

THE VOICE

Vol 30 Issue 21 2022-06-03

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

Local Shout-Out

Toronto, Ontario

Incorporating Exercise

No Matter How Busy

Plus:

*Homemade Is Better: Omelette
Dear Barb: Cat Burgled
and much more!*



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The Voice Magazine

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

Email

voice@voicemagazine.org

Publisher

AU Students' Union

Editor-In-Chief

Jodi Campbell

Managing Editor

Karl Low

Regular Contributors

Barb Godin, Barbara Lehtiniemi, Alek Golijanin, Jason Sullivan, Wanda Waterman, Corey Wren, Jessica Young, and others

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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!

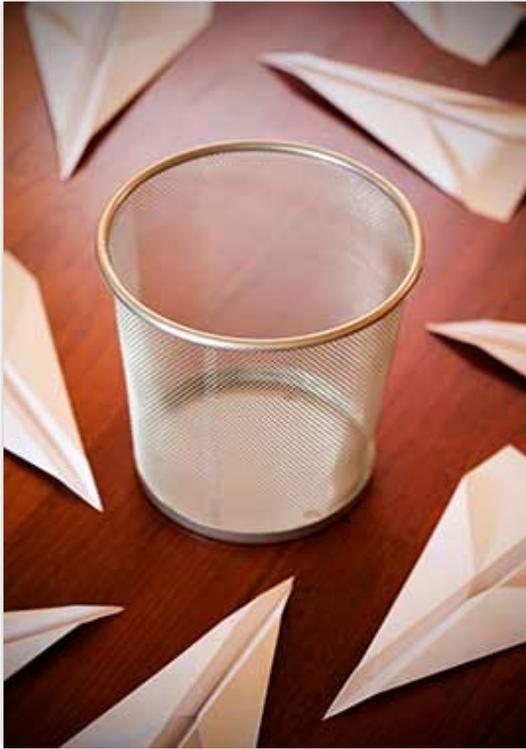
Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?

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

Editorial

Will it Make a Difference.

Karl Low



Ontario has re-elected Doug Ford to office. Honestly, I don't have much more to say on the topic, because I haven't been following Ontario provincial news too closely, but from what I saw over the past several years, it seemed to me that Doug Ford finally stepped up to the plate when COVID-19 came to town. His actions over the course of the disease weren't perfect, of course, but his performance over most of it seemed, at least to me, to be pretty solid. He also nicely managed to dodge most of what was sent to the fan during the Ottawa occupation, and, given the other options that were being presented, Ontarians were apparently good enough with letting him have another chance.

I say "good enough" because the voter turn-out during the election was extremely low. That tends to happen either when there are no severely contentious issues hanging over the current leader, and those trying to take the job away don't seem to bring enough to the table to make it seem like things will be much better if any of them get in.

Meanwhile, here in Alberta, Jason Nixon, former president of AUSU, has now taken over the role of acting Finance

Minister for the province. Mr. Nixon has some extensive familiarity with taking full advantage of being in an "acting" role, but the role of Alberta's Finance Minister is likely one that is going to be under much more scrutiny from the press than he was when he was with AUSU. So, while I expect the Alberta government will likely see no savings by having only one person in two ministerial roles, I don't think we're in for anything too visible to happen either.

In this week's Voice, however, what's very visible is our feature interview with fellow student, Cailin Rehill, who, like very many AU students, is currently working full time in the field she's now simultaneously studying.

We've also moved the Local Shout-Out beyond Calgary once again, this time to explore some businesses local to the Toronto area. And just because summer is here doesn't mean you have the time to exercise like you know you should be. But that's where Xine Wang's ideas for how to mesh physical activity in with a busy life-style might be helpful. The tip about how to park to increase your physical activity is such a simple one to integrate, for instance, there's no reason why anybody shouldn't. And if all of you did it, I might even be able to get a parking space close to the mall, so there's that, as well.

Also this week, we've got music reviews, events, scholarships, comics, advice and more. But maybe that's not enough for you? Maybe you're flipping through the magazine wondering where the story about your favourite subject is? I'll tell you, it's in you, and we're just waiting to get it here and publish it for everybody else to see.

So until then, enjoy the read!

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 Cailin Rehill (she/her) a 36-year old, Bachelor of Commerce student, majoring in Human Resource Management, currently residing in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Cailin “grew up in East St. Paul, MB, which is just north of Winnipeg.” She continued, “I work for my parent’s company in the areas of business management and human resource management. I am third generation in our business, and I work closely with my family every day. Two years ago, I decided that I wanted to focus my career completely in human resource management, so I started taking classes at my local community college, Red River College Polytechnic, working toward their Certificate in Human Resource Management. (I had previously

completed certificates in Business Administration as well as a certificate in Management through RRC). About halfway through my HRM program, I decided that I wanted to go farther with my education, and I began researching schools that offer Bachelor programs online, which is how I came across Athabasca University. After extensive research and speaking to other AU students, I decided AU was the right choice for me. I continued working toward my certificate with RRC because all the classes could be transferred, and I started planning my classes with AU. I completed my HRM certificate with honours in February of this year and have continued taking more classes that could be transferable to the AU Bachelor of Commerce program, while at the same time taking classes with Athabasca University, which hasn’t been easy, but AU’s flexibility has made it possible.”

Cailin also has plans post-graduation, explaining “I am really interested in moving my career completely into the field of Human Resources, and although I have a certificate in HRM I feel like the BCom is far more versatile for the career I want to build and goes well with my previous education and real-world experiences.”

When she is not busy working or studying, Cailin “really enjoy[s] sailing, biking, snowshoeing, boating, sewing, and spending time at the family cabin.”

As for her experience with online learning? “My first experience with online learning was with my community college last year and I was at first nervous on how I would handle it, but it turns out I thrive in the online learning environment. This was instrumental in making me feel confident in taking on my BCom with AU. My experience with AU so far has been very positive. The faculty of business called me to welcome me to the program and to make sure I was feeling settled in and taken care of, that really made me feel like AU was a real community and the school was there to help me. I have also had a really good experience with my tutors, they have been really helpful.”

However, like many students, she has had moments where she wavered about continuing her schooling. “I have had moments where I maybe feel overwhelmed or tired and I question if I have made the right choice in tackling such a large goal. In those moments, I remember why I am doing this, and why I know what I am doing is the right choice. I also have incredible people in my life that always listen and then cheer me on to keep going and keep pushing for my goal,” she stated.

Although Cailin is “not sure [she has] a memorable course with AU yet as [she is] a fairly new transfer student and have only taken a few courses so far,” she does “remember being nervous before [her] first class with AU started and then after the first day of working through the course, realizing that [she] could in fact handle this and [she] was going to be ok.”

As for communications with tutors? “I have found my tutors to be helpful, easy to contact, and prompt in returning emails and course work which has been really great.”

When asked which famous person past or present she would like to have lunch with and why, Cailin had several choices. She stated, “I love history and could rattle off a handful of people I would love to sit with, but I think the two people that first came to mind were Stephen Hawking and Neil deGrasse Tyson. Which is a little funny because I am not into science at all, but I think both men would be (would have been) incredibly interesting to talk to.” And the lunch? “Lunch would be something simple. Maybe cheddar broccoli soup, with salad and sandwiches.”

As for the greatest lesson she has learned in life? “I have truly learned so many great lessons from so many incredible people, ‘Life is too short for conflict’ would be one. Another would be less a saying and more just a notion that if you want something, then go for it, this lesson was nearly 36 years in the making. I have always regretted not getting a degree out of high school, and it took me nearly 2 decades to finally act on that and make the leap, but here I am! It’s never too late.”

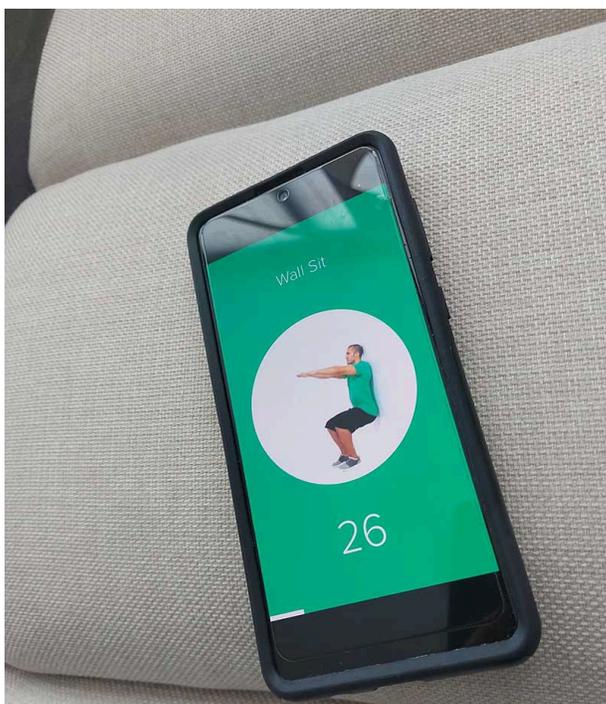
And her proudest moment? “I’m not sure what my proudest moment has been thus far, but I do know the proudest moment will be in 2.5-3 years when I can say I have completed my Bachelor of Commerce and I will be the first in my immediate family to have reached that goal.”

As a final thought, Cailin mentioned that her “drive and determination sets [her] apart.” She explained, “It’s certainly not a unique trait though, I’m sure many online adult learners could claim the same, it’s what we need to have to keep us going.” Best of luck Cailin!

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

Five Ways to Incorporate Physical Activity

Xine Wang



One of my favorite workout apps, 7 minute workout helps me stay committed for small burst at a time. You can customize your workout that adds up to 7 minutes.

Ever Sometimes the energy required to get off the couch is just too much. It might be that you've had an exhausting day at school or work and you're just looking to laze about until bed or it may be that you've had a feast and just looking for a nap. You might be wondering how can I fit working out into my routine? Working out takes dedication, time and energy. But when we've crammed out schedules packed with activity, how do we make time for it?

Here are few tips to incorporate working out into your routine without it feeling like too much of a commitment.

Workout for 5-10 Minutes at a Time

This is one of my favorite hacks for a quick energy-boosting workout. If you're an early riser this might mean a quick five-minute high intensity interval training session before breakfast. It might also be a five-minute workout before lunch. If you're like me and get a bout of anxiety before bed, working out has been shown to reduce anxiety and insomnia. It helps tire me out before bed so I can clear my mind for optimal sleep.

Run on the treadmill while you watch an episode of your favorite show

Sometimes, if we're doing something passive such as watching Netflix or the NHL playoffs, it might be worth your time to work out while doing it. You don't have to move the entire time and burn off the maximum number of calories. But the key is to keep moving. Even if it's jogging on the spot or doing pushups or jumping jacks for a few cycles, it helps improve energy levels and mood. It wastes no time at all and helps you stay entertained while you workout

Take the Stairs

If you have the option of taking the elevators or escalators, try taking the stairs instead. Even if you don't work out, walking up and down stairs helps burn calories and improves your leg muscles. It's a small change to your routine but over the course of a week, a month, a year—there's a lot of added benefit. This is especially true if you live on a higher floor of an apartment.



I live on the ninth floor of my apartment, and it certainly helps to run down to the basement level from my floor every morning.



Being on my phone with my grandma for hours means I also can do some brisk walking while speaking with her. Most of the time I'm just listening to her fun stories so I'm not doing much of the talking!

Park Further Away from your Destination

If you're going for dinner at a restaurant, choose the furthest parking spot and walk from there. It's not a lot of exercise, but it certainly helps. In general, this generation of people spend a lot of time sitting—starting from the office, to school, to home. Sitting has been attributed to reduced metabolic rate, obesity, and higher blood pressure. So any opportunity you have to walk somewhere, take it!

When you're on a Long Phone Call, Go for a Walk

When I'm on the phone for a long time with my grandma, I like to go for a walk up and down the block. Now with the weather moving to the positive double-digits, walking in the garden or down the street while having a conversation with a friend or family member could be a good way to incorporate exercise into your routine.

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

Local Shout-Out Toronto, Ontario

Jessica Young



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

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

So, to support local business, I have compiled a list of small and medium-sized businesses that I have personally patronized and feel that the price, quality, and customer service deserve a shoutout.

Mable's Fables Bookstore

"Bringing families and books together since 1988."

Mable's Fables Bookstore is an adorable bookstore located on Mount Pleasant Road. Not only does Mable's have a great selection of books in their cozy, welcoming shop, they also have a variety of programs such as Mable's Mystery Book Club, a monthly book subscription, and gift baskets for every occasion. They also participate in the Kids Read North program, which sends books to children in Northern Ontario First Nations communities.

Likely General

"Likely is an artist-focused shop & gallery primarily supporting the expressions of 300+ women, queer & marginalized artists since 2013."

Likely General is a "multi-functional space" located on Roncesvalles Avenue. They sell a variety of items made by local sellers, including clothing, home goods, art, and apothecary products. They also host workshops, events, book launches, lectures, and a community-minded gallery offering a new exhibit once a month.

In 2014, Likely General created a monthly donation goal and have since donated regularly to a variety of organizations throughout the community, including Foodshare, ESN, Sistering, Nellies Shelter, Toronto Prisoners Project, Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, Wet'suwet'en Legal fund, Ocam Collective, Black Lives Matter, Black Legal Action Centre, and the community of KI.

The Night Baker

"You want cookies? You have come to the right place! We make cookies...Delicious, delicious, delicious cookies. We make original and creative recipes to help you achieve our one goal: Eat Cookie. Be Happy."

The Night Baker has two locations on College Street and Danforth Avenue. You can purchase in store, curbside pickup, or order delivery from anywhere in Canada and the US. The rotating flavors are to die for, and the cookies are baked fresh all day, every day. The Night Baker also donates any left-over cookies to a food bank to eliminate food waste.

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

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

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

CHAT with AU Library

Tues, Jun 7, 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

CHAT with AU Library

Thur, Jun 9, 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, Jun 9, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT
Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/ausu-virtual-student-social-2/

RSVP through above link

Looking ahead...

Convocation 2022

Fri, Jun 17, 8:30 am to 4:45 pm
Online

Hosted by AU

news.athabascau.ca/events/convocation-2022/

Registration closed May 31

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

How to Burst with Confidence

Marie Well



With confidence, every dream you've ever considered can be realized. Confidence is critical to gaining the extreme epitome of success you deserve. But even if you're not confident, simply act confident until your legacy takes hold.

But how do you act confident? By believing in yourself, despite bad turns and pitfalls. In other words, never quit. Keep throwing stuff at the wall until your dream sticks.

Here are belief mantras that will guide you to great confidence and unimaginable success:

You have limitless potential! You have the power to achieve beyond your wildest dreams. So, what is stopping you? Tune out other people's fears and limitations and focus on your own improvement.

Nothing can defeat you. You grow from challenges. You are fearless. Something that could potentially crush anyone, you are able to laugh off. You say things like, "I can't control the past but I can make positive choices today." "I admit I failed there, and this is how I'll grow from it."

Your dream is exciting. You pick dreams that you enjoy. If you love acting, dream of becoming a big name in Hollywood. If, like me, you love learning marketing skills, dream of becoming a Chief Marketing Officer. If you love what you're doing, then that matters more than the end goal. If you had fun along the way, it won't crush you if you don't actually win the prize.

Your dream is worthwhile. Your dreams are beneficial to others. If you dream of becoming an actor, go to children's hospitals in costume and light up a child's face.

You can make the impossible a reality. You dream beyond your present capabilities, even daring to dream the impossible. A famous movie producer (James Cameron) would consider producing scripts that were, at the time, technically impossible to produce. But when new technology later became available, he'd begin productions. He made what was impossible possible through patience and perseverance.

Your values are impeccable. Your values guide your decision-making. They might include integrity, empathy, the will to succeed, service, unconditional love, or some other driving force. But make sure the values you pursue are the ones that matter most in the end. The idea is to identify the three biggest values that currently define your behavior and make them your legacy. Of course, you can always add more values as you live and learn.

You have unlimited focus. You flex your mental muscles more and more each day. That means you memorize facts as soon as you encounter them. That means you rehash your notes on your way to the store. That means you treat your focus like a workout that grows more intense each day. Push your focus to its limits—and then some. If your brain aches at the end of the day, you're on the right track—but may need a scalp massage.

You work hard and smart. You adopt the processes that lead to successes. For instance, if you are in the math department, study all day long for thirty-minute intervals followed by five- to fifteen-minute breaks. Prioritize solving math problems over reading the textbook, using fully worked out solutions manuals as your guidepost. Never let an uncertain assumption about a calculation occur without examining it to death until you find certainty. Read all the questions on a math exam before solving a single question and focus on the easiest questions first. Buy high

quality erasers and pencils. The trick is to find any little advantage—and pounce on it. Set yourself up for success right away, as success reinforces success.

The people in your life have your back. Even if no-one has your back, I believe someone does—and that someone loves you unconditionally. That person could be a higher power (think God) or your guardian angel or a deceased ancestor you may have never met. I believe you don't need a faith for any of this to be true. But if you have people in your physical life who have your back, nurture those relationships with everything you've got.

You make excellent decisions. Your choices in life are like online advertising's artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms. In other words, the healthier the choices you make, the healthier the options life presents. The more destructive your choices, the more unhealthy the options life presents. But these AI algorithms are smart and will respond whenever you deliberately make a change. To be healthy, the goals could be to eat healthy, get fit, work hard, learn something new everyday, nurture your character, love unconditionally, and work for the well-being of others.

You are deeply gifted in ways you may not yet realize. Because you have unlimited potential, you can learn any skill you desire. So, you have many gifts not yet discovered. Does it mean you will be playing basketball with the top players in the world if you're four feet tall and fifty years of age? I honestly can't say no. But it does mean you can gain a talent with basketball.

You focus exclusively on your positives. Revel in your successes. Focus on your strengths. But if you are a runner and keep tripping on the 50-yard line, you've got to study how to turn that around. Constantly review your progress, as the review-process acts like more reps in the gym.

You have the ability to acquire all the knowledge needed to succeed. Say you want to learn how to code, buy a book on Coding for Dummies. Start at the basics. Work education in as a daily part of your process for success. Hire coaches and tutors. Hang out at libraries and bookstores. Invest in courses, seminars, conferences. Do all you can to become the top gun.

Internalize all of the above mantras to pursue dreams with confidence. After all, you are a rocket ship ready to blast off into heights beyond your wildest projections.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: CNIB Post-Secondary Scholarships

Sponsored by: CNIB Foundation

Deadline: June 27, 2022

Potential payout: up to \$5000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be blind or partially sighted, Canadian citizens or landed immigrants, and pursuing a post-secondary diploma, degree, skilled trades certificate, apprenticeship program or equivalent. See [full eligibility criteria](#).

What's required: An online application form, transcripts, a letter of acceptance, two or more letters of reference, along with a maximum 2-page essay detailing how a CNIB scholarship will change what it means to be blind for you in your education.

Tips: One application covers a dozen scholarship opportunities.

Where to get info: www.cnib.ca/en/cnib-post-secondary-scholarships



Homemade is Better The Omelette

Chef Corey



I realized that I don't have a lot of breakfast recipes, so figured that we should start with something simple. I've made the breakfast sandwiches, homemade sausage, pancakes, French toast, bacon and eggs in tin foil, and waffles—more complex dishes at breakfast. But I saw a hole that needed filling with simpler meals that only take a few minutes instead of multiple hours of prep work. So, I bring you omelettes, a simple vessel that you can eat as is, or you can fill them with meat and veggies all you want!

According to some sources, the omelette's roots can be traced to ancient Persia. A dish very similar to the omelette was created there, though most of us think of France when we consider it (Davidson, 2014, p. 571) (Anderson, 2013, p. 65). I discovered that 15 different cultures have their form of an omelette, for example, China has Egg Foo Young, while France has the standard omelette and the Provençal Omelette. But India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mesoamerica, Philippines, Pontic Greek, Spain, Thailand,

The UK, and the USA all have a variation. We generally see only a few variations in Canada, the Western Omelette from the US, or a variation of the standard omelette from France.

This recipe is based on the standard omelette, but I realized it might be more like a Provençal Omelette in my reading. The difference between them is how you put the topping on. The Provençal Omelette has the toppings added to the whole omelette partway through cooking, and then it is flipped. You will notice that this is similar to how I make my omelette. The Western Omelette has ham, onion, green bell peppers and sometimes diced tomato. On the other hand, I add whatever I fancy at the moment. Salt, pepper, cheddar cheese, Mozza cheese, peppers, onions, chicken, ham, bacon, or just eat it plain.

The Fritta, from Italy, is likely another familiar dish to you. The Fritta is an open-face omelette cooked with additions that may include pasta, cheese, or vegetables. I can't say that pasta in an omelette would be that good, but I've also never tried it, so I'm not the best judge. You will notice that my omelette is a mixture of Italian and French styles. I like to heat my ingredients before I add the eggs and cheese. But this recipe is easy to make, takes some patience, but rewards you with a full hand slap of delicious!

The Omelette

Ingredients:

- 3 eggs - whisked
- 2 tsp Butter
- ¼ tsp Salt
- ¼ tsp Pepper
- 1/8 - ¼ cup of toppings (taco chicken, onions, peppers, cheese, tomatoes) OR toppings of your choice.



Directions:

- 1) Dice all your ingredients and have them waiting.
- 2) Grab a small mixing bowl and crack your eggs into it.
- 3) Whisk the eggs and add the salt and pepper.
- 4) Heat a non-stick frying pan over medium-low to medium heat.
- 5) Add the butter to the frying pan; add the toppings except for cheese once it melts.
- 6) Cook your toppings for 2-3 minutes to heat them.
- 7) Add the eggs and use a rubber spatula to bring the sides into the middle. Do this gently, so the eggs do not break. You are trying to get the uncooked egg to take its place.
- 8) Once all the egg is mostly cooked, add the cheese.
- 9) You can try to flip the whole omelette or fold it in half; if you have kept the heat lower, the omelette will still be pliable and fold nicely.
- 10) Continue to cook until the cheese melts, then plate and enjoy!

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Anderson, H. A. (2013). *Breakfast: A History*. AltaMira Press.

Davidson, A. (2014). *The Oxford Companion to Food*. Oxford, United Kingdom: OUP Oxford. Retrieved from The Oxford Companion to Food: <https://books.google.ca/books?id=b1leBQAAQBAJ>



Fly on the Wall Nevermind Netflix & Chill

Jason Sullivan



Here's the Fetishism Of Commodities!

Whether it's child labour in Dickensian London—that time of Tiny Tim and coal dust smog—or modern sweatshops seething with repressed bodies and stultified minds, the outcome of the goods and services that propel our consumerist times is far removed from those who actually toil to bring us our pleasure. This we know. Few of our peers would find much new in what we shared from our learning if all we did at AU was recapitulate commonly held truths. Yet, a deeper look at the alchemy whereby products appear to obtain value in a market of relations, rather than by the actual labour of their manufacture, reveals an almost fairy tale ideology akin to Cinderella's pumpkin becoming a chariot.

Not only the drudgery of work takes on a mystical character. When public policy disavows the value of an item or affixes a tax to its sale, it's akin to how the stroke of a clock at midnight reverts said chariot to a pumpkin. At root, though, it's actual labour that makes the goods that are bought and sold based on the arbitrary whims of culture and belief. Grass getting long in your suburb? Rev up your lawnmower. Grass growing in rural life? Bring around your heifer! The consumerist answer to every question comes to appear natural when in fact it's made by the people within a given cultural climate. Above all, the product of labour comes to appear as a thing separate from those who produce it. Needs, rather than labour, appear as means to fulfillment in modern life.

Marx notes the process whereby consumer goods appear to have a life of their own: "The form of wood, for instance, is altered, by making a table out of it. Yet, for all that, the table continues to be that common everyday thing, wood. But, so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than "table turning" ever was." (1, online). A private craft fulfills only ourselves, whereas a public product gains value primarily through exchange for money. Why do we economically value what can be exchanged rather than pay people to truly fulfill themselves? After all, the roll call of university graduates, decade after decade, find many students who enrolled in a discipline only because they could make money from it based upon the societal norms of their time (only to later come to grief and regret in old age). One might note that in times of war, for instance, opportunities for big money and career advancement arise literally as labour as violence becomes highly valued and attrition through combat death leads to a constant demand for replacement workers. *You're fired* takes on a sinister ring to it. At AU, happily, we potentially can enjoy learning while also bettering our future life chances.

All this happens because our specific system, capitalism, defines value in a specific way. Value is tied to exchange rather than production; anyone who's worked hard on something only to have no market for it knows this fact well. Much that is beloved or priceless is essentially worth zero!

Value as a Fetish Disguising Essential Reality

Take Karl Marx's concept of the fetishism of commodities, a term that encompasses the process whereby actual work transforms objects into items for sale only for work itself to vanish from site as the item hits a store shelf. Labour dissipates from view when wares are set out for sale and the fact that real people buy and sell items disguises the fact that the most essential relations of production

are between work and resource, not buyer and seller. Sellers could vanish but actual producers would remain and still be the ones producing valuable goods. Here in the Okanagan, fruit stands and fruit packing houses sell directly to customers, for instance. Whereas value appears to abide in cash, the value of goods is really contained in the item itself, as bartering shows in countless informal instances. Marx notes that “this ultimate money form of the world of commodities that actually conceals, instead of disclosing, the social character of private labour, and the social relations between the individual producers” (4, online).

Capitalist culture encourages us to detach fulfillment through shopping—retail therapy if you will—from those who work so hard to give us what we think we want. We think we are buying what we desire, to our hearts content, but the other side of the coin is that we are engaging in a social relation with an invisible Other. As we learn to dig deeper into the thicket of social reality around us, we see ourselves and our place in the world with new eyes. The first step to a more fulfilling future is not, after all, a diploma-sized sheet of paper. It's in the provision of new meanings for ourselves and new missions for making reality a better place to abide.

The Gig Economy as Case Study in the Fetishism of Commodities

Shannon Walsh's UBC-Vancouver documentary 'The Gig is Up', examines the Gig Economy and provides examples of this fetishism. Amidst film shots of “people frantically pedalling, driving, or drilling with customers idly scrolling through phone apps” viewers are quickly cued into the fragile and precarious nature of working in the fake-boom marketplace of Uber, Skip, and other techno-gig empires. In fact, literal algorithms can “cut pay rates at any time” and “workers can find their accounts deleted in an instant, for any number of system-determined reasons” (Downing, online). Reviewer Jared Downing notes that Walsh has provided us with her fair and balanced view of “an almost sci-fi dystopia most of us only encounter when a guy in a bike helmet arrives with a sack of food”(Online). A burger and fries arriving while a person is tethered to their gaming console and/or domestic chores might seem like a dream come true. Yet, for every easy meal or cheap thrill there are humans toiling somewhere behind the curtain. And often they compose a ghettoized and marginalized labour force.

Karl Marx termed this process commodity fetishism: when we detach the significance that every product or service was crafted and provided by real human hands we fall prey to one of capitalism's core conceptions: that the market functions like an organic entity with hands that reach and prod and generally improve humanity. While this may be true the market is an abstraction that often overrides the needs of its participants and the planet. A second and related fact of capitalism is that, over time, the rate of profit tends to decline (Encyclopedia.com, online). Even the best invention since sliced bread becomes common and no longer commands lucrative pricing. From here an essential contradiction emerges: as life improves thanks to better production methods, profits decline and the market appears to be suffering. Whole workforces can become redundant or face declines in their wages. This conflict between the needs of workers and the demands of the market tends to be masked by the fetishism of commodities where items don't typically bring to mind the workers who produced them (unless it's a celebrity endorsement). Vegans often note that if we saw slaughterhouse photos in the meat aisle we'd see less T-bones sold, and the same is likely true if we saw selfies of exhausted sweat shop workers in the Dollar Store toy aisle.

Downing concludes with disturbing accuracy that “labour has always been a space of contestation” with historical successes and failures. (Online). But isn't life generally improving? After all, a couple of decades ago the idea of having any fast food delivered to one's door would have seemed something only a character in a cartoon could envision. Friends, real people we knew personally, had to be available to be our informal delivery service. Otherwise we had to do the work of driving ourselves to the drive-thru.

Tragically, with ease comes paralysis of the mind if we forget about the workforce that brings us dinner with the tap of an App. Downing's informants remind us of the difficulties faced by the new and precarious industries such as Uber and Skip: "You're constantly hustling. You don't have time to look side to side at what could be on the horizon, because you're just trying to get the next job. In that mode, you kind of get swallowed." (Online). Swallowed like that easily acquired late night snack, we might say.

At AU the Labouring Buck Starts With Us

All of these facts point to something we distance students must remember if we expect our coursework to either get done without our hearty participation or to give us an easy shortcut to good grades or even a diploma. In the end, someone has to do the hard work of studying and writing and, like the tastiest burger or pizza or pad Thai, the most rewarding part of an AU education is that from tail to tip we know that we are the key labourers who produce for ourselves a positive academic outcome.

In fact, we're not so removed from the aptly named "putting out system" that prevailed just prior to the industrial textile factories of Europe (Juhasz, online). Each week, prior to a longer weekend of revelry than we moderns enjoy, a family of home weavers would set their wares out for the masters to come and collect, pay packets in hand. In other words, the bosses came to the workers and were grateful for whatever had been produced. Maybe next time we use an App to have a worker bring us our dinner we can ponder whether our studies are not a revolutionary breakthrough in student-based education. After all, we control almost every step of our productive process! And, in sharp contrast to brick and mortar schooling we don't have to pay to study away from our comfort zone! We might even say that AU learning is the ultimate App: one that delivers a truly fulfilling learning experience!

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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.



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

June marks National Indigenous History Month in Canada. A glance in the Voice's archive turns up a wealth of articles our past writers have submitted to the magazine.

Shrinking the sea of ignorance. Barbara Lehtiniemi ponders her perspective on the Call to Action resulting from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as her experience with her first INST course at AU. "Every step we take toward understanding gets us closer to overcoming the challenges of a complex issue. The more we know, the more we grow." Many Small Steps on the Path to Truth and Reconciliation, February 16, 2018.

Turning the tide of trade in human remains. Former Voice editor Sandra Livingston examines the debate over museums repatriating Indigenous remains—now policy at many Canadian and world-wide museums. "It is the issue of humanity's failure to accord mutual respect to traditions—and people—of all cultures." Editorial – Of Rights and Rites, November 2, 2007.

Beyond Literary Landscapes The Immigrant Experience

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 novels concerned with the immigrant experience, a reminder of some classics, and as an inspiration for further reading.

In particular, “[i]mmigrant literature is a genre of its very own, reflecting the journey and experiences of many migrants around the world.” Topics often “include identity in adopted countries, conflicting loyalties[,] and issues of discrimination and racism.”

Some examples of well-known authors who have covered the immigrant experience include Souvankham Thammavongsa, Silmy Abdullah, Zuleika Reid-Benta, M.G. Vassanji, and Chimamada Ngozi Adichie.

Other popular authors who have written about the immigrant experience include V.S. Naipual, Tayeb Salih, Kim Thúy’, and Amy Tan.

What

Some well-known works include Thammavongsa’s *How to Pronounce Knife: Stories*, Abdullah’s *Home of the Floating Lilly*, Reid-Benta’s *Frying Plantain*, Vassanji’s *No New Land*, and Adichie’s *Americanah*.

Other popular novels include Ocean Vuong’s *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous* and Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*.

Where

Many of these works are set throughout Canada and the United States, as well as Bangladesh, Thailand, Jamaica, Nigeria, India, and Tanzania.

When

These works often take place during the 21-century.

Why

These novels may be of interest for readers who would like to know more about the immigrant experience, as well as the history, languages, and cultures of various communities.

How

AU's wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to the immigrant experience 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 topic may enroll in ENGL 351: Comparative Canadian Literature I, a senior-level, three-credit course, which serves as "an introduction to the study of ethnic minority writing in Canada in the context of the country's two majority traditions—the English and the French." In particular, the course examines topics, such as "the voices of women, national myths and stereotypes, regionalism, and immigration." The current course revision includes Vassanji's *No New Land*. (Please note that ENGL 211: Prose Forms and ENGL 212: Poetry and Plays, in addition to course professor approval, is required prior to registering for this course).

In addition, students may consider SOCI 380: Canadian Ethnic Relations, a senior-level, three-credit course, which covers topics, such as The History and Legacy of Ethnic Inequality in Canada, Race and Racism in Canada, and Immigration and Race Relations. Happy reading!

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

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Second chances. A funded student wonders what the options are after failing a final exam; replies outline the timelines for taking a supplemental exam.

Discord

Who's watching the watchers? A concern posted in the #general channel about what personal data ProctorU collects from exam-takers, and whether it is shared, kicks off a deep-dive into broader concerns about online data collection and personal privacy.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "We recognize meaningful contributions in our communities by people with disabilities and know we all play a part in helping communities become fully accessible & inclusive. How #AthabascaU's Accessibility Services supports learners <https://athau.ca/3PTsABa> #AccessAbilityWeek."

Youtube

Getting excited about Convocation 2022? Watch AU's 2-minute teaser Welcome to Athabasca University's Convocation!



Music Review

Help (I'm Falling 4U and I Can't Get Up)

Jessica Young



Artist: The Aquadolls

Song: Help (I'm Falling 4U and I Can't Get Up)

California female rock trio, The Aquadolls, have released a new single and video, "Help (I'm Falling 4U and I Can't Get Up)." The song is available anywhere you get your music, and the video is available on [YouTube](#). Their upcoming LP is scheduled to be released in the fall of 2022.

The band was formed in 2012 and consists of lead singer and songwriter Melissa Brooks, with Jacqueline Proctor on drums and

Keilah Nina on bass. Their sound mixes indie, punk, surf rock, and vintage bubble-gum girl-group. The band describes their latest single as a "sultry slow jam compiled of surfy guitar with a heavy kick drum, hitting our heart strings with every chord."

Frontwoman Melissa Brooks says, "This song tells the story of falling for someone and starting to obsess over them. It's about imagining all of the things we could do together, both romantic and twisted, showing the darker sides of having a crush and longing for more to come from it."

Before getting into the music—I have to point out that The Aquadolls aesthetic is adorable. Their Instagram looks like Euphoria meets [The Hex Girls](#) (the iconic witchy/vampire band from Scooby Doo and The Witch's Ghost). I love a group of powerful, confident women coming together.

"Help (I'm Falling 4U and I Can't Get Up)" has the classic Gen-Z [chill vibes](#) that have gained popularity on TikTok. With highly relatable lyrics like, "If you're feeling me for real/Come on tell me that you love me/And you always will/Even if you don't really mean it/I wanna hear it still," it's no surprise that The Aquadolls have amassed over 23 000 followers on Instagram. Some of the other lyrics are NSFW, so listen with caution.

The music video begins with a girl sitting on the ground reading a book and falling asleep. She wakes up under a tree where a fairy takes her on a tour of a magical world. The video cuts back and forth between the mystical, pink-tinged images and footage of the band sitting on a bed, lazily playing their guitars and singing—their faces donned with expressions of slight boredom. While the video gives the vibe that The Aquadolls are too cool to care, it's obvious that they put a lot of work into their art. Every aspect of their music and their brand flows together perfectly.

Overall, I really liked "Help (I'm Falling 4U and I Can't Get Up)" and the accompanying music video. I can't wait to see what The Aquadolls have in store for us next.

Check out The Aquadolls on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

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

Pounce on Every Opportunity

Marie Well



Opportunities are everywhere. They are infinite. They can morph into even greater ones, the more you give. The number of opportunities available to you at this moment are mind-boggling. When they come flying by, run to them with open arms, jump on them, and enjoy the ride. Don't let a single opportunity pass you by.

Jump on every learning opportunity. Pounce on every single learning opportunity that will make your dream golden. But also learn by reflecting on what you achieved, the conditions for those achievements, and how you can build up your performance every day. Ask yourself, "What can I do to earn an A today?" or "How can I make the most money today?" or "How can I brighten someone's day today?" or "How can I get better today than I was yesterday?" You are an eternal flower, so grow, grow, grow!

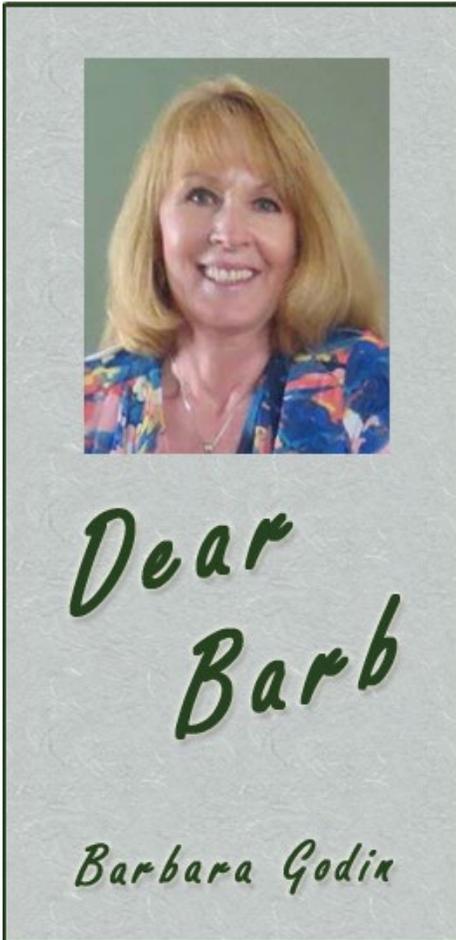
Psyche yourself every minute of the day for top performance. Put mantras on your walls. Set out to put a high level of passion and that perfect blend of excitement into what you do. Of course, it helps if you love what you do or at least aspects of it. If you don't entirely love what you do, shift it up so that you can add components you are passionate about. Strive to love your work more and more every day by putting your soul into it. There is no limit on how big your love for anything can grow.

Positivity brings you closest to your goals. Your work, studies, play, and relationships all require pure positivity. This positivity comes through best with an upbeat tone of voice, excellent posture, kind words, and joyful action. If you are not at peak positivity, enhance your mindset for optimal performance. Focus exclusively on the positives. Have a vision of your ultimate dream to guide you. And revel in even the simplest joys. After all, a "C student" who loves his studies can go further in academia than an A student who feels no passion.

Give your work, studies, play, and relationships all you've got. Don't let a moment go by when you're feeling weary, worn down, or disenfranchised. Make every moment matter. Focus with hyper intensity. Feed every task the highest levels of energy and quality you can muster. Time and evaluate each high-quality activity to beat your best performance. Reflect on what you can do each day to bring in the greatest mileage—and give it your 100%.

Recharge. When you take breaks, plan them out so what you do brings you optimal joy. Don't let a break occur, say a two-week vacation, where you start to float mindlessly on irrelevant tasks. Instead, figure out what joyful activities and R&R recharge your battery—and schedule them. If doing aerial yoga on your hammock is exciting and relaxing for you, make time for its joy. If reading a fiction book refreshes your brain, schedule its fun. If sweating it out racing bicycles excites you, go for it. Whatever recharges your spirit is vital for maintaining a positive mindset.

So there you have the route for optimizing opportunities. If you can't quite see the opportunities yet, keep plugging for the goal. The more you do this, the more the infinite opportunities—that were there all along—will magically appear.



Cat Burgled

Dear Barb:

I am a single parent of two young children. I do not have a lot of money, but I want my kids to have what their friends have so I try my best to get bargains. I have made many purchases of toys and clothing and things from Kijiji and most items were as described and I felt as if I made a good purchase.

Recently, though, my kids have wanted to get a kitten, so I thought I would search on kijiji to see what was available. There were so many cats it was unbelievable. All colours, ages, and prices. We picked out a couple that we liked, and I sent messages and only one was still available. It was an orange tabby, nine months old and in the pictures it looked like a great cat for the kids. I contacted the ad and received a response immediately that the cat was available. Unfortunately, it was an hour and a half drive, and I knew I could not get there to see it for a couple of days. The owner said no problem, e-transfer me \$20 and I will keep the cat for you. She sent me her address and phone number. I was so excited to tell my kids we were going to get a cat. I sent her the e-transfer and it was deposited at once. Then I asked her a few more questions and there was no answer. I thought she must have gone out. Tried to contact her again, no answer. Then I sent a text message to the number she gave me, no response. So, I called the phone number, and it said this number is not available.

Obviously, I got scammed. It's only \$20 but to a single mother trying to raise two kids, that's a pair of shoes. If she did this to five people, she could have made herself \$100. What is happening to this world? How do I explain this to my children without causing them to lose trust? I was hoping you might have some suggestions on how to deal with this, thanks.

– Scammed Mom.

Hi Scammed Mom:

It happens to the best of us. Unfortunately, many people are selfish and have no consideration or care for others. The only way to avoid these kinds of things is to only do transactions in person. Do not buy anything sight unseen. If you can't see the item for a few days, it's better to take the chance on losing the item, rather than losing your money. As for your children, explain to them in a gentle way, that some people are just not trustworthy. I don't think you have to go into any more detail than that.

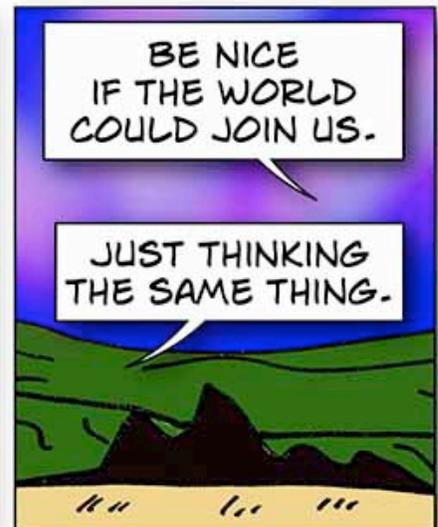
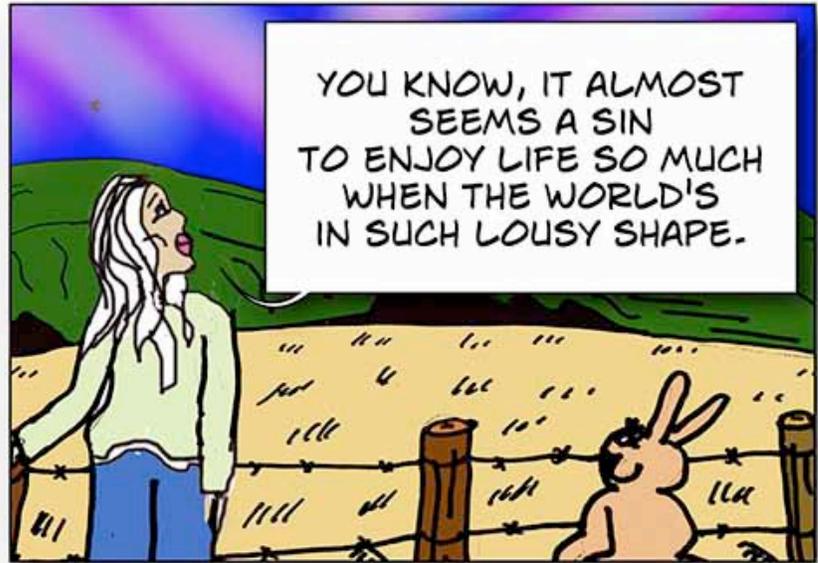
Tell them next time you will go to see the kitty to make sure you like it before sending cash. There are lots of cats out there, so I don't think you will have a problem finding other one, although I would suggest you go through your local animal shelter, which is full of wonderful animals needing a forever home. Thanks for your email.

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
How to Save the World

Wanda Waterman





Get to know your newly elected Executive Committee as the four student leaders chat about their roles, plans for the year, and unique circumstances that make studying at AU a special experience.

Starring: AUSU President Karen Fletcher, VP External Trishtina Godoy-Contois, VP Finance and Administration Naju Syed, and VP Community and Wellness Natalia Iwanek



Are you passionate about improving the experience of underserved and underrepresented students? Looking to gain committee or governance experience? Check out this amazing leadership opportunity with AUSU! **We are looking for up to two student-at-large members to join the EDI Committee.**

The EDI Committee is formed by AUSU Council and promotes the awareness and visibility of EDI as a core value at AUSU. The committee identifies the specific EDI needs of AU undergraduate students and supports the Executive Committee in their advocacy efforts to have those needs met.

[Visit our website for details](#) on how to apply!



Drop by the Virtual Student Lounge on **May 30th at 2 p.m. MST**, hosted by VP Community & Wellness Natalia Iwanek (she/they). The Student Lounge is a casual space for AU undergrads to meet, kick back, and chat about everything AU!

Drop by and get to know your student community with Natalia! [Click here to RSVP on Eventbrite.](#)



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

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Managing Editor Karl Low

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