lehtiniemi, Deanna
Roney, Wanda Waterman,
Xin Xu

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

The Voice is published almost every Friday in HTML and PDF format.

For weekly email reminders as each issue is posted, fill out the subscription form [here](#).

The Voice does not share its subscriber list with anyone. Even I don't look at it, it's all on auto.

© 2017 by *The Voice Magazine*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.

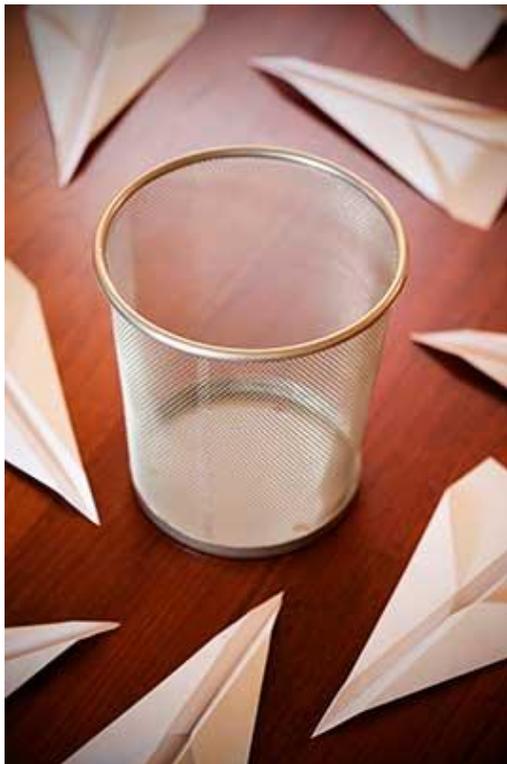
Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?

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

EDITORIAL

Look it Up

Karl Low



Remember when you were told not to make a face or it would stay like that permanently? Given the nature of the internet, that saying may have more truth than most people realize—especially if some friend happens to snap a picture of you while you're making that face. The notion that what's on the internet is permanent is starting to affect our society in profound, and sometimes opposing, ways.

One the one hand it can be hard to disassociate yourself from something that happened in your past, even if it wasn't your doing, such as false accusations of a crime. Being exonerated these days is no guarantee that a potential employer won't find the story of the exoneration but not the proof of your eventual innocence, and getting the false story removed can be difficult. Even if you're the victim of a crime, as one company here in Canada was when one of its former distributors started manufacturing and selling its product under their own branding. The offending company has been ordered to stop, but simply moved out of the country and the internet makes it simple for people to continue purchasing their products, even here in Canada.

On the other hand, sometimes information that we think will reliably be available is not. Recently, the government of India started blocking users from accessing certain government sites in the Internet Archive, (The Wayback Machine, as it's more commonly known). No information

as to why has been given, but in these days of fake news, the notion that a government could simply declare certain pieces of historical public information to be inaccessible is disturbing. The idea that we bear responsibility for the words we say and ideas we put forward falls apart if we cannot rely on being able to access what those words were.

Scientists dealt with this with the election of Mr. Trump, with many being concerned that government data, particularly with regard to climate measurements, would be dumped and it created an international effort to back-up and save all the data that was available. Fortunately, this time, we had some warning. And these types of things happen in Canada as well. It is almost standard procedure now that the moment a political campaign is complete, the campaign documents, the promises the politician made, are all whisked away from public view.

But why is any of this a big deal? After all, it wasn't so long ago that there wasn't an internet to speak of. Nobody could look up anything on a website then, and we seemed to get along just fine. However, the internet has changed that too. The ease of publishing means its incredibly easy for false information to be propagated. This in turn means that unless we can find the information from the original source, we can't trust it. Before, pushing false information was hard. It had to go through the gatekeepers of the media or academia, who knew that they were all competing to provide the most valuable information since they all had limited space and opportunity to present information to us. That's changed. With limitless electronic space, and 24 hour a day access to us, whether through television or the internet, the value of the message isn't as important as simply ensuring we engage with the message. We no longer need to know. We can just look it up. But that's a dangerous place to be when you realize that what we look up can be controlled by people and companies who have no idea who we are.

Luckily for you, here at The Voice Magazine, we do care, which is why things like this week's interview with grad student Dani Paulich, the second part of our look at what AUSU's involvement with CASA brings us, or Jason Sullivan's exploration of the value of an AU education (with an image for essay writing you might never forget), are all archived on our site. (Okay, maybe that segue was a bit forced. At least I tried.) Enjoy the read!

MINDS WE MEET



Dani (Daniella) Paulich is a born and raised Calgarian pursuing her Masters of Counselling with a Specialization in Art Therapy through AU. She started her undergrad at 17 years of age completing a BA in Psychology with a minor in Drama at St. Mary's University in Calgary. She is passionate about understanding children and adults with disabilities. Although she is aware one of the top reasons people visit Calgary is for the Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth, she suggests that winter is also a great time for tourists with outdoor skating and the mountains a quick trip away.

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

I've had some pretty amazing teachers over the years such as Mrs. Lake in grade one, Mrs. Rauch in grade seven and Mr. P who taught me drama in high school. I would also say my mom as she has always encouraged me to explore my options and interests. Plus, I think I've always just liked learning and have had the drive myself.

What parts do you like about online learning?

I really like the freedom to be able to create my own schedule and work when I want to. I also like that the assignments are so clearly laid out. My classmates are surprisingly supportive as well, and most of the professors

are great. When I've had issues with profs, I have learned how to appropriately advocate for myself which is a great skill to learn.

What do you dislike about online learning?

Sometimes I miss the in-class aspect, and socializing -- the in-person connection. But, overall, I really like it.

How do you motivate yourself when it comes to studying?

Wine! -- Just kidding (kind of). I just remember what I want to accomplish in my future and I know that I need to get things done. Again, I think that a huge part of it is that I really just like learning!

What has been your favourite or most memorable AU course?

Summer Institute (a three-week in-person intensive course focus on counselling skills) for sure as it was so incredibly fun. Dr. Rob and Katherine were *amazing*. My classmates were great. The whole experience was incredible. I'm also really excited for Art Therapy Institute in a couple weeks.

What do you like to snack on while studying?

Also wine (just kidding, kind of...again). Apples with peanut butter, popcorn or chocolate covered almonds.

What non-AU assigned book are you currently reading?

"The Single Girl's To Do List" by Lindsey Kelk, I think—I bought a bunch of fun romantic comedy type books. I will read anything by Jodi Picoult. I also love funny books, or books related to autism and other disorders, especially biographies, autobiographies, or books that tell a story, while showing the reality of the disabilities. Awareness is key

What is an item on your bucket list?

I want to travel more. Thailand and Croatia are top of my list. Thailand because it's beautiful. Croatia so I can visit my homeland for the first time. Also to open my own art therapy studio one day. Kids with disabilities need a safe and open place to create.

If you won the lottery, but could only buy items that began with the first letter of your name, what would you purchase?

My Dream home (loophole? Ha-ha), Dogs, Diamonds and Donuts (a girl's gotta eat!)

What is your mantra in life?

Do the best you can do under the circumstances! I learned about it in university and I think it always reminds me that life happens and I'm not perfect, so as long as I do my best in the moment, I'm happy.

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.

**Mi CASA es su CASA, Part II****Scott Jacobsen**

Lindsay Boyd
Communications Officer of CASA

Lindsay Boyd is the Canadian Alliance of Student Association (CASA)'s Communications and Public Relations Officer, who recently took some time to be interviewed by Voice writer, Scott Jacobsen, about her role with CASA and where she thinks it's heading in the future.

How did you become involved with CASA?

Going into the job, I didn't know all that much about CASA. I had just graduated and come back from my exchange in Australia, and was looking for my first real job. I came across a job posting for a Communications and Public Relations Officer for CASA online, and the position requirements were things I had a lot of experience with through my studies and past internships. So, I applied, went to the interview, and got the job!

What tasks and responsibilities come with your position as the Communications and the Public Relations Officer?

As the communications person, it's my job to be the custodian of CASA's brand and to ensure that what the organization is doing is

communicated to students, government decision-makers, and the public at large. CASA is doing some really important work for students, but if no one knows what we're doing and what we stand for, our efforts will be much less effective than they are now. I'm also responsible for making sure communication flows smoothly between all the internal layers of the organization, which, because of the geographical distance, can sometimes be a feat in itself.

On a daily basis, I am responsible for maintaining a consistent social media presence, updating the website, writing press releases, sending email updates to members, and copyediting documents, to name a few things. In each of these tasks, I make sure information is easy to read and understand. I also work alongside a translator and a graphic designer to create different products, i.e. bilingual policy papers, promotional materials, and infographics. Additionally, I provide support and guidance to CASA's Member Relations Committee, which is tasked with improving both the internal "CASA experience" as well as many external communications and recruitment efforts.

What have been some of the bigger policy and federal level advocacy wins through CASA for its membership?

One of CASA's greatest wins for students was in Budget 2016 when Canada Student Grants were increased by 50% for low-income, middle-income, and part-time students. This means eligible students now receive 50% more grant funding than before, and the best part is that, unlike loans, that money doesn't ever need to be repaid to the government.

Another notable win that CASA advocated on in support of other prominent organizations (like the Assembly of First Nations) was the \$90 million federal investment into the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, or PSSSP, announced in the last federal budget. This program is how government provides funding for First Nations and Inuit individuals who want to attend post-secondary. This investment was much needed, since the program had previously been subject to a 2% funding cap and had been unable to keep up with the rapidly growing population of First Nations and Inuit youth seeking a higher education.

Why is CASA important?

I think CASA is important because it's an organization that stands up for the best interests of post-secondary students in Canada, a group that doesn't often have the time or resources to advocate for themselves. We are really an organization that takes a grassroots approach, meaning that our policy and advocacy positions come directly from our members and the students they represent. We are also an organization that has built a positive reputation over the past 22 years, and is recognized and highly regarded among government officials. This means that students who take meetings under CASA's name are taken very seriously when on the Hill and when advocating to their own Member of Parliament.

What seem like the more important objectives according to the CASA membership this year?

The membership has identified a few priorities to focus on this year. Those include helping international students, improving the health and wellness of students (which we've seen addressed a lot more in the media and on campuses recently), improving the accessibility and affordability of educational materials like textbooks (including the fight to protect fair dealing for the purposes of education in the upcoming review of the Copyright Act), and reducing the financial barriers to post-secondary education. The membership has also prioritized looking at Indigenous student issues, so we will be undergoing a review process to better gauge what policies would be appreciated by and needed by those groups.

What has been a highlight experience for you?

I think one of the highlights for me, professionally, was seeing the direct results of our advocacy in the federal government's 2017 budget. Shortly after being hired, I was thrown into CASA's most intensive conference of the year, Advocacy Week. At this conference, student leaders travel to Ottawa and speak directly with MPs, senators, and other federal decision-makers about issues affecting students. Staff participate too, so being new to the job and the whole advocacy thing made it a very intense week! When the budget was released later in March, it felt great to see all that hard work pay off with investments made in a number of areas we had identified.

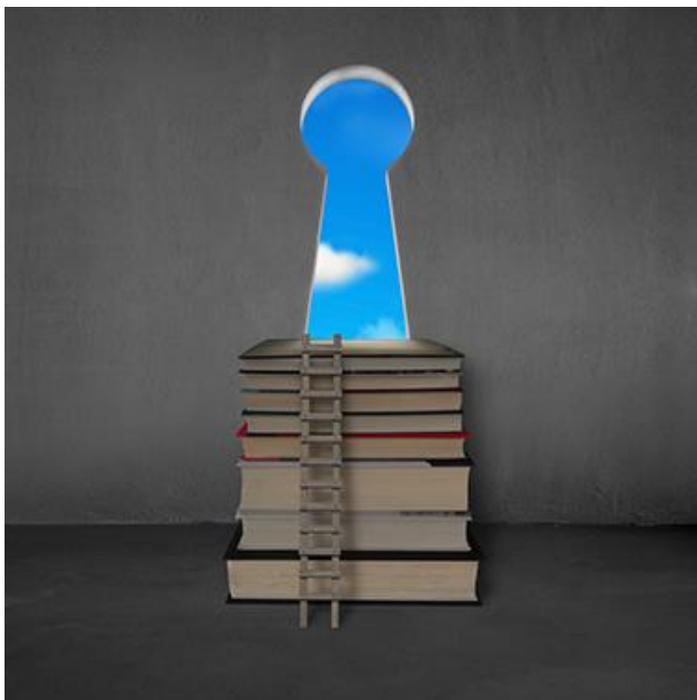
On a more personal side, I greatly enjoyed meeting different student leaders from across the country. Everyone is so interesting and different, but share a common passion for helping students on their campuses. It's inspiring to see, and if I ever went back to school, I would seriously consider running for a position like that.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen is the AUSU VPFA. He works with various organizations, and runs In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal, and In-Sight Publishing.



On Target: Enrolling in my Final Course

Barabara Lehtiniemi



This month, almost five years after beginning my first course at AU, I enrolled in my final three courses. Now, three boxes of AU course materials are on their way to me. There's no backing out now. I'm on target to graduate in 2018.

Selecting and enrolling in my final few courses was exciting to contemplate, but nerve-wracking to accomplish. Out of all the courses I could choose to complete my degree, was I really sure that these were the three I should take? I thought I was certain about my choices—I had decided on these courses months ago—but ended up waffling at the end. I changed my mind on one course, choosing another from the same field of study. I flip-flopped a few times on another, but ended up going with my first choice. Only one course was I firm on, if for no other reason than the number of prerequisites I'd had to fulfill to take it.

As with previous courses, I've staggered the start dates: September, October, and November 1. To avoid a time crunch in April, I made sure my final course—ending April 30—is exam-free.

These three courses will join two already in progress, one of which is finished next month, the other—a 6-credit course—continues to April 30. For several months this winter, I'll be working on four courses at the same time—something I've never attempted before. If all goes to plan, by April 2018 I'll be finishing up my very last AU course.

I chose to complete the enrolment for all three courses at once for several reasons. First, I wanted a chance to examine the course materials before the start dates. That gives me the opportunity to withdraw, if necessary, and re-enrol in another course without losing precious time. Second, I wanted to run my course selections by AU's Advising Services, to ensure that, after completing these final courses, I will have fulfilled the requirements of my degree. And finally, I wanted to make sure I enrolled before the pending increase to out-of-province tuition (which I later learned might not take place until 2018.)

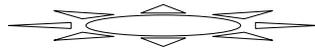
I thought I would feel some frisson of excitement enrolling in my final course, but the event was rather mundane. Just one of many steps on the way to completing my degree. Along the way, there will be a last of many things, including a last exam and a last essay.

While I wait for those milestones, I'm still trying to enjoy the journey. With the end in sight, I find myself slipping into impatience. Instead of savouring the thrill of learning, I find myself rushing to get through it so I can get the damned degree already.

On some days, I wish I'd kept to my original plan to graduate in 2019. On other days, I'm eager to be finished in 2018 so I can move on to the next stage—whatever that turns out to be.

In the meantime, I'm marking off the milestones and staying on target for Grad 2018.

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



The Fit Student Poor, Poor Rich

Marie Well



Would your heart bleed if Bill Gate's riches caused him agony? If Hugh Hefner had had just about enough with women? If Jeff Bezos got sick of books?

I got it wrong. In my last article, I listed the pluses of poverty. I said a lack of cash shrunk belly fat and upped desire. I said the wealthy climax into doldrums. In other words, I shared the view of classic under earners: wealth is wicked.

My poor woman's mindset since got jolted. How? I read Barbara Stanny's book *Secrets of Six-Figure Women*. Not a size six figure from too little cash stashed for dining out. Nor the alphabet-size figure from eating Mom's cake-fed free-range pig. Instead, Stanny's six-figures signify your someday salary.

You can earn six figures, whether you're a social assistance heir, a wheelchair rider, an ESL star, a single pop, a locked-up senior, or a Starbucks Barista. Set aside excuses, and act.

Today, my boyfriend and I watched a fellow with wild hair and a frumpy suit enter an elevator. My boyfriend stated the guy looked like he came straight from a shower. We parted ways, but not before eyeing him rev his sports car. So, no excuses. That guy's appearance doesn't hold him back; neither should yours.

Have you been duped to believe your top dollar is less than oodles? Barbara Stanny lists traits of underearners in her book *Secrets of Six-Figure Women: Surprising Strategies to Up Your Earnings and Change Your Life*. Her comments below appear in bold and rich italics; mine in hard-up plain font.

Underearners are fine with meager salaries. Stay clear of jobs that pay poorly: teaching, clerical, and nursing fields. Instead, apply for jobs with opportunities for raises and promotions.

But what if you're competing in a bust economy like Alberta's? Well, support a pro-business government and apply for 6-figure jobs once the economy revs.

Underearners don't put a high-price on their worth. Don't dupe yourself to believe you're not worthy of six-figures. (Minorities often lower their wage ideals. Starving students do, too.)

I fear my looks lower my value. My face is bare and my gray roots sparkle. Surely, we don't have to look like Margaret Thatcher to earn six figures. But good hygiene, manners, and a smile can up your dough.

My rich brother says appearance is everything. He wears imported silk suits. Yet, he cuts his own hair. And many of the suits downtown have bellies and bald scalps. They make six figures. Why not you?

The best solution for upping the looks? Go hard in gyms—and lounge in steam rooms.

Underearners volunteer services for work in the private sector. Don't do services pro bono because you're too humble to charge. Ask for a decent wage. Value your skills.

At a college, I watched a job interviewee state a salary range that started at minimum wage. He got what he asked for—minimum wage. The college toyed with him for a few months and then fired him. The moral? Value your work because others may not.

Underearners sabotage their work. Don't set yourself up for failure by job-hopping, by starting spats with coworkers, or by applying for roles you're unqualified to tackle.

I set myself up for failure. I prepped for a social media position by reading *Facebook for Seniors*. My first day of work? I fumbled to figure out how to fire off a Facebook message.

Yet, overreaching held benefits. I learned at hyper speed on the job. After the stint, I studied social media hard. Within six months, interviewees called my social media skills "impressive." But most of all, I discovered my passion.

My advice? Don't set yourself up for failure, but do push your potential.

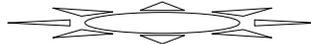
Underearners get buried with debt. Don't borrow just to get by. Don't barter either. Instead, earn cash and avoid debt.

When my molar broke, I pulled out Visa. When I needed business suits, I pulled out Visa. My debt rose, along with my stress.

Did I really need a new molar? Many cultures have high rates of missing molars. Plenty of six-figure earners lack more than a molar. So, tuck away that Visa.

Let's take that further. Did I even need a degree? Many six figure earners have high school or less. Some climb upwards for years within stable companies. Some set high standards and luck out in the first year. Some start businesses that wind up worth millions. No limitation can hold you back.

So, what do six-figure salaries reduce to? Having a goal. You may lack the education, the looks, the lineage, but with a goal, you've got the shot at six figures.



Canadian Education News

Scott Jacobsen



Government of Canada Supports First Nations students

A press release was published reporting on the support from the government of Canada for access to education for First Nations students. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, made an announcement of a total of \$5 million to assistance First Nations learners.

The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) will be given \$2 million via the Canada Post-Secondary Partnerships Program for two years (\$2 million per year, starting 2017-18). Also, the First Nations University of Canada will develop the National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education with the other \$3

million.

"This initiative marks the first step in the Government of Canada's Comprehensive Review of Post-Secondary Education, undertaken in collaboration with Indigenous partners," the press release said, "This review will ensure that the current federal programs supporting Indigenous students' pursuit of post-secondary education, meet their actual needs in supporting attendance and completion of their chosen degree."

Global Education Survey on Canadian Students

According to a recent press release, the Canadian students most probable to self-fund use the education savings plan. In Canada, 76% of parents assist with funding their child's education. However, across the globe, the average is 87% of students are assisted financially by their parents for post-secondary education.

Also, Canadian students are the most likely to "fund their own education goals (42% vs. global average: 15%)." The data comes from the HSBC *The Value of Education: Higher and Higher* study. 8,400 parents and 15 countries and territories worldwide were included in this survey.

Executive Vice President and Head of Retail banking and Wealth Management, Larry Tomei, said, "The good news is that Canadians take a proactive approach to financing their child's education...Taking advantage of

registered education savings programs, or scholarships and bursaries is key, however, there is still opportunity to do even more."

Physician Education Program Announced for Prevention for Suicide

"The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC), the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP) and mdBriefCase Group, are pleased to announce a new physician education program designed to support Canadian healthcare professionals in the prevention of suicide," according to a recent [press release](#).

A one-hour program called [Suicide: Facing the difficult topic together – Empowering physicians, instilling hope in patients](#) was published through a multi-disciplinary faculty. Suicide is a "major public health issue," according to Louise Bradley, the President and CEO of the MHCC.

Suicide cases, based on research, often had contact with a healthcare provider. The Executive Director of CASP, said, "It is essential that professionals become pro-active in opening the conversation around suicide to help the people be more comfortable to share those overwhelming feelings and get help as early as possible."

An educational course or module was released and be viewed [here](#). Some [facts](#) about suicide:

- *Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in Canada.*
- *Among Canadians aged 10-24, suicide is the second leading cause of death.*
- *Many of those who die by suicide had a diagnosable psychiatric illness.*
- *Populations at an increased risk of suicide include: many Indigenous communities, youth, the elderly, inmates in correctional facilities, people with a mental illness and those who have experienced a previous suicide attempt.*
- *First Nations youth die by suicide about 5-6 times more often than non-Indigenous youth.*
- *Suicide rates for Inuit are among the highest in the world (11 times the national average).*

Strong Competition Between Post-Secondary Graduates

According to [The Globe and Mail](#), "We are living in an employer's market. New university and college graduates are in strong competition with one another as they enter the job market. Enrolment numbers at Canada's postsecondary institutions are rising..."

Canadian student post-secondary enrollments were at 800,000 in 1980. As of 2015, they were over two million. The needs of the job market are shifting. The number of students enrolled now "presents a considerable, often daunting challenge to organizational recruitment."

Senior-level representatives of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce held a panel entitled "Skills for an Automated Future." The results of the panel, according to the author of the article, show the need for training of "highly skilled employees of tomorrow and retain top-tier talent."

Some strategies were suggested: increase opportunities for students, start a mentorship or coaching program, commit to digital literacy, allow employees to grow, and demonstrate engagement in community.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen is the AUSU VPFA. He works with various organizations, and runs In-Sight: Independent Interview-Based Journal, and In-Sight Publishing.

Break Trail

Deanna Roney



In some career fields, there is a specific trail you need to follow to get to your end goal. If you complete A, B, and C (in that order), and do them well, you are able to climb up the career ladder. Other careers do not have a well-trodden path. Sometimes it's like you're standing in the middle of the forest: a tangle of alder brush surrounding you and no clear, nor easy, path to be seen. In these cases, you just have a compass bearing, an end goal, and you have to figure out how to get there with nothing more than that. Everyone, it seems, takes a different route and there isn't really one that is common, at least not that is talked about, or, to continue the analogy, flagged.

I just completed my first internship with a literary agent and fell in love with the work. It answered the question I asked myself in one of my courses: I love evaluating and critiquing creative writing, but I can't make a job of that, can I? Turns out, yes. But the how isn't as clear. It turns out the path to being a literary agent is largely unmarked. Agents land in their jobs through a variety of means—everyone taking a path that is specific to them. Some came through publishing, others made the move from a law career. The journey is dependant on your unique situation and skills. If you're lost in the bush with nothing but a compass reading and a machete you can carve your own trail, but, if along that bearing you come across a lake and cannot swim, you have to go around, while someone who is a strong swimmer may decide to just swim the lake.

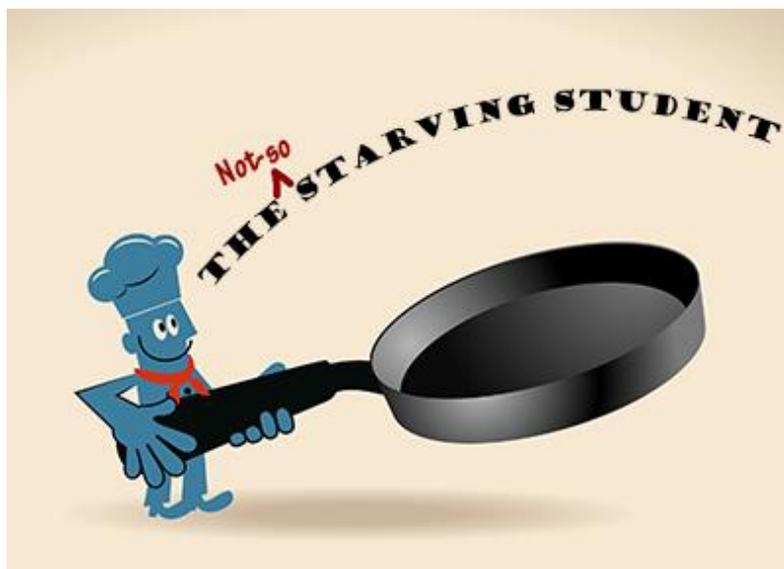
It is important to watch for signs when you're making your own path, you don't want to take on an internship with anyone who offers. Just like you don't want to swim across a leech-infested lake, or continue down a game trail that is littered with grizzly sign. While maintaining your bearings you need to ask questions of those offering the positions and keep yourself safe. Ask reputable people within the industry for help. In my search for a new internship, I used the resources of the last agent I worked with. I'm not shy about asking after an agency's reputation if I can't find the information I need through my own research. It's important to ask questions and ask for help. Of course, not everyone will be receptive to the questions, and if they aren't, say "thank you" and move on. Always remember that anything you ask in a public forum is, well, public. Consider your online presence a part of your application, both now and in the future. Because professionals will look you up. With many of the internship applications, they ask specifically for social media handles.

The path to the career you want won't always be clear, but there are resources out there to help you if you look hard enough and if you are stubborn enough to stick with it. Keep swinging that machete and breaking your own trail, and what might feel impossible isn't (generally). You can get there as long as you have an idea of where there is. Don't lose sight of the end goal and use everything you can. So while I hit my refresh button on my email, waiting to hear on the second phase of an application, keep looking, keep working, and don't let yourself stall. You won't get out of the alder brush by standing still.

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

Rewind: Taste of Edmonton

Xin Xu



Edmonton recently hosted its annual local food festival this past week. As an adventurous gourmand, I toured the outdoor festival on three separate occasions. On certain days even braving an unpredictable forecast to sample freshly-prepared local fare offered by food trucks and restaurants. Here are some of my personal favorites from the week, along with tips to make the most of your summer food festival experience.

Browse before you settle

Arriving at the Edmonton downtown core the first day of the festival, the outdoor tents were jampacked with fellow gastronomes. With the large gathering and lineups, I was able to venture completely through the enclosure while scouting out potential targets. At the end of the walkthrough, I found the Canadian Dairy farmers tent offering sampling of grilled cheese - something I would have missed had I started nibbling on the first sandwich that caught my eye.



Buy your tickets beforehand

Tired of having to replenish your tickets in the midst of a large crowd? Many outdoor events have pre-sales where you can save yourself the lineup and frustration. For me, I purchased my tickets a week in advance saving me some extra cash to spend on quality grub.

Dare to be adventurous

At large-scale events such as local food festivals, there's bound to be fast-food chains, familiar logos, and stereotypical comfort food. While ordering BLT or ginger beef might satisfy your cravings, challenge yourself to sample the unfamiliar. Food festivals showcase restaurants and food trucks you may have never heard about which means there're plenty of opportunities to expand your dining experience. For me, I found a Caribbean vendor selling delicious Jamaican jerk chicken on rice.





Stay hydrated

The downside of savory food is sometimes the aftertaste can be quite strong. As someone who enjoys sampling each food with a fresh palate, bringing a bottle of water helps you survive the summer heat. The water came in handy after we sampled some strong seafood glass noodles and before trying some delicious arancini orbs.

Pace yourself

While the small portions might make you think your stomach is invincible, the reality is that you can only eat so much. Be selective when it comes to the menu items and try to avoid having seconds of the same dish. For me, I tried two curry dishes that were similar. The second time being significantly less appetizing than the first.



Experiment on separate days

Depending on the festival itinerary, often there may be different vendors and food trucks available on different days. To maximize your experience, use your tickets on separate days. For me, I found a dimly lit tent that features daily chef competitions and of course, sampling the products of their hard-work. The theme for that day was Italian cuisines and I picked up a slice of the chef's hand-tossed, salami pizza.

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

Women of Interest

Maryam Mirzakhani was born May 3, 1977, in Tehran, Iran, and died of breast cancer on July 14, 2017. Mirzakhani was the only woman, and the first Iranian, to win the Fields Medal, which is equivalent to the Nobel Prize in Mathematics. The Fields Medal has been described as the most prestigious honor in mathematics. It was established in 1936 and is only given to individuals aged 40 or younger. Maryam Mirzakhani received her BSc in 1999 from the Sharif University of Technology in Tehran. She then moved to the United States and earned her PhD from Harvard University in 2004. Mirzakhani was the recipient of many honors and awards including being named one of Nature Magazine's ten "people who mattered" of 2004. She received the Clay Research Award in 2014 and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2017.

Additional information about this outstanding woman, who was taken far too early, can be found at the following websites:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maryam_Mirzakhani

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/16/us/maryam-mirzakhani-dead.html>

<http://fortune.com/2017/07/15/maryam-mirzakhani-dead-math-nobel-prize/>

Fly on the Wall

What is your Education Worth?

Jason Sullivan



We've all been there: a hand brushes a hand for an instant, eyes lock furtively and flit away, nostrils catch a scent of an *other*. Momentary intersections and exchanges form much of our human experience. Wordless yet memorable, these ineffable intersections range play a crucial role in interactions, ranging from romantic coquetry to professional body language. Often we think of exchanges as economic, but all of socialization embodies rituals of give and take and mutuality. For us, money is central, but what if our culture was based not on a monetary economic planning but on negotiated exchanges of the spontaneous and intimate sort? What if we related to one another as

much in terms of the exchange of ideas as in the exchange of objects? As AU students, this latter possibility piques my interest. Many folks are suspicious that postsecondary education leads to *just a piece of paper*, so perhaps a society not based on symbolic paper value such as money would value learning and creativity in deeper and more appreciative ways.

I saw just such a prospect mentioned in a social media conversation. One commenter said: "I think we need to reorient ourselves from the idea that people's value comes from what they produce. ... Perhaps we switch back to a gift economy as the tribal islands in the South Pacific once were, your value to the tribe is created by what you're able to give the others. A society where tipping is the norm. Where instead of selling things, we provide service and hope it's worth a tip from another." This adds another facet to the eternal question asked of University students: *what are you going to do with that?* Given the realities of the job market, the value of our AU education may best be investigated by an investigation of *needs* and their fulfillment by way of *use value* and *exchange value*. If another world were possible it surely would address these fundamental facts of life.

Need

As organisms, we need to feed and to inhabit tolerable climes. We may literally reside under a rock and subsist on fungi, but we must do so within the parameters of heat and nutrition that our species requires. While some may wonder if distance education students really do *live under a rock*, given their isolation, we nevertheless do fulfil a need by being here. Better careers to support our families and flourishing selves that lead meaningful lives are two needs AU fulfils.

Needs are not so simple, however. We presume them to arise naturally yet our needs are moulded and massaged by those in our surroundings. Karl Marx noted that "Production not only produces goods; it produces people to consume them, and the corresponding needs" (Marx, online). Needs arise biologically and are channelled socially. Jean Baudrillard bases his analysis of consumer society on the realization that "what produces the commodity system in its general form is the concept of need itself" (Baudrillard, 70). We may unwittingly be taught to believe what we are told we need. Our needs, such as we define them, are fulfilled in the context of a consumer society awash in advertising. We all know this fact yet it's worth considering when looking at how we fulfill needs like food or clothing. When we buy things they appeal to us at a social level; their presentation strikes a chord almost as though they had a life of their own with their own persona and associated quirks. Pierre Martineau suggests that "any buying process is an interaction between the personality of the

individual and the so-called 'personality' of the product itself" (Martineau, online). We might ask, then, what our needs would look and feel like in a culture devoid of commercials. How would we rate our intellectual needs which, hopefully, AU seeks to fulfill?

Use Value

"Use value is not as natural as would first appear either. Like the famous feminist phrase, *a man needs a woman like a fish needs a bicycle*, the utility of a product depends on the desires and expectation of the buyer. We presuppose the usefulness of something at our risk; it's no coincidence that salesmen often use the term "you're gonna want" such and such; they are hoping to plant the seeds of inevitability, namely the inevitability that we will come to desire what they are selling. Appealing to others easily translates into appealing to the lowest common denominator (think of: *but wait, there's more*). We risk missing out on authenticity when we define ourselves by what we own; and participate in a belief system where "all individuals are described in terms of their objects" (Baudrillard, 20).

South Pacific islanders used religion to understand their contact with objects brought to them by colonial forces. *Cargo cults* arose to explain the arrival of goods by ship. Islanders would pray and gather onshore in anticipation like millennials camping out in lineups awaiting the newest iDevice or Harry Potter sequel. A society where people were in close contact with nature and production was being replaced by one where mysterious forces provided the means of life. Scientific American notes how advertising dovetailed with this new metaphysical approach to the consumption of goods:

"The Cargo Cult had a name for the deity in heaven. He was called John Fromm. It is not certain how this name arose but quite possibly it was from American soldiers identifying themselves by their place of origin: i.e., I am John from Indiana or I am John from Minneapolis. Some clever business began marketing products under the name John Fromm. For example, soap bars were labeled John Fromm Soap. When it was a choice between ordinary soap and God's soap, it was no contest. It was clear which one would get you heavenly clean."

This was a far cry from a society where we take others at face value and genuinely consider what they have crafted, grown, played, or written. If something is not "for me" it can still radiate value because of the passion of its maker. Many productions are not so directly utilitarian as soap; our AU studies, for instance. Let's face it, a lot of folks don't think a university education is worth much unless it translates directly into big money. It behooves us to encourage open-mindedness when it comes to the products of others' labour: our toils in the obscurity of academia may seem limited to our future employability, yet a society that values each for what they can produce would mean that our education is valued and, in turn, we respect and value the products of others for what they have in common with ours: the personal and human quality of their creation.

The key here is that identifying with an object is not the same as identifying with a person; commodity fetishism is where social relations such as occur in sweatshops are masked such that we forget or are unaware of who actually made the product we buy. For Baudrillard, commodity fetishism is where "where social relations are disguised in the qualities and attributes of the commodity itself" (Baudrillard, 64).

We don't see the conditions under which our clothes are produced in the same way we don't realize that what seems an inevitable and practical purchase has been made to appear that way by advertising. Baudrillard states that "use value, indeed utility itself, is a fetishized social relation, just like the abstract equivalence of commodities. Use value is an abstraction" (Baudrillard, 64). Marketing may limit our ability to know what we truly desire: "contemporary alienation: in the process of consumption internal conflicts or 'deep drives' are mobilized and alienated in the same way labour power is in the process of production" (Baudrillard, 15). A

worker with no control over processes of production is not so different than a shopper in a mall striving to fulfill himself when there is nothing on offer that will do the trick. In a different society, with more human to human contact at the level of production and consumption, exchanges surely would be more fulfilling. As AU students we experience this as we interact directly with course material rather than experience it as one student among an anonymous throng in a lecture hall. Our tutors also provide a direct connection that professors in brick and mortar universities do not always provide with consistency.

Exchange Value

The flipside of use value is exchange value. For a gift economy to function participants must produce things (even cupcakes or knowing glances) that not only fulfil themselves but that others find enjoyable too and are willing to give something up to get. Intellectual onanists need not apply, it would appear (Merriam-Webster, online). A third type, symbolic exchange, does yield protean potential. "Symbolic exchange gives objects an individuality which rips them out of sign-, use- and exchange-value. Each object becomes unique, ambivalent and reciprocal or reversible with other objects" (Robinson, online). When the meaning of something is open to creativity then both producer and consumer may find fulfilment that suits their desire. Children are great at this when an object like a cardboard box and irrigation sprinkler becomes a spaceship and ray gun.

An Intellectual Gift Economy?

What would AU students have to offer in a gift economy? Besides the employment we already attain, the hard currency of knowledge need not be limited to trivial recreation (impressing friends with answers to Jeopardy) or mundane practicality (writing reports for businesses). Both have their place and yet the intangibles of our education may serve us in ways we had yet to conjure in our imaginations. A better question might be: what would participants in a gift economy value most? Basket weaving and cabin building come to mind but so does that ambiguous word that at times incites sighs of boredom or annoyance: philosophy. In a society bereft of the abstraction of money, one where the economic scaffold of exchange has been laid bare like a denuded emperor, surely philosophical discourse would lead to vistas of wonder for those who were once pejoratively labelled *intellectuals*. Like salons in 18th Century Paris, and the Royal Society in London, people with any and all ideas might exchange them in a spirit of mutual inquisitiveness and respect that the internet, replete with vicious spam wars and comments sections best never perused, has never known. Emoticons might give way to thesauruses. Meandering thoughts, complex and erudite or tangled and pastiched, might find value in ways as yet undreamed.

At its best, our education draws fresh water out of the springs of our selves and allows us to be reborn into the future with new tools for our practical dispensation. Critical thinking, that boon tied to education like a sail to the mast of productivity, is just the tip of the iceberg. Not unlike journal-keeping, long valued for its therapeutic and creative effects, essay-writing (despite the existential dreads it often unleashes) is a form by which we become who we are. It's us on the page and we unfurl ourselves like a sea cucumber projecting its entrails into the sea to ward off a predator. If we ever live in a society where everyone feels free to express what is inside them

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

Online MBA Info Session

Wednesday, August 16, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT

Online

Hosted by AU's Faculty of Business

business.athabascau.ca/event-details/executive-mba-information-session-10am-mst-8/

register online at above link

Academic Integrity at AU Webinar

Tuesday, August 15, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html

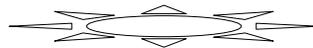
pre-registration not required

and to accept the same from others, then perhaps exchange value will reap new realms in terms of our ability to truly express what Marx dubbed our *species being* (Marx, online). After all, we are human beings as well as human doings. If we can put our being into words and truly listen to the words of others then who knows what heights our humanity may reach.

References

- Baudrillard, J. (1988). Selected Writings. (Mark Poster, Ed.). Retrieved from: http://faculty.humanities.uci.edu/poster/books/Baudrillard,%20Jean%20-%20Selected%20Writings_ok.pdf
- Marx, K. (1844). Estranged Labour. In *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. Retrieved from: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm>
- 'Onanism'. Merriam-Webster Online. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/onanism#medicalDictionary>
- Robinson, A. (2012). An A to Z of Theory: Jean Baudrillard Symbolic Exchange'. In *Ceasefire Magazine*. Retrieved from: <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-baudrillard-1/>
- Watkins, T. The Cargo Cults of the South Pacific. *San Jose State University*. Retrieved from <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/cargocult.htm>

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.



The Creative Spark! Now, Where Did I Put my Memory?

Marie Well



What's your oldest memory? I once crashed my adult-sized trike, sucked the black powder off match tips, and petted swarms of aphids crawling my skin. (Hey, they look like ladybugs.) Yet, I bet I remembered wrong. You see, we recall tidbits that never took place. Plus, we miss most of what really went down.

And memories fade.

I once got a perfect grade in an advanced university calculus class. Quadruple integrals. Not a single error. A decade later, I've forgotten the integral of x .

What's worse? You can alter a person's memories. You do so by suggesting stuff that never took place. In the movie *The Girl on the Train*, Rachel's husband accuses her of committing

violent acts during drunk spells. She believes him. But he did the bad stuff, not her.

"The mere suggestion that something may have existed is enough to cause its inclusion in your mental recreation of the event," says Roberta Ness in her book *Innovation Generation: How to Produce Creative and Useful Scientific Ideas* (p. 68). That's why parents of mentally ill kids believe the wild tales the kids may tell. When your child reports for weeks that he's being followed, chased, or gunned down, consider that medical help may be required.

We also absorb little within our line of vision. So, our memories are selective. For example, when we read, we glance over words. We drum up mental movies the author never intended. We tune out what doesn't jive with our headspace.

We even misread body language. On a test of body language IQ, I bombed. A picture of a teen crumpled in pain, I marked as optimistic. A photo of a sneer-smiling woman rolling her eyes, I marked as playful. My test result? 25% accuracy and a lesson in humility.

Plus, we each walk life's steps that make us see—and remember—differently.

For instance, fans flock to Lady Gaga's shows. Yet each fan has a unique mental replay. Hefty men bash Lady Gaga's jelly rolls. Preteens pretend it's Justin-Bieber-in-a-wig. All at the same show.

Even during spats, people have polar-opposite views of the same predicament. Say I fail to thank a friend for a tea latte because I'm craving a coconut mocha. I see myself as pining; my friend sees me as whining.

And the worst memories cast blame. Unjust blame. We can find a basis to blame anyone. We just need to dig—and lay it on thick. Many of us blame mom for our mishaps—even though mom cooked us 5,000 meals and laundered 1,000 loads. Even Mother Teresa gets flack in the news.

What's the solution to faulty or misplaced memories? Positive memories. Memories where everyone gains. Focus on them.

Roberta Ness points out the role of biases in misplaced memories and more in her book *Innovation Generation: How to Produce Creative and Useful Scientific Ideas*:

- We believe we remember better than we do. This is called hindsight bias.
- And what you expect shifts your memories.
- One study found that subjects thought they remembered a result correctly—even when they hadn't.
- "Details learned after an event can overturn recalled reality" (p. 68). So, be wary of what you hear.
- We may believe we observed something even if we didn't. This happens when someone presents a view that confirms that observation.
- We may think we came up with something original, even though another source told us first. [I wrote a script that claimed thought travelled on mathematical asymptotes (curved lines that go on for infinity). A decade later, I read news of a scientist claiming the same idea, almost word for word].
- And to rehash the worst: "The mere suggestion that something may have existed is enough to cause its inclusion in your mental recreation of the event" (p. 68).

So, hang around people who make you smile. You're certain to shift your memories for the greater good. A paradox? I call it a creative spark!

All the Music be Happenin' Now The Kurd's Tale

Wanda Waterman



I first began texting Mustafa Mallabozan, a Kurdish musician from Kobani, in 2011 on a language-learning site. I'd been using the site officially to learn other languages and unofficially to gather narratives from people in strife-torn Middle Eastern countries. I wasn't eager to learn Kurdish, but I did want first-person accounts of the Syrian war. Mallabozan wanted to practice his English, so it looked like a win-win.

I've corresponded with him off and on since the civil war began. Since then he's been imprisoned and tortured, has lived in refugee camps, and has traveled across Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. He now lives in

Austria, where he plays his oud with local musicians and studies German.

In 2011 I wrote a series of articles about Mallabozan for the *Voice* (beginning [here](#)), chronicling my disappointment and rage that the stresses he endured were so great as to render him unusable as a witness even to his own circumstances.

One of the more tragic effects of violence is to silence the voice of suffering by rendering victims so deeply disturbed that they're no longer capable of faithfully relaying their suffering to the outside world. Could such maddening violence also silence music?

In Mallabozan's early years music had been to him a priceless splendor filling his heart with joy and uniting him with his family, his people, and with all of humanity, alive and dead. His first instrument was one he'd fashioned from a metal box and a wooden stick. As soon as he could afford "real" instruments he practiced for at least ten hours a day for three years, from 2006 to 2009, with no teacher.

"Because of the big amount of happiness," he writes, "I was just laughing loudly, kissing my instrument as if it was my life partner."

The other 14 hours were spent listening to music.

"The music I listened to when I was younger, it was talking to me. For example, Muhammed Abdulkarim—a Syrian bouzouki player called the 'Prince of Bouzouki'—his playing used to speak to me. For years I would listen to his playing before I slept, and his playing was talking to me in real words, each musical 'sentence' of the prince was a word sentence and someone telling it to me."

He continues to play oud and bouzouki today, but his heart isn't in it to the same extent. He claims his playing doesn't sound like it used to. He even finds it harder to listen to music these days.

"I don't remember the last time I wanted to hear music," he confesses. "I prefer silence to notes. I enjoy it, really; it's maybe a kind of dead soul in a living body. But it's like this now."

If Sam Baker's story shows that victims of violence are able to form significant, healing musical statements, Mallabozan's proves that the musical brain itself is somehow threatened by organised cruelty. It won't be easy for anyone to convince me now that terrorism and tyranny can't destroy music, because I've seen that for at least a little while they can.

I was now neck deep in the music and political struggles of the peoples of the Middle East, the long, strange unwinding of the sins of the twentieth century and the inescapable myths of the ancient world. I developed an intense curiosity regarding the music of the slave, the exile, the rejected, the refugee. It all begged the same question:

If cruelty can silence music, why does the purest and most beautiful music nearly always begin with slaves?

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

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Tweaked SEO Scholarship

Sponsored by: Tweaked SEO

Deadline: August 31, 2017

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be 18 years or older, be enrolled in a post-secondary institution in Canada or the US, and have a GPA of 3.2 or higher.

What's required: A completed online application (or e-mail submission), along with a minimum 750-word essay on any digital marketing subject.

Tips: Boost your application to the top of the pile by ensuring your essay displays a high level of enthusiasm for business or marketing.

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





Sad and Troubling

On Saturday night, we attended a sixty-fifth birthday party for our brother-in-law. It was a fun shindig because it happened at a wooded, eighty-acre parcel of land my sister and brother-in-law and her adult children bought a year ago. It has a collection of outbuildings and power pedestals for campers to plug into.

With a double garage that serves as the cook house and shelter if weather is bad, an outhouse, fire pit, deck, gazebo, umpteen chairs, plenty of firewood, and assortment of quads the place is well outfitted. A series of trails through the bush provide a path for walkers or off-road vehicles. Though it was a bit scary this spring when one wildlife camera picked up a black mama bear and a pair of cubs. Eek.

Things like ladder ball, motorized toys, a wading pool, and a trampoline ensured that everyone had something to do. A second fridge loaded with refreshments ensured no one went thirsty.

It was nice to simply sit for several hours visiting with family and friends. To watch the play of the fire as conversations got mellower and the youngest kids went to bed. To grow comfortable with the darkness and to light one's path to the toilet with an iPhone. To be grateful that this family shares this property with all of us.

But, for me, one of the best parts of the night was the fireworks display that Matt did. We first saw his handiwork last year at another birthday party at The Pines. It rivaled what many small towns do during Canada Day or during their annual fairs, whether for duration, variety, or complexity. It was extraordinary. So naturally, I was excited to see what he planned for this party.

It was magnificent. Unfortunately, we never saw the finale. Before 11 PM and about ten or fifteen minutes in, a huge black pick up truck screamed into the yard and parked just steps away from where we were all sitting. He left the truck running and blinded us with his LED power bar lights. An agitated guy jumped out, ranting and raving, screaming and swearing about the fireworks. His posture, volume, words, actions were aggressive and frankly, scary. One never knows

who's unhinged and who isn't.

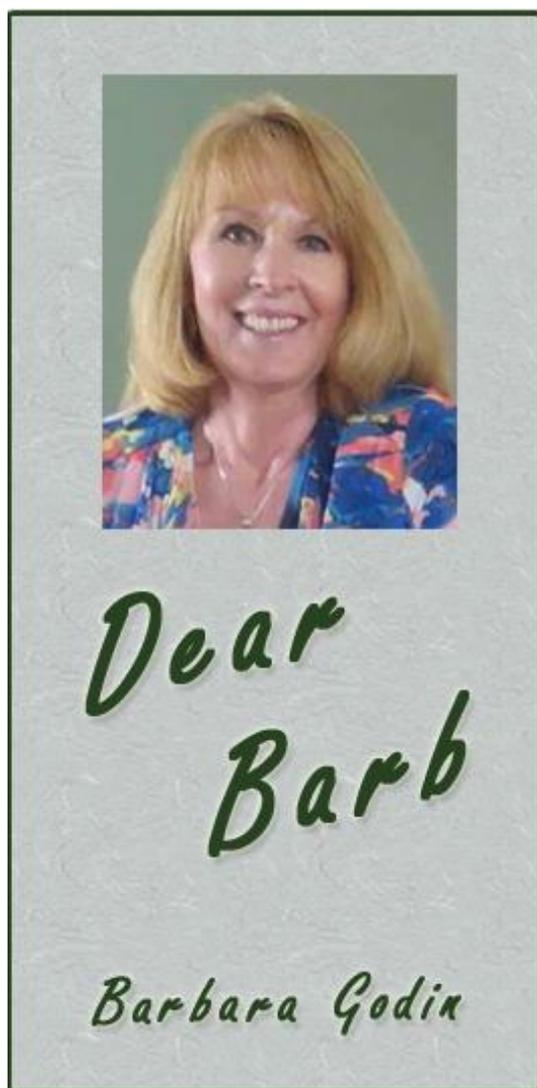
His anger and outrage was disproportionate to the perceived 'crime.' It didn't matter to him that a fireworks permit was in place, that there was no fire ban in effect, that it was before 11 pm Saturday, that a baby was sleeping in a trailer mere steps away. He was pissed off that he had to get up in the morning and the fireworks were too loud. Then he asked how we'd like it if he fired off his twelve-gauge rifle. Explaining and apologizing did nothing. His fishtailing truck cut ruts in the ground and driveway.

The next hour was spent reliving, replaying the incident. What could and should have been said. What would have inflamed or defused the situation. How lucky it was that he didn't hit any parked vehicles or a person walking in the dark. What were the odds of future vandalism or sabotage? Where the cameras should be placed to catch any retaliation. How good the finale would have been. How, with men of all ages and sizes present, it

was my sister who approached the truck and tried to de-escalate the situation. How it scared the kids who witnessed the outburst.

Hell, how it unsettled us all. It reminded me of my youth, attending keg parties in the bush when in the wee hours a cop car or a group of troublemakers crashed the night. It wasn't fun then, and it's less so now, especially since it seems more people are teetering on the edge of reason and are likely armed or high or both. And the irony is, that a calm and civil request would have been respected. Instead he chose a sad and troubling way to express displeasure, from where I sit.

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



Gifting Honesty

Dear Barb:

I have a dilemma; my best friend is dating a woman who is cheating on him. They have been together for almost a year and I never really liked her. I always thought she was a controlling gold-digger. I've told Richard how I feel about her and he didn't take it well. I think I should tell him what she's doing, but I doubt that he will believe me. Because of what I've said about his girlfriend in the past, he may think I am just making this up. Richard is helping Angela with car payments and rent. I hate to see him being used like this. Should I just let this go, or take a chance and tell Richard what I know. I don't want to ruin our friendship, as we've been friends for years. Do you have any suggestions? Thanks, Ben.

Hey Ben:

Thanks for your question. It's always difficult when put in these types of situations. If you don't tell your friend and he finds out that you knew but didn't tell him, he will not be happy with you. If you tell him he may not believe you and if he doesn't ever find out the truth, he will think you were trying to sabotage his relationship. Since you found out about her cheating, there is probably a good chance that Richard will eventually discover this as well. My advice to you would be to follow your heart. There is risk involved in telling him or not telling him. If you don't tell him and he ends up marrying her and she continues this type of behaviour after marriage, he will be very hurt and you may regret not telling him the truth.

Personally, I always believe telling the truth is the best policy. If he were not your best friend, then my advice would be different, but since you are so close, I think he would be devastated if you weren't honest with him. Hope this was helpful.

Dear Barb:

I've been in a couple of weddings this summer and I've got one more to go. I am university student and I'm finding it difficult to afford these weddings. It would be cheaper for me to buy a gift, but it seems everybody prefers money these days. How much money I am expected to give? Thanks, Chris.

Hi Chris:

Weddings can be expensive, especially if you have more than one within a short period of time. The typical cash gift for a wedding is around \$150, but many factors will come into play. For example, is this a family member, or just a casual acquaintance? According to a CBS News article if it is a friend's wedding the average is around \$80 and if it is a family member it could be upwards of \$150, however you can only give what you can afford. Often a thoughtful gift will mean a lot more to the couple than cash, as they know you took the time to select a special gift. Great question Chris, as this is the wedding season.

Follow Barb on twitter @BarbGod

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.

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

New AU student Claudio has many questions about AU, and experienced students are chiming in with answers and helpful tips. Jennifer is stymied by a vaguely-worded assignment question for GOVN 450 and seeks student input while she waits for a tutor response. Lots of feedback to Manuela's comments about the separate course evaluations from AU and AUSU, respectively.

Other posts include children's literature, teaching overseas, AU advising services, and pending change to tuition fees.

reddit

Activity is picking up on the AU reddit page, with threads started for BIOL 204, CHEM 217, MATH 215, and PSYC 405. If you're taking or have taken these courses, your input is welcome.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "We're lucky to have @au_press books at our fingertips! Read about the distance education award they recently won: <http://ow.ly/UiDu30eb9SL>."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Need help battling depression? Check out Student 16-week depression program, free courtesy of AUSU. <http://bit.ly/1RZJ1r0>."



Politically Bereft



Sure, you SAY you're pro-life, but if I keep this litter will you let them play with your kids?



AUSU

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' UNION

IMPORTANT DATES

- **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 4:** AU and AUSU closed for Labour Day
- **Sep 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Aug 1](#)
- **Sep 12:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Sep 15:** [October degree requirements deadline](#)

This space is provided by AUSU. The Voice does not create or edit this content. Contact services@ausu.org with any questions.

Who are the AUSU Council?

Want to know more about the council that represents you as an AU undergraduate student?

Check out their biographies on our website [here!](#)



AUSU council works to provide services, representation, and advocacy for all AU undergraduate students. They advocate at the university, provincial, and national level for affordable and quality post-secondary education for all AU students. They serve as the voice of the AUSU membership by staying up to date on the needs and priorities of AU students.

Find out about some of AUSU's many advocacy efforts on our website [here](#).

Check out highlights of AUSU's work in the AUSU executive blog online [here](#).

Find out more about the services AUSU offers on our website [here](#).

Questions? Feel free to email ausu@ausu.org.

MEC Committee Welcomes New Member

AUSU's Member Engagement and Communications committee would like to welcome AUSU member **Benjamin McDonald** to the vacant committee seat!



AUSU Course Evaluations

Have you finished any courses in the past year? We encourage all undergraduate students to fill out an [AUSU course evaluation](#) online after every course!

Although your evaluation is confidential, the results are compiled and available online [here](#). This information can help students choose their courses, so the more evaluations are completed, the more useful this resource becomes!

Please note, these evaluations are different than the ones sent out by AU. You can fill out an [AUSU course evaluation](#) anytime, even after your course has ended.



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

301 Energy Square - 10109 – 106 St NW - Edmonton AB - T5J 3L7
Ph: 855.497.7003

Publisher Athabasca University Students' Union
Editor-In-Chief Jodi Campbell
Managing Editor Karl Low

Regular Columnists Hazel Anaka, Barb Godin, Scott Jacobsen, Carla Knipe
Barbara Lehtiniemi, Deanne Roney, Wanda Waterman, Xin Xu

www.voicemagazine.org

The Voice is published almost every Friday in HTML and PDF format.

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org.

To receive a weekly email announcing each issue, subscribe [here](#). *The Voice* does not share its subscriber list.