

THE VOICE

Vol 26 Issue 13 2018-03-30

Talking Sports Literature

With Dr. Angie Abdou

Fifteen Steps to Organization

Cleaning Up

Not My March

A Look at #MarchForOurLives

Plus:

*Rejections for the Win
Spring Brain Cleaning
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

Talking Sport Literature: *with Dr. Angie Abdou* 4

Articles

Editorial: *Editorial Control*..... 3
 Spring Brain Cleaning..... 8
 Not My March 10
 Fifteen Easy Steps to Organization 12
 Rejections for the Win..... 17

Columns

Course Exam: *COMP 272* 9
 The Creative Spark: *Wing it On Stage*..... 14
 The Fit Student: *Celebrities with Low Self-Esteem* 16
 The Not-So-Starving Student: *Four Exotic and Strange Eats* 18
 Dear Barb: *Bank On It*..... 21

News and Events

Student Sizzle 7
 AU-Thentic Events 11
 Vintage Voice..... 15
 Scholarship of the Week..... 20
 AUSU Update 23

Graphic

Poet Maeve: *Perfect Love*..... 22

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



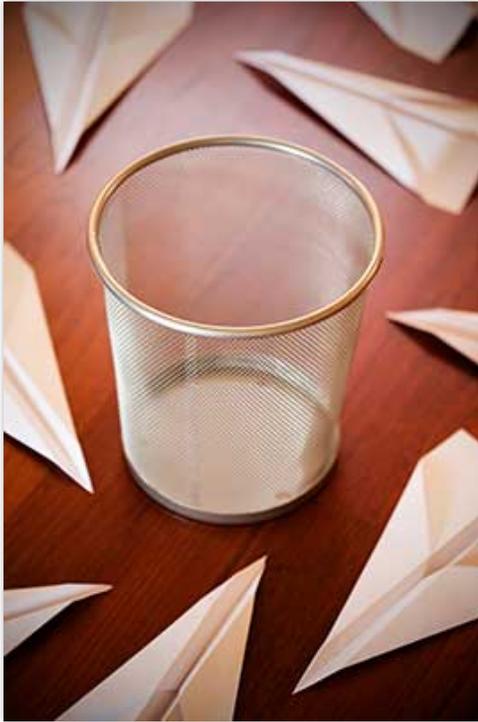
We love to hear from you!
Send your questions and comments to voicemagazine.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter!

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 Editorial Control

Karl Low



Dr. Angie Abdou is our feature once again this week, but this time we look at her take on a genre of writing that's just starting to get some serious academic study, Sports Literature.

And while it's a really good read, my time this week has more been taken up with another piece in this week's issue, "Not My March" by Jaclyn van Beek. It can be tempting, as the editor, to simply say no to pieces that I feel are fundamentally wrong. Much as I would say no to any piece that was outright racist or sexist, there's places people can go if they want to read that kind of stuff, I don't think the student magazine of Athabasca University students should be it.

But then there are all those issues where I know many people believe things that I do not, but where expressing those points of view isn't directly causing harm and where those beliefs haven't already been irrefutably proven in error, even if I think they will be at some point in the future. If the Voice Magazine is truly to be the voice of the AU student community, than those student voices, even when they disagree with my views, should be given a place.

This can be challenging for many student papers that seek to provide an 'unbiased' point of view, because students, you, me, the person in your study group, we all have our biases. And that's not a bad thing. After all, if we all believed exactly the same thing, we're going to be missing some opportunities in the places where our beliefs are wrong.

So as written in the Voice style guide, bias is fine. I don't subscribe to the notion that reality is balanced, and demanding writing be balanced would then be sacrificing accuracy for some notion of fairness that doesn't exist in the world we actually live in. However, I do insist that writing in the Voice should be accurate. It should be incontestable on the face of it. This means adding qualifiers when things are asserted as general facts when they are not general. Adding what I tend to think of as "weasel words" such as "might" or "may" or noting that something is a reflection about an opinion. I don't like doing this, and I often correct writers who do this when it's not necessary, but sometimes they are.

However, the point of all this is that this effort makes me think about my own biases. How often do I miss a generalized assertion that may not be 100% true simply because it matches my own point of view? This was more clearly pointed out to me when I was looking for an image that was gun positive, but not sexualized, militarized, or referencing the American flag or constitution. It's harder than you might think, and I found myself wondering, is that because we've all, outside the U.S., internalized a bias against there being a positive depiction of guns? Or is that because depicting what is a tool designed for destruction difficult to do in a positive way? Bias and truth can often overlap. There are very convincing reports written that banning guns doesn't reduce violent crime, for instance. That they are contested by a large number of reports showing the exact opposite doesn't reduce their impact in that fashion. But no matter which way your bias falls, you can find some truth in there. The difficulty becomes parsing out which is the more accurate reflection of our reality. But then again, being able to do that is presumably part of what we're being taught through our university career, isn't it? Let me know what you think, and enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'l'.

Talking Sports Literature With Dr. Angie Abdou

Carla Knipe



The topic of sports has been on people's minds lately, with the current NHL hockey season ramping up for the playoffs as well as the recent Olympic and Paralympic games in PyeongChang. In Part two of our interview with AU's Creative Writing professor, Dr. Angie Abdou, she talks about her upcoming books that combine her love of writing with her lifelong love of athletics.

Sports writing has been a big part of your works; swimming and wrestling in *The Bone Cage*, skiing in *The Canterbury Trail*. What attracts you to writing about sports and what makes you want to write more about that subject area?

For my first novel, I took the advice to write what I knew—and particularly to write a world that I knew well and that readers might not know as well. I swam my whole life (on the Thunder Bay Thunderbolts when I was four-years-old, then the Moose Jaw Kinsmen Flying Finns, the Regina Optimist Dolphins, and eventually the University of Western Ontario

Mustangs when I was twenty-seven). I also watched my brother wrestle his whole life, eventually competing in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia. I knew those two worlds very well—their sights, sounds, smells, stories. And I found the people—the athletes—to be fascinating, wild characters who I hadn't seen represented on the page. It made sense to tackle my first novel by trying to get them there. So I started with sports. It's the world I know best. Similarly, with *The Canterbury Trail*, a ski-town offers its own weird little sub-culture, one I hadn't seen between the covers before, but that I thought would make for fun reading. Living in one at the time, I had no shortage of material.

I've moved away from sports to other topics, but now I'm thinking about athletics from a parent's perspective, with both of my kids deeply involved in sports. I can't seem to escape! But I do like writing that is rooted in the physical—as a reader and a writer.

Not many people realize that there is a whole genre about literary sports fiction—sports writing is more closely associated with sports journalism, or more about the pop culture aspect. Is sports literature a growing field? Or do you feel like you are somewhat of a pioneer in that regard?

Some of my favourite Canadian novels focus on sports: Richard Wagamese's *Indian Horse* (hockey), Paul Quarrington's *King Leary* (hockey), and Bill Gaston's *The Good Body* (hockey). Some good Canadian sport books even focus on sports other than hockey! I'm a fan of Steven Heighton's *Every Lost Country* (mountaineering), Samantha Warwick's *Sage Island* (marathon swimming), and Thomas Wharton's *Icefields* (mountaineering). Sport often functions as a vehicle to talk about the meaning of life. Characters imbue their lives with a sense of purpose and significance by having a dream in sports—that athletic goal sets them on a quest which lends a story narrative momentum. Often, though, their quest ends in a different place than they intended—not with a gold medal but with some new understanding. I like sport literature for that quest narrative, for the cast of wild athletic characters, for the physical writing, and for those stories about re-evaluating a dream and individual's purpose. Sport in literature is not new. But

sport literature courses—English courses devoted particularly to looking at literary writing focusing on sports—are fairly new and spreading. *Writing the Body in Motion* is meant as a resource for such courses, for teachers and for students.

Have you noticed any differences about the approach and perspective of how men and women write about sports?

To be honest, if you gave me most sport novels with the author's name scribbled out, I don't think I could tell if it was written by a woman or a man. Take *Indian Horse* by Richard Wagamese and *Twenty Miles* by Cara Hedley. Both are hockey novels. Both have beautiful descriptions of the sport. Both have characters who run into doubt and obstacles, and who eventually undergo re-evaluation of their circumstances. There is nothing particularly feminine or masculine about the way Wagamese or Hedley writes about hockey. Hedley does, though, write about women finding their space in a sport traditionally designated as male. Her goal is to carve out a place for women at centre ice of the sport that allegedly defines our country. So *Twenty Miles* is a feminist project. But that's not, of course, true of all women's sports writing. So, no I couldn't generalize about a difference in the way men and women write about sports. In the novels included in *Writing the Body in Motion*, almost all authors write about sports that they themselves have competed in. Maybe they write more as athletes rather than as women or men.

Do you think that literary sports writing will be taken more seriously in the future, or do you think it will always remain a bit on the “fringes” of writing?

I'm not sure that literary sports writing is on the fringes. Lawrence Hill's very successful novel *The Illegal* is about a runner. I call it sport literature. Much of John Irving's writing is about wrestlers. I call that sport literature. W.P. Kinsella's *Shoeless Joe*, which was made into the baseball movie *Field of Dreams*, is commercially successful sport literature. A lot of popular writing features sports and athletes. Sport literature courses, on the other hand, do need to fight for place within English Departments and for respect within the discipline. There's a tendency to dismiss this type of study as a little fluffier, as "just sports," but I do think that is changing. I belong to an international Sport Literature Association and attend its conference every year, usually in the United States, and those scholars take their work very seriously.

Writing the Body in Motion is an anthology that is a compilation of essays that discuss sports writing. It's being published through Athabasca University Press. Is it a book that concentrates on the academic analysis, or can others get a lot from the essays as well?

Jamie Dopp (my co-editor) and I wanted the essays to be accessible so that a general reader might enjoy them. However, the main goal is for the essays to supplement Sport Literature classes at the university or high-school level. Teachers might use them as material for lectures or assign them to students as research or as a sample essays. There are essays on ten of the most commonly taught Canadian works of sport literature.

Were the contributors easy to find, or did you have to do a lot of searching to seek out the authors?

Through the Sport Literature Association, I had instant access to the most active scholars studying sport literature written in English. Most of the authors in our collection come from that group.

You have another upcoming book, *Home Ice, Confessions of a Hockey Mom* which will be released this coming September. Tell us what readers can look forward to with that book?

It's a voyeuristic peek into my life as it is now. I follow our family through one hockey season, second-year Atom. The story ended up being not just about youth-sport culture, but also about

parenting and marriage and middle-age and the over-extended family. The Goodreads blurb says: "With equal parts humour and anguish, Abdou offers a nuanced portrait of today's hockey parent. Her revealing stories and careful research of an often-troubling sport culture offer a compellingly honest and complex insider's view of parenting today's young athlete in a competitive and high-pressure culture."

Basically, I wrote the kind of memoir I would like to read. I like candid memoir with research woven in. That's what I wrote.

Being a hockey mom is something that a lot of Canadian parents can relate to—and presumably hockey parents talk a lot about it while they are watching their kids play—but there hasn't been too much written on the subject. What was the trigger that made you decide that you would be the one to write the book that no one else has before?

I wanted to read this book, but it didn't exist. I kept trying to get someone to talk me out of the idea of writing it. First, I presented a paper (the prologue essentially) to my Sport Literature Association, thinking they would say "Well that was fun, but there's not a book in it." Nope. They loved it. They wanted the whole book. So then I sent the prologue and a bit of a rough proposal off to my agents, thinking they'd say encouraging things but then break it to me that nobody really wanted a book about a hockey mom. Nope. They loved it. And so it went. Everybody kept saying YES! where I expected to hear NO! In the end, though, it really is a book that I (as an over-extended mother of young athletes) would love to read. I hope other readers love it too.

Did you speak to a lot of hockey moms across North America, or was it written from more of your own experiences?

I did book-research about hockey around the world—and youth sports in general—but that research is woven into my own very personal story (as an athlete, a sister of an athlete, and a mother of athletes).

What can non-athletes take away from reading literary sports fiction, even if they can't relate to playing the sports themselves?

Sport Literature is often about having a dream and setting goals to attain that dream. What happens when a character realizes a dream has become unattainable? Once the dream dies, how do those characters reshape their identity? How does the loss of that defining goal shift their sense of themselves as well as the way they present themselves to the world? How do those characters find meaning in life once that dream disappears? These questions apply to everyone, but sport lit manifests them in a dramatic, visceral, physical way.

Sport Lit also examines the relationship between the body and identity - and how who we are changes as our bodies change, whether through aging or through injury or through deliberate manipulation. Again, this issue of body and identity applies far beyond the sporting arena.

What are some of the lessons you've found through your experience of sports, both as an athlete yourself as well as a parent of kids who love sports, that you can apply to other aspects of life?

Swimming has shaped who I am more than anything else has. Swimming taught me the discipline and work ethic and resilience that I bring to my writing life. I spent my youth swimming two-hours before school and two-hours after. The hours training far out measured the hours of competition. I remind my students that: a lot of the writing you do will be training ... don't expect it all—or even the biggest portion of it—to be published. Like with sport, you have to put in those long hours of practice.

From swimming, I learned how to show up when I didn't feel like showing up. I learned how to come back after soul-crushing losses and disappointments. I learned how to find pleasure in the training itself rather than the outcome. Routine, commitment, work, discipline - I'm happiest when my life looks like that.

As a parent, it's so easy to get caught up in the "is he any good?" approach to sport—to get carried away with victories and overblown ideas about future victories. That's not the value of sport—I always try to bring us back to process and life lessons. In that way, I remind my kids that they learn more from the so-called losses. Being able to pick yourself up, dust yourself off, hold your head high, and try again—THAT is a useful life skill.

Writing the Body in Motion: A Critical Anthology on Canadian Sport Literature comes out May 2018 with Athabasca University Press: <http://www.aupress.ca/index.php/books/120276> and is currently available for pre-order through Amazon.

Home Ice: Reflections of a Reluctant Hockey Mom releases Sept 2018 with ECW Press: <http://transatlanticagency.com/2017/06/deal-news-home-ice-by-angie-abdou/> and is currently available for pre-order on the ECW site: <https://ecwpress.com/products/home-ice>

Carla is an AU student who lives and writes in Calgary, Alberta. Say "hi" to her on Twitter @LunchBuster.



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

Alisha of Calgary wonders if she can use ProctorU or if she must go to the exam centre; the good news is she has choice. Bill Angela questions whether a supplementary exam will be the same or different than the original and is relieved to learn it will be different. Gwenyth seeks feedback on how long refunds usually take after dropping a course early; put the kettle on, Gwenyth, you've got 4 to 6 weeks of waiting ahead of you!

Other posts include the cost of textbooks, challenging a course for credit, APA formatting, and courses BIOL 204, SOCI 332, and WGST 303.

Twitter

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Congratulations to the new AUSU President Brandon Simmons, VPEX Melinda Goertz, and VPFA Natasha Donahue! They take office on April 10. More details on your new executive to come!"

@AU_Press tweets: "Your personal data is being collected every moment of your day (hi, Facebook!). "Transparent Lives" shows how surveillance is expanding and investigates the way governments and the private sector gather, monitor, analyze and share your information. <http://ow.ly/5TEk30ja4M9>."

YouTube

AU President Neil Fassina presents highlights of the March 23 BoG meeting in Board of Governors Meeting: Outcomes, posted by Athabasca University.

Spring Brain Cleaning

A little walk to whisk away winter's cobwebs

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Spring has arrived—by the calendar at least. Here in the easternmost reaches of Ontario, the landscape looks more wintry than spring-like. The ground is blanketed with snow and there is not a crocus nor a green bud to be seen. The only sure signs of spring are the presence of a few bewildered robins and the absence of tiresome early-morning snow ploughs.

Each spring, as soon as our road is bare of snow, I'm eager to get out and walk. Our rural road is narrow and busy: too dangerous to walk on until the snow has receded a few feet

from the edges, providing a safe zone from passing vehicles. Every winter—and every spring—brings varying conditions. Some years my first walk is in February while other years I've had to wait until April.

By the end of winter, I eagerly anticipate getting out walking. Walking is an easy activity that requires little preparation, no special equipment, and only a moment's notice. After a glance at the thermometer to determine outerwear requirements, I can lace up my shoes and be on my way.

After spending the winter buried in my studies, I need to get moving again. Muscles have atrophied from sitting at my desk for hours every day. My bum seems to have spread to match the contours—and girth—of my desk chair.

I start the first couple of walks slowly. I had to stretch unused muscles to reacquaint them with the notion of movement and exertion. And that's just getting my shoes on!

Like my body, my mind needs to get moving again. Although four courses take a lot of brain power, it's such a limited focus. Like spending the winter confined within four walls, my brain has spent the winter confined to four courses. There's so much more out there and my mind yearns for the limitless prospect of open spaces and infinite options.

Walking time is thinking time. Along our straight, flat, country road, the act of walking demands limited mental energy. My senses drink in the landscape while the fresh breeze stirs up the dusty corners of my mind. I seldom set out to hatch ideas while I'm walking, but creative thoughts burst in my head like fireworks.

I can solve many problems during a 20-minute walk. Increased blood circulation and oxygen intake prompt a clarity of thought that caffeine and confined spaces cannot. Tearing myself away from my cluttered desk liberates my creative spirit. I return home re-energized and brimming with ideas to set in motion.

I've spent all winter juggling—and often fumbling—my final four AU courses. Now it's spring, and the horizon is stretching out before me.

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



**Brittany Daigle****Course Exam**
*AU courses, up close***Course Exam****Brittany Daigle****COMP 272— Data Structures and Algorithms**

COMP 272 (Data Structures and Algorithms) is a three-credit computer science course that builds on the concepts introduced in COMP 268 (Introduction to Computer Programming in Java) or COMP 206 (Introduction to Computer Programming in C++) and shows how to use data structures as tools to design computer programs that will cope with the complexity of actual applications. As prerequisites, students should have familiarity with the fundamentals of Java and/or C++ and should have either completed COMP 268 or COMP 206. If students feel that they have sufficient programming skills in Java, C, or C++ then they may be admitted upon approval from the course professor. If you want to learn more about Introduction to Computer Programming in Java, read my [COMP 268 Course Exam article!](#)

Students will be required to download an Integrated Development Environment (IDE) for this course. My recommendation is IntelliJ, as it is free, it highlights errors, auto completes some text, and it has an integrated debugger that is useful for solving programming errors and can be useful for the required written reflections.

Data Structures and Algorithms is comprised of twelve units, three assignments weighing twenty percent (students must score fifty percent in each assessment to pass the course), and one online final exam worth forty percent. The twelve units within this course cover topics such as array-based lists, linked lists, skip lists, hash tables, stacks, queues, recursion, scapegoat trees, red-black trees, heaps, binary trees, sorting algorithms (merge-sort and quick-sort), and graphs. For each assignment, students will have to apply, program, test, debug, and analyze the inputs and outputs of their code in Java by way of written reflections in Word.

Students are required to add inline comments in their code and prepare a separate document to reflect on how the essential methods, classes, parameters, or entire programs were designed and handled while implementing those algorithms for each programming question in all three assignments. Alongside your code, in a Word document, the reflections must include two or more of the provided prompts. The prompts include significant types of errors or warnings that you faced when coding programs, whether you were able to correct these errors or warnings quickly, which debugging strategies you used, which commenting strategies you used, which testing strategies you used, which code optimization techniques you followed, what resources you referred to, or just other comments.

Assignment one covers the basic methods of stacks and queues, such as `pop()`, `push()`, `add()`, `remove()`, and `size()` and requires students to answer question one, question two, and any other two questions from questions three to six (for a total of four programming questions and four reflections). I found this assignment to be relatively short and simple, though I have prior experience with stacks from the card game [Magic The Gathering](#). All questions in assignment one must be fully coded programs.

Assignment two covers binary trees and the traversal of trees, which included the methods `preorderNext()`, `postorderNext()`, and `inorderNext()` and requires students to answer all the provided questions (for a total of five questions and five reflections). Trees are about ways to organize your data to be stored and retrieved efficiently. This assignment took longer to complete as I had not encountered this idea of a tree prior to this assignment. All questions in assignment two must also be fully coded programs.

Assignment three covers merge-sorting, quick-sorting, doing tree traversals by hand on a provided graph, and covers different kinds of binary trees, including Adelson Velskii and Landis (AVL) trees, and red-black trees. Students must complete all the provided questions (eight questions and roughly four reflections). This assignment was definitely the longest and most difficult, though thankfully not all of the questions in this assignment had to be coded. Half of the questions were coding questions and the other half could be illustrated or explained in a Word document. Since only half of the questions needed to be fully coded programs, only half needed reflections.

The final exam is online, closed-book, and students are allowed three hours to write it. There are four parts to this exam, which include twenty multiple choice questions worth two marks each (forty percent), ten fill-in-the-blank questions worth three and a half marks each (thirty-five percent), three short answer questions worth five marks each (fifteen percent), and one programming question worth ten marks each (ten percent). For students who are concerned with the final exam, there is a sample final exam that is provided on the course homepage.

From personally taking this course I found it to be less time consuming than COMP 268, though it still took awhile to complete. One incredibly annoying aspect of this course was the marking times for the assignments. Each of my three assignments took roughly a month to get marked, so do not expect to have your assignments marked before you write your final exam if you procrastinate until the last month of your course contract! Thankfully, the questions in the three assignments were generally easy to understand or easy enough to look up. The first two assignments were definitely the easier assignments, with the third assignment being the most difficult and demanding. If you enroll into this course and find yourself stuck, I recommend you look in the COMP 272 General Discussion Forum to see if someone else also had the same issue. Many students ask really helpful questions and provide a lot of great resources to others who are struggling. If another student does not answer your question, the professor usually will. This course was a degree requirement of mine but unless you are really interested in advancing your knowledge of data structures then I would not recommend it.

Brittany Daigle is 22 years old and completing her BSc in Computing Science & Information Systems with AU from Toronto, Ontario.



Not My March

Jaclyn Van Beek



Can someone, *anyone*, tell me why I should #MarchForOurLives?

Last month, unspeakable evil visited Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. A gunman stole seventeen souls from their loved ones, cruelly, needlessly, malevolently. Hearts were broken as Americans witnessed this horrific drama play itself out in the news media. And then, as these things go, tragedy was made hell as brother turned on brother in a heated gun control debate.

I inwardly cringed as I watched a select few survivors of the Parkland shooting become the darlings of the mainstream media. I won't give these kids a free pass, mind you—their participation appears to be entirely voluntary,

and they are old enough to make their own choices—but I wonder if some of them might come to regret that their face will forever live on the glossy cover of TIME magazine as a symbol of a “movement” that seems to be so ill-informed and devoid of definition. I recently stumbled upon an essay I wrote in high school about socialized healthcare, and even in the privacy of my own mind I was so embarrassed I could barely get through it. I don’t know how I could have lived it down if it had been printed in TIME! Becoming more conservative as you mature is not unheard of. Supposedly, Churchill once said, *“If you’re not a liberal at twenty you have no heart. If you’re not a conservative at forty, you have no brain.”* Middle age might prove difficult for some of these young spokespeople.

Regardless, town halls were held. Interviews were given. Cover photos were taken. Marches were planned. The left-leaning mainstream media outlets have held these children up to us as shining beacons of hope, catalysts for change. Granted, their experiences must have been harrowing, and they truly have my deepest sympathies, but the mere fact of being touched by trauma does not imbue you with moral authority or legislative expertise. And yet, one can hardly scroll through the home page of CNN or BuzzFeed or without seeing photos of their faces or reading quotes pulled from one interview or another. They all say the same things. “We demand change!” “We must take action!” The mission statement on the webpage for the March For Our Lives protest event (that took place last weekend) states the following: *“Not one more. We cannot allow one more child to be shot at school. ... Our schools are unsafe. Our children and teachers are dying. We must make it our top priority to save these lives.”* And later: *“The mission and focus of March For Our Lives is to demand that a comprehensive and effective bill be immediately brought before Congress to address these gun issues. No special interest group, no political agenda is more critical than timely passage of legislation to effectively address the gun violence issues that are rampant in our country.”*

That all sounds revolutionary, but it’s also extraordinarily vague. The online petition gives us some indication of what the activist’s “comprehensive and effective” bill might look like, but the suggested policies lack sophistication and appear to be ignorant of the facts surrounding gun violence. The first demand is the banning of “assault weapons” (a phrase which has no technical definition in the classification of guns) and high capacity magazines, as well as cracking down on the so-called “gun show loophole”. Banning the private sale of firearms would be difficult, if not

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Business Undergrad Info Session

Tues, April 3, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

business.athabasca.ca/event-details/business-undergraduate-information-session-3/

Register online at above link

AUSU Advocacy

Facebook Live Event

Tues, April 3, 5:30 to 6:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/facebook-live-event-7/
no pre-registration required

AU Open House

Wed, April 4, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT

Online

Hosted by Athabasca University

www.athabasca.ca/discover/open-house/

Register online at above link

second session: Wed, April 4, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT

Edmonton Meet & Greet

Wed, April 4, 5:00 to 7:00 pm MDT

Joey Mayfield, 130 Mayfield Common NW,
Edmonton AB

In person

Hosted by AUSU

<http://www.ausu.org/event/edmonton-meet-greet-6/>

e-mail services@ausu.org to register

impossible to enforce. The reality is that there isn't some easy solution that is being quashed by greedy NRA lobbyists or corrupt politicians.

It seems to me that if legislators could draft a bill that would “comprehensively and effectively” eradicate school shootings, they would happily do so. The Second Amendment has already been bounded in a variety of ways: restrictions on fully-automatic weapons, comprehensive background checks, safety requirements for handling and storing firearms. In fact, if the laws that are already in place had been correctly implemented, the Parkland shooting might never have occurred. Does anybody really think that any politician, Republican or Democrat, simply doesn't care about dead kids? Implementing gun-free zones likely doesn't work, there are convincing reports that banning firearms does not reduce violent crime, and disarming law-abiding Americans (particularly women) may actually make them less safe. It's not that anyone doesn't care – it's that there is no simple solution to the ever-present problem that is human malevolence.

“*Not one more.*” How can anyone propose to achieve such a lofty goal? How can any legislative body be expected to ensure that not one more child dies at the hands of an evil person committing an evil act? The purification of souls is God-work, not fit for mere man. None of this is to say that improvements can't be made, and any and all legislation that keeps kids safer and does not infringe upon the rights of law-abiding citizens should be thoughtfully crafted and swiftly implemented. But it is prudent to recognize that there is no “*comprehensive and effective*” legislation that can cure the human heart of corruption. So, last Saturday, I did not petition legislators. I did not march. Instead I petitioned the only One whom I believe can end needless suffering and despair.

Christian, conservative, Canadian – in that order. Follow me on Twitter @jaclynvanbeek.



Fifteen Easy Steps to Organization

Tara Panrucker



When life gets busy, life becomes messy. Small items start to go missing and time is wasted searching for keys, phone chargers, and clothes. While organizing your living space may seem like a chore, doing so can bring about a great sense of peace and a surge of new creative energy. Time is also no longer wasted searching for things. Home clutter can also reflect mental clutter; therefore, an organized home reflects a sense of control and serenity. To help get you started, choose any of these easy steps to break down what may seem like an overwhelming task.

1. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by all the organizing you have ahead of you, break it down and do only one closet or drawer at a time. Before you know it, you'll have covered every spot in your room or home.

2. Start small. Empty your email boxes and delete old archived information no longer valid to your life. Delete old files you know you will never need again. Clearing up cyber-space can be hugely gratifying, particularly trashing those old messages from your ex.
3. Clear off your office desk, wipe it down with a wet cloth, and re-stock shelves and drawers with fresh paper, note pads and pens. Don't forget to wipe down your computer and other electronics with a cotton ball dabbed with hydrogen peroxide. Be careful not to soak it so it doesn't run into your computer; you just want enough to de-germ your keyboard. Use decorative baskets or boxes to contain files, books, and art supplies. Pinterest is a great resource for ideas.
4. Make three piles of clothes from your closets. One pile to keep, one pile to donate to charity, and one pile to toss. You can colour code your clothes when you rehang them, or sort by tops and bottoms. Take the donation bag to drop off at a thrift shop. Throw away or recycle torn or worn clothing into something new.
5. Place lint rollers in drawers throughout your home, and keep one in your vehicle so you don't waste time hunting them down. Pet owners will particularly appreciate the efficiency of this step.
6. Take all the leftover cereals, nuts, raisins, and chocolate chips in your kitchen and make a new container of trail mix for quick and healthy snacks.
7. Detox your refrigerator – throw out all expired condiments and dressings. Remove and scrub shelves and drawers with hot soapy water in the sink and dry. Clear space for fresh fruits and vegetables.
8. Soak the bathtub and shower with a good antibacterial spray or homemade vinegar solution. Let sit for ten-twenty minutes before using a magic eraser to scrub all the crud and rinse it down the drain (make sure not to use the eraser on metal fixtures—only use a soft cloth). Do the same with the sink and toilet. Look how shiny everything is now!
9. Re-stack and organize Tupperware containers and lids in cupboards for easy access and storage. No more searching in frustration for matching lids.
10. Donate utensils and items in your kitchen and closets you haven't used in over a year to charity.
11. Drive through the carwash and wipe down the interior of your vehicle. Wipe off the dusty interior windows for a clear new perspective. Add an air freshener or cotton ball soaked with essential oils for a pleasant smelling interior.
12. Clear out old liquor bottles and medicines from your cupboards. If there is a 2010 liqueur still standing patiently on a shelf, perhaps it's time to bid it goodbye. Same goes for expired medicines as they lose effectiveness over time.
13. Enlist each family member or roommate to speed-clean one drawer or shelf. Empty contents and dump the junk. Use small baskets, boxes, or plastic containers to keep small items organized. Place a box for charity and a box for garbage out and time everyone. First one finished gets to choose take-out! You may find enough change to pay for dinner.
14. Move the furniture and vacuum, dust, and wash underneath. It doesn't take long for the dust bunnies to build up, along with other things that mysteriously disappear. Your lungs will thank you for the cleaner air.

15. Recycle old magazines, newspapers, files you no longer use, and old clippings or recipe books. Now that you can basically search for anything on the internet there is truly no point in letting paper clutter pile up all over the house.

Now that you've organized your living space, you also won't be wasting time searching for missing items. Use baskets, decorative boxes, and storage cubes for tidying frees up your living space. Now you can easily focus on what's important and start accomplishing more important goals. Organizational serenity now!

Tara Panrucker is currently enrolled in an AU online English course to help hone her writing skills and eventually achieve a General Arts Degree. She is a freelance writer and avid enjoyer of the outdoors, currently residing on Vancouver Island.



The Creative Spark! Wing It on Stage

Marie Well



Ever start a speech with a sudden faceplant? If so, you've wobbled into the world of improv!

Improv requires acting on the spot—without any scripts. Improv also teaches teamwork, risk-taking, inner-critic blocking, and desire-awareness says Kate Goodman in her book, *Improvisation for the Spirit: Live a More Creative, Spontaneous, and Courageous Life Using the Tools of Improv Comedy*.

You can see the life skills learned from improv she lays out in her book in bold below.

First, improv beholds the golden rule for teamwork: Never say *no!*

Why? “*No!*” fails to draw up goodwill, warm fuzzies, and helping hands. Plus, “*no*”s stop stories midsentence.

Kate says, “In improv, it is a cardinal sin to ‘negate.’ Negation is when you deny someone’s idea . . . First of all, it will be a power play over the other actor, which is really not fun for the others and, over time, makes people not want to hang out with you . . . Second . . . if you outright say no to an idea, the scene comes to a screeching halt . . . It makes you clam up” (p. 39 or 633).

Yes, improv trains you to not tear down, but build up others’ ideas: “Instead of negating, we ‘affirm and add.’ It’s called the ‘Yes, and ...’ Rule. . . . It shows you care about the other actors’ ideas . . . All of us want our ideas heard” (p. 40 of 633).

A naysayer, my old boss, spewed “No”s. If you said, “Yes,” he said, “No.” And vice versa. If you agreed, he’d switch his view. His staff had higher turnover than nightfall in an asylum. He’d bomb improv.

Second, “improv teaches you to take risks”

(Introduction, 20 or 633). Kate says, “The point of spontaneity is that you are not censoring yourself. We often fear that if we don’t censor ourselves, we’ll say something stupid and be embarrassed by it, and everyone will think we’re dorky or worse. But if we do censor ourselves, we’ll never get to the best solutions” (p. 50 of 633).

On stage or in life, when your jokes get met with, “Oh, shut up” and rolling eyes—don’t let the backlash stick. Similarly, in boxing, when you get cracked in the face, keep jabbing.

Similarly, third, improv helps you resist inner-critics.

My boyfriend treats me with unconditional love. No critic from him. The more time I spend with him, the more carefree life feels.

On the flipside, inner critics lead to depression. I read a Pinterest pin that said, “Some people wish they had your bad days.” A decade ago, I’d have given anything to have lived my worst days this year. Despite happier times today, my self-critic roars. My best advice? Ignore critics when you flub; gag them when you sparkle.

Fourth, improv fine-tunes your wants and desires. In improv—and in life—you “must know what your character wants . . . to help create a story that moves forward in an interesting way” (Introduction, 23 of 633). As for my life, my wants seem blurry, ever-changing. I desire health, love—a career. Outside of that, I need desire tune-ups.

A life lesson I learned? Discover your desires through the Myers Briggs personality test. Then size up suitable career paths; plan your optimal life.

And don’t enroll in comp sci when it ranks worst on Myers Briggs.

In other words, don’t wing it in geek squads. Wing it on stage.



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of *The Voice Magazine*.

Would atheists believe that April 1 is “Atheist Day”? Here’s a peek at some articles on the subject of atheism:

Ethical Anarchy 101. Writer b.e. hydomako, who sometimes thinks the world is a projection of some malfunctioning machine, argues for the untangling of ethics from religion. “It should be the responsibility of each of us to impose our own morality upon ourselves.” [Self and Other: An Introduction to Ethical Anarchy](#), September 11, 2002.

Passive atheism. Lonita Fraser recounts her world tour of belief systems, including those of Roman Catholics, Wiccans, Daoists, and followers of Santeria. “Over the years I’ve come to realise that there is valuable truth in just about anything.” [In Search Of](#), January 12, 2007.



The Fit Student

Celebrities with Low Self-Esteem

Marie Well



Cocaine. Womanizing. Kardashian egos. No wonder celebrities struggle with self-esteem. But what about self-esteem for a greeter at Walmart, doomed to no Hollywood stars on the Walk of Fame?

Today at the mall, I went window-shopping. A boutique store-clerk looked at me, horrified, brushing off my chitchat, rushing me out the door. When I looked into the mirror, I could see why. I haven't had my hair done in months and my pants look ragged. Like Jim Carrey sporting Miley's hairdo.

As I left the boutique, I stewed to myself, "The first rule of customer service? Treat every customer well!"

But then I walked the corridor of the mall, peering at every women's hairstyle. Mine ranked as scraggiest. Yet, women in the mall often look plain. Not today.

Bikini-clad celebrities look frumpy compared to these women. Tall blonde Swedes, I bet.

When I reported my distress to my boyfriend, he said stop self-cherishing, be happy with who you are. He's not the slightest vain. He said get a book on self-esteem, so I went into an aisle of books and sobbed.

I returned moments later with a book, but my boyfriend looked distracted. He shared with me a political joke someone emailed him. The punchline? Kathleen Wynne. Yes, in a world of Kathleen Wynnes, I'd rank as a Kardashian.

I no longer felt bad.

But later, I went to get groceries. In the lineup, a young woman's shirt said, "Your makeup looks terrible." She peered at me and giggled. Again, I felt saddened. But should we really seek the self-esteem of a Kardashian?

Lawrence Heller, PhD, and Aline LaPierre, PsycD, talk about why celebrities lack self-esteem in their book *Healing Developmental Trauma: How Early Trauma Affects Self-Regulation, Self-Image, and the Capacity for Relationship*:

- Emphasizing looks and performance lowers self-esteem. This emphasis is called the Love-Sexuality survival style: "Since [celebrities] base their self-worth on looks and performance, their self-esteem is conditional, underneath their beautiful exterior they feel highly flawed" (p. 79).
- What! Celebrities with low self-esteem? "Individuals with the Love-Sexuality survival style are highly energetic, attractive, and successful. They are the ... sports heroes, cheerleaders, top actors and actresses" (p. 79).
- Even non-celebrities suffer celebrity-like low self-esteem: "In certain families, love is conditional, predicated on looks and performance" (p. 79).
- But when love is based on looks, troubles brew: "As a result, adolescents ... relate either from the heart or from their sexuality but find integrating both difficult and anxiety-producing" (p. 81).

- And loving looks, not souls, aches the headspace: “Having invested energy in creating an image of perfection, they fear that nobody could possibly love them if their flaws were revealed” (p. 85).
- Plus, zeroing in on looks leads to vicious cycles: Celebrities’ “constant striving for the idealized self-image actually reinforces the shame-based image of feeling flawed and unlovable” (p. 87).
- And vanity makes finding love harder: “They also fear that they aren’t capable of loving anyone, and they constantly question whether love is even possible” (p. 85).
- So, what do celebrities need to do for self-esteem? “Recognize and allow tenderness and vulnerable feelings” (p. 87) and “deepen their bodily awareness, not just beautify or objectify their body” (p. 87).
- The moral? “Love based on looks and performance is not love at all” (p. 87).

A decade ago I lacked self-esteem despite spending hours grooming. I never went outdoors without lipstick and mascara. Why so much fuss? The perfect look meant less rejection.

But one day, we all turn 60, 70, 80, or older. Skin sags. Noses grow bigger. Wisdom widens. So, what matters most? Experiences, not vanity. After all, experiences last even when you can’t afford plastic surgery.



Rejections for the Win



Deanna Roney

Rejection can be paralyzing. The thought of putting yourself out there to only be turned away can be enough to stop you from wanting to try. But, what is the worst that can happen? You ask, they say no. But, if you don’t ask, you are rejecting yourself.

Sending creative work to magazines, contests, agents, or publishers is not an easy task. Knowing that this writing thing can’t be done without *some* rejections doesn’t make receiving them any easier. After a while you might start to wonder if you’re in the right spot, chasing the right thing. A question I see a lot in writer groups is how do you

know when to trunk a piece of writing? How many rejections should you draw the line at? There is not a simple answer here. I think it is a matter of feeling.

The important thing to consider is not how many rejections you get, but how many chances you took. Did you give up after one? two? a hundred? I think one thing to consider after several rejections is to take a close look at your submission package. Is there something in there that is pushing people to pass? Maybe the grammar is off, there are typos, maybe the formatting is wrong, or maybe it is something bigger and you want to rewrite the first pages. Making these changes, altering the submission package, is not giving up, it is giving yourself more of a chance. Work with feedback, was it a query letter only that got the pass or the sample pages? Sometimes the only way to know the answer on this one is to look at what you submitted, if they ask for

query only or query and sample, if it is both then you can assume they looked at the pages and passed, but if you aren't getting beyond the query letter it is time to revise it.

Whether you are submitting creative writing, technical writing, or resumes it is important to pay attention to the details and give yourself some room to rework things if you need to. A rejection doesn't mean you will not succeed, it just means that that particular person wasn't a fit for your work, or someone else was more qualified. Sometimes these rejections can lead us to better things in the long run. Each rejection can be a lesson if you look at it hard enough. Each one might be pushing you to where you want to be.

When I queried my first work I got some requests for more, some personalized rejections, some form rejections, and some crickets. But, looking back on it all now, I wouldn't be where I am if those had gone any other way. I wouldn't have sought out an internship to learn more about the process and fallen in love with that work. If I hadn't sought out and got that first internship I would not be working with the Literary Agent I am now and the work I am doing now feels so utterly right for me. It has given me insight into the world, but also I have found another passion within it.

While the rejections hurt. Especially the first, they were one of the best things that could have happened, because they led me here. And now, I am ready to send my work back out there, I am ready to work hard in this internship, and I am excited to see where it is all going to lead me.

Don't be afraid of rejection. Because you never know where it might lead you, but don't self-reject. Don't stop yourself from putting it out there because you just never know what will come back your way –it might be something you never expected.

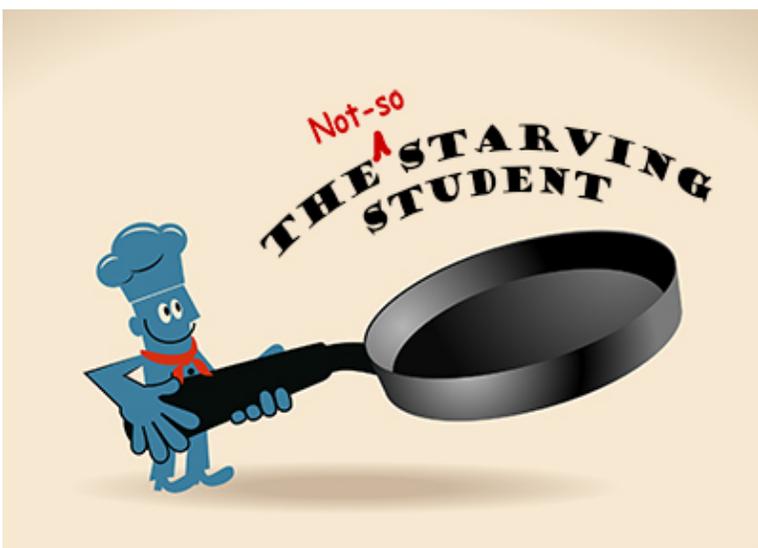
Deanna is an AU graduate who loves adventure in life and literature. Follow her path on the writing journey at <https://deannaroney.wordpress.com/>



The Not-So Starving Student

Four Exotic and Strange Eats

Xin Xu



Are you an adventurous foodie? Do you enjoy ethnic cuisines and are not afraid to make a statement with the food you're eating? Then this article is for you! Having travelled the globe to seek out authentic palette pleasers, I wanted to share some of the most unique food I've had from around the world.

Frog Legs: Cosmopolitan Las Vegas

Of all places, I certainly did not expect to find fried frog legs served on a silver buffet platter. Frog legs are considered a delicacy in Asia and having tried them on the other side of the globe, I was surprised to find deep fried, fully seasoned frog legs with some semblance to buffalo wings in Las Vegas. Luckily, The Cosmopolitan hotel serves some of the most exciting and unconventional buffet items such as bone marrow and frog legs. The protein was tender and similar to chicken wings. My favorite was the buffalo sauce dip that masked any hint that I was holding a frog leg and not a chicken drumstick at the local pub.



Fried Alligator: Orlando Florida

Even before setting foot in Orlando, we were acutely aware that we were entering alligator territory. From tours of Gatorland to airboat rides through crocodile-packed swamps, we were pumped to see these massive carnivores in action. However, I was not expecting to wind up chowing down on these beasts. While at a local diner, we picked up some local favorites like alligator and fries (strikingly similar to chicken tenders and fries). The protein was muscular, tough, and definitely not your average chicken tender texture. There was no hint of gaminess or exotic flavor, though, and it could easily have been mistaken for overly cooked beef or chicken.

Curried Camel Brisket: Edmonton Alberta

When I discovered an authentic Somalian restaurant in town, I knew I had to take a chance on African food. Given this was the only restaurant in the city that served camel meat, I had to order their curried camel brisket. The camel was seasoned with curry, cumin and a complex mix of spices that reduced the gaminess of the meat. While the texture reminded me of lamb, the meat was much fatter and had a strong hint of gaminess, one quite unlike goat or lamb.





Stir Fried Periwinkle Snails: Hefei, China

On my recent trip to China, I was enthralled by the growing night market culture and the late-night eats available in almost every city I visited. Late night eats are so popular, the Chinese give this “fourth meal of the day” a name; yie xiao (pronounced yeh tsiao). The fourth meal is popular for Chinese millennials who work tirelessly during the day and unwind at night with friends and co-workers. One of the popular selections at this hour include periwinkle snails. The snails are similar to pub food in North

America, typically ordered with a pint of beer. You use a toothpick to extract the meat. The protein is tough and carries a powerful snail scent (if you’ve ever had escargot you will understand).

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



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: The Irene Adler Prize for Women Writers

Sponsored by: Lucas Aykroyd

Deadline: April 30, 2018

Potential payout: \$1000 USD

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be female, a citizen of Canada or the U.S., and pursuing an undergrad or grad degree in journalism, creative writing, or literature at a recognized Canadian or U.S. institution in 2018-19.

What's required: A completed entry form, along with a 500-word essay on one of three topics regarding women and writing.

Tips: Read last year's winning essay for inspiration.

Where to get info: www.lucasaykroyd.com/scholarships





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Bank on It

Dear Barb:

My husband and I have been married for three years and I just found out he has a bank account that I did not know anything about. I discovered it when I went on the computer to check our mutual bank account. I noticed in the bookmarks there was a link to a bank, which was not the bank where we do our banking. When I clicked on the link it went to the login page and the access card number was already inserted, just waiting for a password. I had no idea that my husband had this bank account. When I confronted him he didn't lie about it, he admitted that he had this account. He does not see anything wrong with this. He will not tell me how much is in it, he says it's his personal business. I feel really betrayed. As a married couple I feel we should be open about stuff like this. Am I expecting too much? Thanks, Megan.

Hi Megan:

Great question! Keeping financial secrets from your spouse or significant other has a name: financial infidelity. And chances are, suspicions that your partner is not being fully honest with you about money is affecting your relationship, according to a new report from CreditCards.com.

According to a national survey dated February 14th, 2017, and conducted by the Financial Planning Standards Council and Credit Canada, 36% of Canadian's are victims of financial infidelity. Men and women are equally victims of financial infidelity from a partner. So you are not alone. I agree with

you that in a relationship you need to be completely open and honest about finances. Lying about money can be as devastating as actually being unfaithful with another person. Once a partner lies, the trust in the relationship has been jeopardized and this could lead to separation or divorce. However, partners can choose to have their own bank account, but you both should know about the account and how it is being funded. For example, is the money in the account coming from the family budget? If it is, you both should agree on how much will be deposited into this account. My suggestion to you and your husband would be to make an appointment with a credit counsellor where you will be able to discuss your finances in a safe environment with a mediator present. The counsellor should be able to discover the reason why your husband feels a need to hide his finances from you. There could be many reasons, including problems with addiction, whether it is drugs, alcohol, gambling or shopping. Other reasons could be so that the person will be able to make purchases that their partner may not approve of.

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.



Poet Maeve
Perfect Love

Wanda Waterman





AUSU

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' UNION

IMPORTANT DATES

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

- **Apr 03:** [Facebook Live Event](#)
- **Apr 04:** [Edmonton Meet & Greet Event](#)
- **Apr 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting May 1](#)
- **Apr 10:** [Council Changeover Meeting](#)
- **Apr 15:** [May degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Apr 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for June](#)
- **May 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting June 1](#)

AU Student Mobile App

Are you connected to the campus community?

Want quick access to services and resources available to you?

Download the [AU student Mobile App](#) and start connecting with fellow AU students!



Proposed Membership Fee Increase to \$3.75 per credit

AUSU council will be voting on the first reading of a [proposed student fee increase](#) during the April 10, 2018 council meeting. Council understands that any increase in fees is of concern to students, and takes any fee increase very seriously. However, council also recognizes the value of continuing to make improvement to the organization to bring quality services and resources to the membership.

The fee increase proposal will be voted on by special resolution in accordance with [AUSU Bylaws](#). The motion that will be voted on will be as follows:

BIRT AUSU council approve a membership fee increase in the amount of \$0.75 per credit to take effect on October 1, 2018.

A great deal of consideration and research has been put into the potential fee increase. Although AUSU always has and will continue to advocate for the lowest possible fees for post-secondary students, there are important reasons why a student union fee increase is being considered at this time.

Find out more on our website [here](#), including:

- Improvements AUSU has made over the past 2 years
- Opportunities for membership feedback
- The dates of the first and second reading of the proposed change

AUSU Career Resources

Looking for a job? Need help creating a resume or preparing for interviews?

Want to find out what career fairs are coming up in your province?

AUSU's [Career Resources](#) can help.



AUSU currently has the lowest student union fees in the province of Alberta at only \$3.00 per credit. Other student unions charge up to \$90 per credit, with a provincial average of \$7.89 to \$27.42 per credit*. Even with the proposed fee increase, AUSU fees will be among the lowest in the province, despite also being the largest student union in the province.

**Based on 2016/2017 University calendar fee listings. Variance based on full course load vs. part time studies and in some cases on program.*

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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