



THE VOICE

Vol 30 Issue 03 2022-01-21

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

Machine Learning Bias

Avoiding Accountability?

Travel during COVID

Recounting the Experience

Plus:

*This is not a COVID article.
Local Shout-Out: Vernon, BC
and much more!*



CONTENTS

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

Features

Minds We Meet: *Sabina*..... 4

Articles

Editorial: *Getting in the Research Game!*

Machine Learning Bias: *An Excuse to Avoid Accountability*..... 5

What It is Like Travelling During COVID 7

How to Get Inspired 11

Five Trait's Women Desire in a Valentine's Man 19

Columns

Local Shout-Out?: *Vernon, British Columbia*..... 9

Music Review: *Black Sheep*..... 12

Fly on the Wall: *This is not a COVID Article* 13

Homemade is Better: *Saskatoon Bannock*..... 15

Beyond Literary Landscapes: *Poetry—Part I*..... 17

Dear Barb: *Tune Changing*..... 20

News and Events

Authentic Events..... 6

Scholarship of the Week..... 10

Vintage Voice..... 14

Student Sizzle 18

AUSU Update 22

Comic

Poet Maeve: *Males Bonding*..... 21

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

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

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

Editorial

Getting in the Research Game

Karl Low



You may have heard that the bachelor's degree is the high school diploma of the modern world. And given that Canada is the nation with the highest rate of people with some post-secondary credential around the world, there may be some truth to that.

So how do you distinguish yourself among all the others, if that's what you're going for? Graduate studies is a solid choice, but doing that will generally require you come up with some original research into a topic. That can be pretty daunting to many students who have settled in to the routine of read, synthesize, and report (and that's giving the benefit of the doubt, as far too many courses still only require simple regurgitation of the readings to pass.)

Fortunately, we are entering AUSU's research week and there's a few events coming up, with one of the key ones being a zoom meeting with Athabasca University's Associate Vice-President of Research, Dr. Andrew Perrin. While most research related events at universities are directed at graduate students, that doesn't tend to help those of us trying to become graduate students. This one, hosted by AUSU, promises to have some focus on undergraduate opportunities.

My first few years taking studies at AU, I managed to get myself into a "research assistant" position at the university for the computer science department. And what did that entail? Sitting in an online chatroom (actually a MOO, a programmable chatroom/gaming environment) and answering questions of students who came in looking for technical help in getting their course materials working. It wasn't hard, and this has been a helpful credit on my CV ever since. What's more, I was paid for my few hours each week, that, more often than not, meant keeping one eye on a chat window while playing solitaire in another.

This meeting should be a great opportunity to get an idea of what kind of positions are available like that for AU undergraduates. Now, I'm not saying you'll get a position exactly like that, especially considering how expert systems and artificial intelligence are able to do essentially the same thing these days, but there's problems with those systems too.

And that's the perfect segue into one of our feature articles this week, where Alek Golijanin takes a look at what "machine bias" means when people talk about artificial intelligence. Is the bias really that of the machine, or is there something deeper that needs to be dealt with.

Also this week, our main feature is our interview with Sabina, a student who went for a certificate right after high-school, and since has decided she's looking to further her degree and career, and how AU has managed to fit into those plans. Her words of wisdom are certainly worth reading the article for, as they're something a lot of students have trouble with.

We're also featuring a story by Xine Wang (Formerly Xu, congrats!) on just what it's like to travel during this phase of the COVID pandemic, and some of the notable differences she's seen on either side of the border.

Plus we've still got events, scholarships, a blast from the past for Squirrel Day in the Vintage Voice, as well as our usual selection of advice, recipes, thoughtful reflections and more!

Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl'.

MINDS WE MEET



Who are your fellow students? It can feel like you are all alone in your studies, but across the nation, around the globe, students like you are also pursuing their AU education, and *The Voice Magazine* wants to bring their stories to you. If you would like to be featured next, do not hesitate to get in touch!

The Voice Magazine recently had the chance to chat with Sabina (she/her) from Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, the traditional Treaty 6 territory of the Nêhiyaw (Cree), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Dene, and Nakota Sioux Peoples and Métis Nation of Alberta (Region 4).

Sabina is currently completing her Bachelor of Commerce, with a major in Accounting, hoping to pursue her CPA designation after graduation.

From Grande Prairie, Alberta, Sabina “attended college there for an office administration diploma right out of high school.” She stated, “I worked in accounting for four to five years before I decided I wanted to go back and complete my accounting degree. Now, I currently live in Fort Saskatchewan and am one year away from completing my degree.”

She credits her father as the one person in her life that has had the greatest influence on her desire to learn, “because he was the one who initially pushed [her] to go to college right after high school.” She explained, “I took an office administration program and really enjoyed accounting, and that is why I am pursuing my accounting degree now.”

Sabina is enjoying AU’s online learning environment. She stated, “I like all the freedom it gives with not having to be in a class at certain times. Since I live outside of Edmonton it is nice that I don’t have to drive into the city every day for classes. But it can be tough and time consuming. I find I spend the majority of my time studying because I don’t have someone else teaching me.”

However, like many students, she has wavered about continuing her educational journey. She related that this occurred recently, just after she had “completed [her] third year and it has taken [her] five years.” She explained, “School was starting to feel like a lot: doing it on my own and taking so long to finish. But I am also a year away from completing my degree now and there is no way I could quit after the amount of classes I have completed and just a small amount left.”

For her most memorable course to date, Sabina chose MGSC 312: Stats for Business and Economics, stating, “I actually got 100% on the midterm.”

As for communication with her course tutors, she finds it “generally pretty good,” explaining, “It is different depending on the class but the majority of the ones I have been assigned have been very helpful.”

When she is not studying, Sabina spends her summers “garden[ing] and enjoy[ing] the outdoors.” She continued, “In the winter I usually hermit in my house and do a craft like macramé or binge some television.” She is also “binging *The Office* over and over,” and is “currently reading the *Bridgerton* series.”

When asked about the most valuable lesson she has learned in life, Sabina stated, “Failing is okay and you can’t be good at everything. I learnt that by having high expectations for myself regarding marks but learned pretty quickly some classes you just need to barely pass and move on. And having to rewrite exams is not a sign of failure.”

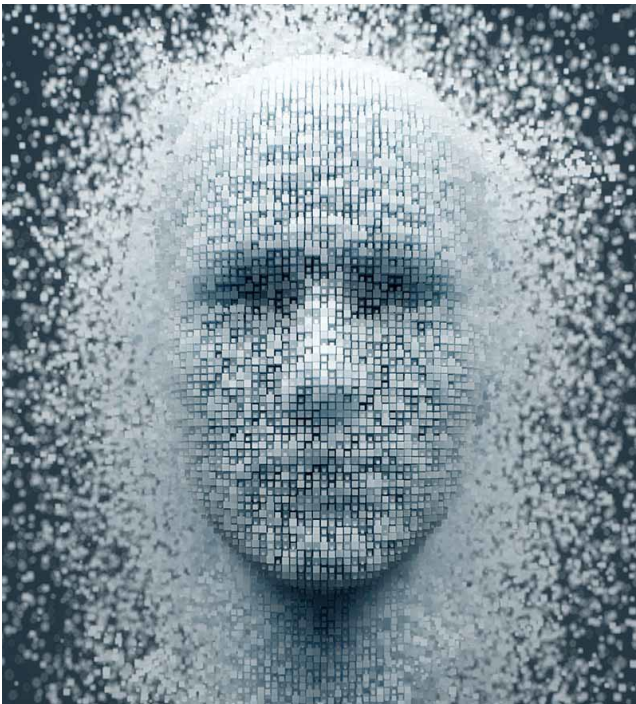
As for her proudest moment? “My proudest moment is being so close to accomplishing my degree because I have been doing the entire thing online. It takes a lot of self-motivation to complete a number of classes online by yourself. Especially because there are no deadlines other than the course end date.” Best of luck Sabina!

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



Machine Learning Bias An Excuse To Avoid Accountability

Alek Golijanin



Racist. Discrimination. These are words that get slapped on to artificial intelligence programs that are identified as being biased in their outcomes against different groups. In the tech world, the term used for these outcomes is machine learning bias and it is defined as a phenomenon that occurs when an algorithm produces results that are systemically prejudiced due to faulty assumptions in the machine learning process. But if we start talking algorithms and coding, artificial intelligence is the product of human design, and it functions as it was programmed to by its developer. The reality is that machine learning bias is a convenient excuse for tech teams to avoid accountability for their lack of foresight.

What's the starting point for Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning?

When the idea of artificial intelligence programs that could learn and improve over time became reality it

was called machine learning. The ability for artificial intelligence systems to learn on their own was seen a game changer, and the machine learning was designed to take place with minimal human interaction. The machine learning algorithms are programed to absorb tons of information and filter anything not coded as important. Over time, what happens is the artificial intelligence system updates itself and consistently gets better, or, if it turns out there is machine learning bias, worse.

The origin story for Machine Learning Bias

Among the leading tech giants, research and development are the costliest departments and the results they produce have long-term implications. The challenge with having a successful tech

business is that tech companies often need to seek out patents and protections for their innovations to stay profitable.

And with how competitive the tech space is, there have been occasions where competing companies have requested patents for similar products. The tech company that could argue that they were first-to-market with their product would likely have a better chance of being awarded the patent. Companies that were all-in on a single patent and that missed out on it were likely to go under. The competitive nature of research and development in the tech space and the amounts of money that get invested into these departments mean that tech companies may have no choice but to be first-to-market—even if it results in a faulty product.

Another major challenge with designing a comprehensive artificial intelligence system is that there is always more to them than developer-only teams can plan for. The biggest barrier to bringing on diverse schools of thought is that tech companies are often cash strapped and do not have the financial means to bring on a variety of professionals including those with backgrounds in sociology, health, or finance.

One of the most cited examples of machine learning bias and how it can ruin lives is that of a risk assessment software that was used in the criminal justice system. The biased algorithms were coded by developers based on superficial data which resulted in black individuals being flagged as more dangerous and having stricter conditions imposed on them. While the machine learning bias was not fatal, it did have life-changing implications for the individuals whose freedoms were taken away. The effects of this machine learning bias could have been avoided if the developer-only team had had access to professionals with backgrounds in socioeconomics and who would have been better positioned to identify potential areas for bias.

Our society is heading into a future that will have us interacting with artificial intelligence systems ranging facial detection systems all the way to robots. As our capacity to innovate and build becomes more powerful, so does our ability to do unplanned damage. Using machine learning bias to explain unexpected results that harmed people is equivalent to referring to car crashes that were the result of impaired driving as car accidents. Both outcomes are entirely avoidable, and excuses should not be accepted because they minimize the life-changing implications they can have.

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

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

Research Week: an evening with Dr Andrew Perrin

Wed, Jan 26, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/research-week-an-evening-with-dr-andrew-perrin/

RSVP through above link

The Power of Relationships: Why Mentorship Matters

Thur, Jan 27, 11:30 am to 12:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU, Ten Thousand Coffees, and RBC

news.athabasca.ca/events/the-power-of-relationships-why-mentorship-matters/

Register through above link

Trivia Night with the Library

Fri, Jan 28, 7:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library

us06web.zoom.us/j/93792249985

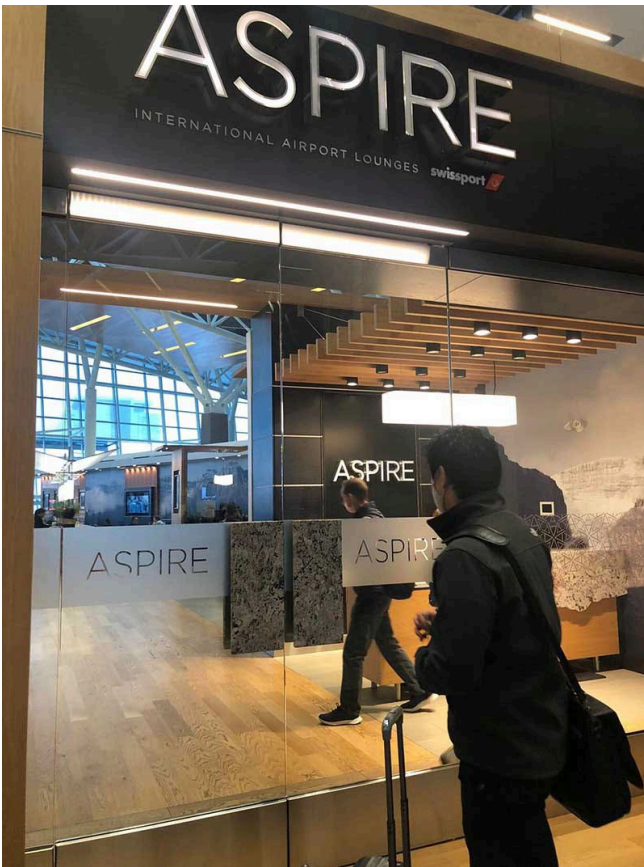
No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.



What It is Like Traveling During COVID

Xine Xu



Travelling during COVID is rough but stay within the recommended travel guidelines and you can have fun while staying healthy.

One of the most stressful, but also fascinating, experiences in 2021 was traveling amidst the pandemic. I know I might get a lot of hate for this post, but I wanted to share what some of my experiences have been like. I also know that while avoiding travel is highly recommended at this time, there are still some people who have booked tickets beforehand or, if you're like me, have airline credits about to expire before year end, so you might want to know my experiences. But please note that these are purely my own experiences and may not be exactly what everyone will face. It is highly dependent on the country you're visiting and where you're venturing.

My story started about 1.5 years ago when I pre-booked a ticket to see my aging grandmother in Shanghai, China. Her health was deteriorating, and I planned a summer trip that was, of course, canceled without notice. I had my credits returned to me for the airline that I had booked, but one and a half years later, the airline called me saying that the credits would not be transferable to the following year. Hearing that nearly a thousand dollars' worth of credits was going to waste, I quickly booked a ticket to the United States. This was before the omicron variant and, at the time, COVID looked as if it

was waning and people were slowly returning to the office and to normal life. The border rules were also growing more lenient. I only booked to the U.S. because I feared traveling further than our adjacent country given the complexities overseas and in other non-English speaking regions.

So, a few weeks before Christmas, I packed my suitcase and was ready for a one-week adventure in Los Angeles and San Diego.

Xu2:

This adventure started in Calgary, where I had to get my rapid antigen test for travel. The rapid antigen test involved a nasal swab in which my nose was intensely swabbed in circles multiple times. For those of you who have tried the take home antigen kits, this is very similar.

However, when it comes to swabbing my nose, having another human being swabbing the nose was a lot more painful and stressful than swabbing myself at home. I would say this is one of the most uncomfortable and irritating parts of my travel.



My partner and I stuck to outdoor activities to reduce contact with people.

Furthermore, I knew that before I left the U.S. I would have to undergo another round of antigen testing.

The antigen test was not excessively expensive, but it was not cheap either. This is a common consideration that travelers during COVID should be aware of. Funnily enough, however, when I passed the U.S. border, I was not asked to present my negative test results. In fact, nobody questioned me about symptoms or test results. So despite having paid for my antigen tests and following the travel advice, I was never asked to present this information.

My experience in Los Angeles and San Diego was strange, to say the least. From a COVID perspective, it felt like the pandemic was over in America. Not everyone was masked indoors. Even when signs were prevalent in elevators and indoor spaces, many people were seen unmasked. Costco gave out food samples, and many shoppers were unmasked and rolled their eyes when I reminded them to put on a mask. Perhaps in other countries, this may be different but from my experience, it felt like a crime to wear a mask when everyone around you was not.

After a relaxing vacation in California, I had to book for a rapid antigen test prior to departure. So 72 hours before departure, I found a pharmacy that would test foreign travelers free of charge. Unfortunately, their services were poor and slow, but I could have faced a \$2,000 penalty for not presenting a negative antigen test to the Canadian customs officials. So 24 hours before departure, I paid for a private lab to swab me and their test results were returned in less than two hours, with a very hefty cost associated with the swab, of course. Luckily, I was able to arrive safely in Canada free of symptoms and positive test results. Compared to the U.S. customs that never questioned my test results, the Canadian customs had multiple check points for negative antigen test results.

At the end of the day, my vacation was a much-needed break from my one and a half years of nearly total isolation. However, it did come with its own headaches and challenges. For anyone traveling during the pandemic, always check on [Travel.gc.ca](https://travel.gc.ca) for guidance for your destination of choice.



*Despite some of the influences from others, I stayed true to indoor masking policies
Matcha shortbread cookies make an excellent gift for friends and family*

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



Local Shout-Out Vernon, British Columbia

Jessica Young



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

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

So, to support local business, I have compiled a list of small and medium-sized businesses that deserve a shout-out.

Expressions of Time

"The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in a book".

Expressions of Time is an adorable, eclectic, used bookstore located on 30th Avenue. Opened by Okanogan resident, Charlene Deuling in 2011, she considers this bookstore her dream come true.

Expressions of Time has a surprisingly wide selection of books, including a children's section, almost always in great condition. Take advantage of their trade-in program, where you can bring in your used books for 40% of the selling price in store credit, or 25% of the selling price in cash. They also sell a variety of vintage and witchy items, such as tarot cards, rocks and crystals, vintage jewelry, and collectables.

Personally, I can get lost in this place for hours.

Ratio Coffee & Pastry

"We want you to come in and experience the warmth of a beverage, hearty food and genuine human interaction."

Ratio Coffee & Pastry is located on 29th Street—a short walk from Expressions of Time! Ratio began with a coffee cart on bike wheels under the simple pretense that the people of Vernon deserved quality coffee and pastries.

Ratio is by far my favourite place to get coffee when I'm visiting Vernon. Nothing provides a better warm, small-town atmosphere than sitting outside in their large patio area, sipping my traditional cappuccino and people-watching.

Planet Bee Honey Farm

"We produce a selection of local honeys from our very own hives and compliment these with

honeys sourced from other passionate beekeepers – curating Western Canada’s largest selection of raw, pure honey bottled & labelled by hand, in-house at our Vernon, B.C storefront. Every visit to Planet Bee includes a chance to witness honey bees up close, stroll our bee-friendly gardens, and taste honey & mead - all free of charge”.

Planet Bee Honey Farm is literally the only place I will buy honey. I buy a huge tub of their creamed honey every time I am in Vernon, and let me tell you, I could eat this stuff by the spoonful. They have a huge selection of honeys, jellies, honey wines, and other beeswax/honey products, including soaps, skin care products, and tinctures.

Planet Bee opened in 1997 and remains a family-owned business. They expanded their educational program in 2013, and today you can book a guided tour and/or honeybee presentation or visit the indoor and outdoor education centres at your own pace. My kids love to look at the bees in action in the glass observatory hives!

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

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

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Kin Canada Bursaries

Sponsored by: Kin Canada

Deadline: February 1, 2022

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents, and be planning to register as a full-time student in the 2022-2023 academic year at a recognized post-secondary institution.

What's required: A completed application form (submitted to your nearest Kin Club), including contact, academic, and financial info, as well as information about your community involvement, your knowledge of Kin Canada, and the ways receiving this bursary would impact your education.

Tips: Read the application tips section for valuable info.

Where to get info: <https://www.kincanada.ca/bursaries>



How to Get Inspired

Marie Well



To be inspired, you first need to believe you have no limitations.

Your perceived limitations are all lies. If someone tells you that you can't achieve a (moral) dream, they've just told you a lie.

Everyone has perceived limitations. One senior with a chronic disease whom I know is in forced poverty from her senior's benefits. She thinks her disease and age means she can't work. But it's a lie, and she's about to prove it to herself.

One young girl I knew went through brain surgery and was deemed a vegetable by her doctor. But it was a lie. She's now educated and has a positive future.

One female medical professor I emailed was once told that her mental illness would prevent her from ever working or going to school. That clearly was a lie.

Not believing the lies is the first step to getting inspired. The second step is taking action.

Here are some actions that might inspire you:

Claim an ideal career.

But don't just go for any job. No. Dream big. Find the highest paying careers with the most possibility for advancement. But make sure it's a career you love. One way to achieve this is to do personality tests such as the Myers Briggs and see what careers most suit your personality. Then pick the career with the most income potential.

You don't want to aim to earn \$2.00 per hour making cross-stitch puppets, even though you may love cross stitch. It's better to do something that you love and that earns you around a six-figure salary and that also enables you to buy all the craft material you could possibly desire.

Get fit and ultra healthy.

As another example, if your body mass is too big, think back to your leaner days when you were fast and athletic. Or perhaps it's the desire to stop lethargy. The desire, thus, is to get fit and eat well to restore higher energies.

But don't just go for a five-pound loss. Get back into the clothes where you felt your best. It's really all about self-discipline and involves one word: change. Instead of low nutrition, high fat meals, eat high nutrition, low fat meals. And exercise with weights and cardio. The hardest part is the first week. But as you feel and look better, you'll get the reward to push you further, until you reach your ideal state. At that stage, you've arrived at peak health.

Escape the poverty trap.

As yet another example, perhaps you are poverty-stricken. Say, you can't work because of a disability or old age. Perhaps everyone you know in your demographic is unable to work. The

key is to see yourself as having no limitations. Even if you have the most severe disability yet try to work but constantly fail, you still have unlimited potential. The key is to not give up.

Why settle for a poverty-income, one where you feel hungry each day, barely able to afford a cup of coffee? Instead, go for the gold: keep developing work-related skills and seek out library books on CEO psychology. Who knows—you could go from a disability pension that forced you into poverty to earning six figures—even seven—every year.

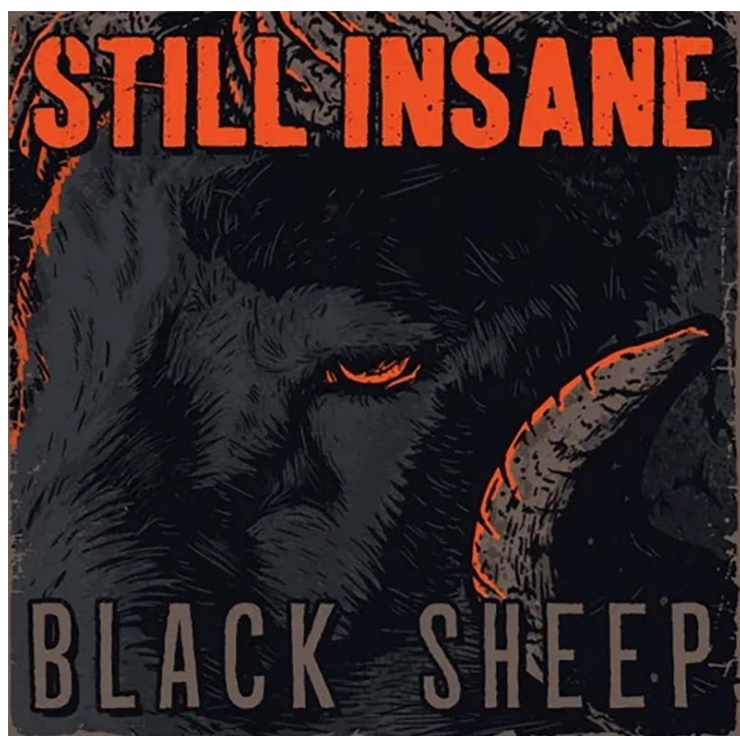
Become highly educated.

Last, but not least, get highly educated. If you were a C student or a student in the so-called “special class,” don’t let it stop you from getting an education—even a PhD. People are breaking through barriers every day. And if you think it’s impossible for you to achieve a PhD, it’s time to break through that barrier, too. Why not be the one to set the example?

Whatever ethical goal you strive for is yours—if you don’t believe the lies.

Music Review—Black Sheep

Jessica Young



Artist: Still Insane

Album: *Black Sheep*

Formed in 2006, Still Insane is a punk rock band from Quebec City. According to them, their goal is simple: to play fast, to play loud, and to play everywhere. The band’s latest EP, *Black Sheep*, will be released on February 4th, 2022. Meanwhile, the title track “Black Sheep” is now available to stream anywhere you get your music.

Still Insane consists of Eric Dorval on vocals, Jean-Sébastien Arsenault on guitar, Steeve Rock on guitar, Jean-Philippe Bérubé (Bub) on bass, and Sylvain LaBrecque (LabWreck) on drums. The band is self-described as a melodic punk band with 90’s Californian Skatepunk influences.

Black Sheep has five tracks: Sleeping On The Floor; Black Sheep; No More Targets; Stay Home; and Thank You.

The single “Stay Home” was released in December 2021. You can [read my review](#) on that one for more details, but in summary: I wasn’t a fan, yet still hopeful that the rest of the album would change my mind when it was released.

Unfortunately, after listening to *Black Sheep*, I’m still not a fan. The instrumentals sound exactly the same in every song, and the vocals are off-key and not on beat. Now, I understand that this was most likely done on purpose in a “we’re too punk to care” kind of way, but it was a little much for me. I think the generic sound and vocals could have been saved lyrically, but the lyrics felt juvenile and mostly consisted of singing the title of the song on repeat.

The opening track, “Sleeping On The Floor” seems to be about a man with a drinking problem. I was actually very excited when I pressed play on this song because it sounded like something

much different than “Stay Home”. That lasted about 20 seconds in, and the classic punk chaos of frantic drums and loud guitar ensued. At the 2:30 mark an uncredited female vocalist comes in and sings, “Hey dude, it’s me inside your head; are you really that stupid, to lose your wife and kids?”—which is about as close to vulnerable as that track gets. The song ends with a monologue about someone defecating in a parking lot. Gross.

The title track, “Black Sheep” was one of the better songs of the album. Fast-paced and anthemic, the band joins together to shout the lyrics “Black Sheep” for most of the song. Next, “No More Targets” is the one-minute-long version of essentially the same thing.

The final song, “Thank You” was my favourite because of the sweet: “without you I can’t imagine, how life would feel, each day with you is like Sunday”. Unfortunately, the vocals were exceptionally bad in this song, and I didn’t feel that the heartfelt lyrics matched the angry, aggressive instrumentals.

Check out Still Insane on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [Twitter](#).

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



Fly on the Wall

This is Not a COVID Article

Jason Sullivan



This is not a COVID article. Computer algorithms may spot a key word, like teachers who spot head lice on children, but this article isn’t about words. And it’s not about parasites, per se. Remember when a phrase like *gut fauna* might have turned tummies? Well, truth is, it is the representative weeds, er, wee beasties, that we are all known to and composed of. Words are as much about what words represent as about what they claim to mean.

Representation, to *present again*, is like how the word *analysis* means to cut again. Others at AU who took the BIOL204 course as one of their mandatory science sign-ups, will recall that lysosomes are aptly named: they cut and slice and dice genetic reality like so many dollar bills peeled off a wad in some old gangster movie, or so many

cards flung out of a Rolodex in another old business film. Remember the 80’s movie *Ghostbusters*? The librarian character became really spooked when card catalogue cards came flying out of their shelves; no Dewey decimal system can bring order to cultural disorder that lurks in society just below the surface.

Maybe it’s the desire for a well-ordered order that leads us all to accept reality as it is, represented by the powers that be. But there’s always more, just beneath the surface, and you don’t have to believe in conspiracies to note that history is replete with just-so stories past off and a short while later cast-off. Weapons of mass destruction in 2003 Iraq, anyone? Or how about: work hard in school and you will have more job choices than your dropout neighbour who became a

handsomely paid “rig pig?” So many dead dinosaurs and plant materials, lying just beneath the earth’s surface and magically transubstantiated into dollar signs.

What lies beneath, indeed. And just as there’s no cure for the common cold or for the sense of loss at wasted study opportunities, there’s also no solution to the inveterate human desire for meaning-making via representation. Consider what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, either two paragons of weaselly opacity or, if you ask another audience, those geniuses of schizo-analysis and creative aplomb, had to say about representation. Or perhaps what their academic fan base progenitor, named John Marks, had to say in 2005:

“Representation’, for Deleuze, entails an essentially moral view of the world, explicitly or implicitly drawing on what ‘everybody knows...representation cannot help us to encounter the world as it appears in the flow of time and becoming” (Marks, 227). Indeed, as per the real influenzas and fake news in our time, there’s no correct representation of the fear and trembling we relatively youthful AU students feel as we worry about our elders. And there’s no telling how history will judge these askew times.

Perhaps Deleuze correctly ascertained, in Marks’ words, that the nature of representation occurs as either politicized or poeticized. “The poet speaks in the name of a creative power, and seeks to affirm difference as a state of permanent revolution: he is willing to be destructive in the search for the new.”

Just as lysosomes cut up the building blocks of life—the better to erect new towers of biological magnitude—so too might we at AU become the ana-lysts who equally challenge any paragon of virtue who claims hegemony over our hearts and our minds. Having a mind of our own, even if we are wrong, is part of being able to think at all. As kids learn from loving adults: there are no stupid questions, just dumb silence. After all, if creative thinking dissolves into the mindless abyss of conformity then we all might as well just, you know, get rat race jobs and spend our tuition bucks at the local Canadian Tire or Wal Mart or Starbucks or Baby and Me (Sarah Ingham, online).

References

Ingham, S. (2021). ‘Baby and Me’. Retrieved from <https://babyandmebrand.com/>

Marks, J. (2005). ‘Representation’. In *The Deleuze Dictionary*. New York: Columbia University Press.



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

You'd almost think we were making these up (we're not), but January 21 is Squirrel Appreciation Day. Truly. A good opportunity to learn all about the furry critters, and delve into some interesting articles from *The Voice's* vault.

Everything sounds like a bear when you're lost in the woods. Nola Newitt and her family get closer to nature than they planned. "Realizing we were in bear country, we tried to make as much noise as we could. Still, we were a little nervous and the moment we heard rustling in the bush we both jumped..." Northern Saskatchewan: A Fun and Affordable Holiday Destination, August 14, 2002..

How do you like your squirrel? Busby LeClair attempts to keep up to the Joneses next door, grill for grill. "Standing on tiptoe and peering through a gap in my living room vertical blinds, I can't help but notice that the Appliance World delivery van had backed into my neighbour's driveway. Alright, I say to myself, the conflict has escalated." Barbecue Wars, February 9, 2005.

Homemade is Better Saskatoon Bannock

Chef Corey



Well, it's another week and another new edition of Voice Magazine. I made this recipe last year and shared the finished product with my neighbour, Paul. I must brag about how fantastic my neighbour is. He might not think he is, but he's pretty awesome! Paul and his family share an alley with us. He's a Professor of Indigenous Studies at another University. You might have heard of a course he co-created as Dan Levy helped give it some forward motion by joining it and subsequently promoting it last year. The last time I asked him about it, the course had over 400,000 people finish it. Paul is Metis from Saskatchewan, his spouse is from Ontario, and they have a couple of kids. Paul is one of those guys who is super kind and caring but also likes to joke around. So as a gesture of neighbourly appreciation, I delivered him some Saskatoon Bannock.

I fried these bannocks, but I've had great success with baking them as well. If you are not a fan of saskatoons, or you cannot get them, you can try a couple of substitutes. Saskatoons also go by the name Juneberry or serviceberry. I've heard Juneberry used more colloquially in the United States and Eastern Canada.

They look like a small blueberry but taste way better. We can find saskatoons growing wild in the Edmonton area, but we also visit u-picks and sometimes get them from the store.

If you cannot find saskatoons, Juneberries, or serviceberries where you live, then I feel sad for you. However, you can use blueberries to emulate the flavour, though you're missing out. Alternatively, just leave the berry out and make this bannock plain. I added sugar to this recipe to make it more sweet dough than savoury, but bannock (culinarily speaking) is like southern biscuits. When I made a recipe like this with my Cub Scouts, I told them that Europeans made bannock around the same time as our Indigenous peoples. The recipe difference had more to do with the ingredients available to them.

In my short amount of research into this and some use of Wikipedia and other websites, the differences were possibly significant enough that both bannock recipes should be considered variants of the same formula. The recipe is simply flour, fat, water, and heat.

The difference is that Europeans had access to salt and sugar, where these ingredients were not as readily available to the Indigenous peoples of the time. Flour would have been different as well as corn or wheat may have been used, whereas, in Europe, wheat flour is more likely the primary source of flour. Fat is another area that would have been different. We have a plethora of fats available to us; plants like canola and coconuts give us some fat but can also use animal-based fats like butter or lard. I don't think Indigenous people generally cultivated cows, and I believe their fats came from buffalo and other animals. Europeans had bovine dairy available and hogs for lard. I'll admit I am certainly not an expert so take my speculations with a grain of salt, and if I'm wrong, please tell me. Other





sources I've read also suggested that the Indigenous peoples gave bannock to the Europeans, who then exchanged ingredients.

Thankfully today, we have access to more than enough of the world's food. With solid fats, like butter, lard, or shortening, you want to work them into the flour like you would if you were making pie dough. Mix it until it looks crumbly and forms a solid mass if you squeeze it. Each fat will do something different to your bannock, though. Butter will add flavour, lard and shortening will make it slightly more challenging (still very tender, but not as flaky as butter). I chose a combination of butter and shortening this recipe. This way, I get a good variety of tender flaky and a dough that doesn't fall apart right away. You can also just use half a cup of one ingredient, such as butter. It's not going to be terrible unless you overbake it, in which case, don't blame me, Sharon Weiss; you did that all yourself.

So, if you're not Sharon and you know how to follow instructions, then enjoy this dish and share it with your friends, eventually, don't do it now, though, because COVID.

Saskatoon Bannock

Ingredients:

- 3 cups flour
- ¼ cup butter
- ¼ cup shortening
- 2 TBSP baking powder
- 1 tsp fine salt
- 1 TBSP sugar
- 1 ½ cups of cold water
- 1 -2 cups saskatoons, depending on your preference

Directions:

- 1) Mix all the dry ingredients in a mixing bowl.
- 2) Add the fat and mix it up until it resembles coarse cornmeal.
- 3) Add the water and mix everything until the dough is mostly combined.
- 4) Lightly flour a work surface and pour out the dough to work it into a ball.
- 5) Once it is no longer sticky, knead it for two minutes and rest for five minutes.
- 6) Heat a frying pan with an inch of oil until the oil reaches 350°F. Alternatively, turn on your oven to 350°F and prepare the following steps as though you were using the range and baking sheet.
- 7) Roll out the dough to ½ inch in height and cut out circles starting on the outside and working your way towards the middle. A glass works if you do not have rings as I do.
- 8) Once you have finished, roll up the remaining dough and repeat the last step until all the dough is used.
- 9) Once the oil is ready, fry a couple at a time, leaving space between them.
- 10) Fry for two minutes, then flip and fry for another two minutes. Repeat this until a toothpick comes out clean from the largest bannock. OR, bake in the oven for up to 30 minutes, poke a toothpick in the center. They are done if it comes out clean, and the bottom of the bannock is browned.
- 11) Repeat with all the dough until they are all golden brown and delicious!
- 12) Let them rest for 5 minutes and then devour.



Beyond Literary Landscapes

Poetry: Part I

Natalia Iwanek



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

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

Who

This week’s column will serve as a two-part introduction to the diverse and wide-ranging poetry genre, including this week’s focus on 21st-century poetry and next week’s glance at pre-21st-century poetry. Those interested in an

introduction to the vast genre of 21-st century poetry, a reminder of some genre classics, and as an inspiration for further reading, may choose to begin with three poets, namely Nayyirah Waheed, Aria Aber, and Dionne Brand.

Other poets in this genre include Sonia Sanchez, Beth Brant, and Rupi Kaur.

What

Poetry can be defined as “literature that evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience or a specific emotional response through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound, and rhythm.”

Poetry is an incredibly diverse genre that can be broken down into various categories by common types of poetry including, but not limited to, blank verse, free verse, narrative poetry, odes, and ballads. For simplicity’s sake, this column is separated into very general categories of 21st-century poetry and pre-21st-century poetry.

Some notable reads in this genre include, Nayyirah Waheed’s *salt.*, Aira Aber’s *Hard Damage*, and Dionne Brand’s *No Language is Neutral*.

Where

These works span a wide geographical area, including Afghanistan, the United States, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, and Germany.

When

These works mainly take place in the 21st-century.

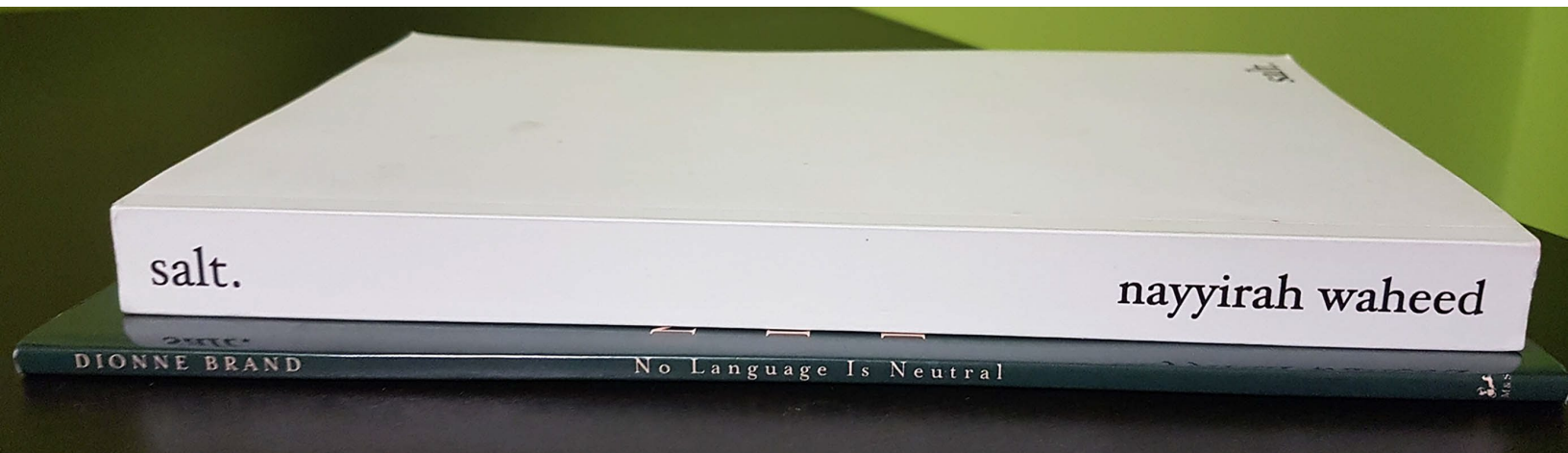
Why

For readers interested in themes of love, displacement, migration, family, race, identity, colonization, and feminism, the works of 21st-century poets will not disappoint.

How

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

AU students interested in learning more about this topic are recommended to look into ENGL 212: Poetry and Plays, a junior-level, three-credit course, which "introduces forms of poetry, with a wide variety of examples from Shakespeare to Atwood, examining themes, structure, style, and imagery." Happy reading!



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

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics



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

AthaU Facebook Group

Examining options. One student (at least) has lost track of what exams can be written how and with whom. Fortunately others are up on what's up with exams and share the current options.

reddit

Seeking alternatives. A student bemoans the lack of video lectures at AU and asks for tips on other online universities that offer them. A few responses offering commiseration, and a few tips on other uni options.

Twitter

@austudentsunion tweets: "Did you know AUSU students can use

@LinkedIn learning for free? @LinkedIn Learning gives you access to thousands of online training videos by industry experts on software, programming, business, creative skills and more! Sign up today! #linkedin #jobtraining #AthabascaU."



Five Traits Women Desire in a Valentine's Man

Marie Well



I saw an ad today that asked, “What are the five traits women find sexy in a man?” The woman announcer, who wore a low-cut blouse, then said, “The first trait is confidence.” She flipped her hair and requested I click on the button, which I did.

But I know confidence isn’t a universally desired trait. Sometimes confidence can be a chip-on-the-shoulder or egotistical mentality. I believe there are traits in a man—or in a partner in general—women love more universally than confidence.

It may be true that women love warriors, whether they are sculpted with muscle or round and chubby. But what do women love more than warriors?

That's the Valentine Day surprise. Women tend to love men with particular traits. Appearance doesn't even make the list of top traits, in my mind. But love does. Whether the man is tall, skinny, short, plump, he can be someone's beloved Valentine that lasts forever.

Here are five traits I believe women universally love, or at the very least appreciate, in her Valentine's man:

Trait one: a man who never directs his anger at her.

Trait two: a man who never criticizes her.

Trait three: a man who keeps his problems to himself, or at least refrains from complaining.

Trait four: a man who listens carefully to her so he can discover how to bring her the greatest of joy.

Trait five: a man who chooses to love her more profoundly every passing day.

If you're a woman and your man—or partner—doesn't possess any of these traits, then focus exclusively on those traits you've ever loved in him. And don't consider for a second the flaws or shortcomings he might possess. It's everyone's goal in life, I believe, to love another being unconditionally, come rain or shine.

If you're a man and don't possess any of these traits, start by refusing to show anger, in any form, to your woman. And then build on the rest.

But don't be disheartened, not for a moment, if you don't possess the above traits. Every woman has a unique cluster of standards she most desires in a partner. Some women love bookworms; others love sports enthusiasts. Some women will accept a controlling partner, but not a disloyal one. Others will love a poverty-stricken partner, but not a controlling one.

And what you look like is much less important than what's in your heart.

I heard a quote recently that said, “Somewhere someone is looking for a partner with exactly your traits.” Claim the five traits above to build on those traits of yours many women only dream of finding in a perfect Valentine.



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Tune Changing

Dear Barb:

Hi, I have a dilemma. I chose not to get vaccinated from Covid. I must admit I bought into the conspiracy theories. I did not think the virus was anything serious and that it would eventually just disappear as Donald Trump said. However now we are into three years, and it is not going away and so many people have become sick and are dying.

From everything I read and hear it does seem that the unvaccinated are keeping this virus going for so long and allowing it to mutate. Over Christmas a lot of family and friends became ill, some just had colds, and some were quite sick, and my grandfather ended up in the hospital. I really do not know a lot about this virus, but I do not want to be responsible for perpetuating it. The problem is, after speaking out against the vaccine for all this time, I don't know how to explain my change of heart to my family or friends.

Maybe no one knows how to stop this virus and it needs to run its course, but I'm feeling I should be listening to the Medical Health Officers now. They do not know everything, but I'm realizing I don't either, and they've got more time and people to look into this stuff. Looking for some tips on how to explain my change of heart. Thanks, Scott.

Hi Scott:

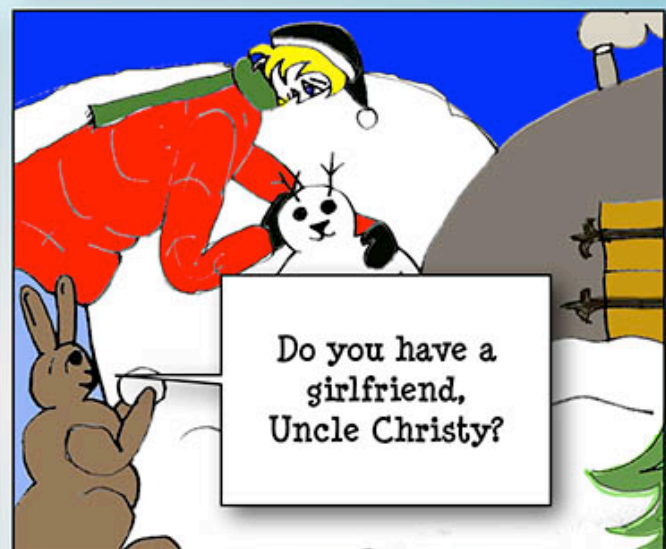
You have the right to change your mind, however it may be difficult to explain your change of heart to family and friends. You can explain that since you made your initial decision, additional information and research has become available. People often change their opinions as they gain knowledge. A simple example are people who were staunch meat eaters and then become vegetarians; it happens, people change their minds.

At this point you can make a more informed decision. Also, you have witnessed millions of people being vaccinated with limited negative effects. It is a normal part of human nature to be skeptical and ask questions. However, at some point we have to trust that the experts who have spent years and years in medical schools, hospitals, and doing research, have more knowledge than we have through surfing the internet or watching biased tv shows. Often people make decisions based on the group they are a part of. They go with the flow. Then when they do more research, they realize they did not make an informed decision. It can be especially hard for someone to realize they might not be making the right decision when they don't have the knowledge to tell them that in the first place. This is called the Dunning-Kruger Effect, which Psychology Today describes as: "The Dunning-Kruger effect is a cognitive bias in which people wrongly overestimate their knowledge or ability in a specific area. This tends to occur because a lack of self-awareness prevents them from accurately assessing their own skills."

Good for you Scott for being insightful enough to change your mind when presented with additional information. I hope this information is helpful.

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.



Poet Mave
Males Bonding**Wanda Waterman**

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Is there anything I can do now?

Visit the Student Research Centre on our website for information and resources to help get you started.



Pride Student Lounge

Hosted by VP Community & Wellness Natalia Iwanek (she/they), the Pride Student Lounge is a safe space for 2SLGBTQIA+ undergrads to meet, kick back, and chat about anything and everything @AthabascaU! Drop

by and get to know your fellow 2SLGBTQIA+ students with Natalia, your leader for student engagement!

Email ausu@ausu.org for the Zoom link.

Virtual Student Lounge

Hosted by VP Community & Wellness Natalia Iwanek (she/they), the Virtual Student Lounge is a casual hangout for any and all AU undergrads to meet, kick back, and get to know fellow @AthabascaU learners. Drop by and get to know your student community with Natalia, your leader for student engagement!

Email ausu@ausu.org for the Zoom link.



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THE VOICE

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