

Vol 29 Issue 50 2021-12-17

# Minds We Meet Interviewing Students Like You

# Christmas, COVID, and Caring How to Reach Out

# Musing on Traditions What Makes a Tradition?

Plus: Taking Toxicity out of Xmas Local Shoutout in Red Deer and much more!

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



#### We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to <u>voicemagazine.org</u>, 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.

Karl Low

#### Editorial Happy Holidays!



Welcome to the last issue of *The Voice Magazine* for 2021. It's been a bit of a year for me, and hopefully you've had an even better one. As it's the last issue, some folks have contacted me asking about what's happened with issues from previous editorials, so, quickly, the dog seems to have bounced back and be happy again, we still don't know what happened, but gift horses.

My journey with ADHD medication has proven to be unproductive. I'm at the maximum dosage they like to give and while it's finally starting to have some noticable effects, those are primariy side effects—a slightly higher level of tension/anxiety and an elevated heart rate sometimes. I expect the next change will be to reduce the dosage and try to find ways to focus on psychological/lifestyle adjustments to deal with habits that have formed over some 50 years. I'm not terribly hopeful about the chances of any significant differences, but I guess you don't know until you try.

As the last issue for 2021, the time has come for me to ask a favor of all of you. If you have a moment in the busy rush, think back and see if there's any article over the past fifty issues this year that struck you as particularly thought provoking, enjoyable, infuriating, or simply a really good read. If something comes to mind, send it to me at <u>karl@voicemagazine.org</u> because I'm starting to compile the list for the Best of the Voice 2021, which will be our very next issue, released on January 7th, 2022. If you can't remember the title or the issue, that's fine, just give me a general description and I'll hunt it down.

Creating a "Best of" issue that's informed by your opinions is not only great for me, reminding me of some of the articles I've forgotten, but I feel makes a great way to start a new year and to really show new students what *The Voice Magazine* is all about.

Also, I should let you know that if you're not subscribed to our notification list, you missed out on a secret contest I ran a couple of weeks ago. Ten lucky people who wrote in in response to my announcement will be notified very soon that they've won a fun pack of *The Voice Magazine* swag, just for sending a quick email! Will I run another surprise secret contest in future? You never really know (hint: yes), but you'll have to subscribe to know when it is and how to enter. All you give up is the email space for a single message on Friday letting you know when the latest edition of *The Voice Magazine* is available online—and that's something you already wanted to know, right?

So, what's in store for our last issue? Well, we've got a great interview with a student who's had to be her own primary motivation for her education. And, like I'm sure many at AU, her journey in post-secondary is as much as exploration of what she can learn as it is a step toward a possible goal. Sometimes it's hard to remember among all the students who are driven to get their degree as simply another step in their life plans that some people are still figuring out their plans for sure, and post-secondary education is part of how they discover that.

We've also got a look at holiday traditions. We probably all have them, but do we really know what they are? Plus, Marie Well makes her case for a selfless caring Christmas, and some of the things, large and small, that you can do to help bring it about. All this plus advice, closures, scholarships (with a bonus to keep you going over the holidays), reviews, recipes, and more!

Have a happy holiday, enjoy the read, and we'll see you next year!

# MINDS OF MEET



Who are your fellow students? At times, in an online learning environment, it can feel like you are all alone, but across the nation and around the globe, students just like you are also pursuing their Athabasca University (AU) studies! Each week, *The Voice Magazine* will be bringing you some of these stories. If you would like to be featured next, do not hesitate to get in touch!

*The Voice Magazine* recently had a chance to chat with Wendy Meguinis (she/her), currently residing in TsuuT'ina Nation, Alberta.

Wendy is currently enrolled in the second year of the <u>Bachelor of General Studies</u> – <u>Applied Studies</u> program here at AU. Prior to her time at AU, Wendy worked most of her life and did not have "an opportunity to study," however; she "started with small goals." She explained, "My first goal was to complete a <u>University Certificate in</u> <u>Public Administration</u>, which I graduated from in August 2020. My next goal was to move onto a diploma but with some encouragement I am now in my 2nd year of the Bachelor of General Studies – Applied Studies degree program."

Her "future goal is the <u>Bachelor of Commerce</u>," but, as she explained, "[W]e will see where I go and how I get there first. Small, attainable goals first. Having an education fits in with anybody and anywhere they go; it is a useful tool and with it, I will always give back to my community and ensure there is a future for our youth."

Describing herself as "a 43-year-old First Nations Woman," Wendy stated that she works and studies full time. She continued, "I am married and we are parents of two beautiful daughters and grandparents to one energetic grandson. TsuuTina Nation is where I am from and where I reside."

When she is not studying, Wendy loves "to golf, play pool, binge watch *Netflix* or movies." She continued, "I like to be the passenger in a vehicle while my husband aimlessly drives around the city. I love to play with my grandson and have hangout time with my family." Although like many AU leaners juggling full-time work and school Wendy does not have much time to read non-school related books, she has recently read *Red River Girl: The Life and Death of Tina Fontaine* by Joanna Jolly. She has also begun reading *Bears Falling from Trees, On the Wings of Success*, and is looking forward to reading, *Firekeeper's Daughter*. "One day soon when I get through all these courses I can get to it."

When asked who in her life had the greatest influence on her desire to learn, Wendy stated, "Honestly myself, I always wanted to study, I always wanted to receive my education." She continued, "When I was a little girl, I used to carry a phone book around and pretend I was walking the halls of a school; unfortunately, I never had the chance to. It was always my goal, and I knew one day if I fought and pushed hard enough that I would get the opportunity."

As for her experience with online leaning, she described it as "a lonely world," adding that "[I]t would be nice to have some peers and study together and walk the school hallways, but sometimes that's just a want." She elaborated, "When I first started online, it was great, you have your own study schedule, you can do it anywhere at anytime you want to. But when you start to get bogged down and start to feel alone it gets a little tough. This is where you have to remember your goals and give yourself that extra push to keep going. Also have to remember that this free schedule is an advantage and that I should not take it for granted."

Like many students, Wendy related that there was a certain point when she wavered about continuing her schooling. She explained, "After I completed my certificate, it was weird not having any courses, so I jumped back into more courses. Then I realized I might have needed a break. I haven't had a break from courses since May 2018, and it took me a long time to snap back into it. I found myself putting off my courses and getting intimidated by the assignments and course loads. I pushed some courses to the brink, and then I just said 'That's enough.' and I sat down and dove into them. I am not getting my education for anyone else, I am not getting it because I have to or that it is a requirement for something. I am just doing it for my own self and that is what gives me the greatest push is when I remember that."

There have been highlights in the educational journey as well, including <u>INST 203</u>: Indigenous Studies I. She explained, "Being First Nations and learning about First Nations was a shock to me. It was weird reading about my life, all the things I lived through and experienced were in a book and it was teaching me the reasoning of why I lived that way. It gave me so much insight into my grandmother and mother's life and managed to work me through many feelings and many realizations. I can't wait for my next <u>INST</u> course."

When asked about her communication with tutors, Wendy has not had much to date, stating, "I just try my best to get through my courses on my own."

If she were the new President of AU, Wendy joked that she would "make it easier to pass all the courses." "(Just kidding.") She continued, "If it was easy, everyone would do it. A project I would create is to have the instructors/tutors or writers of the books do an introduction videos or course topic videos. Just so it feels like a school environment and that we have a visual of the staff behind AU. And because sometimes we just need that visual explanation."

As for pet peeves? "I'm always scared that I am missing important information somewhere in the AU portals that I need for my course. I couldn't find a study program recently and I was looking everywhere, after some digging I realized it was down. So yeah, my pet peeve is not finding what I think I need."

When asked which famous person, past or present, that she would like to have lunch with and why, Wendy chose George Strait, "because, you know, he's George Strait." She would also "like to have lunch with a famous writer and get the code for keeping your brain on topic and learning how to organize all your words and thoughts." And the lunch? "A medium well done 6oz steak with mushrooms and shrimp, served with loaded mashed potatoes and asparagus."

The most valuable lesson that Wendy has learned in life has been self-care. She explained, "You need to be healthy and live peacefully in this lifetime. Make your life happy and create happy

comfortable spaces for yourself that you can dwell into and be at peace. Be active and do the things you want to do. If I could tell my 20-year-old self that."

As for the proudest moment in her life? "Proudest moments in life are watching my children do things that are great. I could go on and on about the great things my oldest daughter has accomplished in her life so far. Seeing my youngest daughter excited and happy about school this year is the highlight of 2021 for sure. Watching my grandson learn to skate and play hockey. The proudest moment of my life so far was receiving my University Certificate. Due to COVID, I couldn't celebrate with anyone or go to a graduation so that is something I will never be able to describe, just the pride and happiness in my own self is what I hold onto. I always knew I could do it and now I await my next graduation."

And the one thing that distinguishes her from other people? "Wow where do I begin? From doing this interview I have learned that I am not able to brag about myself or give myself too much credit. I like to share credit with my peers and hype them up or write about other people and not myself." She mentioned that this was particularly evident in the questions about her proudest moment, where she went on at length her daughter's accomplishments! She continued, "I also am a very empathetic person and I have to distance myself from anything that brings heartbreak or anger."

On a final note, Wendy related that she wishes that she had "been introduced to AU when [she] was younger." She explained, "I feel if I had that opportunity, I would be a lot farther into my goals. But I am ever so glad to have found AU, and I am ever so thankful that I get to receive my education and play out my goals. If you're reading this and you are not in school, then get to school. And if you're in school and struggle sometimes, then know you are not alone, and we can do it." Best of luck Wendy!

Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.



# Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

The devastation of last week's tornadoes in the U.S. sent us chasing after tornadic experiences of our past Voices.

**Run for the basement? Or the camera?** Columnist Hazel Anaka recounts the terrible beauty of an approaching funnel cloud. "There's something mesmerizing about this phenomenon: the power, the fury, the sound, the spectacle, and the inherent danger." <u>From Where I Sit – Extreme Weather</u>, June 1, 2005.

Hoping tornadoes don't strike twice. Upon learning her daughter has moved to the same trailer park shredded in 1987's Edmonton tornado, Debbie Jabbour recalls that fateful event. "It was a very strange greenish-blue-black hue, something I had never before seen in my life, an awful, sickening colour that sent shivers down my back." From My Perspective – Trailer Park Blues, August 6, 2003.

Marie Well

#### Christmas, COVID, and Caring



COVID has impacted us all: the private sector has been impacted, many food banks have been overwhelmed, homelessness has been visible at intersections in almost every district in the city. This Christmas, reach out to those people most impacted by COVID.

In that vein, I learned a lesson recently: if someone's asks, wants, or needs something from us, and if it's not negative, then the right thing to do is to honor the request.

For example, if a loved one gets a divorce, loses their house, or goes bankrupt during COVID, it's time to step up to the plate and help their hearts mend. Even if the person is a stranger, or someone you may never meet in your life, caring feels great. Whatever the hardship, there are so many ways we can support loved ones in need.

In a time of desperation, food means more than words. Encourage family and friends to donate food items. Purchase a holiday meal to share with your loved one in need.

A cash gift can come in handy, too. A professor of mine once said, "People often don't give homeless people money for fear it might be spent on alcohol. But if I was homeless, I think I might spend it on alcohol, too." So, giving a cash gift, even if it's spent on cigarettes or alcohol, is a way to show you care. I'd personally prefer to give a gift card to a grocery store, instead, but every gift given is an act of love.

The gift of service can come in handy, as well. If a loved one is elderly, then shoveling their walks might be a way to show you care. You could also take your senior grocery shopping or clean his or her home.

Saying prayers for the person is another welcome way to show you care. If you are not religious, perhaps a phone call filled with kindness would serve as a show of love.

Time spent together may be helpful, too. Perhaps go with the person to their favorite restaurant, museum, or shopping mall. Or just gather at a place of residence and play a movie or listen to music and talk. And some healthy snacks like nuts, cheese, and berries go a long way in warming a hungry belly.

Helping the person realize their dreams is another excellent show of support. No matter the age, severity of disability, or impoverishment, everyone should be supported in realizing their dreams. If you can pay for a course they need, help them acquire items for a professional wardrobe, make them a resume, buy them an annual gym membership, or act as a chauffeur when needed, everyone benefits, especially the giver.

A COVID Christmas can be a difficult time for the person in need, but it can also be a spiritual time. The gathering around of loved ones and the shows of support can make those under duress overflow with a sense of being loved.

And don't worry if your gifts become an expectation. Expect instead for your heart to burst from giving love during the duress of a COVID Christmas.

#### **Musings on Traditions**



#### **Adrienne Braithwaite**

Traditions are paramount during the holiday season. Delicious family recipes, festive excursions, family game nights, and social gatherings are all traditions many of us look forward to in the month of December. However, it can often be a struggle to identify our own unique holiday traditions. While from a bird's eye view, it is easy to notice traditions happening all over our communities, but it's harder when we point the finger back toward our own lives.

In a recent university assignment, my niece had to reflect on her family's traditions, but she could not come up with any concrete examples. She is not alone in this problem; many of us struggle to find patterns in our behaviours year after year. We love to describe ourselves using words such as *contemporary, modern,* and *innovative,* but these words do not necessarily align with our views on traditions.

Additionally, with the COVID-19 global pandemic, we may

have to forego many of our holiday activities that give us so much pleasure during this season. These problems have led me to consider the significant role traditions play in our daily lives, and just how much they contribute to our overall pleasure during the holidays.

#### Family Traditions

Family traditions are such a broad category, exemplifying a seemingly unlimited variation of activities, feelings, and emotions. For myself, holiday family traditions start with food and end with emotions.

We often hear the phrase "bucket fillers"; to me, this term encapsulates the purpose of holiday traditions for me and my family. We figuratively fill each other's buckets while sharing baking recipes, favourite meal ideas, and finishing our Christmas shopping. We also make every effort to be together in some form during the month of December, despite being spread out across Canada. Some of the unique traditions we have (which may or may not be part of other families' traditions), are to order Chinese food take-out on Christmas Eve, drive around looking at Christmas lights around the neighborhood and have Santa deliver early presents of Christmas pajamas.

However, contrary to what the term implies, traditions do not always have to mean that we do the same things every year without fail. Instead, family traditions are as simple as patterns in behaviour and activities during a specific time of year. When you think of your own holiday traditions, what makes those activities so special in your memories? Do your family members reminisce about similar things about the holidays? If so, these are likely your unique family traditions. Our memories will naturally draw us to events that touched us on an emotional or spiritual level, such as things which "filled our bucket."

If your family is new or expanding, you may want to create new and happy memories together. If you want, *Country Living* has a large <u>list of holiday activities to try with your family</u>. You never know, these might become your new family traditions!

#### **Religious Traditions**

In Canada, the holiday season has historically been tied to Christian beliefs. As a substitute teacher this year, I have witnessed how diverse the holiday celebrations are in schools while also how so much of it is still so closely tied to Christianity.

This December many schools are preparing Christmas concerts, decorating classrooms for the season and some even walking through the Christian tradition of Advent. However, the holiday season is becoming more and more of a holiday celebrated by both Christians and non-Christians.

Some schools have chosen to forgo holiday decorations and instead focus on winter fun events. Public spaces are becoming more sensitive to the multicultural nature of Canadian society, and this fosters inclusion and sensitivity to our diverse communities. I personally find myself replacing "Merry Christmas" with a more expansive "Happy Holidays."

There are many different religions that have celebrations during the month of December. Some of these focus on celebrating the lives of influential people in history, while other festivities are in anticipation of what is to come. These religious traditions include Hanukkah, a Jewish tradition also known as The Festival of Lights, Bodhi Day, a Buddhist commemoration of Buddha's enlightenment, Kwanzaa, an African-American harvest festival, and <u>Yule</u>, a celebration for Pagans and Wiccans.

There are so many ways we can foster peace, compassion, and charity for others throughout the month of December, without being insensitive to the spiritual beliefs of others. Our traditions draw up emotions and personal preferences, therefore, religious traditions can be a contentious subject. The University of Wisconsin-Madison shares a contemporary viewpoint on <u>religious holidays</u>, and how we can be more culturally sensitive to diverse beliefs during the month of December.

#### **Holiday Closures and Educational Traditions**

One of the reasons we all have time for our personal traditions is because in Canada (and many other nations), we celebrate the season with closures to educational institutions. These closures are a societal tradition that is observed by most citizens in Canada (or at least those connected to education in some way). Both Christians and non-Christians use this time away from academic environments to regenerate physically and emotionally, gather with family and friends, or to prepare for the new year ahead.

I did some research to see why so many countries implement such a large winter break for students of all ages, especially one so closely tied to Christianity, and the results surprised me. There are plenty of scholarly articles online which advocate for an educational break during the winter months. The studies claim a twofold benefit, the first is that the break is convenient for Christians who celebrate Christmas, and the second is it falls at an ideal time for students to have a break from academic learning. Education Week has a few thought-provoking articles discussing the pros and cons of the current traditional school calendar if you have an interest in learning more about how and why our education system historically supports a break during a religious holiday. I also highly recommend reading "<u>Reimaging the School Calendar for Anishnaabe Schools</u>," which provides a modern look into how education in Canada could be restructured to promote Indigenous Peoples' traditions and worldviews.

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#### Music Review—Black Lights



Jessica Young

Artist: Beneath The Silence Album: *Black Lights* 

Denmark's female-fronted melodic metal quintet, Beneath The Silence, are releasing their new album *Black Lights* on February 11<sup>th</sup> 2022 through Prime Collective.

Of the album, vocalist Mette Hessellund says, "with this album we strived to push our sound further in all directions, while still keeping the core messages intact. *Black Lights* is about being in a place in life where everything seems dark and hope is only a source of disappointment. It's the most personal material we've written so far, and the themes are derived from some rough years that have led to many admissions about who you become when you're broken, and how it feels when you lose yourself and your dreams of the future. I wanted to explore the hopelessness that

is found in such a moment, which led to somber themes of the record".

*Black Lights* consists of ten tracks: "All I See"; "Break You"; "In The Shadow Of Your Eyes"; "Take Over Me; Open Wounds"; "The Taste Of Bitterness"; "Wide Awake"; "Over The Edge"; "Fear"; and "No Where To Go".

While Hessellund bears a striking resemblance to Paramore's Haley Williams, Beneath The Silence has a sound that aligns more with Evanescence—so much so it's difficult not to compare the two bands. Hessellund has an amazing, powerful voice that rises with the symphonic instrumentals of the band (without any screaming), however the lack of gentle piano or string instruments used to compliment her voice makes the album begin to feel noisy after listening to a few songs in a row. The track "Wide Awake" is placed towards the end of the album and has a much slower, orchestral vibe, which I really enjoy. The beginning of the song reminds me of the classic opening to My Chemical Romance's "The Black Parade".

The band has also released music videos for the singles <u>"Fear"</u> and <u>"No Where To Go"</u>. I watched the video for "No Where To Go" first, and I enjoyed it. It's a typical metal band music video—all the band members are dressed in black looking somber, playing their instruments in an empty, castle-like building. Simple, but fitting for the band's aesthetic. I watched the video for "Fear" next, and I wasn't as impressed. The videos are essentially the same, but the latter features the band backlit by blinding lights and a smoke machine. There's nothing overly wrong with the video, it just seems gimmicky. With the song's straightforward lyrics, I think the band could have created a more interesting story for the video instead of copy-pasting their previous content.

Overall, I liked *Black Lights*. If you like rocking out to some Evanescence, Beneath The Silence is definitely worth a listen.

Check out Beneath The Silence on Facebook and Instagram.

Jessica is completing her Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations degree while pursuing her passion for writing and drinking coffee.

#### Fly on the Wall Taking Toxicity out of Xmas



gatherings.

#### Jason Sullivan

#### A Gleeful Romp Through Potentials and Pitfalls in that Most Festive of Seasons

December holidays can be a wondrous and positive time. Also, holiday cheer can be an oxymoron. Participants are implored to be joyful and to keep the Christmas spirit while still being themselves. And, well, it's not so easy to feel festive all the time. Likewise, we're asked to remember the reason for the season (family, friends, gratitude) while shopping mindlessly amidst total strangers (masked up and muzzled by the fact that you can't gift someone a feeling of love). Like an elective that's practically mandatory or a declarative statement that begins with words like "you're going to want," the December holidays are rife with potential pitfalls as well as joyful

We AU students are well equipped for solitary study so, instead of anxiety over the socializing that goes with the season, it's worth taking Christmas and New Year's as a dual double-header of an academic challenge. What new can you learn about those around you? Whether you're a social science major or just a member of society (there's no escaping language and culture for those of our species), we might watch for a few triggers that lead to toxic interactions. Most importantly, for a peaceful Xmas, we can recall the fortune cookie phrase attributed to noted therapist Wayne Dyer (1940-2015): "conflict cannot survive without your participation" (Dyer, online).

#### What Do We Talk About When We're All Here?

Lest we blame family as the causative agent leading to conflict and/or excessive peer pressure (to conform, to be nice, to party hardy, to account for one's previous year in terms of assorted economic, academic, social, or consumerist markers), let's recall that many a friend or coworker gathering has led to difficulties as well.

Erving Goffman (1922-1982), noted Canadian sociologist worthy of the statue that sits in his hometown of Mannville, Alberta, provides a couple of hints about why social interaction may become a bit of an alligator swamp come the ol' Yuletide time. Social conformity is especially pronounced during Canadian Christmas, where weather typically confines gatherings to indoor environments where population density exceeds the expected carrying capacity of rooms, homes, and halls. Never was social distancing so needed or so lacking. But larger social expectations are not limited to our country. Here are a couple of choice snippets from Goffman classic text, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*:

"In Shetland Isle the inhabitants, in an effort to present themselves as progressive farmers to visitors from the outside world, felt somewhat hostile to the few *crofters* who apparently didn't care and who refused to shave or wash, or construct a front yard, or to supplant the thatched roof of their cottage with something less symbolic of traditional peasant status" (Goffman, 165).

Beard not manicured, hair not *did* at an expensive salon, forsooth! New home not acquired in some swanky suburb? Stereotypes though these stigmas be, they can easily seep into small talk

like septic waste into a neighbour's doggy run. A way to avoid these queries, should they arise, is to make it not about oneself or the other but about social theory. For instance, a quick dip into terms like petit-bourgeois aesthetics and perceived class habitus (see: Pierre Bourdieu, online) can reframe the conversation.

Differences of economic class and cultural lifestyle were especially pronounced on the Shetland Islands, as Goffman discovered. Just as black sheep of a family or social pariahs in a community are often the safe topic of judgment, finger-wagging, and general toxicity (so long) as they are absent), this need for a scapegoat to carry polite discourse forward can be especially pronounced over holiday gatherings with the expectation of prolonged conversational engagements.

#### **AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Closures**

#### Athabasca University

Closed Fri, Dec 24 to Mon, Jan 3, inclusive Reopens Tues, Jan 4, 8:30 am MST More info at: news.athabascau.ca/announcements/holi day-closure-2021/

#### **AU Library**

Last day to order materials: Fri, Dec 17 Closed Fri, Dec 24 to Mon, Jan 3 inclusive Reopens Tues, Jan 4, 8:30 am MST More info at: library.athabascau.ca/page/ann

#### AUSU

Closed Sat, Dec 18 to Mon, Jan 3, inclusive Reopens Tues, Jan 4, 9:00 am MST

"Island gentry sometimes discussed how it could hardly

work to socialize with the natives, since there would be no common interest. While the gentry thus showed good insight into what would happen if a crofter came to tea, they seemed less aware of how dependent the teatime *esprit* was on their being crofters available to not have to tea" (Goffman, 163).

Another game, along with the reality that speaking can be seen as a positive exercise in building affinities with family and friends, is to whip out an academic quote and have those in attendance guess which gender wrote it. Here's a classic, to this Fly on the Wall anyway: "The female friendships that she succeeds in keeping or forming are precious to a woman, but they are very different in kind from relations between men. The latter communicate as individuals through ideas and projects of personal interest, while women are confined within their general feminine lot and bound together by a kind of immanent complicity...Their work is not a technique; by passing on recipes for cooking and the like, they endow it with the dignity of a secret science founded on oral tradition" (de Beauvoir in Goffman, 161).

Ouch, a wee bit of a misogynist generalization there! Well, turns out it was written by an eminent philosopher of 20<sup>th</sup> Century existentialism, Her Majesty Simone de Beauvoir. Perhaps such quotes, if they can stimulate intellectual dialogue or simple ruminations about family and gender life, can open interesting new doors to discourse. At the least, they will garner laughs, guffaws, and frowns out of those around. And stimulation of the spirit of the season, a sense of congenial curiosity into the lives of others on this special holiday occasion, may be just the ticket to deliver us from any toxicity. On the other hand, we might get thrown out on our ear and wish we'd have just quietly stirred our eggnog and stroked our unkempt beards and un-coiffed hairdos!

In any case, however you celebrate the season or even if you don't: Happy Holidays to all and to all a pleasant time!

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

Xine Xu

#### Do You Have a Skin Care Routine



Canada's dry winters can cause many skin concerns. Having struggled with dry or flaking skin for years, I've looked to strategies to better manage this dryness for the last two decades. Depending on your particular skin type, there may be various ways to help replenish the lack of moisture in your skin. I've recently discovered a process that works well for myself and may work for you too! If you have dry skin or, worse yet, eczema or other skin-specific issues, starting a skin routine can help reduce any conditions such as inflammation, itchiness, or scaling that may occur from the dry Canadian winters.

#### Step 1: Wash

Washing may seem self-explanatory, however there are many ways this can go wrong. Did you know that over washing your

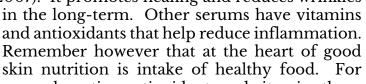
skin can dry it out even further causing cracking and loss of moisture through the surface layers of the skin? Hence why sticking to a morning and evening face washing routine (and no more than once daily showers) is adequate for removing dirt and grime off our faces.

#### Step 2: Tone

While this is not a must-have step. One of the ways that has worked for helping retain moisture in my skin is adding a toner. The purpose of a toner is to help correct any pH differences from the ideal pH of your skin. Because of the acidic nature of the skin, washing our faces with tap water causes a change in pH that can cause some to break out with acne. Acidity is important for keeping out certain bacteria that cause skin inflammation or acne. I like to use a non-alcohol-based toner as it helps reduce dryness after application.

#### Step 3: Serum

This extra step is also not a mandatory step for everyone however it does help correct problems your skin may have. For example, if you're looking for long-term anti-aging care, the best product to use should include retinol—a form of vitamin A that helps speed up the cellturnover process (Kafi, 2007). It promotes healing and reduces wrinkles





I added a mask to my routine before the serum step to provide an even deeper cleanse. I'm using a clay mask but you can also use any sheet mask to help improve your complexion

example, eating antioxidants and vitamins through fruits and vegetables is just as important if not more so than applying nutritious serum to our skin.

#### Step 4: Moisturize

While Step 2 and 3 may be optional for some people, moisturizing is a must in the intensely dry Canadian winters. Different types of moisturizers help retain water in the face and other areas of dryness. I like to apply them to my skin, hands, and feet as I find the flaking and



Adding some emulsion moisturizer to help form a protective barrier against the dryness of Canadian winters

Milica Markovic

itching happens most often in these areas. For others, you might find entire arms, elbows, legs, and calves are dry over the course of the year. In this case, applying moisturizer to these areas is optimal. For those with eczema, the type of moisturizer is particularly important. For example, whereas lotions are more liquid heavy, creams are more well tolerated and thicker in consistency. For those who have oilier skin, gel may be an effective option. (Junginger, 1992)

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



**Course Exam** HSRV 201 (Social Work and Human Services)

If you have a course that you would like to see a Course Exam article written for or you recently took a course that you would like to recommend to other AU students, please feel free to reach out with the course name and number, and any questions or feedback you may have. We'll be happy to write about it in our next Course Exam article.

HSRV 201 is an entry-level, general interest course in the Bachelor of Professional Arts, Human Services degree program that introduces students to social work, human services, and the social policies that govern both fields. The historical underpinnings, approaches, and principles of human services and social work will guide students through the discourse surrounding social welfare.

By engaging with the theories and methods in this course, students should gain a clearer sense of their position on social welfare and are expected to express their reasoning in a personal philosophy statement. Students will also learn to: read and research at or above the course level; apply the course material to hypothetical scenarios; implement policies as they pertain to persons, families, groups, or communities; consult available resources to establish issues in social work and human services; educate people on said issues; and become an ethically conscious practitioner in the field.

This three-credit course for individualized study has no prerequisites or preclusions, and can be challenged for credit.

#### Who Should Take This Course and Why

Course coordinator Dr. Melissa Jay, who is a Nehiyaw member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, says HSRV 201 offers a great introduction to students who are eager to learn more about human

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services and social work. She adds that the course is popular among students from other disciplines as well.

Student feedback over the past year has helped Melissa revise the assignments to allow students more freedom in how they share their knowledge, so they should look forward to creative opportunities for self-expression.

#### **Course, Assignments, and Exam Details**

Thoughtfully created by Dr. Jane Arscott, HSRV 201 provides students with a substantial overview of course expectations. It has four parts, ordered chronologically: *Social Welfare*; *Professional Practice*; *Practice*, *Process, and Levels*; and *Working with Special Populations*.

Part One contains the most sections: *Getting Started*; *Social Welfare and Social Work in Canada*; *The Pillar of Income Security*; *The History of Social Work*; and *International Social Work*.

Part Two covers Theory and Approaches to Social Work Practice and Professional Practice, while Part Three explores Working with Individuals and Families and Working with Groups and Communities. It is in these parts where students will demonstrate their fundamental understanding of the coursework by assigning actions to the appropriate populations.



In Part Four, which is called *Working with Special Populations*, students must respond to particular situations by incorporating their studies from the entire course.

Aside from the personal philosophy statement, which is worth 20% of the final grade, there are three other assignments: Social Work with Individuals, Families, Groups, and Communities (30%), Social Work with Special Populations: Case Consultation (30%), and the Self-Evaluation: Discussion Forum (20%).

These assignments are unique in that, as Melissa explains, "students are invited to choose the type of submission whether it be a traditional paper or PowerPoint presentation." She also clarifies that the first three assignments are designed to aid students in a tangible integration of course concepts, while the final one prompts students to reflect on their class participation throughout HSRV 201.

#### How to Be Successful in the Course

#### **Course Tutor's Advice for the Course**

This course, according to Melissa, invites students to be curious and open minded as they are expected to pay close attention to nuanced processes that are often present in professional environments.

The assignments require students to use the seventh edition of the APA style; thus, they will need to become familiar with it as early as possible. Melissa advises them to refer to their APA manual when necessary and seek support from their tutors as well as AU's Write Site.

#### **Questions?**

If you have any further questions regarding the course, please do not hesitate to contact Melissa at <u>mjay@athabascau.ca</u>. Happy learning!

#### Homemade is Better Denver Style Quicke

#### **Chef Corey**



With Christmas approaching, hopefully we are going to be busier than last year. And with our hustle and bustle comes the need for quicker meals. This week, I made a quiche in the style of a Denver omelette. This recipe uses breadcrumbs as a base instead of pie dough. If you have a pie dough that you like to use, though, it can easily be substituted for the breadcrumbs.

I don't have a lot to add this week, except that I hope everyone is safe over the holidays. Follow your provincial or local COVID restrictions and get your vaccines. Have a Happy Holidays everyone!



#### **Denver Style Quiche**

#### Ingredients:

2 cups breadcrumbs
2 tbsp melted butter
6 eggs
% cup half and half (or milk, or heavy cream)
2 cups shredded cheese (your choice, I used mozzarella and cheddar)
1 red pepper - diced
1 green pepper - diced
½ red onion – fine dice
2 tbsp butter
Salt
Pepper





#### **Directions:**

1) Preheat an oven to 375°F.

2) In a bowl mix together the breadcrumbs and melted butter.

3) Press the breadcrumbs into a 9" pie plate until it covers the sides and bottom. Ensure that it is pushed in with some force and make a good crust.

4) Heat a frying pan over medium-high.

5) Add the peppers, onion, and unmelted butter. Season with salt and pepper and cook until the onions are translucent.

6) Allow them to cool, in the meantime mix the cream and eggs.

7) Add the half the pepper mixture to the breadcrumb crust, top with half the cheese.

8) Add the eggs, then top with pepper mixture and cheese.

9) Place in the oven for 45 minutes, then cover with foil and cook for another 15 minutes or until the internal temperature reaches 165°F or until the eggs are fully cooked.
10) Enjoy

Chef Corey is a student in business management who first graduated from NAIT's Culinary Arts Program in 2007

#### **Beyond Literary Landscapes** Disablity Literature

#### Natalia Iwanek



From my early beginnings as a young introvert, the public library has always been a bit of a refuge. Years later, not much has changed, albeit with an additional affinity for endless hours spent scouring second-hand bookstores to add to my ever-growing "to-read" pile.

From one bookworm to another, this column will be underscoring and outlining various literary genres, authors, and recent reads and can serve as an introduction for those unfamiliar with these works, as a refresher for long-time aficionados, and maybe as an inspiration for readers to share their own suggested topics. Do you have a topic that you would like covered in this column? Feel free to <u>contact me</u> for an interview and a feature in an upcoming column.

#### Who

Those interested in an introduction to the extensive topic of Disability, a reminder of some popular works, and as an impetus for further reading, may choose to

begin with a few well-known authors, scholars, and editors, namely Alice Wong, Amanda Leduc, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, and Robert McRuer.

#### What

<u>Disability</u> is a large and complex umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of unique lived experiences. It is also not a monolith, and can have different meanings for individuals, in terms

of self-identification and the very language used to describe oneself and one's lived experiences, such as <u>identity-first versus people-first language</u>.

Some works that can be used as a primer to this genre include Alice Wong's collection *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century, Disfigured: On Fairy Tales, Disability, and Making Space* by Amanda Leduc, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, and *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* by Robert McRuer. In addition, Dorothy Palmer's *Falling for Myself: A Memoir* is another example.

Readers who would like to know more about the history of disability can also pursue *A Disability History of the United States* by Kim E. Nielsen.

Online reads include <u>Autistic Hoya</u> – Lydia X. Z. Brown, <u>Crutches and Spice</u> – Imani Barbarin, and the <u>Disability Visibility Project</u> – Alice Wong.

#### Where

Many of these books are centered on the lived experiences of those in Canada and the United States.



#### When

These books are predominantly centred on the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup>-centuries.

#### Why

For readers interested in learning more about disability, chronic illness, neurodiversity, the history of disability, the disability rights movement, disability justice, the social model of disability versus the medical model, community care, as well as ableism and intersections with other forms of oppression, these select works are a good start.

#### How

AU's wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to Disability are available in a variety of disciplines, including one's that may fit into your Degree Works. (Always check with a counsellor to see if these particular courses fulfill your personal graduation requirements!)

AU students interested in learning more about this topic are recommended to look into <u>MAIS 658</u>: Doing Disability Differently, a graduate-level, three-credit course, which "examines disability as a social, cultural, political, and experiential phenomenon from which issues of social equality and justice emerge." (For students looking for information about accommodations available at AU, <u>Accessibility Services</u> has additional information.) Happy reading!

Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.

Local Shoutout

#### Jessica Young



Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses (CFIB) estimates potential permanent closures of up to 222,000 small and mediumsized businesses, depending on how the situation evolves. That's 21 percent of *all* Canadian businesses. The corresponding job losses would range between 962,000 and 2,951,000 Canadian workers.

While most of us are struggling financially right now, it is extremely important to support local small businesses whenever we can. Not only is it stimulating our economy, helping each other is simply the Canadian thing to do. Over the last few months, I have been trying to be more conscious of where I am spending my money. Although it's not always possible for me to support local because—lets face it—shopping at Walmart or Dollarama is often less expensive and more convenient.

So, to support local business, I have compiled a list of small and medium-sized businesses that deserve a shout out. This week, I've got a list of my finds in Red Deer, Alberta.

#### **Dose Coffee Co.**

Compostable and carbon neutral cups, filled with locally roasted organic coffee and local organic milk, made for a better today and a sustainable future.

Best coffee in town! <u>Dose Coffee Co.</u> has two locations: Riverfront and Downtown. Dose describes their Riverfront location as "the perfect cafe to slow down, grab your brew, and hit the wonderful trails that connect this city. With the river just a stone's throw away you are guaranteed to see all sorts of wildlife". Meanwhile, Downtown, "beautiful heritage building will give you the sunlight you search for and the delicious coffees you need".

#### **One Eleven Grill**

An inviting and stylish steak house restaurant tucked into the heart of Red Deer just waiting for you to discover or rediscover. Our passion is STEAK! We are committed to quality, serving only the very best locally-owned, grass fed Alberta Prime Beef in both classic and unique cuts. Our warm, inviting ambiance is the perfect backdrop for everything from a romantic evening, a gathering with friends and family and even a quiet business lunch during the week. For amazing food, great music and good times with family and friends, keep One Eleven Grill in mind.

<u>One Eleven Grill</u> was opened on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 (hence the name). If you're looking for a more up-scale dining experience—this is it. Pre-COVID, there was live music every Friday and Saturday night. Hopefully "the best musicians from our city and Alberta" will be able to entertain patrons again soon.

#### Bo's Bar and Stage

Established 1996, Bo's Bar and Stage is Central Alberta's institution for great dining, local beers, hand crafted cocktails and live music. Our mission is to showcase an elevated and unique experience delivered with passion, quality and comfort.

For something a little more casual, <u>Bo's Bar and Stage</u> is the place to be. Not only is the food amazing, there is always something going on, like the upcoming NYE 2022: LOSE YOURSELF TO DANCE event.

Bo's also has a meal subscription box, allowing you to "enjoy a high end dining experience at home or an opportunity for culinary exploration without leaving the couch" (yes, please!). The box includes a three-course dinner for four, including appetizers, a main course and dessert; as well as 12 double hand-crafted cocktails paired perfectly with your regional cuisine.

I recognize that all of these businesses are based in Red Deer, so if these aren't local to you, I hope this article can encourage you to research the small businesses and services available in your hometown. Let's work together to stimulate the economy, practice environmental responsibility, and support our communities.

Jessica is completing her Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations degree while pursuing her passion for writing and drinking coffee.

## **Scholarships of the Week**

#### Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: EnergyRates.Ca College Scholarship 2022

Sponsored by: EnergyRates.Ca

Deadline: January 31, 2022

Potential payout: \$500

**Eligibility restriction**: Applicants must be enrolled at a Canadian or U.S. post-secondary educational institution, or planning to enrol within the following calendar year.

What's required: An online application, including an essay of no more than 500 words on any topic related to "energy in the world of tomorrow."

Tips: Check out the Past Winners section to see what previous years' winning essays looked like.

Where to get info: <u>energyrates.ca/energyrates-ca-scholarship/</u>

#### **Bonus Holiday Edition**

Scholarship name: 2021-2022 Lives that make a Difference Essay Contest

Sponsored by: A&E Canadian Classroom

Deadline: January 31, 2022

Potential payout: \$1500

**Eligibility restriction**: Applicants must be full-time Canadian students (excluding Quebec) in grades 5 to 12 as of September 15, 2021.

What's required: A completed online application form, along with a maximum 300-word essay on someone you think made the biggest impact on Canadian society in 2021.

Tips: Read the Official Rules carefully for detailed information on essay requirements.

Where to get info: <u>www.livesthatmakeadifference.com/</u>

#### How to Create a Positive Habit

# Everyday is a Fresh Start

#### Marie Well

It's One habit most university students want to break is procrastination. How do you move at full throttle without wasting precious study moments?

# Step 1: You Must Want a Change From a Current Situation or Condition.

Pretend you've got five AU courses in one semester. You've got to move to keep on top of your study schedule, and most likely need to work steadily without a lot of free time.

But what if you've got the problem of procrastination? Procrastination can block you from achieving your goals, getting a high paying salary, or acquiring a degree. But you have the power to change it all—in a heartbeat. It starts with the desire to make the change.

As an example, a Hindu spiritualist named Gopi Krishna went to higher education only to find himself reading books of interest rather than his required courses. He sidetracked from his key goal: gaining

credentials. He procrastinated.

And you, as a student, have so much to gain from acquiring the credential of your dream degree program.

The first step to stop procrastinating is to want to change. For any serious student, the shift from procrastination to productivity needs to happen today. We've got the ability to turn our habits around in a heartbeat.

#### Step 2: You Need to Identify How to Make the Change.

Once you decide to change, you need to figure out how to change. There are strategies to do this.

James Cleary wrote a book on habits, and in that book, he identifies four elements for creating a habit: cue, craving, response, and reward. Let's make all these elements work together for our dreams of overcoming procrastination and getting credentialed.

A cue can be anything that acts as a trigger or signal to engage in some action. Your alarm going off can signal you to eat breakfast. Your finished breakfast can signal you to sit at your desk, which signals you to clock in your time on an app, which triggers you to pull out your course books and read a chapter.

The above actually combines the cue with the response. But there's a stage in between: craving or desire. For instance, you might want to sit at your desk and study because you dream of acquiring a degree, earning a high wage, or going onto grad school. Even if you lack the craving or desire, I believe you can get that desire by pouring love on your task such that it becomes your "baby." Condition yourself to crave that goal, to desire it like it's your true love.

And you should build in rewards. Don't just think the degree is the reward. Think also, "When I study for ten hours, I will feel satisfied that I accomplished my goal today." You may also let minor rewards come into play, such as a trip to the grocery store to buy your favorite healthy treat.

But beware of obstacles. For me, I don't have the best rapport with my tutor but the dynamic with a tutor is very important to me. So, instead of sluffing off my work while begrudging each interaction with my tutor, I try to find all the best traits of him and dwell on them. When it comes to working around obstacles, an attitude of love, openness, and patience performs miracles.

#### Step 3: You Must Take Action or Initiate Change.

All it takes is a little bit of structure to get something going. Think of what all your cues (your triggers) and responses will be. Will you set the alarm for 8 a.m. and study right after cereal? After work, at 5 pm, will you do three hours of studies with short five-minute breaks every half hour?

Create the desire. You can love even your most hated subject if you are truly inclined. And you can call up that love in an instant. Simply feel intense fondness for that hated subject while dwelling only on its every positive angle. Don't let negativity hold you back. Replace negativity with love.

Remember to reward yourself. Only you know what that perfect reward is. If it's delightful and doesn't set you back, you deserve it! And you've earned it! The satisfaction of accomplishing or overcoming obstacles is often reward enough. But you do deserve to indulge every so often.

#### Step 4: Make the New Habit a Daily or Weekly Event.

You should feel great about coming this far. Pat yourself on the back. Now it's time to make the habit consistent and give it your all-every day or every week.

New habits can get you credentials, a higher paying career, a degree—anything you could ever dream of attaining because you truly have no limits. No-one can put limits on you that you choose to reject. That's because your potential is infinitely brighter than all the supernovas shimmering throughout the universe.

#### Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



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

#### AthaU Facebook Group

A student by any other name. One students wonders how the process to change their name works at AU, and other students offer advice and suggestions on timing (to avoid issues with exam ID, for example.)

#### reddit

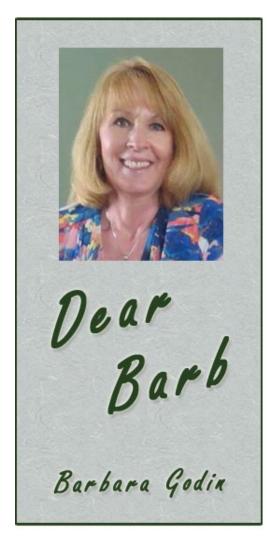
Online doesn't always equal instant. A student wonders why they can't access the course they just registered for minutes ago, and responders suggest they may have to wait a whole day before the registration is processed and access granted.

#### Twitter

<u>@aulibarchives</u> tweets: "Looking for a great holiday read? Why not grab something home-grown by our <u>@au\_press</u>? We've got it here <u>https://aupress.ca</u>."

#### Youtube

'Tis the season! Enjoy a holiday fire from Athabasca University!



#### **In-Law Interlopers**

#### Dear Barb:

My husband and I have been married for three years. We are very happy, except for his mother interfering in our lives. Everything was good when we were dating and engaged, and even the first part of our marriage. For the last year she is critical of everything I do.

She "suggests" different cleaning products that I should use and how I can clean my floors so there won't be any streaks. When we invite them for dinner, she always has something negative to say about the meal. If Dan and I are having a discussion my mother-in-law will always take Dan's side, even if she doesn't know anything about what we are discussing. Whenever I bring up the issue to Dan, he says I am overreacting and that she doesn't mean to cause problems. He says that is just how she is and everyone in the family ignores it. I don't want to ignore this behavior, and I do not think I should have to take her criticisms. On the other hand, I don't want to cause problems with my husband. Do you have any suggestions on how I can deal with this without my husband feeling caught in the middle? Looking forward to your response.

#### Thanks Katrina.

#### Hi Katrina:

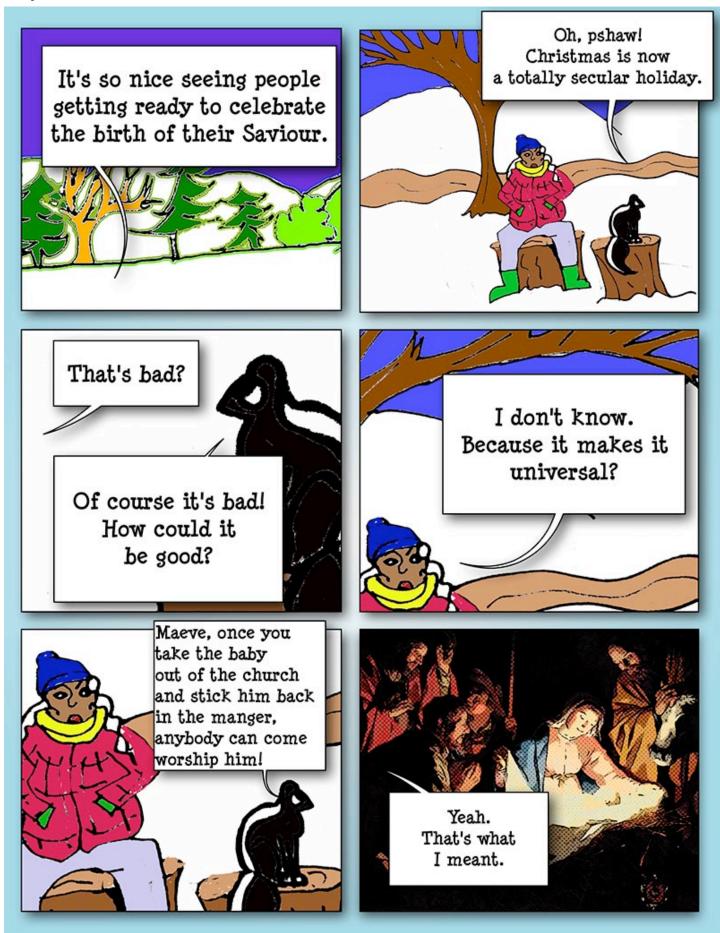
To begin with your husband should not feel caught in the middle. You need to be united as a couple, his support should be with you. Also, if there are problems or issues that need to be said to your in-laws, that must come from your husband, not you. There are clear behaviours that indicate you have an unhealthy relationship with your in-laws. For example, they try to make you feel bad, which is seems your mother-in-law does, by suggesting ways that you could be a better housekeeper. Another indication of trouble is when an in-law inserts themselves into a discussion you and your partner are having, which you have obviously experienced as well. You and your husband need to have an open and honest discussion about how you are feeling. Then you both must produce a plan. You may have to set boundaries, and you both have to agree to follow through on these boundaries. Healthy boundaries are necessary and a foundation in all relationships. Even if your partner does not agree with your feelings, he has a duty to protect you and take into consideration how you feel. These changes will not happen overnight, change takes time and commitment. I would not suggest cutting your in-laws out of your life that is a drastic step and may only lead to more problems.

#### Good luck Katrina

Email your questions to <u>voice@voicemagazine.org</u>. 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.

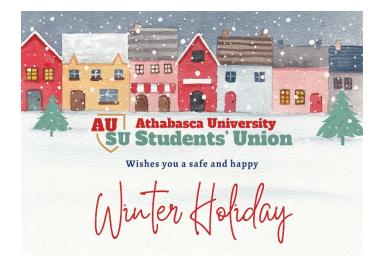
#### Poet Mave Merry Secularist

#### Wanda Waterman





This update is provided to The Voice by AUSU. Contact <u>services@ausu.org</u> with questions.



A reminder that your AU Students' Union will be **closed for the winter holiday from December 20 - 31, 2021**, with regular office hours resuming on January 4, 2022.



AUSU is now accepting applications for the role of Chief Returning Officer (CRO) for its upcoming **2022 General Election for Student Council and Indigenous Circle**. The CRO, working with the AUSU staff, is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the election process, including but not limited to:

- accepting nominations and verifying the eligibility of nominees;
- informing candidates of campaign policy;
- enforcing campaign policy;
- confirming voter eligibility;
- confirming ballot counts from electronic voting system;
- reporting election results to Council; and
- conducting any election appeals, unless the CRO is the subject of the appeal.

Learn more on this role and the AUSU Election process in our <u>AUSU Election Conduct Policy 3.01</u>. If you are interested in this position, please email your resume, a cover letter, and any questions to <u>executivedirector@ausu.org</u>.

Application Deadline: January 12, 2022



Listen in as Leah Campbell joins your AUSU Executive Team as the new Vice-President Finance and Administration and shares her experience thus far as she studies from Brandon, MB. Like so many students, Leah is managing a full course load, taking care of children, and working at a full-time job while somehow organizing enough hours in the day to serve AU students at AUSU. Starring AUSU VP Finance and Administration Leah Campbell, Governance and Advocacy Coordinator Duncan Wojtaszek, and Executive Director Jodi Campbell.



AU is transforming the future of digital-first university research by developing and launching IDEA Lab. IDEA will enable AU researchers and students to innovate, discover, explore, and accelerate their work using existing and emerging tools, processes, and data in the cloud for maximum impact.

The IDEA Academy program will recruit up to fifteen Research Assistants who will receive training on cloud technologies and tools enabling them to support, advance, and contribute to projects developed and supervised by AU faculty researchers.

View the call for applicants <u>here</u>. For more information, contact Dr Paul Daniels, PhD, <u>pdaniels@athabascau.ca</u>.



The winter holiday can be challenging for many. If you find yourself struggling and need support, remember that <u>Homewood Health</u> offers a comprehensive wellness support program to meet your mental health and wellness needs. Call Homewood Health's 24/7 support line at **1-800-663-1142**.

# **CLASSIFIEDS**

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact <u>voice@voicemagazine.org</u> for more information.

#### **THE VOICE**

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