



THE VOICE

Vol 30 Issue 14 2022-04-08

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

Women in Fiction

Bend it Like Beckham's Jess Bhamra

Five Spring Skincare Tips

New Season, New Ideas

Plus:

*Striking Out: Tentative Agreement
FotW: Vacuums & Their Potential
and much more!*



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Views and articles
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of the contributors and do
not represent the views of
AUSU Student Council.

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

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

The Voice does not share its
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Volume 30, Issue 14

© 2022 by The Voice
Magazine

ISSN 2561-3634

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

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

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

Editorial Striking Out

Karl Low



The AUFA bargaining team is reporting that a tentative deal has been struck and is recommending it be accepted. If the AUFA members agree, (and it would be unusual if they didn't) then that means the negotiations are done and contracts have been negotiated, meaning that AU will have avoided a strike.

Looking at the AUFA website, it seems that the changes provided after the strike vote weren't very much, but were apparently enough that the bargaining team felt there was little chance it would gain anything else. In particular, research and study leave, a particularly contentious issue, is still being dissolved (as recommended by the mediator) to be replaced by professional development leave, which will have a maximum of six months available to be accrued.

To many of us, six months paid leave sounds pretty amazing, but in academic circles, sabbaticals are often year long affairs where researchers are expected to go out and perform, well, original research. They're expected to be using the time to get into the field and be able to do more in depth or original research than would be allowed under the normal constraints of having to teach or develop course materials at the like at

the same time. And, of course, they're generally expected to return with enough new knowledge to be able to create new publications and bring increased prestige to the university.

Regardless, the new deal means that faculty members who have accumulated more than six months of research and study leave will still have that full time respected until they use it up. The previous offer, from my understanding, severely reduced the amount of leave owed to faculty members who had been banking it for a long time. In addition, the new deal allows faculty members to take up to 30 days of leave each year, or accrue a maximum of 21 days each year, up to a maximum of six months worth, for the new professional development leave.

The bottom line of these changes for students mean that faculty member will likely be taking at least nine days beyond vacation every year for "professional development", since if they don't take them, they lose them forever. More esoterically, the shift from "research and study" to "professional development" leads me to wonder if the AU board of governors is attempting to move AU more to a strictly teaching university, rather than a research institution. If so, this doesn't bode well over the long term, as the closer to DeVry we get, the less likely we are to be considered by top academics as a place that they want to hang their hat. This in turn might mean less prestigious graduate programs and hence less valued undergraduate educations. But that's long term supposition that will take a while to play out – if it does at all.

Meanwhile, in the here and now, what this likely means is that there probably won't be any strike, so students can probably stop worrying about whether any sort of work stoppage will affect them or not. Also in the here and now, this issue of the Voice Magazine interviews a student living in Edmonton and who is finding her way with her two children and a goal of Counselling once she attains her degrees from AU.

Plus, Women In Fiction returns with a solid read and examination of the character Jess Bhamra from the movie *Bend it Like Beckham*, where writer Milica Markovic makes some keen observations about how this character broke new ground. And of course we have advice, scholarships, events, ideas, and more from members of the AU community like you. Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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 Desaire Pero (she/her) currently residing in Edmonton, Alberta, the traditional Treaty 6 territory of the Nehiyaw (Cree), Denesuliné (Dene), Nakota Sioux, Anishinabae (Saulteaux), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), and Métis Peoples.

Desaire is enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts program with a major in Psychology and a minor in Inclusive Education. She stated, “I’m hoping with my current education and skills combined with this degree I can advance myself into a Master of Counseling program to help more people. In and out of a classroom setting.”

She describes herself as “a 29-year old Educational Assistant, originally from Cape Breton, NS,” living “in Edmonton ... working for the beautiful Enoch Cree Nation in the classroom.” She is currently “on maternity leave after having [her] second child.” She explained, “Once he returns home from his extended stay in hospital, I’ll look forward to studying and resting while just being mom to both my babies.”

Desaire also mentioned that she typically works “Monday to Friday from September to June.” As for the summer? She stated, “I spend my summers on a family-owned beach, eating and boating and spending much needed downtime with family.” She also finds some time to watch television, including the new series, *Dexter: New Blood*.

When asked who in her life had the greatest influence on her desire to learn, she chose her father. She stated, “My father has been my biggest work expectation influence. Although he worked many different roles wearing so many hats, through his strong work ethic and passion for personal success he managed to build his own empire and show us that passion and focus really can pay off. I am most thankful for his drive because he paved the way for me to get the courage to leave home, decide what I want from life and to take it.”

Her experience with online learning “has provided flexibility and encouragement to [her] lifestyle.” She explained, “I can manage my classes, still seek help, maintain my lifestyle. In doing so has really made me feel like a supermom.”

However, like many students, there was a point that she wavered about continuing her education. She stated, “My son being born and immediately being admitted to the NICU made me doubt if I could carry on. Worries about the future and what my career life would even look like.” She

continued, "What got me through is seeing how my grades are still thriving even through one of the hardest battles of my life." Although admitting that she is "not a straight A+ student for every course," her ability to "juggle all this stress and still look forward to a better career makes it all worth it."

When asked about her AU courses, she stated, "I enjoy the layout once I became familiar with how the courses ran. I like the easy communication with the tutors and the online platforms for connecting with fellow students. Couldn't be happier that I decided to go with Athabasca University." And the communication with her course tutors? "So great. They are straight to the point with timelines on when to expect communication with them. Good grading times, lots of feedback when needed. Very satisfied with my tutors thus far."

If she were the new president of AU, her first project would be "a proper welcome orientation on how AU works." This is because it took her "a few semesters to fully manipulate the course materials, outlines, study questions." She continued, "Although it's not hard to find, having someone from each faculty give a little 'welcome' message and cover those I think the success of the students would be that much higher again."

Desaire's most valuable lesson learned in life has been: "There is no such thing as wasted education." As for her proudest moment? "Realizing that if I work hard enough I can accomplish whatever I set my mind to. My proudest moment will be frequently reoccurring."

As a final thought, when asked to describe the one thing that distinguishes her from most other people, Desaire chose her East Coast accent in Alberta! In addition, she stated that she is "an extreme empath which [she] feel[s] will make for a great counsellor one day." Best of luck Desaire!

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



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

Buddha's birthday, celebrated this year on April 8, commemorates the birth of the Prince Siddhartha Gautama, later known as the Gautama Buddha. Buddhas (either "the" one or "a" one) featured in many vintage *Voice* articles.

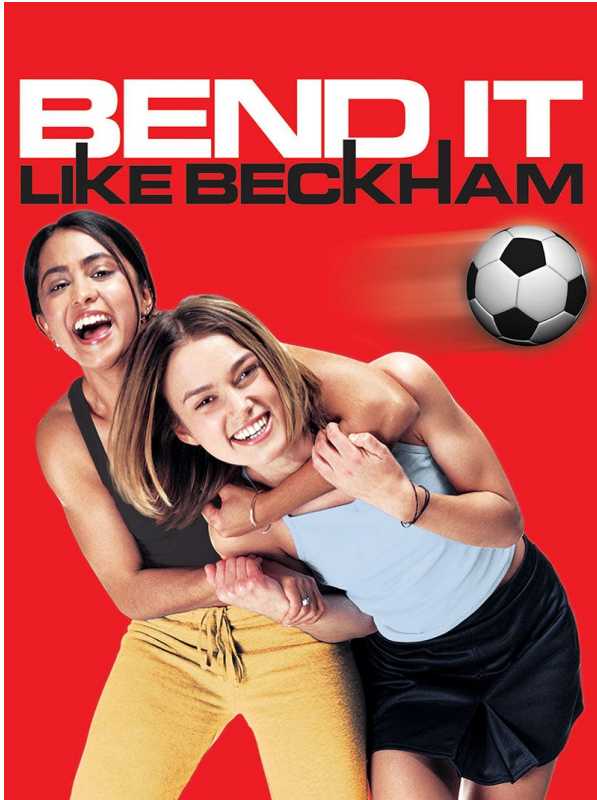
Did she just say the "f" word? Wanda Waterman makes a case for countering the seriousness of studies with some silly diversions. "I don't care what you say, farts are hilarious. How dull life would be without that bass clarinet *blat* breaking all the rules of social order." Ten Dumb Things Every Student should Boldly Embrace, November 4, 2016.

Books, boredom, and The Buddha. Jason Sullivan muses on the nature of boredom. "It's possible that the very desire to flee from oneself and one's boredom produces greater self-understanding." Fly on the Wall – This Thing Called Boredom, January 29, 2016.

Women in Fiction

Jess Bhamra

Milica Markovic



Sports films led by women characters often integrate supplementary themes such as growing up, overcoming prejudice, and/or falling in love. It's not every day, however, that we see one addressing the protagonist's struggle to not only make it as an athlete, but also to reconcile the cultural differences she stands between.

In the highest-grossing soccer film since its 2002 release, Gurinder Chadha's *Bend It Like Beckham*, we are spectators of Jesminder "Jess" Bhamra's dilemma; she's a British Sikh teenager who dreams of becoming a professional soccer player, much to the dismay of her religious family that believes in stringent roles for Indian women. Jess must decide, then, how she'll achieve her goal while also honouring her roots.

Jess is a charming, quirky character whose arc is about learning to tactfully communicate her wishes to other people and negotiate the roles expected of her in every facet of her life. Throughout the film, her multiplex identity is fleshed out by the relationships she has with her relatives and peers.

Our budding soccer star begins her journey at home, where she studies diligently, does housework with her mother, helps prepare for her sister Pinky's wedding, and hosts gatherings, among other things, with the latter being particularly useful for scoping out a prospective suitor who could be arranged to marry her.

Despite bending over backward to prioritize soccer over these obligations, however, Jess does want to please her family and expresses remorse whenever she disregards their concerns. Considering that we didn't have notable media dedicated to Indian, much less South Asian women at large in the west by that point, I think this nuance is important to discuss. It wasn't until recent years when we'd explore the first-generation experience deeper in shows like *The Mindy Project* and *Never Have I Ever*, but *Beckham* was the only time we'd witness a first-gen woman of colour in sports who neither fulfills the "model minority" trope nor assimilates entirely into the dominant culture. Such characters, who don't often get to be the leads, have been frequently relegated to stereotypical depictions one way or the other without much depth if at all.

Seeing Jess work to overlap her communities so that everyone feels more involved in her life—just as she is in theirs—is far more relevant than any attempts to "modernize" the character because her actions mirror the responsibility we might feel we have to improve our own relationships. While we may not always gain personal satisfaction from doing certain things for others, they can absolutely help us sustain trust and kindness toward one another. Jess undoubtedly appears more human and present as a character in this regard.

Jess's relatability to wider demographics could be twofold; she shows the importance of unlearning stubbornness so that we can be patient and grow with our loved ones—as opposed to antagonizing them or shutting down when conversations become uncomfortable. On the other

hand, her development perhaps speaks to those of us who (initially) believe we have no choice other than to act out and sneak about like she does, since our needs are either being neglected or abnegated. The consequences that arise from mistakes both parties make can serve as a catalyst for necessary discussions.

I think there are two subtle, intertwined commentaries that the film reinforces: the first is that Jess is a reflection of her parents, particularly her mother, having to earn their stripes upon moving to London so that they can be taken seriously when calling the shots. *Beckham's* narrative seems to support the notion that the bar is higher for women, especially of colour, to prove themselves in their endeavours and to be responsible for championing their own agency despite the systems they partake in being rigged against them. This segues nicely into the second commentary: that we shouldn't only praise resilience, but also ensure that unconditional love supersedes discriminatory approaches to testing one's merit.

The latter definitely applies to the other major domain of Jess's life. We meet her on the soccer field next, which is as socially concerned as it is action-packed. Whether it's keeping secrets with the character Pinky or getting dressed in a sari by her teammates for the wedding, placing Jess in situations where one environment affects the other lends much more credence to her struggles and bonds. What this also does, I'd argue, is nuance her values; her personal life intermingles with an already-diverse sport setting where the women endure gender-related, racial, and financial tensions.

Their team receives little support from spectators (and some of those who do come to watch come to make sexist remarks) and sponsors. Even referees enable derogatory behaviour from rival players. The team also anticipates that their coach, Joe, will eventually leave them in favour of an opportunity to train a men's league. What this means for Jess is that she must build rapport with her teammates by sharing their burdens and devising game plans to win over the skeptics. Though that's not all; the vulnerability and compassion she cultivates with them transcends sharing the same change room and into the understanding that their life experiences are what bind them, not just the game they love.

While it's never explicitly addressed in the film, I believe it invites the question of whether Jess actually appreciates her feminine side but is pressured to conceal it. Self-expression can often be complicated for women because our choices are thought to carry implications for what roles we could play in society and how we'll be perceived by others. I do appreciate that despite the occasional catcall Jess receives, her beauty is never objectified from a filmmaking standpoint, and

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Closures

CHAT with AU Library

Tues, Apr 12, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library

library.athabascau.ca/page/ann

No pre-registration necessary; access through CHAT link on home page

MBA for Executives Webinar

Wed, Apr 13, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20220413/

RSVP through above link

CHAT with AU Library

Thur, Apr 14, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library

library.athabascau.ca/page/ann

No pre-registration necessary; access through CHAT link on home page

AUSUnights Virtual Student Social

Thur, Apr 14, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT
Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/ausunights-virtual-student-social-12/

RSVP through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

even when she is in full dress it's a celebration of her culture rather than exoticism.

Unsurprisingly, platonic and familial love take precedence over romance in *Beckham*. To be sure, it has its place in a Jess's life - she just doesn't have to base her decisions around it. Her relationship with Joe is incidental but still noteworthy because of how it compares with cultural expectations. While Jess keeps her parents in the loop and wants their approval, she chooses her partner based on parameters she finds suitable and sets the pace for their relationship with him.

There are positive takeaways here for *Beckham* fans, especially younger ones: being yourself doesn't mean you're confined to particular ways of thinking, acting, and living. You certainly aren't obligated to be entirely divorced from your heritage and conform to values someone else considers beneficial for self-enrichment. For me, progression comes from a creative attitude toward performing in your roles, whether it's deciding on principles that matter most to you or blending them together. They can be worth celebrating regardless of whether others subscribe to them. I oppose the idea of depicting individuals who don't "fit the bill" as deserving of isolation or punishment in media because it may encourage a similar mentality in the real world.

In light of fellow writer Jessica Young's article "[Surviving Intimate Partner Violence](#)", it's nonetheless crucial we don't tolerate extreme views that delegitimize women's well-being. I'm glad we have stories like *Beckham* that accomplish the exact opposite.

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

Five Spring Skin Care Tips and Hacks

Xine Wang



I like to use a sponge or scrub to help remove dead skin when I exfoliate.

So recently, I've been very focused on skincare. It's a popular topic but it's one of the hardest routines to stick to. I find it so easy to forget to moisturize or apply serums every night. Now that I'm specializing in skincare in my everyday medical practice, I am more in tune with my own skin and its day-to-day care. In my practice I counsel patients on dermatological treatments using prescription medications.

Now that spring is upon us, there's a lot of spring specific skincare tips that are useful for spring. While winters in most of Canada (with the exception of British Columbia) are dryer and harsher on the skin, springtime usually means more humid weather. It also means more sun and protection against those harmful rays is recommended. So here are some tips and hacks to help keep your skin young and healthy

Exfoliate once every week: Unlike in the winter where exfoliating can cause dryness and flaking, spring and summers tend to be more humid. Winter skin can be dull and dry, but exfoliating will help clear the dead skin and improve skin turnover. Use a gently exfoliant and do some skin "spring cleaning".



Note that only certain foundations and make-up have SPF included, if you're not sure, it's best to apply a separate layer of non-comedolytic (non-pore clogging) sunscreen!

Switch to a lighter moisturizer: this is one tip that I've recently adapted to. I've noticed that in the winter my collection of moisturizers tend to be thicker, oilier formulations to help protect my skin against dehydration. Lighter moisturizers may be in the form of a gel or a light cold cream texture that traps moisture but also isn't leaving your skin feeling greasy.

Increase the SPF: SPF also known as Sun Protection Factor is a measure of the extent to which a sunscreen will protect skin from UVB. It's not just marketing! In medicine, we calculate the amount of time you can stay in the sun without burning from the light. We incorporate the Fitzpatrick score (a scale that measures the amount of melanin in the skin after exposure to sun) as well as the SPF to find how long you can stay in the sun with a certain "strength" of sunscreen. Anywho, what that complex science means is that the higher SPF does protect you better. I opt for at least SPF 30 in the winter and SPF 60 in the summer. Make sure you use a broad-spectrum sunscreen to help cover both UVA and UVB categories of harmful rays that cause aging, wrinkles, and spots.

Use a sunless tanner instead: If you're looking for a photogenic tan this spring, look for a sunless tanner. These are self-tanners and bronzing creams that don't cause premature skin aging. You can purchase these online or in many pharmacy front-stores.

Reduce make-up use: if you're a fan of full-coverage foundations, opt for thinner and lighter foundations that are not comedolytic (pore-clogging). With spring and summer on the way, thicker make-up does not look great in warmer weather and can be irritating for your skin. Opt for lighter viscosity make-up.

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



Here I'm using a very lightweight foundation and lipstick with SPF! Don't forget to use lipstick or lip balm with SPF to help protect your lips from sun damage.

How to Lead with Love

Marie Well



You're meant to be a loved leader, whether you're a mother, boss, teacher, or older sibling. Your leadership is meant to bring out the best in everyone, not just in performance, but in spirit. But in the West, especially in business, leaders are often praised for being "fearless," "in charge," "commanding," even "ruthless."

So, how do we lead from a place of love, instead of dominance? We lead not like they are staff, but like they are our beloved children whose flaws we overlook and who we want to see reach maximum potential.

I believe this is how to lead with love:

Recognize strengths. Observe, even assess through personality tests, the key strengths of your staff. But take it further. Find ways that their strengths and talents can be expressed.

One leader I know rewarded his employee's long-term loyalty by presenting to him a gift. The leader said to the employee, after work, "Please stay. I would like to speak with you." Imagine the worried employee's joy when he was presented with praise and a gift instead of reprimand.

Know that everyone has flaws, and accept those of your employees. Everyone will demonstrate traits we don't particularly care to encounter. But the trick is to accept the flaws, overlook them, and focus on the person's best.

I saw a voice over expert today who was teaching voice acting, but in my mind, only seemed to have one voice. I saw it as a flaw. But she's the voice of Bart Simpson, so who was I to judge? Sometimes a perceived flaw can be an enormous strength. And her voice was very dynamic, but all I could hear was Bart. Even if the Little Pony sounds like Bart, it's unbelievably amazing.

In other words, don't judge an employee's perceived flaws.

Help people acquire what is most important to them. Everyone has unique longings, passions, and goals. Help them acquire what they most desire. So, ramp up the synergy by tapping into your employees' passions. Nothing feels better than encouraging another being's dreams.

One fast food restaurant employee wanted to fund her daughter's education by working two jobs. She did so with the hopes that her daughter would take care of her in her old age as payback. Although it's best to expect nothing in return for a kind deed, had the employer offered to pay into an education investment plan, this woman would've been ecstatic. The company would've helped her achieve her goal.

Have measurable systems and supports in place. But if the measures don't add up, don't punish. Instead, train the employee rather than labeling them as incompetent.

A person who reports to me has had serious life stressor which affected his performance. So, I instituted measurements and systems in a CRM to help get him on track. If these don't work, then empathy, patience, and workarounds play star roles.

Reframe thoughts the Pollyanna way. Reframe any negative as an opportunity. When you have a negative thought, stop, evaluate, and act with wisdom, says The Marriage Foundation. A book on leadership also holds a similar principle, but advises to forgive oneself for the negative thought, and then reframe it as a positive. (I can't recall the book title.)

A long time ago, when A&A Records & Tapes was a household name, I had a staff member I managed. She would often say about me, in front of customers, "I want her job," much to my embarrassment. So, I told her I'd be happy for her to claim my job once I reached a more senior role. And our synergy and hard work together would be the catalyst.

Help people succeed. Make employees look good, feel good, and achieve new heights. That should be everyone's goals, not just a leader's.

Everyone has got unlimited potential. Bring that potential to its most astounding heights, and you can bask in the glory of knowing you brought out their best. So, help people grow by being their biggest cheerleader.

One very charismatic leader I know would say, "Good job" to everybody, one by one every day during work. At the end of the work day he'd congratulate them all and say they all worked hard. He was a loved leader for good reason.

A loved leader treats all employees like beloved children. After all, we are all here to help each other find our way to the promised land, I believe, and love for one another is the only true path.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: G3 Grow Beyond Scholarship

Sponsored by: G3 and AITC-C

Deadline: May 2, 2022, 11:59 pm CST

Potential payout: \$4000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be attending a Canadian high school, and graduating in 2022; and planning to enroll at a Canadian post-secondary institution in a first-year degree or diploma program. (Note: scholarship not open to residents of Quebec.)

What's required: A completed online application form, along with a copy of your university or college acceptance letter, and a 2-4 minute video outlining your vision and planned contribution to the future of technology and innovation in Canada's agricultural sector.

Tips: Read the [Assessment Criteria](#) section carefully for info on video requirements.

Where to get info: www.g3growbeyond.org/



Fly on the Wall

Vacuums and Their Potential

Jason Sullivan



What matters most in life? If you've been asked by friends or family "*what the matter is*," or been confronted with claims that you possess too much of a scowl for your own good, or that dreaded resting bitch face, you know that *matter* is more than a physicist's imaginary landscape of facts, figures, and angles. The history of science has an especially ambivalent relation between truth and evidence and how the twain shall meet. The term for how we know what we know is *epistemology*, and the biggest debate usually splits along the lines of trusting our senses or our minds, and which of those in greater proportion. After all, if we only trust what we see, then we have to question our very minds that do the trusting.

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt gave her answer (whether she originated the quote herself is moot) to what we ought to most value in social life: "Poor minds talk about people, average minds talk about events, great minds talk about ideas" (online). What matters, then, is a matter of opinion. And pretty or vacuous though our eyeballs be, they aren't the progenitors of ideas per se. In science and culture this debate has been especially *piquant* throughout history. Bear with me; see, the namesake of Bill Watterson's famous *Calvin and Hobbes* tiger, Sir Thomas Hobbes, was in the thick of the early scientific revolution and the familiar question hinged on what mattered most: empirical evidence from bodily senses or philosophic truth by the rational mind?

While Francis Bacon derived the classic empirical method—now the basis of scientific inquiry—Blaise Pascal claimed that the heart has reason that reason knows not and even that "there is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus" (online).

This might not ring true (although sound doesn't travel in a vacuum while ideas know no bounds) to our modern secular minds. Yet there's something about the absence created by a vacuum that interests minds of metaphor as well as mathematics. And, of course, there's ol' Isaac Newton, taking a pause from alchemist intrigues, who noted that an apple falling will always bonk something below it—such as his head. (Incidentally, the tree associated with him lately fell over in a mighty windstorm. Had that tree stood forever Newton's Law of Gravity would have been surely and ironically disproven! (Brockington, online).

Hobbes, though, as the conservative counterpoint to the erstwhile liberal John Locke, was of a metaphysical bent. His geometry and math was a bit, er, crooked; such that a noted physicist of his time, Huygens, noted "nothing solid, only pure visions" in one attempt at a geometrical proof by Hobbes; "by dint of being absurd, it becomes funny" (online). More recently, Bruno Latour claimed that, with the ascent of experimental science, a lack exists at the root of the human experience: "We live in communities whose social bond comes from objects fabricated in laboratories; ideas have been replaced by practices, apodeictic reasoning by a controlled doxa, and universal agreement by groups of colleagues" (21). In this context of trite mechanism, it's maybe no wonder that gossip and celebrity culture is so prevalent: the only place to feel a common humanity is in the lowest common denominator; whereby people attempt to connect with absent others to understand facets of themselves that prevailing wisdom leaves unaddressed.

Anyone who's tried to take cognitive behavioral therapy seriously can appreciate how arid such a mechanical approach to emotions sounds.

The Right Person for The Task

Tis' true, Hobbes wasn't up to the standards of the great scientific minds of his time. On the other hand, and we distance students know full well that any perspective is viable within the learning outcomes of a given course—so long as we cite the proper textbook sources, Hobbes did have one interesting point of note. Robert Boyle had recently achieved fame for his experiments where vacuums were induced by a pump whereby birds would suffocate and fall from their perch while onlookers (nobles and ladies and probably pet dogs) would gasp as though grateful that the newfound atmosphere were still present. After all, air was a mystery until the vacuum proved its necessity for life. Hobbes, however, was concerned. If the universe was created by and filled up with God's presence, as was generally assumed in the 1600s, then what happened when this vacuum, this blank artifice of lack, came into being. Not only birds might fall from the proverbial sky, Hobbes reasoned. "if God pervades all space...then any space left truly empty, as a vacuum, might be filled by the Devil. Therefore such a space could not be permitted to exist" (in Aldersley-Williams, online).

For Hobbes to try and abolish vacuums was a bit petty, yet, when we're studying, pondering, and daydreaming, do we not notice the oddest bits of epiphany entering our minds at the most exquisite or odd of times? These mental vacuums, like paper tiger anxieties and false arguments based on emotion, can yield wonderful things in short order. Out of apparently nothing the spontaneous generation of eureka moments is key to the growth of our intellect.

Nothing and Everything

When it comes to learning, first there was nothing, a lack. And out of that a moment of something arose. And isn't all learning a bit like that; suddenly things all come together? Ancient Greeks, like Plato, were convinced that we all have fallen from full knowledge to an earthly ignorance; such that when we *do* learn something new it's actually more like we've remembered it. Plato's "theory of recollection" is core to the idea that out of every mystery is an answer that we know deep in our selves. From this angle, the joy of education is that it feels positive to gain knowledge and understanding because we are almost destined to return to our all-knowing primal roots. No wonder we feel God-like when we've mastered a new concept, theory, or idea! It's almost as though we were destined to return to our roots as omniscient geniuses. Or, at least, our recursive and retroactive ability to embody students with top notch grades!

So, next time you feel a sense of inertia whereby you're being sucked into a vacuum lacking ambition or inspiration, remember: the vacuum will be filled by as much awesomeness as we allow. And hey, if we get nothing done in those deflated moments of inertia, we can at least claim jovially that the devil made us do it!

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Chlorpyrifos – The Latest Pesticide to be Phased Out



This past week I was going through my mail, and I opened a letter from EcoJustice about a new pesticide that was ordered to be phased out in Canada over a three-year period—despite the European Union and United States having already banned it.

The pesticide in question is Chlorpyrifos. When I first read the word, it sounded like a modern-day Pokémon or Greek last name, but Chlorpyrifos is no joke. The letter indicated that the pesticide had been linked to neurodevelopmental conditions like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, cancer, endocrine disruption, and health issues like dizziness and confusion.

Who is EcoJustice?

EcoJustice is Canada's largest environmental law charity and they have been active since 1990 advocating for better environmental protections. Stewart Elgie was the leading founder and the inspiration behind the idea had to do with his environmental law background and being involved in

litigation related to the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska. Since then, it has been involved in many precedent-setting cases that ensured increased protections for wildlife and habitats as a result of their mission to keep harmful chemicals out of the air, water, and ecosystems.

What is Chlorpyrifos?

Chlorpyrifos is a pesticide that has been used since 1965 to keep away various agricultural insect pests. Having exposure to Chlorpyrifos can cause both short-term acute health effects and possibly chronic adverse effects including a possibility of some effects on the nervous system leading to dizziness, loss of coordination, diarrhea, blurred vision, or, in extreme cases, unconsciousness, loss of bladder and bowel control, convulsions, or paralysis.

Health Canada has set in place a three-year window to phase out the use of Chlorpyrifos, while the United States Environmental Protection Agency has already banned it as a pesticide no longer suitable for use in the United States. When they made that decision in the United States it was the result of multiple updated human health risk assessments over the span of ten years, whereas a potential reason for the delayed response in Canada might have to do with Health Canada's regulation policies on pest control products which sets a 15-year cycle for re-evaluating existing pesticides on the market.

Pesticides Harm People Beyond Those Who Eat Them

If Chlorpyrifos is potent enough to impact the neurological development of children, then imagine the health impact it has on field workers and pesticide handlers who experience more potent levels of the pesticide. While this makes sense, the first thing we think about when we hear agricultural pesticides is about contaminated food, but it is likely also harming people beyond those eating it.

My biggest shock in learning more about pesticides had to do with the disturbing language that was used in various reports, where regulators were no longer able to conclude that Chlorpyrifos posed “acceptable risks to human health.”

Beyond Literary Landscapes Guatemala and Nicaragua

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 Guatemalan and Nicaraguan authors, a reminder of some of the region’s classics, and as an inspiration for further

reading.

Well-known Guatemalan authors include Guatemalan author, poet, and diplomat Miguel Ángel Asturias, “winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1967.” Additional writers from Guatemala include Rigoberta Menchú Tum, a K’iche’ Maya survivor and activist, and 1993 Nobel Peace Prize Winner, “for her struggle for social justice and ethno-cultural reconciliation based on respect for the rights of [I]ndigenous [P]eoples.”

Nicaraguan Rubén Darío was an “influential Nicaraguan poet, journalist . . . diplomat” and leader of Modernismo, a “late 19th- and early 20th-century Spanish-language literary movement that emerged in the late 1880s.”

What

Asturias’ well-known works include *The President (El Señor Presidente)* and *Men of Maize (Hombres de maíz)*, while Menchú is known for *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala (Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia)*. Readers may also be interested in the sacred Maya text, *Popol Vuh*. Darío works include *Azul*.

Although these works were written in Spanish and K’iche’ languages, translations in many languages are available.

Other works from the region include the novel, *The Daughter of the Puma (La hija del puma)* by Monika Zak, which details the civil war in Guatemala.

In addition, for a historical perspective, students can consider *Open Veins of Latin America* by Eduardo Galeano, *The Heart That Bleeds: Latin America Now* by Alma Guillermoprieto, *Central America’s Forgotten History* by Aviva Chomsky, *The Blood of Guatemala* by Greg Grandin, and *The Penguin History Of Latin America* by Edwin Williamson.

Where

Many of these works are set throughout Guatemala and Nicaragua.

When

These works often take place from the 19 to late 20-century.

Why

Readers who would like to learn more about Central American history, revolution, socialism, civil war, magic realism, hope, resiliency, and the Maya worldview, may be interested in these works.

How

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

AU students interested in learning more about this region may enroll in [ENGL 458](#): The Latin American Novel, a senior-level, three-credit course, which focuses on "the nature of Latin American literature[,] the questions of politics and history[, and] major themes or literary styles," including the works of Asturias. ([ENGL 211](#): Prose Forms and [ENGL 212](#): Poetry and Plays are prerequisites, and [ENGL 345](#): American Literature II, [ENGL 361](#): Literature of the Harlem Renaissance, or another senior-level course are highly recommended.)

In addition, students may be interested in [GLST 308](#): Americas: An Introduction to Latin America and the Caribbean, a senior-level, three-credit course, which includes topics, such as "authoritarianism and democracy, growth and poverty, race and class, the changing role of women, [I]ndigenous [P]eoples, movements for social change, and the foreign policy of the United States toward the region." (Note, this course is currently under revision.) Happy reading!

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

Homemade is Better Big Daddy's Steak Spice

Chef Corey



With Spring in full swing and the snow melting here in Edmonton, it's getting closer and closer to grilling season. This week I created my own steak spice, in part out of need and in part because I've always wanted to make my own steak spice. This mixture is a balanced combination of sweet, savory, and spicy. I became interested in making my own steak spice while I was in culinary school, after reading the ingredients on a bottle of Montreal steak spice. There are as many "Montreal" steak spices as there are cuts of steak, or at least it would seem. Almost every spice company has a version of Montreal steak spice.

While preparing for this article I was curious why Montreal steak spice was infamous as the only steak spice. In my googling I came across several articles addressing the history of the spice mix. All the articles have a few facts in common. The origin of Montreal Steak Spice is credited to Morris "The Shadow" Sherman. The Shadow worked at Schwartz's Deli in Montreal and one day he sprinkled the pastrami spice onto a

liver he was having for lunch. After that day, customers started to request the spice and thus was born another popular culinary artifact (Abboud, 2019) (Ewbank, n.d.) (Steiman, 2016).

Some of the website I saw have various recipes for Montreal Steak spice, so using influence from them and with an idea as to what spices can be used, I created Big Daddy's Steak Spice. I used ingredients I had on hand so I wouldn't have to run out to store to get some specialty spice.

Each of these spices are among the base line that one should have in their spice rack. The additions that should also be on hand would be parsley, oregano, basil, thyme, and bay leaves. Not including salt and pepper, with these spices plus my steak spices, one can make several combinations for various recipes. Admittedly, most of those would be European spices. The pizza sauce I wrote in one of my first articles used salt, garlic powder, onion powder, thyme, oregano, basil, and parsley. Pasta sauce is the same as pizza sauce with the addition of bay leaf and raw garlic and onion instead of powdered. If you are going to pickle, add in a cinnamon stick and all-spice to my steak spice recipe.

As you can see, having at minimum ten spices plus salt and pepper in your cabinet will provide you with at least five to six different variations for meals. This variation is also versatile, use it on salmon, pork, roasts, or chicken. Now, let's make Big Daddy's Steak Spice.

Big Daddy's Steak Spice

Ingredients

2 TBSP Kosher salt
2 TBSP black pepper
2 TBSP paprika
1 TBSP garlic powder
1 TBSP onion Powder
1 TBSP mustard seed
1 TBSP ground coriander
1 TBSP white sugar
1/2 TBSP red pepper flakes

Directions:

- 1) Add everything into a medium mason jar and shake it up to mix well.
- 2) If you have an empty shaker around, transfer the spice mix and spread liberally on your proteins.

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

Seven Traits of Highly Adaptable People

Marie Well



I Is there a big change looming in your life? A loved one on her deathbed? A child about to be born? A new educational pursuit? A change in your career? A loss of a spouse? A new home overseas?

Whatever it is, you can manage it brilliantly if you're adaptable. And if you're not adaptable, you can always learn its art.

The Positive Trait Thesaurus outlines characteristics of adaptable people, some of which I've highlighted in bold font below. I've added commentary beside each one on what it takes to assume the characteristic.

With that said, here are seven traits of highly adaptable people:

Trait 1: Being willing to improvise. At the core of improvisation is saying "yes" to everything, never second-guessing yourself in the moment, but being highly attuned to what's said and going on around you. "Do you want to go parachute jumping?" "Yes, and I'll take some lessons before we go." "Do you want to start a talk show?" "Yes, and you can be my co-host." "Do you want to move to the Yukon and join the military?" "Yes, and I'll get a free education as a dentist while I'm in training."

Trait 2: Recovering from disappointments or setbacks quickly. Never feel pity for yourself. Pity never poses a positive solution. Try to step aside from the setback, not personalize it. Instead see the disappointment as an opportunity to rebuild or repair with a positive attitude. Create a playbook outlining "what happened," "what went right," "what went wrong," "what could be improved," and "what will be the strategy going forward." Research all methods that might have led to a higher ground. Learn from mistakes and open your heart, but never wallow in self-pity.

Trait 3: Being a good listener. I saw a famous hostage negotiator on Masterclass advise on strategies for listening. The strategies included repeating, with curiosity, the last few words someone just said. For instance, if someone says, "I want to more adaptable," then you reply, "More adaptable?" Alternatively, you could ask a "what" or "how" question such as, "What steps would you like to take to become more adaptive?" Another possibility is that you could summarize by saying, "Sounds like you know what you want," or "It seems like you've got a big goal ahead of you." In these examples, you would be getting the speakers to do all the talking without you revealing much of yourself. That's because these are listening strategies for negotiating hostages. But I personally find these strategies make the speakers feel heard and appreciated, so I use them often.

Trait 4: Maintaining firm control of one's emotions. Replace your negative emotions with positive ones as soon as possible. Don't allow your mind to walk into a dark room of moans and groans. Get out of there quickly, as the dark room will quickly turn into a nightmare of emotions. Find the positive instead—the room filled with love and virtue—and park your thoughts within that wonderland.

Trait 5: Learning from one's past mistakes. Admit to yourself your mistake as soon as you can. Analyze how you could've tackled the situation with more love and positivity. Try out the new strategy the next time the situation arises.

Trait 6: Following orders efficiently. Listen carefully to orders and take notes. Repeat them to the person issuing the commands to ensure you've got them right. Ask questions, too. Make a checklist of tasks you need to perform.

Trait 7: Taking advantage of opportunities. Say yes to opportunities, even if they scare you or force you to question your abilities. The best opportunities come with risk, so take risks. And imagine a big dream you might like to achieve. That way, your brain will be on high alert for anything that could help advance your dream. (This radar-like awareness occurs in the part of the brain called the Reticular Activation System.). And remember, you can take all paths to that opportunity at once or just one path or even multiple meandering paths. There is no limit.

Stay positive by embracing your unlimited potential. See opportunities as infinitely available. Chase the ones that get your heart pumping.

Those were seven ways to become more adaptable. If you adopt just one of the seven traits today, you will come closer to taking change so well that you skyrocket the heavens.

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Time to stuff and fluff? A student wonders how close to the number of required pages essays should be; responses suggest the 10% under/over guideline, but others say always check with the course tutor.

Discord

Bogged down by uncertainty. Discussion in the #general channel is dominated by the possibility of labour action at AU, and what that could mean for students.

reddit

The waiting game. A student is frustrated by a 3-week delay in marking. Responders urge contacting course tutors whenever marks are later than standard. Why wait?

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Applications for several @austudentsunion awards and bursaries, including the Academic Achievement Award, New Student Bursary, and the Student Volunteer Award, are NOW OPEN. #AthabascaU undergraduate students, don't miss this opportunity to apply [#Igo2AU](https://athau.ca/3IVJWJ3)."





Intolerable Inlaws

My husband and I have been married five years and have one young daughter. I always considered us to be a happy family until my brother-in-law moved in. My husband allowed his younger brother to move in with us and our whole life was turned upside-down.

My brother-in-law had some financial problems, so my belief was that this was a temporary situation until he got back on his feet, but that doesn't appear to be the case. Jason is always trying to get my husband to go out with him to the bars. Plus, he openly talks about the girls he met and what they did, I mean intimate things. He does this in front of my four-year-old daughter. I have tried to get my husband to talk to him about this, but he fears this will ruin his relationship with his brother.

When they were younger they never got along, and now my husband doesn't want to cause problems between them. Also, Jason won't clean up after himself, no matter how many times I ask him. He is putting such a strain on our family life. I really wish he would move out.

I do not want to have my brother-in-law living with us for the rest of my life but whenever I bring it up, my husband and I end up in an argument. I don't know how I can get my brother-in-law to move out, without causing problems between me and my husband. Do you have ideas? Thank-you Paige.

Hi Paige:

Thanks for writing. This is a situation that needs to be resolved sooner rather than later. I can see that you are reaching the end of your rope. Your husband is not putting you and your daughter's happiness ahead of his brother's and that is wrong.

If your husband totally refuses to do anything about this situation, then you will have to give him a deadline – either his brother moves out, or you and your daughter do. You should not have to live with someone who disrespects your home and family. The fact that your husband does not see it, is not good. He just needs to realize how much this situation is affecting you and that you will not tolerate it.

I would suggest you give your husband a time limit, say 30 days, for your brother-in-law to leave, or you and your daughter will be finding other accommodations. Basically, your husband will be forced to choose between you and your daughter or his brother. If he chooses his brother at least you will know where you stand, but I highly doubt he will choose his brother. Best of luck Paige and let us know how it turns out.

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



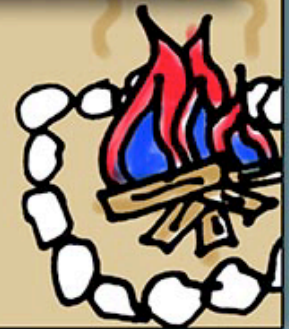
Poet Maeve
The New No-Romance

Wanda Waterman

I WANT THE KIND OF FELLA
THAT WANTS TO SPEND
EVERY WAKING MOMENT
WITH ME BUT HARDLY
EVER DOES...



THE KIND OF GUY
WHO LOVES ME
WITHOUT SHOWING IT...



THE KIND THAT WANTS
TO SHARE A LIFE WITH ME
BUT HAS HIS OWN PLACE...

THE KIND THAT
LOVES TO TALK
BUT CAN GO FOR
WEEKS
WITHOUT SO MUCH
AS A PHONE CALL.

SUGARBUNS, ARE YOU
EVEN READY TO START
A NEW RELATIONSHIP?



NAW,
GUESS
NOT.
(SIGH)





Attention AU Students!

AUSU's Spring awards application period will be open from **April 1-31**.

[Visit our website now](#) and check out the awards and bursaries open to AU undergrads this spring cycle.

AUSU is also excited to announce that our Spring Awards & Bursaries program will once again be doubled!

Spring Awards & Bursaries

Academic Achievement Scholarships (6 available) reward excellence in scholarship to AU students.

AUSU Bursaries (10 available) aid students with exceptional life circumstances in financial need.

Balanced Student Awards (8 available) recognize the effort of students balancing multiple commitments.

#Igo2AU Awards (4 available) celebrate student diversity and allow students to express their joy for knowledge.

New Student Bursaries (8 available) aid students just beginning their studies at AU and have < 6 credits.

Returning Student Awards (8 available) recognize students returning to university after 2+ years away.

Student Volunteer Awards (6 available) recognize students volunteering in their community.

Ep. 55: E-Safety First

Our VP Finance and Administration Leah Campbell talks to IT professional Josh Dedul about the online world and protecting yourself against scams. These tips will be especially useful for AU students given the nature of distance education and how we are all connected via the Internet.

Starring: AUSU VP Finance and Administration Leah Campbell and Josh Dedul



Here's the latest monthly blog from your AUSU Executive Team!

Natalia Iwanek, VP Community and Wellness, gives an overview of AUSU committees and updates on the hard work they have done this term.

"AUSU committees help shape the services, supports, and advocacy efforts your Students' Union provides to all AU undergraduate students."

[Read the full post](#) to find out about AUSU committees and how you can get involved.

Hey Nursing Students!

Allow us to introduce the **Nursing Student Curriculum Committee**, whose role is to help amplify your voices.

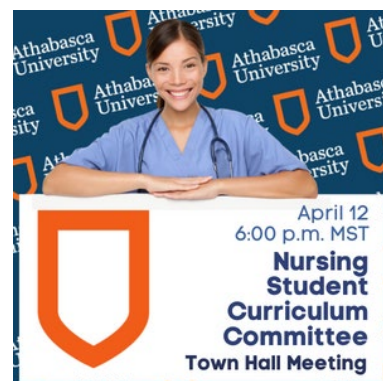
The current committee is made up of your fellow nursing students, Alexander Si-Swires, May Bunn, Gagan Brar, and Leah Seaton, and we're excited to be hosting a Townhall meeting where students can share their feedback, questions, or concerns regarding AU nursing programs. The townhall meeting is available for students only, no members of faculty will be present.

The townhall meeting will be hosted via the Teams online meeting platform on **April 12 from 6-7 p.m. MST**.

Please email lseaton1@athabasca.edu or asiswires1@athabasca.edu for the Teams meeting link.

Join us and share your thoughts on how you would like to see improvements implemented within these programs. Please feel free to email Alexander Si-Swires for questions related to clinical, and Leah Seaton for questions related to the curriculum.

See you there!



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301 Energy Square - 10109 – 106 St NW - Edmonton AB - T5J 3L7
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Publisher	Athabasca University Students' Union
Editor-In-Chief	Jodi Campbell
Managing Editor	Karl Low

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

www.voicemagazine.org

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

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

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ISSN 2561-3634