



THE VOICE

Vol 30 Issue 01 2022-01-07

BEST OF THE VOICE 2021



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.

You'll Want to Read it All Anyway.

The Voice Magazine

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

Email

voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher

AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief

Jodi Campbell

Managing Editor

Karl Low

Regular Contributors

Barb Godin, Barbara
Lehtiniemi, Angela Pappas,
Jason Sullivan, Wanda
Waterman, Corey Wren,
Jessica Young, and others

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

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

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

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

Volume 30, Issue 01

© 2022 by The Voice
Magazine

ISSN 2561-3634

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 Happy Holidays!

Karl Low



Let's face it, it was a rough year.
But it wasn't all bad.

Each year, we like to start off the Voice Magazine with a look back at the year before. Creating a first issue that not only represents what The Voice Magazine is, but what it can be when it hits its heights.

Hence, the Best of the Voice, 2021 edition.

This year, prompted by a secret contest in the [subscriber list](#) in which ten lucky winners are getting some Voice goodies just for being present enough to click a link in their email, we received more student recommendations for The Best of the Voice magazine than ever before. (This is a hint, by the way. If you haven't subscribed, maybe you should. It means that you get an email every week reminding you when the latest edition of The Voice Magazine is out, and sometimes you might even win something just because.)

But I think I've managed to whittle all the suggestions down to those that represent the best of what a Voice Magazine is. Which makes it a great issue to use to introduce people to it.

Each article, I've added a bit of commentary to at the end (that's the orange text) letting you know what made it stand out to be included in the 2021 edition of the Best of the Voice.

And with that, it's time to get to the good stuff.

Enjoy the read!

Handwritten signature of Karl Low.

MINDS

WE

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 Kieran Porter (he/him), currently residing in St. Alberta, Alberta, the traditional Treaty 6 territory of the Nehiyaw (Cree), Denesuliné (Dene), Nakota Sioux, Anishinabae (Saulteaux), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), and Métis Peoples.

Twenty-four year old Kieran is currently enrolled in the Four-Year Bachelor of Commerce degree, with a major in Human Resource Management, with hopes of graduating in April 2022. Kieran stated, “I decided to pursue this degree after operating and running a gas station for a while. I knew I wanted to be in business and deal with financial/administrative/managerial work because

that is what I was most comfortable with. I plan on getting a career in the human resources or financial field hopefully with an established company where I can grow and learn long-term.”

Kieran opened up a bit about his lived experiences and road to AU, mentioning, “At age 17, I lost my brother to suicide. He was 18 years old, and I was 17. He was my best friend. I fell into a deep hole and did not know where to go or what to do. I was not motivated for a future. I was working full-time at a gas station with no plans for my future. Working there helped me gain the skills and proper work ethics I needed for secondary schooling. In 2018, four years after the death of my brother, I decided to enroll in AU. They gave me an equal chance to show that I can pursue anything I put my mind to. Being in a classroom was too much for me and my brain while I was grieving, which is why I chose AU. I am now in the fourth and last year of my Bachelor of Commerce degree majoring in Human Resource Management.”

When he is not studying, Kieran told *The Voice* that he loves sports. “Right now, it is sports heaven in the world with NFL, NHL, MLB playoffs, and NBA. I am either watching the Edmonton Oilers, Philadelphia Eagles, Toronto Raptors, Toronto Blue Jays, or hanging out with my two pet goldfish, Timmeh and Shawn. I also am a foodie and will try new restaurants often.” He also finds time to relax and has just finished watching *Squid Games* on Netflix, and is currently watching the latest season of *Survivor*.

When asked who has had the greatest influence on his desire to learn, Kieran chose his mother and father. He explained, “Growing up, my parents had always told me to do good in school and finish school. Once I reached high school, my head was only focused on the trades and going into the trades right away and making money right away. After high school, I quickly learned that the trades were not for me. I tried out being an electrician, but I hated it and



honestly did not understand it; then I went into building elevators, which I ended up hating because of the physical damage it had on your body. Eventually, I ended up going back to school and it was the best decision I have ever made in my life.”

As for his experience with online learning so far, Kieran loves it. He reflected, “At first, it can be very stressful and difficult. But once you figure out the tricks and make a proper schedule and organize everything properly, it becomes a commodity. It allows your mind to focus in a more peaceful setting. I find the focus is much better being alone at home then around many people as the brain gets distracted easily.”



Despite this praise for online learning, like many students, Kieran admitted that there was a point in his life during which he wavered in continuing his education. He explained, “About four years after my brother had passed away, I was still in a bad place and not willing to grow or heal. I did not want to accept the fact that my best friend was gone forever. One day in 2018, I had a sudden motivation to wake up and change my life for the better because I know my brother would have wanted that for me and would not want me to sit and be sad forever. My brother was the main motivation for me to change my life for the better and to start the healing process of losing him. Enrolling in AU allowed me to start the healing process in my life and has been a healthy guideline for me in my life.”

Kieran chose ACCT 253: Introductory Financial Accounting as his most memorable course, despite feeling “so scared and nervous to enroll in this class because it intimidated [him] with how hard it seemed.” However, he “ended up getting an A and it showed [him] that if you put your mind to anything, you can accomplish it.”

When asked which famous person, past or present, that he would like to have lunch with and why, he chose celebrity chef and TV personality, Gordon Ramsey, since it “would probably be the best food [he has] ever eaten.” And the lunch? “It’s definitely got to be his scrambled eggs. They are so unique and creamy.”

The most valuable lesson that Kieran has learned in life is “to treat everyone with respect and be humble about everything in life.” He continued, “The passing of my brother made me such a better person and made me change for the better in every area. It’s important to treat everyone as family because you never know what they are going through or have gone through in their life.”

And his proudest moment? “One of the proudest moments in my life was winning a senior football championship in Grade 11 and Grade 12. Being a part of such a hard-working team taught me many valuable life lessons that I keep today. Also, paying off my brand-new Dodge RAM while working at the gas station is something I’m proud of as well.”

As a final note, Kieran let students know: “I just want to say that AU is amazing and gives equal opportunity for people to succeed in life no matter what you have gone through.” Best of luck Kieran!

Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University. Interviews with students are one of the staples of the Voice Magazine and are regularly the articles with the most views. What can make them even better is when the student is willing to open up to both the struggles and triumphs they’ve had along the way, and the icing on the cake for this one, from the end of November 2021, is we even got some extra pictures!



Positivity Appeals to Positive People

Marie Well



When we are positive toward others, they respond kindly. Positivity builds beautiful bonds, cements friendships, and bursts with wonderful feelings.

For instance, smiling and laughing throughout the day sounds and looks like a kitten that purrs nonstop. What a beautiful energy. And, oh, does laughter feel good for the person who releases it.

I once babysat two cats. One cat purred nonstop. It was the cat everyone loved. It's so easy and blissful to be that cat. Just smile and laugh all day, even if it feels forced. Feeling that laughter gently massages our heart and tummy and delights all those around us.

To be sure, I once had a colleague who giggled all day, at least a hundred times a day. I didn't understand why she did that, until I tried it myself. It feels heavenly to laugh! Laughter lets the spirit free. And laughter draws others into our hearts.

Another way to build bonds through positivity is to try not to take anything personally and don't anger. It's the people with the brightest smiles and warmest eyes who climb the highest, at least in a corporate setting.

Also, be generous. Sending someone a gift, especially a homemade one, says, "I love you!" Two souls intertwine when sharing gifts that develop the soul, or that demonstrate beauty, or that help build dreams, or that foster any positive trait.

Another means to build bonds is through sharing jokes. Humor reduces tension and stress. But if we're not funny, we can at least share a smile or warm laugh with others. Humor is another way to draw positive people into our circle of love. For example, I recently made a friend with a woman who had multiple near death experiences. I just love her energy and spirituality, and she loves mine. When I talk with her on text, I feel a suffocating hug from nowhere that fills me with joy. My friend calls it a hug from God. And many other spiritual events seem to occur when I speak with her. Drawing positive friends into our lives begets even more positive energy.

Also, to build bonds through positivity, see everyone as a beloved friend. See the sheer beauty of every living thing, enjoying the sounds and existences of even our tiniest friends, the insects. Relish in the purrs and calls of the geese. Celebrate everyone's existence and be blissfully in love with the beauty of everyone, even our enemies. Loving others is more delicious than a calorie-free hot fudge brownie sundae drenched in strawberry whipped cream.

Additionally, expect nothing from anyone. Don't blame a soul. Never hold a grudge. But give everything. This makes us prime targets for the richest of relationships.

And if we ever get hit by tragedy, stay clear of the darkness. Seek the higher ground—the light. The healthier and more positive we are during hardships, the easier it is to reach the heights. Plus, doing the right thing, although it may seem hard, is the most rewarding thing we could ever do—for ourselves and for many others, some of whom we may never meet.

Marie Well submits two articles like clockwork every week, giving advice on developing positive habits whether for in life or for academics. And I'll admit that some of these articles, though well-written, just don't resonate with me. They do, however, resonate with students. Marie had the highest number of articles recommended by different Voice Readers. This one, from mid-May, was her most frequently recommended, and so now resides in the Best of The Voice for 2021.



Are YOU an Overthinker?

Adrienne Braithwaite



Do you spend more time thinking about hypothetical consequences of a decision, than you do on the decision itself?

Overthinking is more than simply taking an unusually long time to make decisions; it is a culmination of excessive worrying about the future while spending too much time dwelling on past mistakes. Overthinking can impact both mental and physical health and evidence symptoms of anxiety and exhaustion. It can also limit creativity and academic performance, which is especially important for post-secondary success. However, overthinking is not always a negative trait; it can also be a healthy approach to decision making, improve our self-confidence, and act as a catalyst for academic success. The challenge is being able to recognize when our overactive thoughts are impairing our ability to make everyday decisions.

Impairing physical and mental health

Dwelling on decisions and outcomes can adversely affect our physical and mental wellbeing. Over time, symptoms may mirror those of generalized anxiety disorders which include restless sleep, stomach problems, and headaches. Once you identify your tendency to overthink, you can develop habits such as deep breathing and calming exercises; these activities limit the impact your stressors have on both your physical and mental health. Writing down your main ideas, options, and worries is also another way to help you take some of the pressure off your physical body. By making lists, such as a pros and cons chart, you visualize and externalize the issue. This frees up space to set aside or take a break from the decision-making process to focus on your physical and mental health needs.

Stifling creativity

Analysis paralysis is defined as “over-analyzing (or over-thinking) a situation, or citing sources, so that decision or action is never finally taken, resulting in paralyzing the outcome.”

Often when we overthink a task or a problem, we are trying to problem-solve so we make the best decision possible. However, overthinking can stifle decision-making abilities, leading to inaction and/or unproductivity. Psychotherapist Amy Morin recommends nurturing a healthy mindset by setting aside designated “worry time” each day. Morin says by doing so, we leave more time in our day for our productive, problem-solving thoughts. Personally, I find taking a walk and listening to a podcast helps me set aside whatever thoughts are crowding my mind. Whatever strategy you find most beneficial, it should be one that provides you with enough time to reset so when you come back to the decision-making process, you have a fresh perspective.

Having a positive and productive mindset is especially important for post-secondary students, as assignments often require a high level of critical thinking and concentration. AU offers students a variety of learner supports including mental health counselling, assistance with exam preparation and time management as well as strategies for developing effective study skills.

Perfectionism; a symptom, or a cause?

I am a self-proclaimed overthinker, and my need for perfection started when I was an adolescent. As the youngest of four children in my family, I simply watched and learned from my siblings' mistakes. However, inaction is one of the major downsides of perfectionism. As an adult, when I am faced with an important decision, I tend to imagine all potential outcomes or consequences beforehand. I spend hours pondering polarizing choices, and often consult multiple people to obtain various opinions before making any major decision. I usually feel an enormous sense of relief when a decision is taken off my plate and placed of my control.

Now, as a post-secondary student, I overthink assignments and email replies, waiting many hours for potential productivity. My biggest fear when studying for exams is that I will forget or miss essential information; I try to counteract this by attempting to cram as many facts into my short-term memory as possible. The only time I ever remember cheating on a test was because my Grade 6 teacher scared us all into thinking the test was too difficult for anyone to pass, even the smart students. I truly believed I could not pass the test on my own, so I spent hours memorizing the multiple-choice key from a friend who had written the exam the previous year. As an educator, I now realize students who cheat, do so because of lack of confidence in their own success. My perfectionism and overthinking let me down in this instance. If I had spent even half the time studying that I had spent creating and memorizing an acronym for the key, I would have scored just as well on the exam.

With some conscious effort, I have slowly learned to identify when I am overthinking, and I am now more willing to accept less than perfect outcomes. However, there are still long, challenging assignments which have required more creativity than I thought myself capable of. Wrapping my head around an unexpected assignment has often taken me longer than creating the actual assignment. Overthinking has a way of clouding our creative thoughts, leading to long unproductive periods of time.

As a result of my own tendency to overthink tasks, I have been forced to tone down my academic expectations of myself and recognize how my overactive thoughts are inhibiting my creative abilities. My personal health and family obligations are prioritized, but sometimes that means setting a time limit for myself on course assignments. Learning to set boundaries on your decision making can help you avoid the vicious cycle of overthinking, along with the negative effects of stress on your physical and mental health.

Fine-tuning Self-awareness and Mental Strength

In the article, "[3 Thinking Strategies That Will Make You Mentally Stronger Today](#)," Morin provides purposeful mental health exercises to enhance your problem-solving skills and creative potential. Below is a short summary of Morin's recommendations:

- Recognize the signs.
- Develop a purposeful, self-reflective approach to changing your mindset.
- Create a mantra to boost your confidence.
- Rephrase negative self-talk into positive self-talk.
- Challenge your brain to identify its own potential.

Try to set aside the long hours of cyclical thinking, and instead, focus on what goals you want to achieve. Ask yourself if the decisions and choices you are spending hours mulling over will have a long-term impact upon your goals, relationships, or career ambitions. Set mental time limits and be aware of how dwelling on thoughts for too long can impact mental and physical wellbeing. Lastly, and I am saying this to myself more than anyone, teach yourself to be alright with

accepting less than perfection. In doing so, you may find you have more time to spend on more fulfilling tasks and feel more energized to tackle all of life's big decisions!

Resources:

- Learner Support Services, Athabasca University
- <https://lss.athabascau.ca/>
- *Do You Have Analysis Paralysis?* Psychology Today. April 24, 2019.
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/fixing-families/201904/do-you-have-analysis-paralysis>
- Keep It Simple: 14 Ways to Stop Overthinking, Healthline. November 14, 2019
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/how-to-stop-overthinking>

References:

- Hasan, S. (2019, July 12). *How Overthinking Can Affect Mental and Physical Health*. KERA News. <https://www.keranews.org/health-science-tech/2019-07-12/how-overthinking-can-affect-mental-and-physical-health>.
- Kurien, R., Paila, A. R., & Nagendra, A. (2014). Application of Paralysis Analysis Syndrome in Customer Decision Making. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 11, 323–334. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2212-5671\(14\)00200-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2212-5671(14)00200-7)
- Morin, A. (2017, November 8). *3 Thinking Strategies That Will Make You Mentally Stronger Today*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/amymorin/2017/10/29/3-thinking-strategies-that-will-make-you-mentally-stronger-today/?sh=61b55f391f96>.
- Morin, A. (2020, April 20). *10 Signs You're Overthinking (And What to Do About It)*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/amymorin/2020/04/20/10-signs-youre-overthinking-and-what-to-do-about-it/?sh=5e25b6ec2bb8>.

When an article, like this one from June 25th, is recommended by multiple students, I take notice. Adrienne isn't a frequent contributor, but the quality and originality of her articles means she's a valued one, and this certainly deserves a space in the Best Of the Voice edition.



#ODSPoverty

Lonita Fraser

Where the D now Stands for Despair



Sometimes I am at a loss for words—which is a mighty rare thing for someone from the east coast who is frequently hopped up on caffeine, chocolate milk, or rage.

What continues to blow my grey matter is how, in a wealthy country whose pundits praise its kindness, generosity to other nations, and other treatments of people which would shine the halo, disabled persons—folk amongst those least able to find gainful employment, be traditionally employable, or sometimes even care for themselves in an appreciably decent fashion—are also those most frequently ignored and left by the wayside, and are amongst those with the lowest forms of financial supports.

#ODSPoverty is the hashtag favoured amongst Twitter users when posting about their struggles trying to survive on the Ontario Disability Support Program.

The buck-passing bandying between the federal government and the provinces/territories about whose responsibility it is to deal with it, has continued for more decades than it should. You know whose responsibility it is? Everyone's. But the loonie, as it were, does ultimately stop at the federal level, especially when this country is half-way led at the provincial level by factions that think austerity measures are the bee's knees, and who spend their reigns going after the easiest targets they can. The Liberal factions seem to want to spend time looking like they're doing something, but end up doing nothing at all.

Studies? We don't need studies. We don't need studies when people are looking to Medical Assistance in Dying to avoid the legislated poverty of living on provincial funding, or when people feel like they're the target of some foul form of eugenics.

Does none of this give you pause? Does none of this give you pause while you hand out funding to other sections of the population in less immediate and dire need of it, to people and businesses who aren't in danger of going hungry or losing their homes? Does none of this give you pause when people consider killing themselves as their only future?

That was an email I sent to the Prime Minister because of an advocacy push online. You can send a message yourself via this link: <https://pm.gc.ca/en/connect/contact>.

The past year has, more acutely than before, shone a stark, painfully revealing light on the state of many things in this country (and others): the delicacy of the supply chain and the importance of the people who work in it, packaging our food and getting it to us; the disgusting state of long-term care; the excruciating need for more medical personnel at all levels to care for us; the shocking lack of funding for all of them; and the deeply disheartening lack of financial assistance for anyone left out in the cold from all walks of life, particularly those in a position to be unable to earn enough to take care of themselves.

More sadly, along with the complete lack of immediate funding increases for those in dire need of it in the most recent federal and Ontario budgets, is the continued lack of attention, beyond lip service, that the situation gets at both the federal and provincial levels, and the lack of empathy shown by some parts of the populace. You should not be asking whether or not these people should be helped. There shouldn't be a question at all, other than, "How can we fix this and make it work?"

Ontario's ODSP rates are still at levels set in the mid-'90s. For pandemic-related aid, Ontario provided only an extra \$100 per month for only a few months during 2020 for extra costs incurred related to COVID, and that went only to people who asked for it, yet the province did not advertise this money was available and, by the time many on ODSP found out about it, the extra funding program was cancelled.

The federal government provided only a one-time (up to) \$600 COVID-related payment to those who get the Disability Tax Credit (which is not universal to all disabled people), and it took them up until just a month or so ago to even provide the money to some people. The federal government did ask the provinces not to claw-back from provincial benefits for anyone in a position to also receive CERB last year. Ontario chose not to fully comply with that request, as did many provinces. In fact, only British Columbia, Yukon, and Northwest Territories fully followed the federal government's request not to claw back.

This entire situation is a shameful tarnish to whatever crown Canada wears. If this is how this country treats its most vulnerable, well, I don't know about you, but this is not a nation I can take pride in. Press your MPs, MPPs, and MLAs to advocate for increased provincial funding for the

disabled, for a provincial or federal basic income for them and the elderly at least, and for more creative solutions to employing those disabled folk who are in a position to work.

References:

Peters, Gabrielle, (2020) "Dying for the Right to Live", *Maclean's Magazine*. Retrieved online from: <https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/dying-for-the-right-to-live/>

Lonita Fraser is an AU graduate living in Ontario where she works from home doing transcription, making art, and trying to learn how to play the bass guitar.

There's plenty of injustice in the world, and good writing can be cathartic for both the reader and writer when we're faced with it. I wish there wasn't a need for this type of writing, but while there is, I'm glad we've got writers who aren't afraid to express their anger while also providing solid information about the situation. And apparently some students agreed with me, as they reminded me of this article, originally published as our Feature in late May, for the Best of the Voice 2021.

Teaching My Daughter to Make a Scene The Importance of Speaking Up

Jessica Young



Recently I dealt with an incident at my six-year-old daughter's school. She was in the hallway with a boy from her class, away from the careful supervision of her teachers, when the boy became physically violent with her. My daughter was too nervous to tell her teacher. She thought her teacher was going to be mad at her. Thankfully, she had the courage to tell me when I picked her up from school that day.

The guilt and anger I felt was unimaginable, but what concerned me more was that my daughter did not use her voice. She did not trust her gut feeling that what happened to her was wrong. She believed that being hurt by her classmate could have been somehow been her fault, so she put a smile on her face and went back to class like nothing happened. This was particularly surprising to me because my daughter is *feisty*. I call her my jalapeno pepper because some people can't handle her spice. She is

loud, outgoing, and fiercely stands up for the people she loves.

Now, I am by no means blaming my daughter. I understand why she was nervous to say something. I understand why any woman who has been assaulted or harassed may not want to speak up. I have been that woman. I think most women have been in the position to understand this special kind of fear and shame. Women are conditioned by society to not make a scene; to be small; be quiet; be pleasant. I thought I had more time before my daughter felt the impact of these realities. I thought I was doing a better job at teaching her to use her voice. This was my lightbulb moment—I will not always be there to protect my daughter. She needs to know how to speak her truth and make herself heard, even if her voice shakes.

By complete coincidence (or maybe fate), a few days later I picked up a copy of a book I have been wanting to read for a while: *The Stranger Beside Me* by Anne Rule. The book is about the infamous serial killer and rapist Ted Bundy. The prologue covers several near-miss stories from women who were almost one of Bundy's victims. As if this isn't applicable enough to the

existential crisis my daughter's school incident has triggered for me, Rule writes: "As I write these recollections of women who survived, I hope my readers are taking careful note of *why* they did. They screamed. They fought. They slammed doors in a stranger's face. They ran. They doubted glib stories. They spotted flaws in those stories".

Rule then goes on to tell a story she heard at a rape prevention conference. A man who had raped and murdered several women confessed to police. The man described luring a woman into his car, then pressing a knife against her ribs and telling her that he would kill her if she screamed. As he was driving her to a remote location, they stopped beside a police car at a red light. Again, the man tells her he will kill her if she calls for help. Finally, the man confesses, "I turned left, went down the road about half a mile, turned into a road, and I raped her and then I killed her".

What I hope most for my daughter is that she gets to grow up in a world where she doesn't have to worry about violence. Unfortunately, I think this may be a tall order. So instead I hope that the many long conversations I have subjected her to over the last week have made her realize the importance of speaking up when something does happen. I hope she screams and fights and runs. I hope she trusts herself enough to know when to stop being pleasant; when to doubt and slam doors the in the face of anyone who gives her that feeling of uneasiness in her gut that is so often pushed down. I hope she calls out for help even when she has a (hopefully metaphorical) knife pressed to her ribs.

I hope she feels strong enough to make a fucking scene.

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

Jessica also writes regular music reviews, but the article that students noticed the most from her last year was this one, from late February, about her daughter and parenting. With how many students at AU are also parents, this is little surprise, and with how this read is both confronting and uplifting while being simply a good read, its nomination was just expected.



Four Reasons Why Hiking is Terrible and One Reason Why You Should Still Do It

Jeff Shermack



Are you thinking about getting out to the mountains this year? Are you a frequent hiker? If so, this article is not for you. Although, you may enjoy reading about my amateur hiking opinions, if only to disagree with them.

If you're an amateur hiker like myself, consider this your most recent warning. If you've never hiked before, consider this your first deterrent. Hiking is terrible. It's an awful, grueling, physically demanding experience that leaves all amateurs sweat-drenched and oxygen depleted—but the results are worth it.

You should know that the journey ahead of you will be a struggle. For any amateur, hiking is like an exercise in coping with loss. You will experience all five stages of grief over the course of single hike. That

emotional turmoil is unavoidable, but it's a worthwhile experience. There are few better sources of catharsis than the acceptance that comes when you've reached a hike's final destination. I urge you to pursue that path, and I hope I can prepare you for the trials ahead.

1. You Are Not Physically Prepared for Hiking

Your current level of physical fitness has a smaller effect on your hiking ability than you think. It does have some effect, but its overall importance is minor. Just as someone who spends time in the gym will be better at other active pursuits, so too will your lungs and heart work more easily while you hike, but your muscles are not prepared for this experience.

"I work out every day. Regular bike rides are part of my weekly routine. My legs are strong enough to handle an easy hike."

Each of those statements and all possible permutations have been uttered by amateur hikers as their feet hit the hills and they begin the climb. I've uttered them myself. Trust me when I tell you that they're all lies.

Hiking uses a specific set of muscles that I'm certain never activate for any other activity. I don't know which specific muscles they are, only that they hide below the surface of regular physical activity, like a child in gym class hoping not to be picked.

If you don't hike often, you're not physically prepared for the effect that several hours of outdoor, upward physical activity will have on your body. All the statements written above—and every desperate lie like them—are just weak utterances that amateur hikers hide behind as a hill starts to take its toll.

2. The Online Ratings for Hikes are Lies

"Hold on, did he write 'several hours' above? The website said this hike would only take two hours. That cannot be right. How long have we been hiking? FOUR HOURS? I hate this. I hate nature."

Did you read an online review for a hike that lifted your enthusiasm? Did that website say that the hike was easy, that it only takes a few hours, and that even elderly people do it with their dogs? Prepare yourself for conversations exactly like the dialogue written above, because everything you read on that website was false.

I have hiked trails with easy ratings and trails with moderate ratings, and I can say with absolute certainty that easy hikes do not exist. The only accurate rating for an amateur hiker is difficult. If this is your first hike in five years, you need to

AU-thentic Events **Upcoming AU Related Events**

MBA for Executives Webinar

Wed, Jan 12, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20220112/
RSVP through above link

PowerED™ and the Rick Hansen Foundation: Accessibility and the built environment webinar

Wed, Jan 12, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU's PowerED™ and the Rick Hansen Foundation
news.athabascau.ca/events/powered-and-the-rick-hansen-foundation-accessibility-and-the-built-environment-webinar/
Register through above link

The Literature Search and Review series – Keeping organized as you search

begins Wed, Jan 12, 1:00 pm MST (4-part series)
Online

Hosted by AU Library
news.athabascau.ca/events/the-literature-search-and-review-series-keeping-organized-as-you-search/
Register through above link

Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) Info Session

Thur, Jan 13, 3:00 to 4:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabascau.ca/events/doctorate-in-business-administration-dba-information-session-20220113/
RSVP through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

double the recommended time. You've been deceived. Anger is a natural response. Try not to let it spread.

3. There Isn't an Easy Way Out

"What if you had stayed home instead of engaging in this inexorable struggle? What if you had simply chosen an easier hike?"

At a certain stage of every hike, amateurs are consumed by pointless hypotheticals.

You're already on a hike. You made that choice. Now you must face the consequences of your actions. Hypothetical questions are worthless. Ask them only if it helps you escape your brutal new reality.

"What if I turn around now? What if I just stop here?"

You cannot bargain with a hike. It exists in a state of perpetual stoic silence. If you turn back, you'll only be depriving yourself of what the trail has to offer after all the hardship you've already endured. Something special is waiting for you at the end, but adversity still waits ahead. You must face it. Only walking onward will save you from this situation.

4. You Still Have to Walk Back

Congratulations, you made it beyond the needless bargaining stage! Your journey is nearly complete. Each new step brings you closer to the end—and further from your starting point. That growing distance comes with a grim realization for most amateurs. Every step you take now is a step you'll have to retrace later.

Each step up is an inevitable step down. Every sweet downward slope on the way out toward a hidden waterfall is an insidious peak that must be mounted again if you ever hope to return from your ordeal. The realization of that inevitable turn will cast a dark cloud over every step you take from now on, up or down. Try not to focus on it too much. All trials end eventually. This hike will end too.

5. The Results of Your Struggle

When I talk about results, I'm not talking about some kind of transcendental spiritual transformation that brings epiphanies about humanity's relationship to nature. If you do experience that kind of reflection, I'm happy for you. In my experience, it's difficult to find any kind of solace while I'm ruefully trudging up a steep incline, wondering if it's possible to take too much albuterol.

I'm also not talking about the bulging, stony muscles that will naturally develop in your legs if you keep hiking. Your body will eventually thank you for the exercise, but first it's going to punish you. The cost of admission to the house of gains is muscle pain. There might be benefits beyond those doors, but they're not the reason you should start hiking.

The results I'm talking about are the fantastic, otherworldly views of mountaintop calderas, hidden waterfalls, and verdant flowering valleys; vistas that I hope I'll remember even as my last anxious breath escapes my clutches. If I have ever had occasion to consider my place in the universe, it's been when I've seen the faces of immortal stone giants looking down at me.

Jeff Shermack was studying English, writing SF and interested in experiments with storytelling structure. This February he'll be graduating from AU, getting ready to take on the real world.

One thing I let prospective writers for The Voice know, "If you can write funny, about pretty much anything, I'm interested." At least one Voice reader agrees with me, and suggested this article for inclusion in the Best of. Plus, if I'm being honest, I hate hiking. I have to admit that was also a factor. It's funny 'cause it's true.



Stray Dogs

Catherine Moise



If you haven't yet read our [honourable mention](#) or our [runner up](#) for the fiction contest, you really should check them out as well, but this week, I'm very proud to be presenting our Fiction Voice Writing Contest Winner. "Stray Dogs" by Catherine Moise. After reading it, I have to agree with our judges, it absolutely deserves to be here.

Dr. Angie Abdou was one of the judges of our contest, an Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Athabasca University who has published eight books including her most recent memoir, *This One Wild Life*, which debuted on the Canadian Best Sellers List. You can find out more about her, and all our judges, in our announcement article "[And the Winner Is...](#)", but she also provided us some commentary on the winning entry:

"'Stray Dogs' is a contemporary Western skillfully woven in tight, rich, and evocative

prose. With a soft touch and keen power of observation, the author explores human isolation and human connection. There is not a speck of sentimentality or cliché in this original mother-son story. "Stray Dogs" is a rare and mesmerizing treasure. Readers will find something new to admire each time they return."

And you know what? She's right. I've read through this thing several times already and keep picking out different pieces that capture my attention. So, please enjoy Catherine Moises' entry, the fiction winner of The Voice Writing Contest:

Stray Dogs

The blade gnaws back and forth on the leather. Seven notches. I'm keeping count. I carved the first notch with baby fat still clinging to my legs. I wore my toy spurs and cowboy hat. The gunslinger in me wondered how I won the gun fight. Better gun? Quicker draw? We forgot the hat in a ditch in Horsefly, B.C. when we stopped so I could take a leak. I cried about them all the way through Alberta—stopped crying when Mitch the Moron gave me something to cry about. The spurs are planted in the prairies. Buried in wheat taller than me. Muscles pitched them when a late-night binge ended with the sharp edge of a spur planted in his foot.

Sheila keeps count of her exes by carving out their eyes. Not quite as gruesome as you'd think. She snaps a polaroid shot first thing. She waits for failure like some people wait for a train or a bus. Then Sheila white-knuckles the knife and carves a jagged rectangle around the polaroid eyes. She keeps the eyes in a tin can. Nights when the owls hoot outside the car window and there're no stray dogs in sight, Sheila takes them out. She arranges them chronologically—plays nostalgia.

I rub my thumb along the rough edge of the notched leather. It's a piece of leather from my holster—the only thing left of my gunslinger days. I keep it in the trunk of the old car, tucked in behind the broken taillight; sucking gasoline fumes.

The first few weeks with one of Sheila's stray dogs nauseates; like too much candy right before bed. Sunshine and sweet talk—hugs and hangovers.

"Don't ya just love him bud?" Sheila prods. "Hey bud, got a hug for Joe Blow?" Or whatever name sits in the driver's seat at that point.

The warm, hazy, lovey-dovey bullshit always ends; right around that time Sheila starts to sharpen the knife. She turns into a blowfish when things get ugly. Ingests huge quantities of liquor. I watch her face puff up and her body inflate. That's when the aquarium gets tight and I realize there's not much room left for me.

On the west coast of B.C., near Vancouver, Sheila took me to Wreck Beach. She said it was a clothing optional beach. I didn't get it. I grabbed my beach bucket and swim trunks.

"Hey bud," Sheila said, "You don't need your trunks – leave 'em here."

Naked bodies speckled the beach. I didn't want to take my clothes off but Sheila said it'd be rude not to join in. So there I stood with willy wafting in the breeze – beach balls bouncing. Sheila taught me to make sand angels.

"You're my little angel," she said, smiling and playing with my hair.

I still called her Mom back then. Mom and her little angel. Wreck Beach is where Sheila picked up Muscles. Later I stood in the mirror flexing my little boy biceps and practicing a deep, "Hey beautiful." Muscles didn't last long. I had him figured for a long shot anyhow.

Donuts showed up in Manitoba. Donuts liked to play whack a mole with Sheila's ass. We met him at a Dunkin' Donuts drive-through in Flin Flon, Manitoba. We made a stop at every donut shop along the road. One day he tried to play whack a mole with my ass. Sheila punched him. Just like that—right when I thought she had nothing left to give me. Sure do miss the donuts though.

Sheila's lips either pucker or pout—always ready for action. Unless she's eating. Then they smack open and shut like she's chewing gum rather than food. When I was a boy, in that gray area before the dawn of manhood, Sheila told me, "Remember bud, girls like respect. Send 'em flowers. Treat 'em special." Back then I hung on her every word—a spider baby hanging from her web.

Took us a long time to scout through Ontario. By the time we reached T.O. I had a fine-tuned swagger. Took it for a walk down Yonge Street. Sheila with her sashay and me with my swag—both on the hunt.

When Muscles sent those spurs flying through the air back in the prairies I learned something.

The way they flew? Propelled by anger? I got to thinking how anger could stir the pot. Anger bubbled and boiled and people got burnt. I started messing around. A snatched wallet from a guy Sheila picked up in T.O. Whiskey poured down the drain. A hole cut in a favourite pair of jeans. Then I just sat back and watched the action. No flowers for Sheila.

We had jerked our way through Quebec, and Sheila had picked up T just past the Ontario border. Monsieur Francais. Theophile Talbot from Temiscaming. We call him T. I like the way he talks. His words reach his eyes in a way that makes me think he really sees me. I try to behave; shackle the saboteur. T teaches me to fish. I learn to skewer fat, juicy worms onto hooks. I start to think things might stick this time. Fish fries and campfires dull the ache in my gut. I start seeing sunsets, beg for cigarettes and let them dangle at the corner of my mouth the way T does. Then T slaps Sheila.

In the morning I splash a little antifreeze in his coffee. We drop his dizzy, slurred, nauseated ass at the emergency room doors. Sheila always perches, ready for flight, in case her feathers get ruffled. So, we hit the road. I put another notch in the old holster leather and I sit in the back seat staring at the trees flying by, the cars whizzing past. Nothing worth counting except those damn notches.

Our old tin-can car wheezes and heaves along the highway. We slip out of Quebec, slide through New Brunswick and settle into Nova Scotia. By then Sheila's voice has reached a new low. I recognize the husky hiss— her own unique mating call. She parks in the middle of two parking spots right outside The Topsy Turtle Bar and Restaurant. A band in the corner cranks out Elvis whining about tender love. Sheila yanks me onto the dance floor.

"C'mon bud, dance with your Mama."

My arms and legs jump and jerk like a spider curling into a death dance. Sheila slips drinks my way.

"Loosen up bud. C'mon."

My legs slither across the floor and my arms snake through the air. I am a snake. My body curls and jerks.

The night is filled with hoots and spilled beer—slow dances and sloppy kisses. Sheila's long arms wrap each man in a syrupy embrace. I eye each one and make a silent bet. Which one wants to play Daddy?

At midnight, Sheila stumbles into a chair. She lights a cigarette, and the smell of singed hair reaches my nostrils. Her lips spread, teasing her face into a smile. I rub my hand across the top of my mouth – feel the fuzz festering on my upper lip. I wonder what she has poured into me. What mix of beer-soaked logic? What concoction of winding roads and unknown terrain will plot my future maps. And what of the men's eyes trapped forever in a tin can?

I stand and lean over Sheila. I whisper in her ear.

"C'mon Mom. Let's get out of here."

Her eyes widen in surprise as she acknowledges my slip of tongue. I lift her body and she reaches up to wrap her arms around my neck. Faded. Sour. This is how she smells. This is how she has always smelled.

"I'm tired bud," she says.

I turn and begin to direct her body to the door. She wobbles and weaves. I tuck her into the back of the old car. Her eyes slip shut.

"Bud?" she says, "I think I'm tired of all those stray dogs."

I pull an old blanket up to her chin. My hand smashes a mosquito against the car window. I open the trunk and pull the old bit of leather from behind the taillight. I slide into the front seat and stare up over the steering wheel into the night sky. I count the notches. Fifteen. And I think to myself, Sheila, we are the stray dogs.

Surprisingly, the Voice Magazine doesn't get much in the way of fiction submissions. This one was the result of us running a contest looking for creative writing from the AU community. Being as it won the contest, including it as part of our Best Of 2021 edition is simply a no-brainer. It already got declared "Best of" back in mid-May.



The Lines Separating Victims from Perpetrators

The Story of The Smallest Violin

Trishtina Godoy-Contois



Hurt people hurt people. You've probably heard this simple and tired statement used in a sloppy attempt to explain the nature of trauma to a victim. I'm not saying that I've never used it myself, but when I heard it for the first time after my mother abandoned me, I got even angrier.

What kind of excuse was that? I've suffered; therefore, I have the right to make you suffer. To me, the words translated to a loss of accountability and let my mother off the hook way too easily. As you can predict, the anger I felt in that first year was unparalleled to anything I've ever experienced before. Not only did I lose my mother, but I had to push my emotions deep down and keep her family together: I let go of a scholarship to play soccer in the US at a Tier 1 university, I let go of the opportunity to

intern for a sports agent in England, I had to work 3 gruelling, physical, minimum wage jobs just to keep my two younger siblings fed and sheltered, I had to get my father working and prevent him from taking his pain out on us.

She even transferred the child tax credit to a new bank account and drained the family account leaving a tidy thirty-two cents for our troubles. However, to my surprise, the worst part was that she became a ghost for 2 years. I had to hunt her down by Facebooking every family relation of hers that I hated just to beg her to sign a paper giving permission for my siblings to travel with their soccer teams.

By the time the second year rolled around, my anger gave way to concern for my brother and sister. I couldn't keep my baby brother from wanting to run away from the house. Running away from my fathers' temper and what my father called "constructive criticism". My brother was by this time starting to hang out with gang members, skipping school, and I was chasing him around town trying to keep him from deep diving past the point of no return. I swallowed my pride and sent word through the Facebook grapevine.

This time when we spoke on the phone, I didn't yell at my mother, I simply told her "I need you to come home. My brother needs you. My sister needs you. We can't handle my father anymore." A few weeks later my mother showed up in Calgary.

She was a harder person than I remembered. Her face gaunter, skin tighter, less youthful. She was couch-surfing and had managed to get a job at a neighbourhood bar in a dodgy part of the city and was dating a bald dude named Francis, of all names. She now smoked weed, swore like a pirate, and was full of stories about she managed to become a mother to cousins I'd never met before.

In the 2 years that followed her return, I neither received an apology, nor an explanation. Every push for the truth was met with either a stone-wall or a reminder of how it was I, after all, who tried taking her kids from her. My anger, pain, and sadness only descended deeper. I went from passing university-level courses while holding down multiple jobs, coaching youth athletics, and playing competitive sports to being unemployed, unproductive, and a failing student.

To say I blamed my mother is an understatement. In fact, there was not a whole lot she could do that wouldn't result in me swiftly and harshly criticizing her failings as a mother and a person. Afterall, who could blame me? It got to a point where I had given up trying to run her out of my

life while accepting that she was simply incapable of giving me what I needed to move on. In other words, I felt deprived of progress.

The Defining Moment

My mother, on the other hand, developed a habit of taking off on road trips by herself or with her sisters, which vexed me to no end. I would torture myself with questions such as, “why would she never take me on road trips?” and “Why did she care more about her family than making things right with her own children?”

Yet, just like clockwork, each weekend would come and with it a phone call informing me of another visit to yet another relative and, as was my ritual, I would eat my anger in silence and tell her to have a great time as my bitterness hugged me tight. Another weekend approached, another phone call, this time she was going to Edmonton for the weekend to visit her sister Lisa and planned to stay with Lisa’s daughter, my cousin. I sat in silence and ran through my usual playbook of judgements. This trip in particular hit me hard because my aunt Lisa was a co-conspirator to my mom’s crime of abandonment. “Can I come?” I blurted out and, without hesitation, as though all this time she had just been waiting for me to accept her unspoken invitation, she responded, “I’ll pick you up at 6”.

The Journey

I tossed my overnight bag into the back of her rundown Buick Regal and jumped into the passenger seat which always smelled of cedar, tobacco, and marijuana. She pushed in the cassette tape that converted audio from the old, cracked iPod touch I had given her the Christmas before, and a Tina Turner song started playing in the background. “Now we are ready to cruise” she said as she lit a joint and handed it to me. Rather than make my typical snarky response about how drugs kill, I simply accepted the joint, inhaled, and cleansed my soul of judgement with each subsequent dry cough as my mother mischievously winked at me and put her foot to the pedal.

That first night we stayed with my cousin in her cozy trailer on the wrong side of town. I was pleasantly surprised to learn she was a new mother and a fledgling artist. It was a humbling experience to be so warmly accepted by a blood relative I hadn’t seen or spoken to since childhood. To some degree it made me feel less anxious about my impending meeting with the aunt whom I hadn’t seen since the day my mother walked out on me.

On the second night, we pulled up at the 7-11 where my aunt worked, just before her shift ended, to load up on chips, taquitos, and beef jerky before our big night out. My aunt looked unchanged with the same short black hair, robust midsection with skinny legs and magnifier style glasses. At my mother’s request I reluctantly purchased a pack of cigarettes for my aunt, which tested my patience as I realized I would be funding our whole night out. “Perhaps she only wanted you to come because she was broke” I thought, “so what?” I responded to myself, “you came to get to know your mother” I added. My aunt took us to a local blues bar with live music and, although I felt awkward around her, I was optimistic I would end the night without blowing up on her. However, as we were dropping off my aunt, she turned to my mother and asked, “want to come in for bit?” My heart sunk as my mother agreed.

Where It Came Full-Circle

My aunt’s place was nothing short of the picture of misery. It was a dimly lit room that reeked of cat urine emanating from the small, open closet that housed not one cat litter box, but two. Her clothes were stuffed in large, black garbage bags, and the only seating available was a choice between an uncomfortable looking wooden chair and a ripped black leather sofa that doubled as her bed. I chose the wooden chair to get comfortable in as I did my best to hide my horror and disgust at her living conditions.

This time I enthusiastically accepted the joint my mother lit, as they both started reminiscing about their childhood. My mother rarely shared stories of her childhood, but my aunt was much

more forthcoming and generous with her words. My aunt shared detailed accounts of growing up with sexual abuse, neglect, familial revenge, and suicide as though they were simply casual facts of life. My mother told me proudly about how her father would bring home his friends from the bar, where they would through the wildest parties, call all the kids outside and bet on which kid would win a chicken-coop fight. In her stories she was always the winner.

I realized that when she shared stories that were too painful to recount, she changed from first person to third. I sat there for what felt like hours in complete silence, absorbing the unfathomable way in which they told their painful stories with humour and tolerance. Once they had finished discussing the details of their stories, my mother glanced over at me, studied my face momentarily and turned to my aunt, “alright Lisa, it’s time I get my girl to bed”.

Internal Power

It was on this trip with my mother that I realized that I knew nothing about her beyond my expectations of her. But she had become a complex person to me, with stories that put my favourite books to shame. She lived a life that sometimes forced her to make decisions that she didn’t even understand fully. I began to look at her with compassion and see that she had given me the greatest gift any mother could ever give their child. She gave me a better childhood than the one that she had experienced. She taught me how to face your mistakes, take responsibility, and never lose sight that you are walking your own journey.

During his keynote address at the National Stolen Generations Conference in Gold Coast, Australia, Gregory Phillips stated that “if we do not deal with our trauma, we inadvertently hand it down to the next generation” (6). My mother’s story gave me perspective on her unceremonious departure, dissipated my pain, and replaced it with gratitude for all the trauma she had not handed down to me. The other significant lesson I learnt was the importance of “respectful individualism”, which, as discussed by Michael Hart, assumes “when provided significant space for development, individuals will act...towards the well-being of the community” and “no personal journey is taken in isolation” (75-76).

At the end of the day, I could only begin my journey of personal healing when I was ready to listen deeply to my mother’s story and hear it in the way she wanted to share it, not in the way that I demanded it. In my burning all-consuming need to address my pain, I lost my internal power. Void of my internal power, I punished all those around me for turning me into a victim. I became a perpetrator by forcing others to live up to my pain’s expectations.

So, if you are feeling the same way I felt and you can relate to my story, I want you to know that you can reclaim your internal power by listening deeply to the stories of the people who have hurt you. I hope you will drop the judgement coming from your pain’s internal voice and be grateful for the pain you didn’t have to experience. Remember, hurt people hurt people. And when you leave your hurt unattended, you will absolutely hurt others.

References

Hart, M. A. (2014). Indigenous Ways of Helping. In L. Lavalley, P. Menzies, V. Harper, & C. for A. and M. Health (Eds.), *Journey to Healing: Aboriginal People with Mental Health and Addiction Issues: What Health, Social Service and Justice Workers Need to Know* (pp. 73–83). CAMH. <https://0-www-deslibris-ca.aupac.lib.athabasca.ca/ID/467716>

Phillips, G. (1999). *How we heal*. National Stolen Generations Conference.

Trishtina is a proud Métis student at Athabasca University currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in Political Economics with a minor in Global Studies.

This one is purely my pick. I got lost in the story so much I was only able to start editing this on my third read. It’s touching, inspiring, personal, and just a hell of a good read. It absolutely deserves to be included as part of the Best of the Voice and that’s simply all there is to it. The only reason I think it wasn’t mentioned by students is that the title doesn’t do it justice. I don’t think enough students took the time when it was first published in late November to read it. Something I’m hoping to correct by including it here.



Being a Female Author

Barb Godin



I am an independent author of three books, which means my books are self-published. Some people say that's not real publishing, but that's debatable and not what this article is about. I am writing this article to address some of the issues I have had to deal with being a female author.

The most difficult part of becoming an author is not writing the book; that's the easy part. Writers love what they do and, as Mark Twain said, "If you love what you do, you'll never work another day in your life." No, the most difficult part of being an independent author is marketing your book.

If you are published with a big publisher, they do most of the promotion for your book and help to arrange book signings, etc. As an indie author, though, there are many scammers out there. Some offering to give you hundreds of book reviews as, apparently, books with more reviews sell more copies. Also, they will include your book in their weekly newsletter and email mailouts to thousands of subscribers. These ad campaigns can cost from twenty dollars to thousands. As a new author you desperately want to get your book read. After all, that's why we write—to share our stories. And possibly to help others to get through similar experiences. You can also choose to promote your book through Instagram, a Facebook Author page, or your own website.

So, after a few months of modest sales, I thought I would try to create an ad and post it to Instagram and Facebook. I included a button where the readers could message me for more information. Maybe I am naive, but I was floored by some of the responses I received. One was a emoji of a dog doing his business, while others were comments like "who needs your f...ing advice."

While these were slightly annoying, everyone is entitled to their opinion, so I quickly removed them. The remarks that were most disturbing to me were from men, and judging by their profile pictures, they were older men, and they were written in the wee hours of the morning. Some were accusing me of selling sex online under the guise of books. Others were inviting me to join them in their hot tub, and those are the comments I can repeat. Most were extremely disgusting, and it makes you wonder what kind of men are doing this.

I wonder if perhaps these are the men that are out hunting for women to fulfill their sick fantasies. I fear for the missing indigenous women and girls and all women and girls who have been victimized simply because they are female.

Becoming an author and sharing my stories has been a lifelong dream for me, and I was shocked to have to deal with this disgusting behaviour. But it won't stop me from writing. I will continue to share my stories with the hope of providing a voice for women and girls everywhere.

Barbara Godin is a graduate of AU and writes the "Dear Barb" column. She lives in London, Ontario with her husband, and two dogs. She can be reached on twitter @BarbGod

A couple of students suggested this article for inclusion, even though it was only published recently in Mid-December. Bringing up an issue of injustice that most of us are mildly aware of but probably don't think much about is, of course, classic Voice material. But making it have a visceral and personal punch? That's what makes it part of the Best of the Voice, 2021.



The Struggling Student Rants Setting Up Shop, Part I

Angela Pappas



Nearly two years of this pandemic have come and gone and, despite what anyone says (expert or not), no one knows with certainty when this will eventually end.

What we do know is that everyone's finances have been affected—whether due to last year's mass layoffs, supply chain disruptions, or rising inflation rates—no one has been left out of this party! It would seem natural, then, that many people across the planet are now setting up their own side gigs or quitting their jobs to be their own boss. Sorry boss, it's not me, it's you.

While we can all acknowledge the fact that starting a new venture can be exciting, there are also multiple risks to keep in mind, so you don't end up groveling back to your manager. For all you list-lovers out there, here are some things to keep in mind:

(1) E-Commerce and Social Media: We all know that social media has exploded during the past decade. People that once refused to touch a computer are now glued to their phones—my mother included. The impact this has had on commerce can't be described within a few sentences, but if you're up to it, it would make a great thesis topic (you're welcome). One thing I will focus on is reputation risk. Social media is famous for its ability to make anyone famous overnight by going viral. This is great because it gives everyone hope that they, too, can one day become a rockstar, even if they are still living in their grandma's basement. On the flipside, anything and everything you do is being watched. Organizational reputations have been ruined within hours, sometimes with no return. But all this wouldn't affect your small, local side gig, would it? You bet your bottom it would! Before you start setting up shop and posting your wares you need to do a full, clean sweep. Everything must go! Those posts you posted on your personal social media pages 20 years ago may not be so appropriate now. They can, and will, affect your bottom line, so go in there and delete anything related to:

- Political rants.
- Opinion pieces, especially ones relating to diversity, equity, equality, humanitarian beliefs, and (as of late) the ongoing debate on vaccination mandates.
- Current event opinions and rants.
- Negative reviews and, in particular, those related to other local businesses.
- Inappropriate jokes. If it's a joke you wouldn't tell your grandmother, or your boss, delete it.

(2) Regulations and Laws: Regulations and laws help standardize commerce, both on the national and provincial level; they are there for a reason, even if we don't necessarily like them. Things to keep in mind include:

- Sole proprietorship versus incorporation
- Permits and licenses
- Industry-related requirements
- Federal and provincial tax requirements
- Target market(s).
 - Will you cater directly to the final consumer, or go after businesses?

- Will you go after the entire market (mass marketing), or a select few (niche marketing)?
- At the end of the day, who will want to buy your product or service and why?
- Competitors—what will the neighbours think? E-commerce has increased rivalry because firms and individuals now have access to markets they never even dreamt of. Buyers are now able to buy the same exact product or service you are selling from anyone around the world. Hooray for shopping choices, but it goes without saying that the next guy will try to undercut you or, perhaps even sabotage you with things like rating bombs. The moral of the story: watch your back and play nice.

(3) Supply Chain: If your business has anything to do with goods, or services which require parts or materials, you have to keep in mind not only the recent supply chain disruptions but also the fact that the Internet has distorted delivery expectations and patience for everyone. Instant gratification is now the norm; gone are the days when we would order something from the Sears catalogue and wait weeks for the mail carrier to arrive. Thank you Amazon Prime—you've ruined it for businesses across the globe! The moral of the story, give your customers realistic expectations on delivery times and be prepared to calm down any angry ones who think that you control Canada Post.

(4) Going online: Finally, long gone are the days where you could open a lemonade stand at the end of your driveway and wait for the dough to start rolling in. If you're not online, are you anywhere at all? Not only do you need to be actively present on multiple social media channels, but you should also, at the very least, have an online website. Thankfully, with businesses like Shopify and Wix, setting up a website is not as difficult as it used to be. There are still, however, some things you need to make decisions on:

- Cataloguing system. The complexity of your catalogue will depend on your product line (i.e., what you're selling). By product, I am referring to both goods and services.
 - How will you set your catalogue up?
 - Will you have photos?
 - Will you have detailed descriptions?
 - Will you list prices or ask potential consumers to contact you?
 - Some online shops even go so far as to place each of their products or services on separate webpages.
- Payment processing. What types of payment will you accept?
 - Typical payment methods include debit card and credit card. More and more businesses, however, are now accepting PayPal and bitcoin.
 - If you have a physical location, consider payment options like Apple Pay and e-transfers, as well.
 - If you plan to go international, keep in mind that many non-developed countries typically pay through COD (cash-on-delivery). If you decide to forgo this method, you may be missing out on a very large market willing to hand over their cash.

While all this may seem overwhelming, fear not—there is so much more to stress out about! This is not an attempt, by any means, to scare you from realizing your dreams. It is, however, an attempt to help you get started on the right foot.

Angela Pappas is a part-time AU Certificate student who enjoys learning and discussing anything personal finance and personal development related.

A couple of the Struggling Student Rants were noted by Voice readers, this one, from our October 15 edition, struck me as part of the Best of because of the no-nonsense advice it provides in a good readable manner. It seems simple, but so many text-books show that it isn't.



When Iceland's Women Changed the World in One Day

The women's walk-out protested gender-based pay discrimination.

Barbara Lehtiniemi



On October 24, 1975, the women of Iceland did not go to work.

For one day, Iceland's women did not show up for their jobs as shop clerks, receptionists, flight attendants, bank tellers, teachers, or fish-plant workers. They did not show up to do housework, farm chores, child-minding, or family shopping. They did not pack their husband's lunches, nor did they prepare the family's meals.

It was the Women's Day Off.

1975 was declared by to be the "International Women's Year" by the United Nations. Like women in many countries around the world, Iceland's women weren't feeling particularly celebratory. They felt overworked, underpaid, and unappreciated.

Iceland's women had been nurturing their grievances for some time. Women made up approximately one-third of the labour force but were often paid less than 60% of what men doing the same work were paid—even at the same workplace. Additionally, women were saddled with most of the unpaid

work at home, even if they worked full-time outside the home.

Several groups, including the Rauðsokkahreyfingin (Redstockings), were ready to take their grievances public, in a big way.

When Iceland's major women's groups met for their first summit in the summer of 1975, the Rauðsokkahreyfingin proposed the idea of a massive one-day strike, to draw attention to women's contributions to the national workforce and protest against gender-based wage discrepancies.

To make the idea appealing to more women, and to avoid the potential repercussions to women accused of taking part in what could be viewed as illegal strike action, the day was to be called the "Women's Day Off."

Women's groups heavily promoted the idea in the news media in the run-up to the event. By October 24, the women were ready.

But, were the men?

In his 2021 book, *How Iceland Changed the World*, Egill Bjarnason describes the chaos:

"On October 24, 1975, all morning flights from Keflavik International Airport were cancelled. The flight attendants didn't show up. Bank executives had to make their own coffee and then sit in as tellers. Students showed up to empty classrooms. Men dragged their children to work. Assembly lines ground to a halt. Phones at reception desks rang unanswered, until an overwhelmed male voice picked up."

Approximately 90% of females in Iceland took the day off, both those in paid employment, and those engaged in unpaid work at home.

That afternoon, a crowd of 25,000 showed up for a massive rally in the capital city of Reykjavik, and smaller rallies were held around the country. (Iceland's population at the time was less than 220,000.)

Iceland's economy was paralyzed for the day. Businesses, schools, factories, and government offices were forced to shut down. In the afternoon, the smell of burnt food wafted in the air, as men tried—some for the first time—to prepare dinner for themselves and their children.

The women made their point.

By the following year, Iceland passed a law prohibiting wage discrimination on the basis of gender. Parliament also passed a bill granting women three months of paid maternity leave.

Five years later, in 1980, Iceland's first female president was elected—the first female elected head of state by a direct vote.

While the concept of women's strikes are nothing new—Greek playwright Aristophanes famously portrayed an extreme example in his play 5th-century BC play, *Lysistrata*—Iceland's women revived the practice for modern times.

Following Iceland's example, women's strikes were organized in other countries over the next several decades. In 2017, women in over 50 countries took part in a one-day strike to mark International Women's Day on March 8.

Although the needle was moved significantly on women's rights by that one day in Iceland, it didn't fix everything. The women of Iceland have gone on "strike" five times since 1975, the latest in 2018. The events are always held on October 24, but no longer involve a full day. On these newer versions of the strike, women leave their jobs early, to represent the time they've been paid for in comparison to men. The time they leave grows later as the years go by.

One day, Iceland's women will leave work at the same time as men every October 24.

Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU graduate (BGS 2018.) She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario.

She doesn't write full articles for us often, anymore, but I always love when Barb Lehtiniemi submits something. It's always informative, interesting, and a good read to boot. In this case, it's also inspirational. Put that all together and was there any doubt it'd be in the Best of the Voice?



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Student Essay Contest

Sponsored by: AWM and Math for America

Deadline: February 1, 2022

Potential payout: a non-specified monetary prize

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be students in either grades 6 to 8, grades 9 to 12, or undergraduates.

What's required: An online application form including contact info, a short (100-word) biographical sketch of the applicant, and a 500 to 1000 word essay based on an interview the applicant conducted with a woman currently working in or retired from a mathematical career.

Tips: Read the FAQ section for info on how to find an interview subject, and on questions to ask.

Where to get info: awm-math.org/awards/student-essay-contest/



The Art of De-Escalation

Alek Golijanin



Imagine a world where people were as capable and eager of de-escalating situations as they are taking out their phones to film conflict—hoping their video will go viral. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, social media has been flooded with these viral videos where people are acting out upon each other, much to the amusement of the crowd. Most situations can be defused before they reach the point of no return, but since bystanders are less likely to intervene, it is important to familiarize oneself with what de-escalation is about.

What Never Works

Before getting into de-escalation techniques, it is important to go over what never works. The most common mistakes seen, despite most people knowing that they make situations worse, are yelling, threats of violence, and antagonistic exchanges.

When it comes to yelling, everyone is guilty of raising their voice for the sole purpose of trying to ‘win’ an argument. The reason people tend to yell in arguments is because they are angry and frustrated, but it may also be the result of them not feeling heard.

It is not uncommon to see individuals yelling at each other prior to making threats or even fighting. The way someone responds to a person that is frustrated or angry and yelling at people will determine whether the situation escalates or if it can be deescalated altogether. When people are yelled at—even threatened—that act itself is aggressive, and aggression tends to evoke a flight-or-flight response. The reason why situations typically escalate is because people tend to meet aggression with aggression. The difficulty with all of this is that it can be difficult to keep a clear mind when the human is biologically designed to respond in one of only two ways: flight, or fight—not by taking the time to analyze the entirety of the situation.

Understanding and Responding to Emotion

To respond appropriately during confrontational situations, it is important to understand what emotions do to people and how to react to them. The leading emotion at play in a confrontational situation is anger, and it can be an extremely difficult reaction because of how anger affects us. Anger impairs the ability to think rationally or listen clearly, but it increases response speeds. This is because anger tends to trigger a chemical reaction that causes the body to release the stress hormones known as adrenaline, noradrenaline, and cortisol. These hormones are what cause heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature, and breathing rates to increase. These responses contribute to the inability to think rationally and listen clearly, and lead people to act out in ways that would be considered out of character.

The best way to respond to a person that is in a state of “flight or fight” is to focus on how anger impairs the ability to react. It is important to use simple short responses while maintaining a calm tone. Anger inhibits the ability to hear and process responses, but the human body is designed to still have some level of understanding. The importance of a controlled response to offset an angry response is that it focuses on “triggers” that may be heightened. The lack of a perceived threat tends to reduce the likelihood of a fight response. The challenge with all of this

is that it is important to stay conscious of the situation and not let emotions get the best of us, which can be difficult depending on the situation.

The Real World

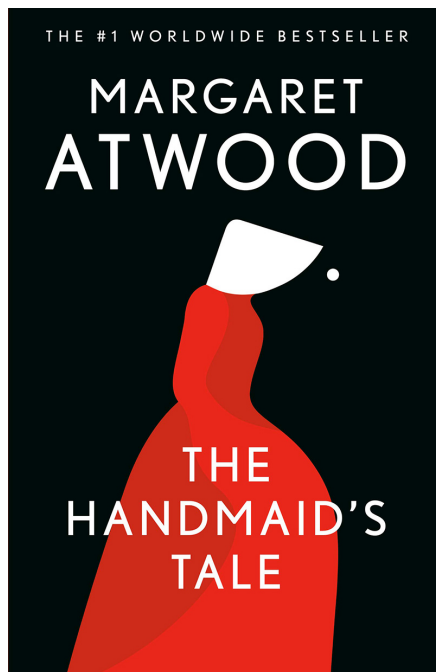
The art of de-escalation is the art of handling emotions. When it comes to dealing with situations in the real world, the ability to read the room is important. Once emotions get the best of a person, they can completely alter their state of being. That is why it is important to be conscious and use judgement when responding to other people. Some situations are not worth trying to de-escalate nor can a calm approach help, just get out of there. Hall of Fame UFC fighter George St. Pierre once said that when people would try to start fights with him that he would simply apologize and walk away. St. Pierre is a multi-division world champion, there is no chance that anyone at a bar is 'stronger' than him, but he stays in control of his emotions because he knows who he is and what he is capable of. It is not about winning or losing.

A combat sports fanatic, Alek is a fourth year business student who like to read research papers for fun.

A student reminded me of this one, with just the line "People need this," and the link. Reflecting on the one year anniversary of the storming of the capitol building, I have to agree.

Women in Fiction Offred

Milica Markovic



In my *Minds We Meet* interview with Natalia Iwanek, I mentioned that I was reading *The Handmaid's Tale* by Toronto-based novelist Margaret Atwood for the first time. Having now completed it, I understand why it was among the novels often assigned to students back in high school English. Its commentary on dystopias entails not only fundamentalism and ideas about freedom, but also the subjection of women in society. Unlike many other twentieth-century dystopian novels, it openly acknowledges and challenges the patriarchal culture, a conversation that only becomes more prominent with every passing decade as the question of women's agency is constantly being debated.

These themes are reflected in the accounts of the protagonist Offred, and I should point out that this review is only for the version of Offred found in the novels, as I have not yet watched the popular television series of the same name.

She serves her Commander and his wife as a concubine in Gilead, an American territory that has been reimagined as an authoritarian, theocratic entity for the purpose of this story. She's possibly one of the most authentic, complex characters put to paper, for she's left us with a question we still haven't been able to answer conclusively after all these years: is she a feminist figure, or a pawn of Gilead's system?

Perhaps there's a reason for the uncertainty. Throughout the novel, Offred exhibits a range of qualities and flaws that encourage us to believe in her self-empowerment while also sympathizing with her plight. Her ability to conceive children protects her from being sent to a labour camp—but only if she follows the rules, which includes obeying her superiors and minding her restrictive lifestyle. Understandably, she elects to not deviate from her role lest she is battered and worked to death.

This doesn't deter Offred from a subtle rebellion, however, like stealing little objects that bear her personal significance and sharing this very tale with a resistance group. Even when her relationships deepen with her employers, she doesn't ask for very much: most notably, a photo of her lost daughter and, again, small items that offer her some comfort. Her one truly self-serving act is her affair with the chauffeur Nick, but it's about reclaiming her sexuality given it's meant to benefit others.

Offred's behaviours suggest that she doesn't wish to overstep her boundaries, but also endeavours to rediscover her humanity. She seems to value having emotions, urges, and independence, though I feel she doesn't take it too far—not just for her safety, but because she doesn't want to abuse whatever power she gains the same way this new government does.

Atwood characterized Offred as a mirror for readers to look into and reflect on how they might identify with her situation. When I read her story, I imagine, even though I can't change the past, how much more appreciative I should've been of my freer life and whether it would've been different had I not taken for granted opportunities to fulfill it. I'd be afraid to defy orders—and even be horrified by my actions—but I also wouldn't deny my needs when someone finally listens to and treats me like a person. For me, love and sex would not be about seeking romantic satisfaction, but a means to reconnect with myself and the world.

Offred's experiences allow me to feel this way because I can believe these are precisely the complicated thoughts she has to grapple with in the novel. They have a palpable effect on her, and sometimes grimly so. I think that despite her tendencies to hold herself back, sorting through her feelings allows her to live as much as she can, considering the circumstances.

The Handmaid's Tale is not a book about fighting back; it's about carving out one's individuality in a place where doing so is nigh impossible. Offred's contribution, on a wider scale, functions as a warning to future generations about upholding dehumanizing beliefs and forgetting our integrity—regardless of our position in the community.

On a personal level, however, Offred's development revolves around navigating very nuanced—often uncomfortable—relationships she has with the other characters and social constructs. She struggles with establishing her perspective on autonomy, issues of consent, enslavement, intimacy, and control; furthermore, she finds that her feelings about people who she'd otherwise view as “good” or “evil” are quite layered.

I'm not of the opinion that asking whether Offred can be deemed feministic or plays into gendered conventions is especially helpful here, because we can't impose our worldviews on a character who must figure that out by herself. Another reason why Offred becomes a Handmaid is due to the nature of her marriage: she was her husband's mistress, which makes her “sullied” to Gileadean authorities and undeserving of better options. She's conditioned to believe that obedience and childbearing are her sole purpose in society.

Gilead's assumptions about gender have a devastating impact on Offred and other citizens, including men. But they are nevertheless deconstructed the more we learn about the characters. *The Handmaid's Tale* is such a compelling read to me, as it prompts us to decide how we'll engage with difficult subjects while also reminding us that destructive institutions cannot be easily reformed without contemplating our part in them first.

Milica Markovic is a Toronto AU student enrolled in the MA-IS program with a BA in criminology and political science.

This article, from early July, was the start of a new series, and inspired by an older column, Women of Interest. It's a step away from our usual fare of advice, recipes, and personal opinions and more a step toward academic writing or discussion, something that remains difficult for AU courses to foster very well. So if we can help foster that here, that certainly deserves to be part of the Best of, in my opinion.



Fly on the Wall

They'll Stone You When You Try to Use A Touchscreen

Jason Sullivan



Did you ever write an AU assignment on a tablet? Me neither! While touch screen keypads might be suitable for kibitzing with family and friends and dolling our faces up with filters ranging from Capuchin Monkey to Octogenarian Granny, nothing beats the tactile nature of a physical keyboard.

Traditional keypads contain ample space for flourishes where fingertips meet their mark with a satisfying smack. Like the lost art of cursive or the hipster-approved craft of pottery, there's an ineffable *jouissance* attained by tactile expressivity. Physical expression seems perpetually on the wane, however. Martin Heidegger, almost a century ago, suggested that only writing by hand can truly express what it is to be human: "This

history of the kinds of writing is one of the main reasons for the increasing destruction of the word. The latter no longer comes and goes by means of the writing hand, the properly acting hand, but by means of the mechanical forces it releases. The typewriter tears writing from the essential realm of the hand, i.e., the realm of the word. The word itself turns into something "typed."

We might wonder, then, in our era of blaring smartphone videoclips rather than silent library research, what we are to become. Recall Karl Marx's famous rejoinder to those who see in human nature an eternally unchanging essence: "The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill society with the industrial capitalist".

Yet, writing with a pen can be slow and frustrating when our thoughts are streaming through our minds like an epiphany cavalcade. In fact, much of what makes school suck, in the popular imagination at least, is the studious dull nature of sitting and writing at a desk like some woebegone Charlie Brown or a seething Calvin (sans Hobbes) held in detention. No wonder Moses, after hearing God speak and receiving stone tablets "inscribed by the very finger of God" later broke them in anger!

Ostensibly, angst for Moses was about idol worship (and here we might think of the endless streaming videos that make the internet anything but a library of learning), but in a deeper sense the key reality is that only when Moses wrote the tablets anew, with his own chisel, did they stand the test of time. Learning is like that, religious mythology aside. When we can recapitulate what we learn in our courses, doing so through the magic of our own minds and hands and with heaping dollops of our own ideas, that is when we come into contact with the magical mystery of knowledge itself.

Show Your Bones and Learn to Glow

There must be some common ground between two poles of expression, the dubious sloth pace of writing by hand and the rapid bewildering realm of voice-to-text transcription. It would appear that the nature of communication depends on technology, be it a carving tool to impress ancient hieroglyphics onto a clay tablet, or a stylus to select one's emojis onto a smartphone screen.

A recent archaeological find reminds us that tools of relative complexity existed far, far, back in the mists of pre-human history such that linguistic expression seems in itself to be a relatively recent invention. Archaeologists have discovered a barbed bone tool from 800 000 years ago that was created by *Homo erectus*. Perhaps it was used to butcher meat. While its purpose is unclear, the complexity of the carved bone shows that we *Homo sapiens* weren't the first to use tools requiring careful thought.

Nor do we have a monopoly on thinking about our environment in ways familiar to anthropologists studying countless societies all the way down (or up) the historical timeline. "Olduvai hominids, whether they were *H. erectus* or some other prehuman population, carefully selected bones as well as stones for toolmaking,' Tryon says. 'They were expert craftsmen or women.' New York University archaeologist Justin Pargeter agrees. 'Although it's unclear whether the Olduvai artifact was a pointed bone tool comparable to those later made by *H. sapiens*', he says, 'the existence of any bone toolmaking 800,000 years ago shows that this practice is far older than typically assumed'"

While translating thoughts into written form requires tools, to avoid being a tool of technology rather than master of our academic domain requires that we seek and utilize the best methods to make our education meaningful. That surely is why a keyboard is preferable to a tablet when writing our assignments.

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

The Fly on the Wall is often a dense read, riding between pop-culture references and philosophical or historical academics, but that didn't stop a couple from being recommended by students for the Best of the Voice. I chose this one, from our March 26th edition, because of that last sentence, which, given that he was just writing of how we've moved on from clay tablets, can be seen as either an ironic or literal comment on the nature of progress – and I'm still not sure which.



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

More than one way to approach AU studies. A funded student is curious about how students manage to complete one course per month without jeopardizing their funding status, and dozens of students quickly reply with their experiences.

Discord

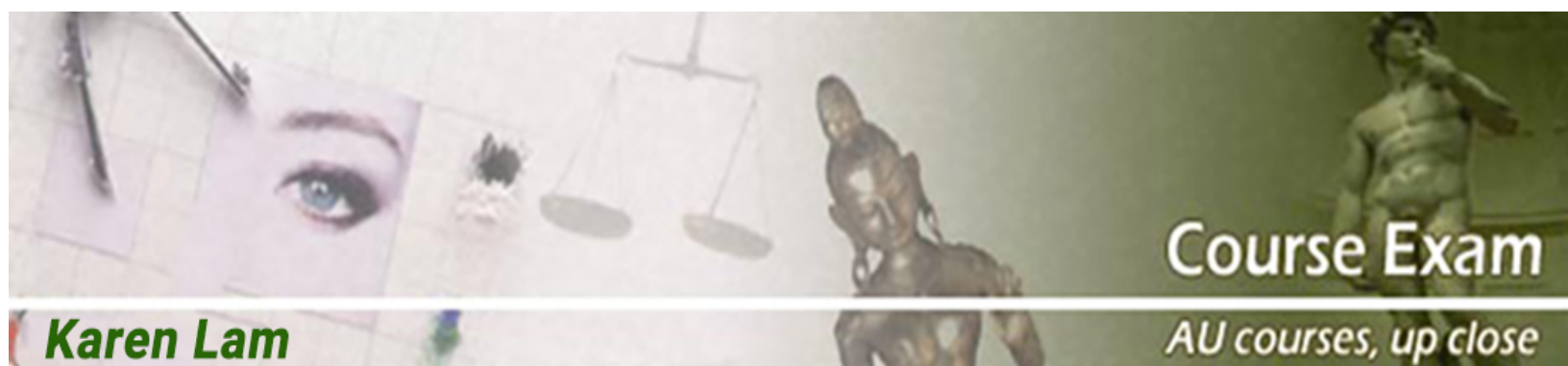
We'll stick with our cold climate, thanks. A discussion in the #general channel highlights the (lack of) pandemic safety measures from student witnesses.

reddit

Follow the yellow-brick road. A student seeks advice after misunderstanding the steps required for a student funding application; others respond with potential (but not guaranteed) options.

Twitter

@austudentsunion tweets: "If you're feeling depressed, angry, stressed, fearful, anxious, or alone, have your student ID number handy and call the Homewood Health Hotline for free professional support for all **@AthabascaU** students. **#auhelps #homewoodhealth #ausu #igotoau.**" (1-800-663-1142)

**Karen Lam****Course Exam****ANTH 272 (Introduction to Archeology)****Karen Lam**

If you have a course that you would like to see a Course Exam article written for, please feel free to email us at voice@voicemagazine.org with the course name and number, and any questions you may have about it, and we will do our best to answer the questions for you!

ANTH 272 is a three-credit introductory course to Archaeology that falls under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. This course will offer you an extensive overview of the theories, methods, and the different practices of archaeology. ANTH 272 also examines the methods and material remains used to study the past. This course is designed for Anthropology and Archaeology majors, or anyone looking for Humanities/Social Sciences elective. The course itself has no prerequisite.

Why You Should Take This Course

For anyone who is interested in anthropology or archaeology, potentially majoring in this field or simply looking to learn more about the study of human activity through various forms of recovery and analysis of material remains, this is the course for you!

We asked a few students who recently completed ANTH 272 why they took the course and if they recommend it to others, and the students that took the course mentioned the initial reason they took the course was because they required some social science credits for their degrees. However, upon taking anthropology or archaeology courses, they developed strong interest and passion for the courses and ended up taking further anthropology and archaeology courses to fill all their other social science credit requirements. The students who have taken ANTH 272 highly recommended this course to others looking for credits, as well as those taking a degree in Anthropology. They liked the course because they found the information and facts interesting, especially the unit about the various types of preservation that can affect a site. Students also highly credited their tutor for her support and guidance in the course.

Course, Assignment, Midterm and Final Exam Details

ANTH 272 is divided into three units with Unit 1 exploring the Framework of Archaeology, Unit 2 focusing on Discovering the Variety of Human Experience, and the final Unit 3 the World of Archaeology. Each unit is divided into a few lessons. The first two units require students to take notes from the two textbooks assigned to the course, and reading the study guide commentary, along with viewing the documentary "The African Burial Ground," which will be featured in the assignments and midterm/final exam.

The course itself is composed of two quizzes each worth five percent each. There are two assignments, with assignment one being worth 20% and assignment two worth 30%. The course includes a midterm and final exam each worth 20% that must be taken online with an AU-approved exam invigilator. Students are required to achieve a minimum of 50% on both the midterm, final exam and an overall mark of D (50%) for the entire course to pass.

Introducing Dr. Laurie Milne – Course Tutor

The course coordinator for ANTH 272 is Dr. Meaghan Peuramaki-Brown and the course tutor is Dr. Laurie Milne. We had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Milne about the course.

Dr. Milne completed her Honors BA in Archaeology in 1968 and her MA in Archaeology in 1971, both at the University of Calgary and commenced employment at Medicine Hat College in 1971 and remained there until June 2015. While on sabbatical and leave from MHC, she attended Simon Fraser University and received her PhD in Archaeology in 1994. Dr. Milne commenced work as a tutor with AU in 1999 and has also served as an SME, authoring 3 courses, Anth 272, Anth 320, and Anth 394. She also served as an interim coordinator of archaeology courses for 3 years until Dr. Meaghan Peuramaki-Brown came to AU.

The focus of Dr. Milne's studies has been lithic technology, cultural ecology, anthropological archaeology, ecological archaeology, and hunting and gathering societies and the challenges they faced in provisioning themselves and their families. She owes her interest in subsistence activities to her mother, an avid fly fisherwoman and gardener! From the time she was two years old her mother would backpack her to favorite fishing holes. Dr. Milne, her parents, and her grandparents spent many weekends picking wild cranberries, blueberries, saskatoons, and chokecherries. "Huge vegetable gardens supplied much of our food" and, at age 3, Dr. Milne was given her first small garden space. When she was 12, a summer vacation with relatives (who were avocational archaeologists) provided the experience of handling stone tools and visiting archaeological sites left by prehistoric First Nations people. Dr. Milne's mother encouraged her interest in archaeology by taking her to many different locales where artifacts were eroding out of cultivated fields and blowouts.

In 1964 Dr. Milne graduated from high school, the same year, coincidentally, that the University of Calgary opened the first archaeology department at a North American university; Dr. Milne was a member of their first class of students. The program of studies provided background in the four fields of anthropology: cultural anthropology, physical anthropology, anthropological linguistics, and archaeology but it also included interdisciplinary science courses in vertebrate paleontology, osteology, palynology, geomorphology, and soils. Dr. Milne's interest in interdisciplinary research derives from her U of C experiences and was further developed at SFU. While a graduate student at the U of C Dr. Milne had the opportunity to teach her first class, a unit on Indians of the Northwest Coast. She immediately knew that teaching would become her life's work. It was the classroom and students that drew Dr. Milne in and made her excited for each day, an excitement that remains to the present.

How to Be Successful in the Course

Dr. Laurie Milne's Advice for the Course

"When I call new students I always tell them that Anthropology 272: Introduction to Archaeology is a demanding course in terms of its two texts, required video, and coursework, however, the assignments largely require use of course materials rather than library research; quizzes are open book and untimed; the quizzes and assignments foreshadow many exam questions; the subjects



under study are diverse and interesting; and I am available to help them be successful in their course experience.

I note that Anthropology 272 provides a great foundation for other archaeology courses and point out that the main course text (Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn- *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*) is reputed to be the #1 selling introductory archaeology text in the world and that the articles in the book of readings (Robert J. Muckle- *Reading Archaeology: An Introduction*) have been judiciously selected by the editor, a college professor from Capilano University College in North Vancouver.

I provide extensive comments on all quizzes, assignments, and exams and where appropriate I illustrate by using my personal experiences in archaeology. Some students find critical thinking challenging but questions in each unit of the Study Guide and in assignments generally provide practice which helps students develop such skills. The major research assignment has been modified due to pandemic circumstances and to fit the abilities of students."

Thank you so much to Dr. Milne for sharing her story and valuable advice to the course!

Student Tips

Course Overview

For this course, we were able to interview one of the students who recently completed ANTH 272, and they stated that this course thoroughly covers all basic aspects of archaeology. When the student compared ANTH 272 to ANTH 277, which is another course they were taking concurrently, they mentioned that ANTH 272 contains a lot of details about subjects, dating processes, archaeological paradigms, and famous archaeological findings. The course itself comes with two hardcopy textbooks, one is the main text, and the other text contains all supplementary readings. When asked whether the textbooks were helpful, students from ANTH 272 mentioned the main textbook is extremely helpful and contains lots of information that is enquired in the quizzes and assignments. Students mentioned there is also a required video and various optional videos that can be watched online or ordered as a DVD via the AU Library.

Assignments

Assignment one is three short essays. Each is 750–1,000 words. Students are provided with six topics and permitted to choose their three topics. The second assignment is a longer paper (one student who completed the course mentioned their second assignment was about 20 pages but that includes charts, photos, and references) based on the weeks' worth of household garbage. Students mentioned that assignment two required a lot of work but received extensive support from the tutor and that made things much smoother and easier. The two quizzes are composed of paragraph-length answers, but, ideally, the more detail the better. Quizzes are documents that can be done at student's own time and are not in exam format. The second quiz is like the first quiz but focuses on the final unit.

When we asked students for tips and suggestions in succeeding in the course, students suggested it is important to pay attention to the list of terms and concepts at the beginning of each lesson, as these are "need-to-know" facts that will be tested in the quizzes. It is also important for students to take detailed notes, especially from the main textbook assigned readings. Students also recommended watching the optional videos scattered throughout the course as they found it very enjoyable and helpful, but they do not contain information that will be tested on assignments/quizzes/exams.

Students praised the course tutor, Dr. Laurie Milne for being the best tutor they had from all the AU courses they have taken so far. Dr. Milne was praised as being very helpful, answering all

their questions, and being extremely proactive about speaking with students over the phone to discuss the course at the beginning of the term. Dr. Milne also gave detailed instructions and support for the lengthier second assignment. Students found she gave clear guidelines of her expectations on quizzes, assignments, and exams, and provided constructive criticism that helped them improve significantly throughout the course. Students also found Dr. Milne responded to emails the same day they emailed her, and that they would receive marks often within an hour to a day after submitting assignments. Overall, students found Dr. Milne very approachable and readily available for support.

Midterm and Final Exam

Exams follow the same format as the quizzes and include four identification questions, two compare/contrast questions and three essays. All offer choices except the compulsory essay, which deals with the required video.

Questions?

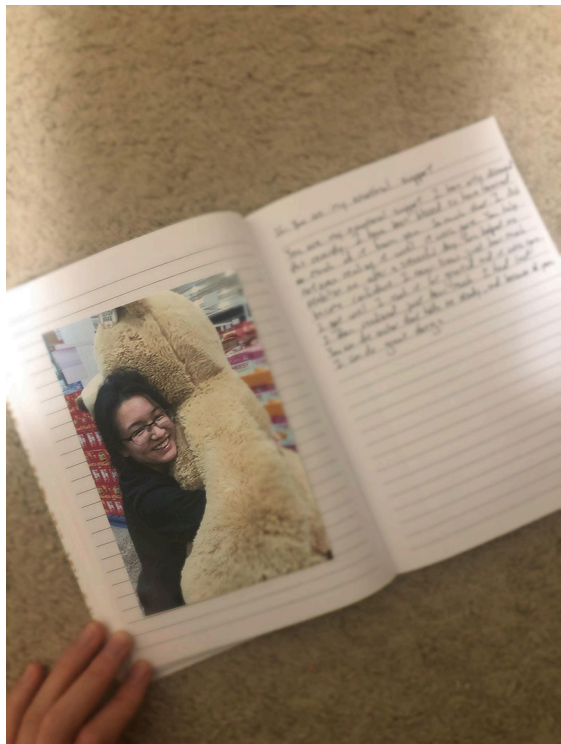
If you would like to learn more about the course prior to registering, please feel free to contact the Course Coordinator, Dr. Meaghan Peuramaki-Brown at meaghanp@athabascau.ca. Happy studying!

Karen's taking her Computing Science degree at AU, learning French and Korean, and is into K-pop, SF, and politics

Right behind student interviews, the Course Exams are easily our most regularly read articles. A couple were pointed out by students this year as being particularly helpful. This one, from late February, manages to not only give students a good idea of what they're getting into with the course, but also give students a heads-up as to their likely tutor.

Three Reasons to Make Journaling Part of Your Routine

Xine Xu

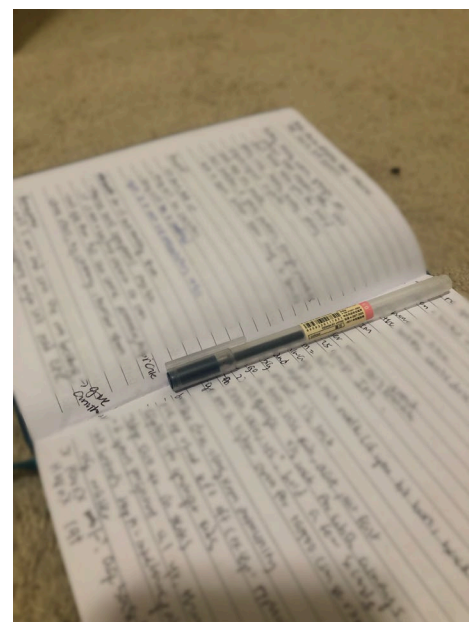


COVID-19 has thrown a lot of obstacles in our course. Whether it was your intended graduation date or the job you were eying for the next internship but was cancelled. So how can we make sense of these different obstacles without it feeling like life has thrown a number of wrenches in our plans. As Steve Jobs once said, "You can't connect the dots by looking forwards, you can only connect them looking backwards," or in other words, hindsight is 20/20.

In March of last year, I started journaling. A habit that I'm proud to have kept up but one that has also transformed my own mental health and resilience. Many people have preconceived notions that journaling is only for the English majors or the Philosophers among us. However, I've found that as a STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) student, I've largely enjoyed this habit—not only as a way to better articulate my experiences and emotions but also to improve my sense of purpose during the dreaded pandemic.

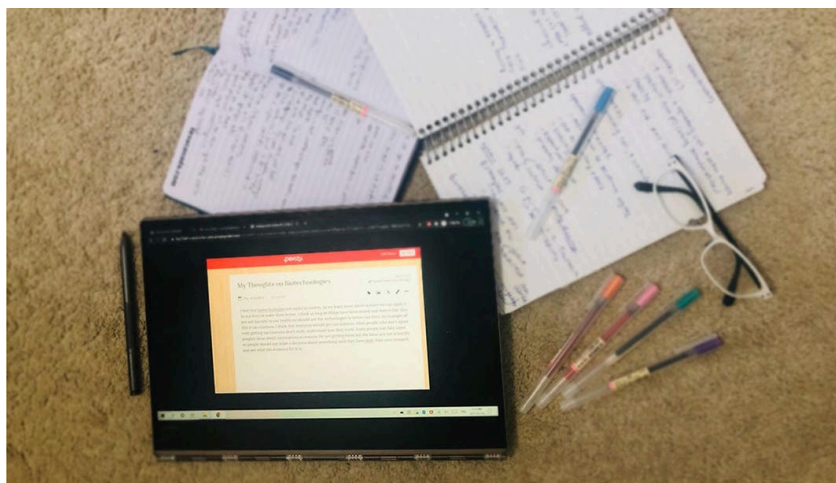
So why should you start journaling?

1. **Tracks your progress:** if you ever wondered if your academic and professional work mattered or if that side project you've been working on will ever be appreciated and respected by people around you, don't fear. You're not alone. Imposter syndrome, the experience of believing that you are not as competent as others perceive you to be, is real and affects many of us. Since I've started journaling, I've begun to notice the small hints of progress that keep me motivated. And during lockdowns, when we don't have our friends or family cheering us on, we might feel like our experiences are meaningless. Journaling gives you a chance to reflect on the progress and plan for the future.



2. **Check in with yourself:** self-care is a word we throw around a lot during the pandemic. We emphasize mental health, but we have few practical strategies to overcome our apathy for the series of disheartening information on the news. One way I've found journaling has helped me is to be more in tune with my emotions. I find that while I feel angry or frustrated, I often cannot always pinpoint the source of that emotion. Instead, the emotional aspects translate into physical manifestations of mental foggy or heart racing. While traditionally journaling is associated with physical pen and paper, there are now many online journals such as Penzu or Evernote that help keep our journals organized.

3. **Find creative answers to your problems:** When I'm busy ruminating over my emotions and not being entirely clear-headed, I find it difficult to find win-win solutions. For example, after an argument with a significant other, I found myself journaling to help find better ways to communicate. I listed some of the pros and cons of my current behavior and took the time to reflect how both of us can improve. Journaling in a way gave control back to me and allowed me to take control of the situation rather than a respondent.



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

Lists, lists, and more lists. The web is full of list-based articles, and why not? They're easy to read, consisting of bite-sized chunks that complement our busy lifestyles (and make it easier for sites to get multiple page views), and some of the best ones give us advice or inspiration that can make a difference in our own lives. From the student recommendations I've seen, this article, from late May, is one of those.



Eleven Ways to Flourish at Remote Work

Marie Well



COVID isn't all bad. It's also a gift.

The COVID Era normalized remote work. And I am grateful. With remote work, I don't stress over my appearance, freeze waiting for busses in minus thirty, and go ape over office politics. I also no longer get workplace anxiety, which was worse than having my hands burned on a stove every thirty minutes. At least, that's the analogy I used when I was in the throes of severe anxiety.

Thanks to COVID, I'm earning more money than I've ever earned in my life—and am succeeding despite three serious disabilities. With that said, here are eleven strategies I use for flourishing in remote work that may be beneficial for you:

1. I journal every task achieved for reporting purposes in virtual meetings.
2. I use the timesheets as a way to make a game out of the timer, recording every task in time increments with the aim to "show off a little" my productivity. This tactic also helps with my focus.
3. I spend more money on clothing while purchasing fewer items. By selecting only "timeless" pieces, I can look my very best at the occasional gatherings.
4. I spend more time than 8-hour days clocked into work. While this strategy may not be most ideal for parents, for a single wanting to get ahead, it can be a remarkable way to go the extra mile. I commonly clock in ten to eleven hours a day, with some of that time dedicated to professional development.
5. I invest in skills development by spending money and time watching Udemmy courses to acquire work-related skills. I spend at minimum an hour a day upgrading skills.
6. I invest in coaches from Fiverr for one-hour tutorials whenever I approach a task challenge I am unable to resolve on my own.
7. I invest in lunch-and-learns from Fiverr coaches willing to provide me with, for instance, five hours of design lessons for \$50 total.
8. I spend time each week seeking out new avenues of growth for my company online by searching for topics such as "sales strategies 2022."
9. I keep an email folder in which to store "new ideas." I also like to text myself spontaneous work ideas for the record.
10. I keep office politics to a bare minimum and maintain a formal, professional, but friendly tone in all written communications. It's much easier to remove office politics in a remote corporate setting if one sticks strictly to business in all communications.

11. If showing my face to a client via Zoom, I find the best lighting in the home and wear a full light face of makeup. Mac cosmetics allows me to "virtually" try on makeup, which I find beneficial. I elevate my laptop so that the camera is at eye level.

When I learned today my company would have an office one or two days a week, I shed some tears. COVID's remote work has been decent for me, and going back to an office, even one day a week, is reason to cry.

But, as with anything, COVID has a double-edged sword. It's hard to sell a product when everything is closed.

Given how many of Marie's articles the students noted, I felt I needed to include at least one more. Not only is this one from the beginning of November in keeping with what you'll usually find in a Voice Magazine, this one gives us an alternative take on what's currently bringing down most people. And if an article in The Voice Magazine can make a student feel better for a few moments, well, that doesn't deserve to be part of the Best of?

Homemade is Better The Hawkeye

Chef Corey



I have been in Scouting as a leader, which we call Scouters, for over six years. When I first started with our group, my son was a first-year Beaver Scout. As a Scouter in Beavers, you get assigned a nickname, and I got Hawkeye. I love the name so much that I kept it when our twins moved into the next level, Cub Scouts. This year has been very challenging for our group—and every other organized activity in Canada or worldwide, I'm sure. We have not been able to participate in traditional activities. For example, an annual Cub camp is known as Funarama that many groups around Alberta join in. Being a professionally trained cook comes in handy with camps like these, and since I enjoy cooking, I have had the great fortune to serve as the camp cook in previous iterations.

This year, we are doing our camp virtually, but I got inspired by a sandwich I saw from a YouTuber I follow. His looked so good that I had to make a version of it. I'm sure it will be a camping meal a few times over the summer, and I think this one might become a staple. I also feel like some of the portions of ingredients could be played with. So, if you're adventurous, play with this recipe. For example, you could increase the amount of meat or change the mustard, or use different cheese! Just have fun with it!

The Hawkeye Sandwich

Ingredients:

3 coloured peppers, sliced into ¼" strips

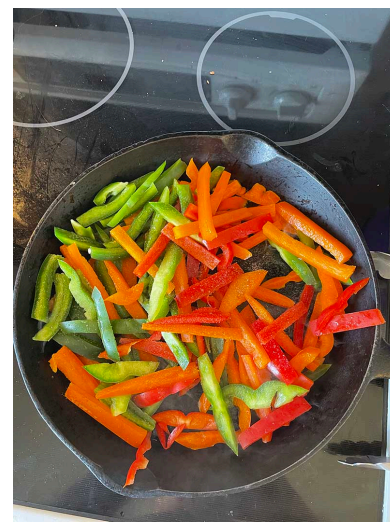
4-5 hoagie buns

1-2lbs Montreal smoked meat, sliced thin (deli-style)

8-10 slices of swiss cheese

Dijon mustard

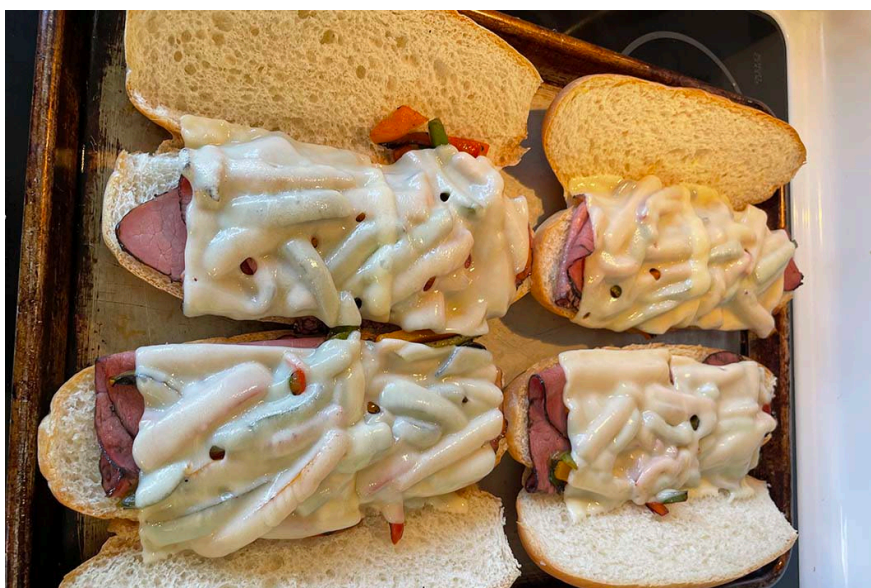
Mayonnaise





Directions:

- 1) Turn on your oven to 350F.
- 2) Place a larger, non-stick frying pan on an element at medium-high heat. Get a frying pan that can fit your hoagie buns, even it is just one at a time.
- 3) Cut your buns in half lengthwise, and butter both sides.
- 4) Brown the hoagies for 1-2 minutes in the frying pan or until they release from the pan. You want a lower heat than high because they will burn otherwise. You could also use medium heat, or if you have a griddle, set it to 350. This is the same idea as grilled cheese.
- 5) Place the buns on the sheet pan.
- 6) Add the peppers to the frying pan and cook them until they are just soft.
- 7) Add the meat to the frying pan to warm it up, about 1-2 minutes again.
- 8) Add 1/8 to 1/4 pound of meat to the bun, then the peppers, then cheese.
- 9) Put the buns in the oven until the cheese melts; if you want a little extra flavour, you can set your range to broil instead of 350F and let it melt and brown the cheese.
- 10) Once the cheese is melted, pull them out and let them rest for a minute, so they cool down slightly.
- 11) Spread the mayo and mustard on the other side of the bun.
- 12) Cut into halves, thirds, or quarters and enjoy!



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

Each week we have one or two recipes, because so much of adulting is answering the question, "What do you want to eat?" I personally picked this one, from our April 9 edition, for the Best of the Voice because I went and made it, and it was simply really tasty. What more do you need than that?

Food, Family, and Fire: Celebrating the Holidays Ukrainian Style

Natalia Iwanek



Unlike the Christmas Day commonly celebrated on December 25, many of those who follow the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic faith continue to adhere to their traditional January 6 and 7 celebrations. This is because Ukrainians like myself, along with communities in Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Russia, still follow the earlier Julian calendar, as opposed to the more recent Gregorian. Coptic Christians from Egypt and Ethiopia celebrate on January 7 as well.

The Immigrant Experience

As ethnic Ukrainian immigrants from Poland, with a long history of cultural suppression, deportations, and forced resettlements, my family immigrated to Canada in the late 1980s. Here we have kept our

traditions alive, with Christmas being the most prominent.

On the eve of January 6, my family sits down to a traditional meatless meal of twelve dishes symbolizing the Twelve Apostles, as soon as the first star is seen in the sky. Pre-COVID-19, this may have meant upwards of thirty individuals getting together in far too small spaces. Often, groups of traditionally attired and costumed carolers brave the frigid temperatures to visit the homes of local Ukrainian families. In return, they are offered sweet and savory delicacies, as well as the ubiquitous glasses of vodka. One of these visitors is the Goat, or *Koza*, a type of trickster. Although the Goat traditionally is not a respected figure, he is also said to symbolize wisdom and usher in an abundant harvest.

Traditional Dishes

- Varenky (Вареники) – Various Filled Dumplings

The highlight of the meal is always *Varenky*, small flour based dumplings, also known as *Pierogi* in Poland and the smaller, meat filled *Pelmeni* in Russia. Although most are boiled, pan friend versions are available as well.

My family favourites include sauerkraut and mushroom filling and potato and tvorog cheese. At other times of the year, savory varieties are often topped with fried onions and bacon fat, along with a dollop of sour cream and fresh dill, while sweet fruit versions are topped with sour cream and sugar.

- Borsch (Борщ з Ушками) – Beet Soup with Small Mushroom Dumplings

Different varieties of this classic beet soup can be found all over Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and parts of Central Asia. In my family's traditions, we eat a vegetarian broth version with small mushroom dumplings called *ushka*. The soup is finished off with fresh dill.

Our beloved soup is not without controversy. There is currently an ongoing clash between Ukraine and Russia over its origin, as a chef has attempted to designate the soup as Ukraine cultural heritage thorough "an application to the United Nations' cultural body, UNESCO." In



many ways, “[t]he borscht dispute highlights deeper grievances between Ukraine and Russia,” given a long history of imperialism and current tensions.

- **Olivye Salad – Potato, Egg, and Pickle Salad**



Other favourites include Olivye Salad, which my family makes without ham, instead focusing on potato, egg, carrot, green apple, onion, peas, and mayonnaise. It is also known as *Ensalada Rusa* throughout Latin America.

- **Holubsti (Голубці)– Mushroom and Rice Cabbage Rolls**

While our Christmas Eve version must be vegetarian, meat and rice version are also quite popular, often topped with a tomato based or chicken stock-based sauce.

- **Pidpenky Machka (Підпенкова Мачка)– Wild Mushroom Gravy**

Often made with wild boletus mushrooms, this wild mushroom gravy is a must for all *varenky* and *holubtsi*.

- **Kutya (Кутя)– Traditional Sweet Wheat Dish**

Kutya is a traditional sweet dish made with wheat, walnuts, poppy seed, and honey. Traditionally, a spoonful is thrown up on the ceiling; if it sticks, good luck will come.

Holiday Traditions

- **Didukh (Дідух) – Traditional Wheat Sheath**

One tradition during Christmas is to bring in a *Didukh* (wheat sheath) after the sighting of the first star and placed beside an icon. The *Didukh* is then burnt to honour our ancestors. During pagan times, it was meant to protect the family from evil, hold “the strength of family ancestors, [and] symbolizes the preservation of memorable family events and traditions.” It was traditionally made from the stalk of last year’s wheat harvest.

- **Malanka (Маланка) – Ukrainian New Year**

Malanka is our New Year’s celebration, traditionally falling on January 13, according to the Julian calendar. The day is believed to be based on supernatural and animalistic, pre-Christian secular, pagan beliefs. In the diasporic community, including here in Toronto, *Malanka* festivities are held yearly by various community organizations.

- **Pavuk (Павук) – Handmade Straw Spider**

Made of straw, these handmade diamond shapes in the form of a spider protect the home from negative energy. The previous year’s *pavuk* is burnt following *Malanka* to make way for the current year’s version. This tradition is believed to be based on an old folk creation tale, which stated that a spider spun a web so intricate, that the universe was created.

Бажаю вам щасливих свят! (I wish you all a happy holiday!)

Natalia Iwanek is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English at Athabasca University and is also a freelance editor and writer. She can be contacted at <https://www.nataliaiwanekediting.com>.

A student reached way back to recommend this one to me. Originally published in late January 2021, it’s not only informative, but lets us in to the life of a fellow student, and it also happens to be timely. All qualities of great stories that I love to publish in The Voice Magazine.



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Conversation with COVID-19

Dear Barb:

Hi, my wife and I have been married for 10 years and we seem to be growing apart. We don't have any children and that was our choice, but it's like we don't have anything to keep us together. It seems to be getting worse since the beginning of the pandemic, even though we spend all our time together, we seem to talk less and well, we can't do anything, so we stay home except for the occasional walk or grocery shopping. I don't want our relationship to fall apart, but I don't know what to do about it. Do you have any suggestions to spice up our marriage?

Thanks Mike.

Hey Mike:

You may not be growing apart; you may be feeling this way because of the pandemic, as it has changed all of our lives so much. You probably don't have a lot to talk about because you don't do anything or go anywhere which is what usually generates conversation. You say you stay home most of the time, what do you do during this time? If you just sit and watch TV, this isn't doing anything together. How about playing cards or a board game or preparing a meal together. Try to create something interesting to do together. You will be surprised how preparing dinner together will generate conversations, probably nothing

mindboggling, but just sharing thoughts and feelings. It seems like you two have gotten into a rut, but you can get out of it if you work at it.

Communication is the cornerstone of any relationship; try a different approach to communicating. For example, sitting, watching TV and only talking to each other when there is a slow or uninteresting part is not healthy communication. Words are a powerful force to connect or disconnect so choose your words carefully. A few positive words can go a long way in creating a close intimate bond, just as a few critical words can easily create a defensive negative atmosphere. Turn the TV off and spend time talking, it doesn't have to be about your relationship, talk about anything, like a book you read or a movie you watched. A conversation that begins in this way, will likely lead to more personal topics, and help you both to see a new or different side of each other.

Also spending a bit of time apart is a good thing. Even in the middle of a pandemic, you can go out by yourself for a walk, or a bike ride, or drive in the car. This will give you both some breathing room. Growing apart is a normal part of marriage and doesn't necessarily mean there are problems or issues.

Thanks for writing in Mike.

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.

Of course, we had to finish with a Dear Barb, as we did in every issue over the past year. This one, from back in March, remains sadly relevant. Something that one student noted "I come back to this one every wave. It still works." If that's not Best of material, what is?



Chazz Bravado When Men Notice

Wanda Waterman



A couple of comics were recommended for The Best of the Voice, 2021 edition, and the cluelessness of Chazz makes me laugh every time.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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

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

Regular Columnists Barb Godin, Barbara Lehtiniemi, Corey Wren
Jason Sullivan, Wanda Waterman, Xine Wang and others!

www.voicemagazine.org

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

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

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

© 2022 by *The Voice Magazine*

ISSN 2561-3634