



THE VOICE

Vol 30 Issue 08 2022-02-25

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

Becoming “That Girl”

Perfecting a Performance?

Michael Winter: Telling Stories

The Writer in Residence Speaks



Plus:

The Power of Yew

AUSU Update - The Candidates!

and much more!

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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

Democracy On the Small Scale

Karl Low



The nomination period has closed, the candidates have been validated, the campaign period opened, and the latest AUSU election is underway.

This year, we have 10 candidates vying for 12 seats. Only five of the ten have served on council before, with notable absences including the current president and the current vice-president finance and administration and several other councillors.

While it would seem like having only 10 candidates for 12 seats means there's no reason to bother looking at who's running, if anything, this means we have to look more closely at all the candidates. To do this, take a look at this week's [AUSU Update](#), where each candidate's picture should be linked to their own description page (and if one isn't, please let me know, as there's some technical doo-hickery going on and I need to get it right.)

AUSU requires there to be an acclamation process, where students have the opportunity to vote Yes or No to each of the ten candidates, and only those who receive more yes votes than no votes will get elected. This is not just window dressing,

as AUSU does have a history where students did in fact reject a candidate in an acclamation, with some students having noted what they found when they did a google search on the person was enough to convince them the person didn't belong on Council. After all, there is no pre-vetting process done on these candidates, that falls entirely to you, the membership of AUSU.

I'm not saying it happens often, but dysfunctional councils are not unheard of when it comes to student organizations, as there can be a lot of money involved and, if we're being honest, not a lot of external scrutiny. So it's important that every student take a good look at these candidates and evaluate if these are the people you want representing you to AU, to the government, and to the wider student populations, both at AU and other accrediting bodies and post-secondary institutions. I'll be honest, I haven't looked myself, and odds are that these are all decent people who want something good for their fellow students. But odds aren't sure things.

In addition, the indigenous circle is also running its election, with room for up to thirteen representatives from and for the indigenous populations at AU. Three people have stepped forward to take on the role of bringing the indigenous focus to the wider students' union.

Next week, just before the polls open, I'll be running our usual interview with the candidates who choose to submit answers. If you've read these before, you already know what some of the questions are, and maybe even some of the answers for the candidates who are already on Council. But it should be interesting to see if some new ideas have developed, as well as what these ten people hope to bring to AUSU.

However, this week, in addition to our feature student interview, we've also got a look at AU's newest writer in Residence, with a report on the talk he held back in December, as well as a link so that you can see the talk on your own if you want to be entertained by a Canadian writer with some good humor and good advice. We're also taking a look at just what makes "That Girl", the one that seems to have her life completely together and is posting it all on social media.

But maybe it's not as together as it seems. Or even if it is, should it matter?

Either way, enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', with a stylized, flowing script.

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 Sophie Major (she/her), currently residing in Valleyview, Alberta, the traditional Treaty 8 territory of the Cree and Dene, as well as the Métis Settlements and the Métis Nation of Alberta, Regions 1, 4, 5, and 6.

Sophie is currently enrolled in the three-year Bachelor of Management program here at AU, with about ten courses left to complete before continuing on to a CPA designation. She stated, “I currently work as a Finance Coordinator for Financial Reporting, which I happen to love. My CPA designation will further my career with my present employer, I hope!”

On a more personal note, Sophie mentioned, “I recently turned 60 years old (wasn’t sure if I was going to share that or not). I live on an acreage just outside of the town of Valleyview, in Northern Alberta. I was born in Edmonton but raised in the farming community of Sunset House, which is just east of Valleyview—about 20 miles. I am married, and this last August we celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary. I have four children and eight grandchildren (who are my joy in life)! I started out with my post-secondary education in Grande Prairie, at GPRC.

Once I met my future husband we decided to go farming! So, until 2003, we were farming with my parents in Sunset House and ran a mixed farming operation of cattle and grain. Since 1983 I have been working, either part time or full time, while we raised our family. In 2003, we quit farming and moved to our present home. I worked from 1983 to 2000 in our local public library, but in 2004, I moved to an accounting job in an oil and gas company. Since then, my jobs have been accounting focused and that is when I decided to get my CPA designation and thus pursue my studies more committedly through AU.”

When she is not studying, Sophie keeps busy. She explained, “In the summertime I love to garden, and, in the winter, I usually just hibernate with my courses. I have eight grandchildren, so I love to spend time with them year-round. One of my passions is genealogy. I have researched on my paternal side antecedents as far back as 1720 in England. I am currently trying to get a better family tree on my maternal side, but we must go back to Eastern Europe, and it has proven to be a more difficult task. I hope to be able to publish a book on our family tree, but I think that will be a retirement project.”

Sophie also finds some time to relax with a good book or podcast series. She stated, “I am currently reading *Women in Old Norse Society* by Jenny Jochens and I have ordered another recreational read called *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World* by David W. Anthony. She is currently “listening to a podcast series called *The History of English – The Spoken History of a Global Language*.”

When asked who in her life has had the greatest influence on her desire to learn, Sophie felt that this was “a hard question,” but chose her parents, explaining, “They were always supportive of my desire to read when I was young, and I was always encouraged to pursue higher education.”

Her experience with online learning so far has been positive. “I like that I can work at my own pace where I am comfortable. I like that I can contact other students for feedback through using the AUSU app and I have been able to find ‘study buddy’s’ through here. The tutors have been great; I have appreciated their guidance throughout all the courses I have taken.”

However, like many students, Sophie has wavered about continuing her education at times. She explained, “There have been many times I have wavered about continuing with this path. Raising four children and working full time it seemed like it would take forever to complete the program one course at a time. However, my dogged determination to see it to the end has kept me going. I would like to say that I accomplished something in my life, and this would be one item on my bucket list that I would be extremely happy to have completed.”

Her most memorable course has been COMM 277: Interpersonal Communication, which “was an eye opener.” She continued, “It solidified a lot of experiences I have had in my working life.” Her communication with tutors has also been great. She stated, “To date I have had positive experiences with my course tutors. One really helped me get on track with citations and how to avoid plagiarism. It was beneficial for the remainder of courses I have enrolled in. She gave me great feedback and guidance.”

When asked what her first project would be if she were the new president of AU, Sophie stated, “That is a tough question – there are several things that would be nice to cover but the two that come to mind to me are affordability of courses and mentoring.”

If she could have lunch with one famous person, past or present, that she would like to have lunch with, and why, Sophie chose Golda Meir or Angela Merkel. She explained, “Either of these two women became great leaders in a male dominated world arena so it would be interesting to talk to them about how they handled the rise to the top of their field.” And the lunch? “Steak and veggies!”

When asked about the most valuable lesson she has learned in life, Sophie stated, “Life is about change – you may not understand now why there has been a change in your life but usually it is for the better and it will be revealed to you at some point, so you understand why. My husband and I have been through many trials in our time together, facing many obstacles but we have always looked to the bright side as much as possible to

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Closures

MBA for Executives Webinar

Tues, Mar 1, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabasca.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20220301/
RSVP through above link

MBA Application Webinar

Wed, Mar 2, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabasca.ca/events/online-mba-application-webinar-20220302/
RSVP through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

overcome them and in the end the change was always for the better.”

And her proudest moment? “There is no one proudest moment in my life that I could pick out, but I can say what I am most proud of are my children. They have all grown up to be confident, considerate, and kind individuals that I couldn’t be prouder of. When you have people in the community come to you and say that they are great individuals then that is an accomplishment.”

As for the one thing that distinguishes her from other people? “I don’t think there is any one thing that distinguishes me from most other people. I try to be kind and courteous with everyone. I am helpful at my work and in past work situations. I guess the words that describe me are kind and considerate. My husband once told someone if you can’t get along with me then there is something wrong with you (meaning the individual he was talking to). A former co-worker told me I was the most honest, trustworthy person he had ever met.”

As a final note, Sophie added some thoughts on the student experience. She stated, “Well, I think it is just wonderful that we have an institution like AU for pursuing further education. If I had to go back to a campus to get my degree, it would have never happened because of where I live. The nearest post-secondary campus is in Grande Prairie, AB. We were raising a family of four children on a farm in Sunset House so going back to school would just not have worked for our situation. The distance learning has been the only way I could accomplish this. So, I am grateful to have the opportunity to do so. I am thinking beyond my work and CPA designation and retirement and think that I may pursue a degree in history for my retirement years. I consider myself a lifelong learner so why not have something to show for it. I would also like to mention that I have mentored a couple of women in the community who have investigated AU for their career aspirations. If ever given the opportunity I let anyone know how great of an experience I have had with AU. It is a wonderful opportunity to pursue.” Best of luck Sophie!

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

Closed for renovation. A student's query about courses marked "under revision" prompts a discussion about options, including reaching out to the course's coordinator.

Discord

Well, it does have coffee in the name. Conversation in the #coffee-shop-lounge channel swings around to coffee, and students swap tips on beans and brewing methods.

reddit

Finding friends. A new AU student wonders where to find other students online; responses include links to the student FB group and Discord channel.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "E-texts go wherever you do and can be downloaded and accessed anytime. Learn how e-texts can set you up for success with online learning at #AthabascaU! #onlinelearning t.co/T5fUK2QB4N."



Michael Winter: Telling Stories AU's Writer in Residence delivers humour-infused presentation

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Photo by Dan Harasymchuk, CC-BY SA 4.0

"My father wanted to be a cowboy. My mother wanted to live in New York City. So they compromised and moved to Cornerbrook." – Michael Winter

Listening to writer Michael Winter is almost like watching stand-up comedy: nearly everything has a punchline.

Winter, AU's 2021-22 Writer in Residence, gave a presentation in December, which he themed "The Unusual Thing in the Room". Winter is an award-winning Canadian author, whose works include five novels, three short story collections, and one work of non-fiction. His most recent novel, *Minister Without Portfolio*, was longlisted for the 2013 Scotiabank Giller Prize.

As AU's Writer in Residence, Winter spends 60% of his time working on his own writing projects, and 40% of his time as a resource for AU's students and faculty. Winter is AU's twelfth Writer in Residence; past writers in residence have included Richard Van Camp, John Vaillant, and Esi Edugyan.

During his recent online presentation, Winter focussed on strategies writers can use to make readers believe what they've written is true. Although Winter now lives in Toronto, he retains vestiges of Newfoundland's lyrical accent, as well as its down-home humour—both were in ample evidence throughout his talk.

Winter urged writers to look beyond the obvious when creating characters and scenes. Out-of-context details lend verisimilitude to stories. In one example, Winter juxtaposes portraying a fisherman character on a boat wearing the expected yellow oilskin jacket and cap, with having the fisherman appear in a tuxedo to attend a formal event.

As a writer, Winter says he's often looking for unusual details in his everyday life that he can incorporate later into stories. He once watched a man walking across a street with his arms crossed. The man's arms started barking, and then Winter noticed a set of ears. Winter later wrote in his notebook that he'd seen this man walking with a dog in his arms, but realized he hadn't captured the "unusual" aspect: his first observation that the man's *arm's* were barking. He can describe the scene, he points out, without using the word "dog."

Having a notebook on hand is key for writers. But Winter cautions against notebooks that are too big, or "too nice." He observes that big notebooks tend to be tucked away in bags or purses, and aren't easily retrieved to jot down on-the-spot observations. And some people are reluctant to "spoil" expensive notebooks with rushed, unpolished jottings.

Winter himself keeps a small notebook in his pocket—right now he is using blank bankbooks discarded by the CIBC—so he can jot down observations without losing their immediacy. Writers often think, Winter says, that they'll write down their observations and ideas when they get home.

"You never will," promises Winter.

Winter concluded his presentation with a low-tech version of a Powerpoint slide—Sharpie sketches on a piece of paper. With this, he demonstrated how to "move the camera" in stories, to focus in on details then pull back to "look out the window."

Winter encourages AU students to submit their writing to him for critique (one submission per person.) Information about how to submit is found on the [Guidelines & Expectations](http://www.athabasca.ca/writer-in-residence/guidelines-and-expectations.html) page at www.athabasca.ca/writer-in-residence/guidelines-and-expectations.html.

A recording of Winter's December 2021 presentation is available on Athabasca University's Youtube channel: "[How to make readers believe your story: Fiction writing tips from Writer in Residence Michael Winter](https://youtu.be/MtJKxZ3-Y74)," (youtu.be/MtJKxZ3-Y74.)

Even for non-writers, the presentation is worth watching to hear Winter's humour-infused storytelling. Winter will be giving another presentation about writing in Spring 2022.

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

Becoming "That Girl"

Jessica Young



Who is "That Girl"? For those that don't know, the "That Girl" aesthetic is a trending concept on social media platforms like TikTok, YouTube, Pinterest, and Instagram. You'll see her—usually fit, attractive, and in her 20's—waking up at 5am and proceeding through her perfectly curated day in her matching activewear set, documenting every 'gram-able moment.

Her day usually begins with a perfectly made bed. Next, there's time spent journaling and maybe reading some books on self-improvement (The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey seems to be a popular choice). She opens up her skin-care fridge in her bathroom—because, of course she has a skin-care fridge—and takes us through her elaborate skin-care routine, usually involving several serums, a mask, and a jade roller. Finally, she enjoys a matcha latte and a gorgeous smoothie

bowl with fresh fruit and chia seeds on top before heading off to the gym. Does she have a job? Is she in school? Does she ever do anything that doesn't fit into her aesthetic? Nobody knows. But it sure is addicting to watch.

While many people (myself included!) enjoy consuming this kind of content, critics have pointed out that the "That Girl" aesthetic contributes to the toxic, productivity-obsessed, hustle-culture that has become such a huge part of our society. This pressure to always be improving yourself, always on-point, and always positive can wreak havoc on our self-esteem. What we see on social media is a highlight reel—and "That Girl" isn't any different. I can guarantee that the creators putting out "That Girl" content do not live the life they display in their videos every day. They get sick, cry their eyes out in bed, leave the dishes in the sink, and embarrass themselves in public sometimes just like everyone else.

When it comes to the "That Girl" aesthetic, and to social media in general, I think it is so important to recognize the reality behind creators' curated feeds. It's important to always give yourself grace

(especially in these difficult times) and remember that self-care can sometimes include sitting on the couch all day eating junk food. I also think there isn't anything inherently wrong in always aspiring to be a better version of yourself, as long as you're doing it in a healthy way. Personally, I like watching "That Girl" content to inspire myself. To find ideas of how I can make my life better, easier, or more enjoyable. And yes, sometimes that includes doing something just for the aesthetic.

So maybe waking up at 5am every morning isn't realistic for you. Maybe you work night shift, or wake up with a baby throughout the night, or maybe, like me, you just need more sleep than that. There's absolutely nothing wrong with that. But what is realistic for you? I would wager that you have 15 minutes somewhere in your day to sit down and journal. Or maybe you could read a few pages of a book instead of scrolling TikTok for that extra hour before bed. Maybe the idea of becoming "That Girl" motivates you to go to the gym four times this week when you really only felt like going once.

If you ask me, finding the right balance between aesthetic and reality is the secret to becoming "That Girl".

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

Homemade is Better

Chef Corey

Chef Corey



I have found a butcher that I really like. In culinary school, we had a rotation where we learned about ordering for restaurants and food establishments. We sort of had a meat place we used, but it was more like a commercial meat producer. Or, if not them, the larger food sales companies sold meat.

Our job was to get the best quality for the lowest price. Most restaurants do this; serve the best quality you can afford. The problem with that training is that average consumers can't just call up a Gordon Foods or Sysco and place a grocery order. We use local grocery stores and are subject to their prices; we can't negotiate as restaurants can.

Oh yes, restaurants negotiate the price they pay for their groceries. Let's say that the striploin steak they are looking to buy is \$15.00/kg (I'm just making up numbers), and a restaurant owner can negotiate that price down. Maybe they only want to pay \$13.00/kg, but the salesperson can only go down to \$13.50. A good salesperson won't sell it for rock bottom, and they will also negotiate for a higher price, using tactics like the quality of the item, or in the case of meats, the letter grade or the size. Sometimes the added benefits the company claims to have are a selling feature. Regardless, price is negotiable when you own a restaurant or food establishment. However, for most of us? We pay whatever the sticker price is for the product we buy.

So why, then, does it benefit us to pay a butcher a couple of dollars per unit more for their product when your local grocer likely has it cheaper? Depending on the grocer, they might have a meat department with meat cutters available. Safeway, Costco, Sobeys, and Superstore, to name a few, have on-staff meat department workers. Some are Red Seal butchers, apprentices, or just

workers, yet the meat you get there can still be Triple-A, number one quality, or of a high standard. I'm not going to turn my nose up those these companies or the products they carry. I have, however, written previously about some of the tricks that meat companies play. Costco is a great example; they offer a good product.

I use Costco Steaks; I've bought striploin, briskets, tenderloins all in whole muscle or broken down. One thing I like about Costco is that their meat doesn't have a lot of age on it, so if you buy it whole muscle, you can age it in your fridge (if you have the room) for however long you want, even though there is a bit of a limit. Sixty days is getting up there in aging meat, and most places will age around a month, maybe twenty days. The aging they would use is called wet aging versus dry-aging, which is used in temperature-controlled environments and is closely monitored. The difference in either product affects the end price. Dry aging means that more of the moisture is lost and more of the dried meat is removed; thus, a five-pound roast might have lost up to 15% of the total weight by the time it's done aging. That increases prices, and the restaurant will want to make up for that loss, so they will charge up to 15% more depending on the loss of product. Now the steak that was \$25.00 at one restaurant is more expensive at another because each place ages its meat differently.

Similarly, in the food sales companies, each company might age their meat before selling it. The typical aging would be wet in these places. But that takes up inventory, which is money, so they charge a premium to store the meat then sell it at a higher price. Costco, I have found, sells their meat closer to the packaging date. We might understand better that they are packaging the meat closer to the slaughter date. An animal usually rests a few days after being processed, but before they are broken down. Then packers will break down the meat and package it into cryovac bags. And the date it is packaged is the date they must put on it. So, if you were to buy a striploin from Costco, that whole muscle loin may have been butchered a few days before, thereby making it less expansive because it has taken up less inventory space.

I titled this article, Butcher, and I make a case for using your local butcher and not always buying from the local grocer (where this makes sense). Local butchers, like Darcy's, Olde Country, or Acme Meat market (to name a few in Edmonton) will have relationships with the farmers they buy from. They will know more about the product in their store than most of the grocers we frequent. There will be butchers in grocery stores that are very knowledgeable about their products, and yes, they are great resources. But a standalone butcher is likely to have that extra relationship that we can trust. They cut the meat in front of you, wrap it up and then serve it.

Plus, they are local. They buy local, they support local, and, just like your local grocer, they hire locally. The people who work in our local grocer are residents, friends, maybe family, and they provide an excellent service. I am so glad I know the owners of my local grocer, plus my family knows a few of the employees. They have a great selection, and the meat department has quality, but if I am looking to source more local products, my local butcher is the place to go!

We always hear about supporting your local stores. If you have a butcher close by, and you can spend a little more on better meat, visit them. Ask them questions about their products, get some dinner ideas or pick up some beef jerky, heck, buy a pork belly and make some bacon (which might be a future article). My local grocery store probably sells Alberta beef, I'm sure if processed somewhere in Alberta, but I know that my butcher buys from farms close to Edmonton, towns like Legal (for those who don't live in Berta, it is pronounced Le Gal).

I hope you learned a little bit from this article. Until next week, keep making it homemade.

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



The Reading List February 2022

Karen Lam



Happy February! We're already more than a month into 2022 with many of us continuing our winter courses and also looking forward to doing more outdoor activity with the warmer weather. Where I'm living, the weather has been warming up, but I do see the cold weather returning within a week! I've personally spent the month doing research and work and hoping for warm weather so I can do lots of outdoor activities with my new puppy! Whatever you may be up to, don't forget to take some me time, whether it is resting or grabbing one of the recommended reads for February!

***Apples Never Fall* by Liane Moriarty**

Apples Never Fall is a novel that examines marriage, siblings, and family, and how those who are the closest to us and those who we love the most can sometimes be the ones that can hurt us the most. The story delves into Delaney's family, who love each other more than anything, however, like all families, they have problems and arguments. There are moments they want to kill each other. What would you do if your mother suddenly went missing and the primary suspect is your father? A recommended read for everyone!

***Good Girl Complex* by Elle Kennedy**

The story is about a girl, Mackenzie Cabot, also known as Mac, and she is a people pleaser to everyone. Whether that is her demanding parents, classmates from school, or her boyfriend. However, sometimes this can be quite exhausting always following everyone's rules except your own. Mac has a dream of growing an internet business though her parents want her to pursue a college degree first. Mac is quite experienced with suppressing her wild side until she meets Cooper Hartley, the total opposite to her, he is honest, straightforward, and a bad boy. Through their friendship, Mac realizes something she never realized before.

***Impossible to Forget* by Imogen Clark**

A wish that brings five individuals together, this is what *Impossible to Forget* is about. Romany just turned eighteen when a tragic incident happens to her mother, Angie, the last family member that she has. To help Romany live her life without Angie, Angie put her four closest friends a mission of helping Romany through the last year of high school. Angie sees in each of these four individuals carrying a beautiful view of life that she wants to pass onto her daughter. A recommended read for all!

***One Step Too Far* by Lisa Gardner**

A recommended read for all thriller fans! Where a young man goes missing and the journey to find him reveals the mysterious secrets. Timothy O'Day disappeared at the bachelor party and left no evidence behind; his parents and friends look for clues to find him. But there is someone out there determined to stop them from finding Timothy.

***The Lobotomist's Wife* by Samantha Greene Woodruff**

For those looking for a compassionate historical fiction, this is the read for you! Ruth Emeraldine's brother committed suicide after World War I. After this experience, Ruth became determined her life goal would be to help anyone who suffered from mental illness. Ruth then met Robert Apter, a doctor working on a treatment called lobotomy. However, Robert falls into a delusion megalomania. Robert's next patient's life depends on Ruth and whether she can save them from Robert.

Happy Reading!

Karen's taking her Computing Science degree at AU, learning French, and enjoys going on adventures with her dog!

How to Become a Lifelong Learner

Marie Well



Lifelong learning will make you better every day. It can groom you for success, love, wisdom, and happiness. It can make you smarter. It will keep your brain healthy as you age, preventing cognitive decline. And, best of all, it can make your dreams come true. Here are actions you may want to adopt to become a lifelong learner.

Read every day.

Just a half hour reading a day can bring you into the green zone. As a bonus, a home with big book libraries bodes well for your children's education. The bigger the library, the better the grades, according to studies. If becoming a book hoarder is a concern for you, I've got a remedy. Just place your book hoards on bookshelves, and it suddenly normalizes.

Take courses.

Courses that lead to a degree, diploma, or certificate are staples for lifelong learning. But once you achieve your goal, what next? You seek out more courses that will advance your career or interests. Line your walls and pad your resume with certificates and credentials. They'll take you places you never imagined.

Subscribe to Industry Magazines.

Lifelong learners take their interests or pursuits to heart by investing in industry magazines. If you want to become a CMO, buy marketing trade magazines. If you love racing BMX bicycles, buy BMX magazines. And if you want to be a Petroleum Engineer, buy the trade magazine. Trade magazines will give you insights you may never get elsewhere.

Listen to podcasts.

Lifelong learners listen to podcasts during downtime, whether it be driving, eating, or cleaning. Not just any podcast, though, but podcasts that lead to self-enrichment.

Access memberships to organizations.

Joining an organization is a big bonus for a lifelong learner. As an example, communications specialists require all kinds of organization affiliations just to get employed by the municipal government. It's almost a criterion. So, as soon as you can, get involved with organizations that advance your personal or professional agenda.

Pursue dreams.

Dreams are often the motivation behind lifelong learning. Lifelong learning can help you cure a disease, carve out a vocation, find true love, win esteem, achieve success, or hone a craft. The path to any dream can be carefully carved through lifelong learning.

Create projects that stretch you.

Are you the kind of person who's always cooking up a project? Reminds me of a dancer I know who is gaining fame, mastering cooking, acquiring top marketing roles, and developing expertise in every one of her chosen new endeavors. Lifelong learners pick a project—a challenge—and attempt to master it to the best of their ability.

Become a producer of knowledge.

This last point is critical. Lifelong learners can end up as vast knowledge consumers rather than producers. They read, take courses, and study, but fail to put the knowledge into practice. This is where projects and dreams come into play. Project and dreams turn knowledge into output. Best of all, sharing one's knowledge is the highest forms of giving, next to the sharing of love.

Lifelong learning ignites miracles; lifelong learning launches your dreams.

Fly on the Wall Requiem for a Yew Tree



Jason Sullivan

Truth and Myth-Making in our Lives at AU

To Academic disciplines are by nature exclusive in their views. The word discipline says it all; disciplinary actions invoke strictures and disciplinary biases reveal a denuded emperor within any thought structure. There are no limits to creativity as the re-forming of reality; learning is as much about unlearning prior beliefs than about gaining information. In the trades, woodworkers and foresters learn to cut wood on a bias and to fit; measure twice and cut once, right?

But different measurements can produce an assortment of meanings. Here in my humble rural orchard abode an aged but thriving yew tree received the sawblade treatment as part of a larger demolition and reconstruction project of a derelict

farmhouse. It was sad to see the yew go but there are many ways to see and feel in any moment; likewise, we forge the themes of our studies.

Time Defines Meaning Too, at AU and for a Yew

Any organism or idea shortly dissolves under analysis; the living energy of a subject largely depends on us, the viewer or learner. As one of the more impressive evergreens, *Taxus americanus* (and other species of the *Taxus* genus) not only produces bright red berries that are treated as toxic or medicinal depending upon who you ask, but the yew also is one of the most long-lived trees (or shrubs, for it can live in either phylogenetic form thus illustrating promiscuity in the nature of being a being and likewise the academic potential of interdisciplinary studies).

Yew trees are paragons of the virtue of botanic longevity and social meaning. Perhaps because of their long life, yew trees are ascribed with cultural meanings. Examples of the yew in a human context include:

"The Third Witch in Macbeth mentions, as a constituent of the cauldron's brew, 'slips of yew slivered in the moon's eclipse' (Macbeth: Act 4, Scene 1). Being an evergreen and famed for its longevity, it has also been associated both with death and immortality. Within the last decade it has been recognised that the pseudoalkaloids of various species of yew are powerful antimitotic agents, useful in certain cancers which are refractory to other drugs. It is a slow-growing evergreen tree that may reach a height of 25 metres (80 feet). Its bark is rust red and its leaves needle-like and dark green." (Lee, *online*).

"According to Richard Mabey in his *Flora Britannica* ... no other type of ancient tree occurs so frequently inside church grounds ..."

And that's because: "People buried yew shoots with the deceased and used boughs of yew as 'Palms' in church at Easter."

"Robert the Bruce ordered bows to be made from the sacred yews at Ardchattan Priory in Argyll. These were then used during the Scots' victorious battle at Bannockburn in 1314" (Trees for Life, *online*).

The Personal is...Personalized Roots

Evergreens are impressive in winter partly because they remind us that learning is like life: it flourishes both in and out of season if we allow nature to take its course. Redolent with significance back to Roman times, yew trees seem to resonate with a sense of mystery about life and death. Creativity, being the metamorphic and corporeal essence of both, seems to gather at the roots of a yew tree. "Robert Turner in his book *Botanoaoitia* written in 1636, makes a graveyard appear to be a fearful place. He states;

"If the yew be set in a place subject to poisonous vapours, the very branches will draw and imbibe them, hence it is conceived that the judicious in former times planted it in churchyards on the West side, because those places, being fuller of putrefaction and gross oleaginous vapours exhaled out of the graves by the setting sun and sometimes drawn by those meteors called 'Iignes fatui', divers have been frightened, supposing some dead bodies to walk, not that it is able to drive away Devils as some superstitious monks have imagined." (Turner in Partridge, online). *The Symbolic, the Sacred, the Empirical: Yew's Got to Know What you Know?*

Anyone who's seen a necklace or other ornament bearing the traditional tree of life, and perhaps wondered about this ancient pagan symbol's connection to the hippie peace sign or the Christian crucifix, or even to the X and Y axis that somehow unites both trigonometry and watercolour paintings together at an ever-diminishing vanishing point on an imagined horizon, or pondered latitude and longitude (where am I, man?), or considered the ways and means of constructing a dog or bird or cat or kiddie house on a sunny Sunday, can catch the drift that a tree's natural form may, just may, be essential to all other forms of human cognition. After all, we humans have evolutionary ancestors that stride back millions of years and, once upon a time, didn't even walk straight, at least at a certain time and a certain place 3.6 million years ago (David, online).

A crooked mile may be fun to traverse down at your local brick and mortar college campus but to remain steady in our distance studies means that we must embrace not only meaning and purpose but also a realistic and pragmatic trajectory for our learning life. Just as the yew goes down many hermeneutic paths, so to is it up to us to interpret reality lest it disappear along with the sands of time and change.

Just as no academic discipline can fully define our lives, the meaning of any organism, like our learning, depends not only on the biopic reality of an ecosystem but also on the very human narrative of life itself. History runs through, and runs us through biologically as we age, and in that sense we and our learning are no exception to the reality of entropy: all things must, by nature, end. Human life can seem short and fleeting and so it is within the grand cosmic picture; this is why distance education can drag on or bring us a spark on a daily and/or life-long basis.

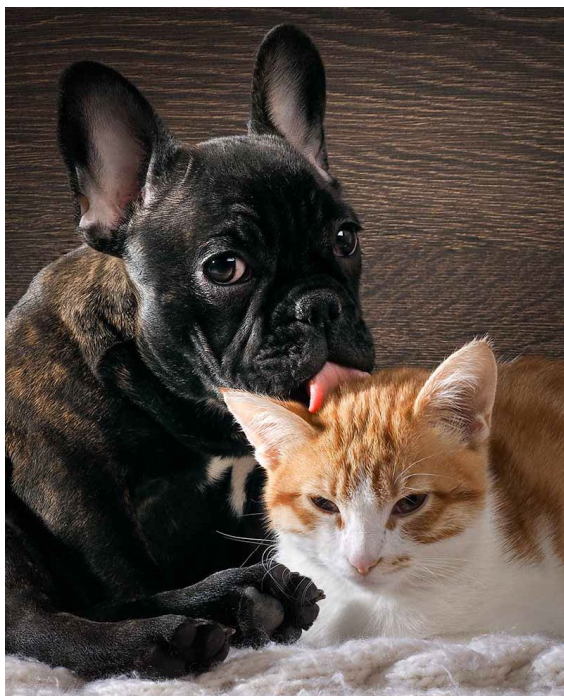
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Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.

How I Love My Enemies

Marie Well



From my experience, the more we love our enemies, the greater the love we can feel for others. And the more love we feel for others, the more blissful life becomes.

The following advice may not be for everybody but has worked wonders for me. It has opened work opportunities, enhanced my relationships, and made me a team player.

With that said, here are lessons I've learned about loving our enemies:

During crises, giving love can ease stress.

As an example, a best friend, little to my knowledge, had sabotaged all my career opportunities while serving as my job reference. This occurred over a decade's time. When I discovered this, I chose to still love her but stopped communicating with her. By making this choice, I feel love rather than resentment, when thoughts of her arise.

As another example, I read a news story about a woman who had forgiven a criminal who brutally murdered her son. By offering forgiveness rather than vehemence and vengeance, this woman surely healed more peacefully.

I've also learned that it's soothing to give into other's unreasonable requests, if doing so does not cause any harm.

For instance, at a corporate dinner, a fellow colleague wanted to switch seats with me, long after we had settled in our seats. My seat was in the corner and great for conversation. I refused to switch seats, which angered her. In hindsight, I wish I had switched seats with her, if only to show her I'd walk the extra mile.

I've also learned that people can surprise us.

We can't change people who hurt us, nor should we expect them to change. But people may surprise us and change, should they reach that level of awareness.

To illustrate, my own life has gone through surprising changes. I used to blame others for negative events. Now, I stop myself from blaming. I choose, instead, to focus on how I might grow from the negativity. This growth mindset mended my relationships, improved my work dynamics, and created peace of mind.

Lastly, I've learned not to confront an enemy on a wrongdoing.

This strategy may not be for everyone, but it certainly works for me.

To illustrate, whenever I feel I've been wronged, I stop myself from confronting the wrongdoer. By not confronting, I don't fan the flames. After all, what triggers me may not be a trigger for others. And, ultimately, over time, it feels best to simply let "perceived" wrongs go.

As a final comment, loving our enemies helps us love ourselves. After all, I believe self-love is merely the accumulation of the love we feel for others.

Music Review

Variants of Vibe

Jessica Young



Artist: Mickey Leigh's Mutated Music

Album: *Variants of Vibe*

NYC musician, author, and producer Mickey Leigh has released his debut solo album under the name Mikey Leigh's Mutated Music. The LP, *Variants of Vibe*, is now streaming everywhere.

If you're not familiar with the name Mickey Leigh, you may recognize his brothers, Tommy and Joey Ramone, of the infamous punk rock band, Ramones. Mickey authored the best-selling memoir "I Slept With Joey Ramone: A Family Memoir". Mickey is also the executive producer of the upcoming Netflix adaption of the book, directed by Jason Orey and starring Pete Davidson as Joey Ramone.

Variants of Vibe has fourteen tracks: Little

Cristine; It Felt Like Love; Trouble Man; No Fun Anymore; Go Home Ann; Spanish Eyes; Loneliness; Stories That Never Got Told; Standing In The Dark; I Got A Message For You; When The Truth is on Trial; Brave Old World; Lost In Space; and La La Lala.

Of the new record, Mickey says, "Like every organic entity, music is perpetually readapting itself in order to survive = mutating. As we know, things we create also variate as they mutate. Mutated Music is what we are. Our new album presents a Variant of Vibe. This may sound complicated, but it's only rock 'n roll, and we love it and don't want to see it become extinct! Mutated Music = Rescuing Rock 'n Roll, one song at a time."

By all accounts, it sounds like Mickey Leigh is a beloved artist in the NYC music community, which is fair, considering he grew up in Queens and is the brother of a musical legend. But after listening to the album, I wasn't a fan.

Variants of Vibe sounds like Mickey was attempting to recreate his brother's punk rock sound, combined with the blues rock/folk/country sound of Dire Straits. Frankly, it just doesn't work. Mickey has an interesting voice, but his tonality clashes with the instrumentals behind him. Meanwhile, the mixing resembles something straight out of the 80's. Mickey's vocals are almost unintelligible against the rest of the music, as if everything was recorded separately (as is the norm with music today) but not blended together. The result is that the songs end up sound like noise rather than a cohesive unit—perhaps something that works with Ramones' punk rock, but not with Mickey's style of music.

Unfortunately, most of the songs sound exactly the same, with the exception of "La La Lala" and "When the Truth is on Trial," which sound slightly more acoustic with a country twang, and "Go Home Ann," which features a synth. "Little Cristine" also marginally stands out due to the clinking glasses and indistinct chatter in the background, made purposefully to sound as if the song was being recorded in a bar.

While I'm definitely interested in watching "I Slept With Joey Ramone" when it's released, *Variants of Vibe* wasn't for me.

Check out Mickey Leigh on [his website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

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

Beyond Literary Landscapes

Isabel Allende

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 column serves as an introduction to the works of Isabel Allende, a reminder of some of the author's classics, and as an inspiration for further reading.

Born in Lima, Peru, before moving to Chile, Allende is a popular Chilean-American author. With her family, in 1973, she was forced to flee to Venezuela after the assassination of her uncle Salvador Allende, then President of Chile.

Many of her novels are considered magic realism, which is defined as a "chiefly Latin-American narrative strategy that is characterized by the matter-of-fact inclusion of fantastic or mythical elements into seemingly realistic fiction." First developed in 1925 by German art critic Franz Roh and coined as "magical realism" in 1955 by literary critic Angel Flores, magic realism became immensely popular throughout Latin America. In particular, "French-Russian Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier was influenced by magic realism." The popularity of the genre has since spread to other countries.

In addition, most of Allende's works "examine the role of women in Latin America," as well as South American politics.

For further reading, authors covering similar topics, themes, or writing in similar styles include Laura Esquivel, Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel García Márquez, and Miguel Angel Asturias.

What

Some of Isabel Allende's well-known works of include *The House of the Spirits*, *Of Love and Shadows*, and *Daughter of Fortune*.

Other notable works include *Paula: A Memoir* and *Island Beneath the Sea*.

Where

These novels (and memoir) take place in Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti.

When

Allende's works are often set in the late 19 and early 20-centuries.

Why

For readers interested learning more about magic realism, family, love, loss, and grief, as well as the Haitian Revolution, Chilean political upheaval, military dictatorship, and family sagas, the works of Allende are a place to begin.

How

AU's wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to the works of Isabel Allende 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 may consider a broad research topic in ENGL 458: The Latin American Novel, a senior-level, three-credit course "focusing on fiction and memoir written in the context of history, politics, culture, identity, and genre." Although Allende is not included in the current syllabus, the works of other magic realism authors, such as García Márquez and Asturias are. Happy reading!

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

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: AEBC/T-Base Scholarship Program

Sponsored by: Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC)

Deadline: March 25, 2022, 11:59 PM PDT

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be blind, deafblind, or partially sighted; Canadian citizens or permanent residents; and enrolled in a minimum of two courses for the 2022-23 academic year in a post-secondary institution, vocational school, or performing arts program. (See Application Requirements section for full eligibility requirements.)

What's required: A completed and emailed application form, along with a 4-page personal essay, your most recent academic transcript, and a recent letter of reference.

Tips: Read the section of Completing and Submitting the Application carefully.

Where to get info: www.blindcanadians.ca/programs/scholarship





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

On Occasion

Dear Barb:

Well, another Valentine's Day and nothing from my sweetie. We have been together five years and get along great. If I ever do get married, Jay will be the one for me. The only thing is he is not sentimental and doesn't honor any special occasions. I am not sure why he is like that, but it bothers me.

He will come home with flowers for no occasion and often brings me a small gift, like earrings, but nothing on birthdays, Valentine's Day, Christmas, or anniversaries. I have tried to talk to him about it, but he says that is just the way he is. I feel bad when I my friends with their flowers and chocolates. Do you think this is something worth making a big deal about, or should I just accept the fact that he is this way? Looking for direction, thanks, Emma.

Hey Emma:

I hope you had a good Valentine's Day despite not receiving the traditional gifts.

I will offer some information about how Valentine's Day came to be, although most information is cloaked in mystery. One legend has recorded that Saint Valentine was a bishop from the third century A.D. who performed weddings for couples who were forbidden to legally marry. Emperor Claudius II wanted to recruit men for his army, forbidding them from

marriage, as he believed marriage would be a deterrent for men to join his army. When he discovered that Saint Valentine was performing these marriages, he sent him to jail.

While in jail Valentine continued to spread the love that he said Jesus had wanted him to. Eventually Emperor Claudius grew to like Valentine and offered to pardon him and release him from jail if he would renounce his Christian faith and worship the Roman Gods. Valentine refused and was sentenced to die. He was beaten and beheaded on February 14th. As a result, his loving ways were remembered and celebrated every year on February 14th. - Quite the story.

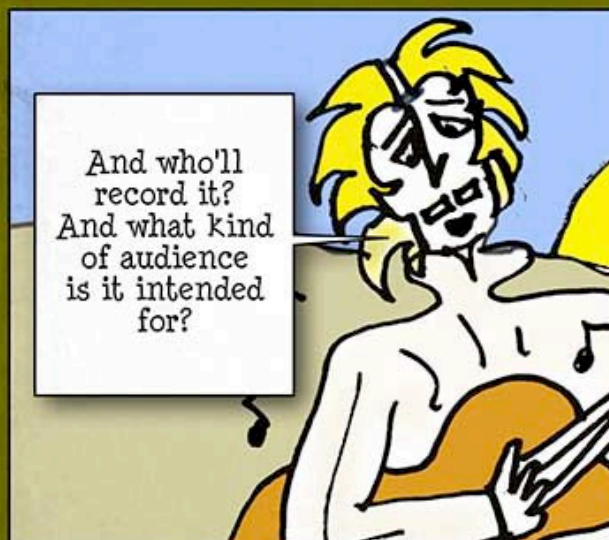
You and your boyfriend have been together for 5 years and your relationship is still good although he does not believe in gift giving. So obviously you have learned to live with this and accept it. I would suggest you not make a big deal about it at this point. However, you can still celebrate these occasions by presenting gifts to your boyfriend. It is possible that at some point he may reciprocate. As you said your boyfriend brings you small gifts, so you know he is thinking of you and cares deeply. Sometimes we must choose what is important in life. Enjoy your day Emma and thanks for writing.

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 Marketing Inspiration

Wanda Waterman



2022 GENERAL ELECTION CANDIDATE CAMPAIGN PERIOD

February 23 - March 14

Students vote March 10-14 to elect the next AUSU Students' Council and, for voters who self-identify as Indigenous, the Indigenous Circle at AUSU. Election questions? Email Duncan at governance@ausu.org.

Meet Your Candidates!

(CLICK ON EACH CANDIDATE TO SEE CAMPAIGN PAGE)

Indigenous Circle at AUSU Candidates



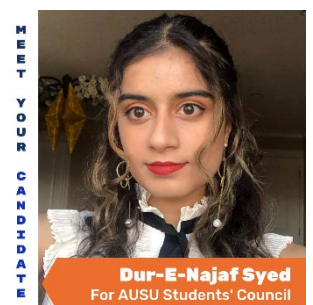
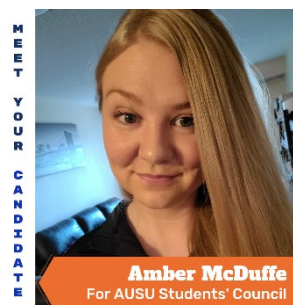
This is the inaugural election for the Indigenous Circle at AUSU, made up of AU students who self-identify as Indigenous and who will represent their fellow Indigenous students to AUSU and the AU community.

Ask your election questions in the [forum](#)!

2022 GENERAL ELECTION
CANDIDATE
FORUM



AUSU Students' Council Candidates



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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