



THE VOICE

Vol 30 Issue 22 2022-06-10

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

Grief

Words Where Words Aren't Enough

Decriminalizing Drugs

It's Not the Solution to Addiction

Plus:

*To the Microfiche!
Managing Insomnia 101
and much more!*



CONTENTS

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

Features

Minds We Meet: *Bonnie Mitchell* 4

Articles

Editorial: *A Mix that Works*..... 3

Grief..... 7

Why Criminalizing Drugs Won't Fix Canada's Overdose Crisis 10

High Performance and Stress 11

Treating Substance Use Disorder 13

Managing Insomnia 101..... 15

How to Live the Dream 21

Columns

Fly on the Wall: *Sanctions & Our Inner Research Superhero*..... 16

Beyond Literary Landscapes: *Leo Tolstoy*..... 18

Music Review: *The Road to Hell is Paved with Good Intentions*..... 20

Dear Barb: *An Anxious Ask*..... 23

News and Events

Authentic Events..... 8

Scholarship of the Week..... 14

Vintage Voice..... 22

Student Sizzle 22

AUSU Update 25

Comics

Poet Maeve: *Crazy Sauce*..... 24

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

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

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

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

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

Volume 30, Issue 22

© 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

A Mix That Works

Karl Low



Drugs and pets and microfiche and sleep. It's a weird combination of articles in this week's Voice, yet I find it works quite well to make this one of the better issues we've had over the past few months.

We start off, of course, our feature student interview. Bonnie Mitchell has been a dispatcher for first responders and her experience has pushed her to seek a psychology degree to be able to help our first responders with the mental health issues that she notes our governments have not been taking care of.

Her passion about the issue comes through the page making this interview definitely worth the read, and I'd go so far as to say it may make you proud to be in a school that allows her goal to take shape.

Following that, writer Corey Wren, more familiar to Voice readers as Chef Corey, lets us have a glimpse of his emotion in his article simply titled "Grief." The death of a beloved pet is the catalyst, but the subject, and the style, is very much a powerful insight into his own feelings and attempts to cope with loss. This article resonates

particularly strongly with me at the moment as we're dealing with our own pet's congenital heart issues and we're at the stage now where we know the end is likely sooner than later. Having something like Corey's article to relate to at least gives me the support in knowing this isn't unknown, isn't unusual, and may even be something that can be recovered from.

That's the hope anyway, isn't it?

We also have a couple of articles sparked by British Columbia's recent decision to decriminalize small amounts of harder drugs in an effort for harm reduction. It's great when we get two separate viewpoints on an issue that come forward at the same time. Even more interesting is that while both articles concentrate on what is happening to the drug user, they still manage to provide very different takes on the subject that are not mutually exclusive. Worth the read individually, but even better in tandem, are Alek Golijanin's article on treating substance use disorder and Jessica Young's article on why decriminalization will not solve the addiction problem.

Switching gears, we also have a recent music reviews, a basic primer to fighting insomnia from one who suffers from it, as well as articles on how to reduce stress while maintaining high performance, advice on dealing with anxiety and those who don't understand, how living the dream may not be what you think it is, scholarships, events and a look back at what students thought about convocation in the past, back before the pandemic drove convocations into the virtual space.

I do also want to give a quick nod to the Fly on the Wall this week. If you're hitting the grind in your courses right now, it might be what you need to give you a quick, readable boost, and send you on your way with some renewed purpose. So all in all, this is a very solid issue, to my mind.

So enjoy the read, I know I did!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Karl".

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 Bonnie Mitchell (she/her) from central Alberta, “a full-time student enrolled in the four-year Bachelor's degree in Psychology with a minor in Anthropology.” Bonnie “will be moving on to a graduate degree as soon as [she] finishes the Bachelor's degree.”

She explained, “My Master's will likely be in counseling, but I am still exploring options, I would like to find a concentration on military/first responder/trauma related psychology. I never intended to become a psychologist but after a 16-year career in law

enforcement as an emergency dispatcher for the RCMP, I have first-hand experience with the abysmal state of mental health support for our first responders.

“We are losing our heroes to mental illness and suicide at an alarming rate, and the government and organizations responsible for our first responders are doing less than the bare minimum to help. I suffered from untreated PTSD for years before being able to seek treatment, and I had to do it alone, without any assistance from my employer. I have previously dedicated my life to being of service to my community and my country, and now I am dedicating myself to being of service to our first responders and armed forces.

“My father always told me ‘If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself.’ I have never felt the accuracy of those words so much as I do now. I already spend much of my time assisting other first responders in navigating the bureaucracy and red tape around getting help for mental and physical injuries suffered on the job; so, becoming a registered psychologist will give me the power to do even more for these deserving people.”

On a more personal note, Bonnie “grew up on a Canadian Airforce base in central Alberta and have made [her] permanent home not far from that location.” “I am a born and raised Alberta girl, but my father is from the east coast, and I consider it my second home,” she continued.

Although Bonnie “used to be an obsessed avid reader, but [she] simply [has] no time now!” She stated, “I have started using audiobooks on road trips as my only option. I am currently wrapping up *Sapiens* by Yuval Noah Harari. An amazing book, I highly recommend. Anyone interested in psychology, sociology, history, anthropology, or anything to do with human behaviours will love this book.”

Although she does “not have much free time these days with being a single mother, a full-time student, and part time shift worker,” she does “manage to carve out leisure time ... outdoors with Clyde, [her] 65-pound Australian Labradoodle.” She continued, “Being in nature is important for my mental and physical health. I enjoy hiking (the beginner kind) and being in the woods or around water. My best friend and I have paddleboards, and though I spend more time falling off than actually ‘paddleboarding,’ it is still one of the best investments I have made. We have two boards, so it is perfect for a day at the beach with everyone in our families’ taking turns, including the kids. I also love exploring the riverside and nature trails with my dog, and I am drawn to the mountains whenever I have time.”



When asked who in her life has had the greatest influence on her desire to learn, Bonnie chose her “mother for sure,” explaining, “She married my father very young and, like many women of her generation, she was a homemaker through my early childhood. When I was a preteen, she went back to school and set out to obtain a teaching degree. Due to financial reasons, she had to leave school one semester before graduating and re-entered the workforce. She did not allow this to be her downfall, in fact she turned the necessity of full-time work into an achievement greater than a teaching degree (in my opinion), as she smashed glass ceilings throughout her career in the finance industry. She used the education and life experience that she had to propel her through a fast-track course of her own making from being a bank teller to being a branch manager. A highly successful, award-winning one at that. She was so often the only woman at the table in corporate Alberta finance and she never stopped learning more and achieving more. She inspired me to have the courage to seek advancement in every part of my life, through my career and now through my education.”

As for Bonnie’s experience with online learning so far? “I love online learning. Due to many years of high stress shift work, I do not think I would be nearly as successful in a classroom setting *enter not-so-subtle brag of straight A academic record*. I do my best work between 3pm to 3am, I always have music on in the background, and my dog is always at my side. These methods would not be possible in a classroom. The only thing I dislike is that I believe the Athabasca University tutors do not always readily provide relevant guidance. We pay the same amount, or more, for these courses as traditional classroom classes, and those instructors would never consider telling their students to figure something out on their own when asking for clarification. I feel really frustrated about these issues; I would like to see AU mandate a more involved approach with their tutoring procedures.”

And her most memorable AU course? “Although the psych courses are my passion, the MATH215 course on statistics is the most memorable. I was never great at math in high school, and I thought



I would barely pass it. Just glancing over the formulas and graphs was so intimidating. Once I got into the course, I realized that my brain must have developed a math capability at some point, because not only was I good at it, but I was also enjoying it! The excitement of solving a huge problem with an entire page of equations to show for it was something I did not expect.”

When asked what her project would be as the new president of AU, Bonnie stated that her “first order of business would be to reformat the tutoring system.” She explained, “I would implement a system where there were tutors that worked as course guides, not just assignment markers. The course guides would answer questions about the way the course works; they would be specific about the expectations on assignment formats and be open to debate course content. The tutors would provide a generic sample assignment for each type of assignment to show students what their style preferences were. The point of university level education is to learn the subject matter, not to learn how each tutor likes to have a research paper formatted. If students are just

given guidance on navigating the courses and on assignment formatting, they can then concentrate on learning the material, and achieving higher grades.”

When asked which famous person, past or present, she would like to have lunch with, and why, Bonnie stated that she would “love to chill with Elon Musk and pick his brain.” She continued, “I’m neither for or against Elon Musk in any way, but I objectively have to recognize that he is an incredibly unique human. I’d like to discuss his philanthropic views, his understanding of neuroscience, and obviously I would have a few suggestions regarding where he could place some of his money.”

The one thing that distinguishes her from most other people is “a sewer mouth that would make Samuel Jackson blush.” “I think being a tomboy on a military base and then entering law enforcement just fostered an environment where I could learn all of the bad words and use them eloquently and enthusiastically. My favourite word is the F-bomb but my repertoire is extensive. When I have my professional personality in gear, most people would never believe it, by my mother will testify that the language used in my personal life has taken years off her life,” she stated.

Bonnie’s proudest moment in life has been “the day that [she] was formally sworn in as a Civilian Member of the RCMP at the Division Headquarters and raised [her] right hand and said the words of [her] oath and received [her] regimental number.” She explained, “My father was so proud that I had chosen a career in public service instead of going for corporate wealth. My family has a lot of military and government service involvement; it was an honour to join them in serving my country.”

And her most valuable lesson learned in life? “People die, a lot. All kinds of people, all kinds of ways. TELL THEM YOU LOVE THEM. You never know when a life is going to end early. You will live the rest of your life desperately hoping they knew you loved them.” Best of luck Bonnie!

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



Grief

Corey Wren



We got Mocha when she was between 6-8 weeks old. She was born on February 9, and our neighbours at the time got her from a breeder. They also had a toddler and found it challenging to have both. I don't blame them; it **was** difficult.

At the time, we had another dog, Sammy. He was two when we got him the year before. He and Mocha got along so great that we knew we could keep her. She and I connected immediately. We let her sleep on our bed, and she would snuggle above my head at night. We were terrible at training, and she constantly peed in the house; eventually, though, we were able to teach her to go outside. But, even to the end, if we left her at home alone, she would pee or defecate in the basement to tell us she was angry. When I would leave her at home with everyone else, then upon my return she would promptly tell me she was upset I went without her.

She would make a series of growling remarks at me, and I knew I was in trouble. Yet, we were on the couch together a minute later, hanging out.

Her hair was soft and flowed like silk, and her eyes were welcoming and full of appreciation. We did almost everything together. We spent virtually every waking moment together. She was there when I woke up and went to bed at night. We would cuddle on the couch and in bed. I wrapped my arms around her as often as possible. I loved her so passionately, and I know she loved me.

She and I trained for four half marathons together, and before her back started to go out, my wife would walk with her in the mornings. She was so loyal and obedient that we rarely needed a leash. She would just follow along, at her own pace sometimes. We could have her off-leash when we went camping, and she would stay close to us; she didn't like adventuring unless I was going. Sometimes she would go with my wife, but she usually stayed close, or she would race from one of us to the other, just because she needed us to be close. She had terrible separation anxiety, which we never learned to fix. I always told myself I'd help her get over it, and in the last few weeks, I was trying to help her enjoy her kennel again by putting treats in there. She'd go in and grab them, then bolt out as fast as she could because she knew what could happen if she stayed.

She got to see the birth of our children, move into a new house, go camping in many places, lots of road trips, and was loved so much. Through it all, she was a loyal dog that just wanted to be pet and loved. It makes one a little jealous sometimes to have such an easy life where someone feeds, cares for you, helps you get exercise, and makes sure you're healthy.

But this last semester felt like it had been in retrograde since it started. In January, my wife and son contracted COVID. Our youngest daughter was not fully vaccinated and needed to stay home from school until there was no longer a concern about exposure. The entire month of January had us working together on her homework assignments. She finally went back to school in February, and I was able to get some schoolwork done. The months started to get busier with sports, Scouting, and personal appointments.

From there, the schoolwork started to slide. Mocha, my best friend, injured her back and needed daily care. The care didn't take long, and she began to feel better for a little while. Then in April, it got worse. She had it x-rayed, and we found out it was mostly tissue, but then we got the news that she had developed cancer. We all talked about our options, how we proceed, what we should do, how much time she had, and can we cure it? With some pain treatment, we were able to get her mostly back to normal. But that was the limit of treatment, and surgery was not an option this time. She was palliative. We were devastated. We all cried, held each other, and talked about our next steps. We vowed that her last day would be the greatest day ever! We would pull the kids out from school, get some hamburgers, and steak, and keep each other company until it was time.

Then at 3:31 pm on April 28, 2022, she took her last breath.

Grief is a potent emotion. I am having a difficult time processing it. Almost everything I touch or see reminds me of her. Everywhere I go in my house reminds me of our time together. I am fortunate to have had 15 great years with her. We spent every day we could at home together, and when we could, we went out together. We would walk or drive to the school to pick up the kids. And if I went out alone, she was beyond excited to see me when I got home. She would often voice her displeasure that I didn't take her with me or tell me how glad she was that I got home safely. We spent so much time together that it was difficult for me to remember a time when she wasn't there.

When it was time for her to pass, I felt this wave of sadness, anxiety, depression, and loneliness. She was surrounded by everyone in our family who loved her. We cried. I might have cried the hardest. We grieved together and told her how much we loved her. We cried, touched her, said our goodbyes, and reminded her how much we love her. In the end, we're sure she loved us too.

Then we just left her.

We got in the car and drove away.

We left my best friend's body behind.

As much as I am uncertain about a higher power, or a deity that looks over us, I hope that if she has a soul and spirit, that it went somewhere peaceful. I have struggled with the idea of a God, one almighty force in the universe that controls and creates everything. But, on the other hand, something brought us together. A power beyond explanation set our paths

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

CHAT with AU Library

Tues, Jun 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

AUGSA Annual General Meeting

Tues, Jun 14, 6:00 to 7:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AUGSA

augsa.com/events/details/14/Annual-General-Meeting

AU graduate students only; RSVP through above link

CHAT with AU Library

Thur, Jun 16, 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

The Library Presents: Google Scholar

Thur, Jun 16, 12:30 to 1:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

news.athabascau.ca/events/the-library-presents-google-scholar/

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

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.

to link. From the moment I met her, I knew it was true love. I knew because I'd already experienced it before, and I would experience it multiple times until now, yet I'm sure I'll experience it more until my time is done. If there isn't a higher power, a God, a destiny, or some grand plan, then I'm not sure how to explain our friendship. It is a force that I cannot explain in words.

My house feels empty, even though my family is home. A piece of my soul is missing. My heart is aching, and my mind cannot focus on the tasks I need to accomplish.

I have a massive hole in my life, and it's one I'm not sure how to fill yet. While everyone here can sleep, for the first few days, I found it difficult. I feel lost and alone though family and friends surround me. I sure didn't think that day would end like it did, and how I would get up and experience not having her in the bed with me.

I'm supposed to move forward, but I feel stuck. Part of me wanted alcohol to take away the pain, and the other wanted to feel numb. Yet, another part felt guilty for wanting to push her through and just give her meds for a while longer. I told my wife that it would never be a good time to let her go, and I couldn't watch her suffer. I wanted to put her down because I thought it was the best thing for her. We talked to our kids about what was best for Mocha, and then we talked about what was best for us. As the vet injected the liquids, Mocha was at peace with her family.

We all got to pet her, hug her, and say goodbye. But what makes this difficult is knowing that we can't have another pet like her. She was there the day our children came home from the hospital. She smelled them, protected them, and helped raise them. She helped teach our kids what it was to be a good pup and how to behave in the pack. She loved us all, and as they got older, she found that they were helpful and could help her get what she wanted.

If we left the kids home as they got older, we would tell them that she would be sad, and they will have to help her see that she's not alone. As long as someone was home, she was happy because she knew she wasn't being left by herself. It wasn't as much of a concern when Sammy was still around, but she became the princess of the house after Sammy passed. She knew we were wrapped around her paws. In the last few months, we started to give her more treats. I would feed her meat from the cutting board, get her a cup of whipped cream from Starbucks or a plain cheeseburger, and share my fries from McD's. I knew it was getting close to the end. We'd been talking about it for a couple of years. I wasn't ready yet, my wife wasn't ready yet, and I didn't know if our kids would ever be prepared. There was never going to be a good time. We just had to rip the bandage off and hope for the best... It turns out the best is still a struggle—more for some than others.

I lost my best friend. She was 15, and we loved her more than anything ever! I would joke with my kids that she was the favourite child. I would also tell them that I love them all more than the world. If this is what it's like to lose your best friend, I hope that I am fortunate enough never to experience the loss of a child. I know that I might have to lose my other best friend, my wife, one day. And I will be just as devastated because the love I feel for her is my whole heart. I can't give any more love than that. I've given more than I ever thought I would be capable of giving, and I always will.

I love you, Mocha, wherever you are.

I love you, Sammy, wherever you are.

I miss them dearly, and I know I'll be able to move forward, but for now, I'm grieving—a lot.

Corey Wren is a student at AU's school of business management and a stay-at-home-parent of three who graduated from NAIT's culinary arts program in 2007.



Why Decriminalizing Drugs Won't Fix Canada's Overdose Crisis Jessica Young



B.C. will become the first province to decriminalize small amounts of illicit drugs. Beginning January 31st, 2023, drug users over eighteen years of age will be able to legally possess up to 2.5 grams of methamphetamine, cocaine, opioids, and MDMA. Police will also not be permitted to confiscate drugs from the user if the amount is under the legal threshold.

Unsurprisingly, the decision has attracted significant criticism from all sides of the issue. Some are advocating that the legal threshold should be increased to a minimum of 4.5 grams, while others maintain that the only true solve to the overdose crisis will be when the federal government provides a safe, regulated drug supply to the user. Of course, there are also those who fear that decriminalization will encourage drug use and increase crime rates.

What *can* be agreed upon, however, is that the overdose crisis represents an enormous problem in our society, and that problem is only getting worse. According to [this CBC article](#), “More than 9,400 people in B.C. have died of toxic

drug overdoses since the province declared a public health emergency in 2016, an average of six people a day.” Regardless of your opinion on addiction, drug use, and the latest government policy—those numbers are simply tragic and terrifying.

The B.C. government’s decision comes from a harm reduction standpoint. According to [Harm Reduction International](#), “Harm reduction is fundamentally grounded in principles that aim to protect human rights and improve public health. Treating people who use drugs—along with their families and communities—with compassion and dignity is integral to harm reduction. The use of drugs does not mean people forfeit their human rights - they remain entitled to the right to life, to the highest attainable standard of health, to social services, to privacy, to freedom from arbitrary detention and to freedom from cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, among others.” A harm reduction framework focuses on keeping people alive and protecting their health through policies that are “facilitative rather than coercive, and aim to reinforce positive change in a person’s life, no matter how small or incremental that change may be.”

Unfortunately, I don’t believe that decriminalization will solve the overdose crisis. Not because of a too-low threshold, not because of a lack of safe supply, and not because I don’t agree with harm reduction. I don’t believe that the decriminalization of illicit drugs will solve anything because *drug use is not the problem*.

In 1985, Dr. Vincent Felitti, the man behind [the largest, most important public health study you’ve never heard of](#), developed the ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences study) questionnaire. Dr. Felitti began the ACE when he realized that the vast majority of his chronically obese patients had a history of childhood abuse. The ACE questionnaire asks patients [ten questions](#) about their life experiences before the age of eighteen. Five are personal — physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect. Five are related to other family members: a parent who’s an alcoholic, a mother who’s a victim of domestic violence, a family member in jail, a family member diagnosed with a mental illness, and experiencing divorce of parents. Each

type of trauma counts as one. The higher your ACE score, the more likely you are to experience adverse outcomes in adulthood. For instance, with an ACE score of 4 or higher, the likelihood of chronic pulmonary lung disease increases 390 percent; hepatitis by 240 percent; depression by 460 percent; and attempted suicide by 1,220 percent.

Dr. Felitti eventually realized that treating his patients' obesity was never going to work, because he was trying to treat the solution to their problem. Binge-eating was his patients' coping mechanism—their solution—for dealing with their *actual* problem: the lasting affects of adverse childhood experiences.

I believe that the overdose crisis is rooted in the same problem. The CDC reports that 1 in 6 adults have an ACE score of 4 or more—many chronic drug users will fall into this category. When we live in a society that is overflowing with people attempting to cope with childhood trauma, coupled with the consistent toxic stress caused by other prevailing societal issues such as poverty and discrimination, the *actual* problem behind the overdose crisis becomes much clearer. While I don't believe that the decriminalization legislation is a negative thing, I believe that what the government should be focusing on is investing in communities and families, schools, housing, and mental health resources. I believe that the government should be investing more in our children—working preventively to reduce the need for drug use in adulthood.

I truly, genuinely, whole-heartedly hope that the decriminalization of illicit drugs in B.C. will save lives; but the real change will only happen once we address the problems that are imbedded in our society.

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



High Performance and Stress



Marie Well

In my view, pizza, booze, and Netflix won't help anyone manage stress, especially over the long term. But de-stressing strategies that lead to top performance bring the best kind of relief. After all, you're destined to be a rising star, hero, academic, transformer, tycoon, or whatever you desire.

I once had severe workplace anxiety, and if not careful, I could have a relapse. So, I'm no stranger to techniques for de-stressing.

Here are a few strategies I use for managing stress for top performance:

Minimize stressors that don't advance your goals.

If cleaning your home gives you stress, as it once did to me, but an untidy home also gives you stress, either find a way to delegate the task or, better still, do what I did and master the task. I schedule cleaning three times every day, and am hyper-disciplined. Strangely, 100% discipline is more manageable than 99%.

Some stressors, however, don't advance your goals. For instance, a friend who demands to meet for coffee twice a week may be better suited as a productive exercise buddy. Or a parent who

argues with you endlessly over the phone, demanding you spend time together, may be better served as a companion at a restaurant. It's killing two birds with one stone. Minimize stressors by reworking them into strengths wherever you can.

Be highly prepared for stress-inducing activities, such as exams.

Practice, practice, practice. Being thoroughly prepared will minimize your fear of failure and, thus, reduce your stress. When under pressure, being prepared helps automate your activity, such as exam-taking, leading to a higher probability of success. Stated differently, you will typically perform only as well as you practice. So, make your practice and preparation count.

De-stress with good health.

Not just your mind but your body may be susceptible to stress, and mind and body work in tandem. Healthy living takes good care of both mind and body. Healthy living means eating clean, anti-stress foods, such as bananas, avocados, seeds, and salmon. It also means removing toxins and caffeine. Just as importantly, it requires regular exercise for maximum health. Meditation or deep breathing also reduces stress levels. De-stress your body with health, and your mind will benefit.

Develop detailed, highly structured routines.

A highly disciplined routine prevents second-guessing: "Am I focusing on the right things?" or "What should I focus on next?" When you are unclear or uncertain about what you should be doing, that can cause stress. A highly structured routine can automate processes so that you don't feel overwhelmed. I find that timing and recording every task, from grooming to vacuuming, helps me schedule highly efficient, doable routines.

Be self-critical the right way.

Self-criticism is valuable. I don't mean self-criticism where you feel deep sorrow, self-blame, guilt, or animosity. After all, it's best to look forward and not backward. I'm talking about the self-criticism that helps you to grow.

For instance, consider the following scenario: "I didn't get an A on the exam, and I thought I studied hard." Instead of feeling bad about yourself, it's best to say, "I got a B, so yes, my studying process would *benefit* from some *fine-tuning*. I *love* reading, so I'll *pick up* a book or *search* the internet for study habits. I'll *revisit* the exam and *figure out* how to *solve* these questions. I'll *find* the *correct answers* through textbooks, my TA, and a Udemy course."

Notice that the solutions were framed in the positive and didn't focus on weaknesses. For instance, the scenario didn't express, "I *failed* to get an A, so I'll see where I went *wrong* and what I'm *struggling* with." Notice how the prior positive framing gave you energy, whereas this negative framing did the opposite? Try reframing and journaling all self-criticisms so that they are strictly positive.

Avoid a wandering mind.

I had severe anxiety with a tinge of obsessive control disorder (OCD). I no longer experience this, but I've realized part of my problem was letting my mind wander way too much. While this may not be clinically provable, a wandering mind does not jive with high performance. I've also learned that training the mind not to wander helps curtail stress-inducing thoughts. And the more we focus our thoughts on positivity, the less stressed we feel.

Take breaks that immediately advance your goal.

Breaks where you drift are not optimal. That's because a drifting mind can lead to stressful thoughts. On the flip side, breaks where you schedule high-valued, enjoyable activities can

recharge you. The best breaks also advance your performance goals. For instance, lying down briefly while visualizing step-by-step what you will do for the next several hours is a highly productive break.

Learn how to minimize stress in relationships.

I've found the first step to reducing relationship stress is never arguing with your significant other. Also, never criticize, complain, or confront your true love. By choosing nonaggression, life becomes more harmonious. And if you, like me years ago, have stress so severe you can't work, take heart. Your day to shine is just a strategy away.



Treating Substance Use Disorder

Decriminalizing the Small Possession of Hard Drugs

Alek Golijanin



On January 31, 2023, adults 18 years and older who live in British Columbia will no longer be arrested or charged for possessing small amounts of drugs—as long as it is less than 2.5 grams. The provincial government of British Columbia decided to take a big step forward in changing the context around how we interact with individuals that are trying to break free from the chains of addiction.

Understanding Substance Use Disorder

Before we understand what addiction is, it is important to start off by identifying what it is not. A powerful description I remember coming across explained that addiction was not a moral failing, a choice, or a character flaw. It was not the result of a lack of will power.

Addiction is an illness commonly referred to as a substance use disorder. It should not be seen as acute illness but rather a chronic disease that impacts the brain.

Although a long-term battle with substance use can

result in physical changes in brain composition along with other serious health complications, it is curable.

A 2012 Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey estimated that around 20% of Canada's population met the criteria for a substance use disorder. That means one in every five people we come across are likely to be struggling with substance use, and we have a population of almost 40 million. Once a person is addicted, that is, have a substance use disorder, they are not using substances to feel good but rather to feel 'normal'. Think about that for a second, and the fact that one in five Canadians are likely to be struggling with substance use.

Breaking the Chains of Addiction

The approach to helping a person break the chains of addiction often involves understanding their brain chemistry and lived experiences. It is said that most people who begin to experiment with substances and develop addiction are looking to heal. The biggest challenge in beginning the road to recovery is that people tend to struggle to come to terms that they have an addiction.

An addicted brain looks different under brain imaging scans, and those differences in the brain bring about behavioral changes that are mainly compulsive and destructive. When addiction fully takes over a person, their entire life begins to revolve around their cravings for substances and avoiding the withdrawal from not having any. It takes a lot more than will power to overcome the chemical brain changes brought about by substance use. That recovery process includes being provided prescribed medications and slowly lowering dosage levels, but safe sites are a necessary component to increase the odds of full recovery.

Getting the Rest of Canada to Buy In

Some people argue that the way to deal with substance abuse is deterrence—make the punishments severe enough that people will fear the consequences enough to stop. But, to date, what positive changes have harsh consequences, punishments and shame had on a person's addiction? I applaud British Columbia for deciding to decriminalize the small possession of hard drugs. By changing the context in which we react to people that are engaging in the use of hard drugs and likely struggling with other health problems, we create a user-friendly environment where health supports are accessible and plentiful.

Addiction has always been an illness, even during the times that society was most hostile to the thought of it being anything other than a sign of a weak person. A person might make the decision to use a substance for the first time, but nobody wants for their life to spiral out of control.

If you are like me and you believe that people across all lines of difference deserve to be treated with dignity and have a chance to reach their full potential, supporting changes that have the potential to help people recover and live a life of purpose is a no-brainer. We never leave people behind or give up on them especially when they have a fighting chance, and people in Canada always have a fighting chance.

Alek Golijanin is an AU alum who considers himself a gentleman first, a scholar second, and a combat sports fanatic third. In that order.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: AWSN Scholarship

Sponsored by: AWSN

Deadline: June 30, 2022

Potential payout: \$3000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must reside in Alberta, and be attending an Alberta-based institution continuing their full-time undergrad studies, entering the third year of a STEM program.

What's required: An online application form including contact, personal, and academic info; a recent transcript; one referral letter; and three short essays on specified topics.

Tips: Read the [Program Guide](#) for full details of the scholarship and application process.

Where to get info: www.awsn.org/awsn-scholarship



Managing Insomnia 101

Xine Wang



Ever feel tired but you just can't sleep? Insomnia hits everyone differently. For some, despite being at your most mentally fatigued state, sleep can be a challenge. I've experienced this for the last five years. Recently it seems to have worsened—perhaps due to day-to-day stress or the commitment of adulting becoming overwhelming. In my teens, it was almost always due to my night owl habits of “just another 5 minutes” scrolling through social media or watching a Youtube video, but now the chronic insomnia hits different.

Exercise

Exercising seems to be the solution to many things nowadays. It's been cited to improve mood, depression, bone density, and reduce joint problems. It's also been said to help with sleep. Exercise is known for releasing hormones such as endorphins, and epinephrine that improves circulation, digestion, and other reasons that

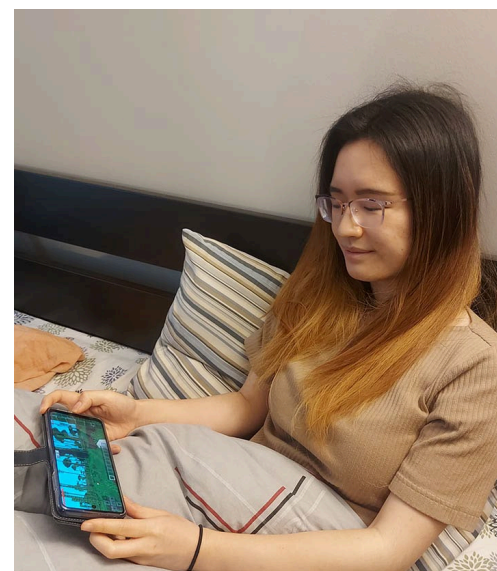
might be impacting your sleep. For myself, bloating and intolerance to certain foods can keep me up at night. Exercise seems to help.

Minimize Screen Time

Screen time is a culprit due to the blue light that emits from our LED or OLED screens. Blue light is said to disrupt our circadian rhythm (the internal biological clock that regulates sleep-wake cycles). I typically leave my phone in an area where I cannot reach. In the morning when my alarm from my phone rings, it also reduces my ability to hit the snooze button.

Ensure area you sleep in is only for sleep

Besides sleep and sex, the bedroom should not be associated with study or work. I had a bad habit of studying on a laptop stand while in the bedroom and that created an environment where I would take the stressors from studying into bed and create anxiety before going to bed. Prime your brain into thinking that the area is sacred and only for resting. Even if you're not sleeping well, keeping this area restricted to sleep and sex will be a key first step. Ensure the bedroom is dark and at the optimal temperature for sleep.



Watch what you eat before bed

This may sound like an adage from your parents. Eat early to avoid indigestion seems like a no brainer. However, after dinner many people will have snacks and more snacks. Especially in light of the recent Stanley Cup Finals, just grabbing a beer with fries and wings is commonplace. But when the games ended at 11 pm on some days, I ended up staying up until 2 am digesting my poor choices of fried foods earlier that night. If you're really craving an evening snack, a light snack of fruits and vegetable dip might be a better idea than foods heavy in grease.



Contact a sleep specialist

When the insomnia becomes an unbearable part of your day and you're waking up like a zombie that can't focus on your schoolwork or work duties, then contacting your family physician might be a good idea. Certain clinics have a focus on sleep and have experience with managing insomnia. They might help you identify our root cause of insomnia. Moreover, it can help you have better insight into your sleep patterns that would be beneficial for the rest of your life.

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



Fly on the Wall

Jason Sullivan

Sanctions and Sanctioning Our Inner Library Research Superhero



During library research my friend and I would exclaim, "To the microfiche!" Visions of ourselves as superheroes climbing into their technology, our voices louder than the ex-military librarian preferred, we'd trundle to the back of the room and rifle through metal filing cabinets full of translucent blue plastic pages. The topic that day, and many others, was the fabled railroad that ostensibly forged Canadian unity. A blasé topic, owing to it's repetition every semester but, buoyed by exuberance that sometimes only a pop culture reference can provide, we'd delve into the fantasy realm of history.

The machine itself was a big metal lug; we'd feed microfiche sheets into one end where they were illuminated from below by a light. Then we

manually scrolled the plastic past the light using a dial I much later associated with the arm on a casino's one-armed bandit. Placing our heads over the lighted area we'd read the manuscripts and news reports from days of yore. Sometimes nuggets of information would emerge. Over a quarter century later I don't recall exactly what we discovered on that day but an example from the period was of prairie farmers buying the rights to short tracks of train line and starting their own railway. What fun, almost like a comic book, to own your own railway!

"He estimates that the same 50 miles of track his co-op now operates would have cost Canadian Pacific and Canadian National \$1 million (Canadian; US\$765,500) annually. His own costs? About \$500,000.

There are eight Canadian short lines, compared with 500 in the United States ... The majority of funds used by the short-line railroads as well as the larger ones come from the federal government. Cutting the subsidy might pinch the big railroads, but would likely shutdown the highly subsidized Southern Railways" (Clayton, online).

A common source for material was the Christian science monitor; in our internet days at AU we can still locate tidbits and morsels for our course material from their online site. While our sources were as timeless as the literally plastic medium of the microfiche sheets, and seemed

pretty cut and dried and *just the facts* ma'am, the internet today is famously a morass of possibilities and contradictions.

Sanctions, Tariffs, History Textbooks Not So Out of Date

Another key high school social studies topic, the use of tariffs and sanctions in trade wars and political snafus, is to this day familiar to students young and old. For instance, Yahoo News notes that recent punitive economic action against Russia only briefly staggered their currency, the *ruble*.

“The actions are largely toothless if foreigners keep guzzling Russian oil and natural gas—supporting the ruble by stocking Putin’s coffers. Even as Russia remains mostly cut off otherwise from the global economy, Bloomberg Economics expects the country will earn nearly \$321 billion from energy exports this year, up more than a third from 2021...this gives Russia a current-account surplus—economics jargon for exporting more than you import, which tends to lift a country’s currency—and undermines the attempt to pummel Russia with sanctions” (Maki, online).

Basically, if you have something the world wants to buy, neither hell nor war nor high water will diminish the value of your goods. It’s a bit like being an adult student and majoring in business; if we get our diploma we’ll get a serviceable job if not the fulfillment of a happy life. One former Wall Street Journal claims that the decline of globalization and access to cheap labour in impoverished regions from recent increases in tariffs and sanctions in impoverished regions can only benefit workers in our countries.

“Russia is likely to demand ruble payments not only for natural gas sent to Europe but also for oil and food commodities, such as wheat and corn. This will increase global demand for the ruble. In fact, it will strengthen both the hands of Russian financial institutions and, ultimately, Putin’s government. Those buying commodities in rubles will have to turn to Russian banks for financing (as Russian bank loans are the source of rubles) and will seek to export more to Russia to obtain rubles. This will create an alternative to the eurodollar system for countries that either must be—or decide to be—closer to Russia and away from what we’re calling the West again” (Carney, online).

History proceeds apace, although the microfiche technique hasn’t really changed and a quick search reveals that many university libraries still have and use their microfiche. Knowledge retrieval is still about going to a source and thumbing through options. Likewise, the world is at our fingertips as distance students. And fortunately, although harmed by assorted forms of *deplatforming* by Big Tech, the internet still provides a broader base of information and interpretation than the microfiche ever did. But if history goes off the rails we may wish we had access to the real McCoy, those raw tangible microfiche sheets along, of course, with actual paper books.

There’s no substitute for the genuine article in hand, as medieval scholars discovered when works by Aristotle and others were finally available again thanks to the Islamic world preserving them (Wichmann, online). However, as we also learned in the 9th Grade as minnow-minded pupils, the conditions for big wars were partly forged by increased nationalist competition for resources. But hasn’t the world always been that way? Just as our high school textbooks in the 90s asserted, economic conflict forces countries to adapt and hopefully not end up in World War. When global trade becomes dicey, import substitution, say where some brie is made in Canada and would suffice as a lesser but fine cheese, creates new domestic markets. Our country already famously defends dairy products from American intrusion to such an extent that it’s rare to see a US milk product anywhere but on the shelves of our good friends, the big box stores.

We're All Super and Heroic at AU

Be it internet search engines, or manual microfiche adventures, history and knowledge have changed far less than we might imagine. Wisdom and learning come down to reading and researching and demonstrating our knowledge by writing about it. There's never been a shortcut to good study habits and Athabasca is renowned for enabling us to bring an excellent university education home with us while providing the means to achieve unique skills of time management and personal motivation. Class is never quite done, at AU, and as stressful as that can be it also means that the wonderful AU library is always open. Check it out, with your superhero wagon and cloak in tow!

References

- Carney, C. (2022). 'The Rumble and the Ruble – How the West's Sanctions on Russia Strengthen the Ruble and Threaten Globalization'. *C-vine.com*. Retrieved from <https://c-vine.com/blog/tag/russia-sanctions/> See also: <https://www.wsj.com/news/author/john-carney?page=2>
- Clayton, M. (1994). 'Canada's Short-Line Rails Fight For Survival'. *The Christian Science Monitor*. Retrieved from <https://www.csmonitor.com/1994/0721/21081.html>
- Maki, S. (2022). 'Mocked as 'Rubble' by Biden, Russia's Ruble Roars Back'. *Yahoo News*. Retrieved from <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/mockied-rubble-biden-russia-ruble-193615066.html>
- Wichmann, A. (2021). 'How Scholars of the Islamic Golden Age Saved Ancient Greek Knowledge'. *GreekReporter.com*. Retrieved from <https://greekreporter.com/2021/09/03/how-scholars-islamic-golden-age-saved-ancient-greek-knowledge/>

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.



Beyond Literary Landscapes Leo Tolstoy

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 novels of Leo Tolstoy, a reminder of some of the author's classics, and as an inspiration for further reading.

Born August 28, 1828 in Yasnaya Polyana, in the Russian Empire, Tolstoy was a Russian realistic fiction author. Realistic fiction can be defined as

a “genre consisting of stories that could have actually occurred to people ... in a believable setting.” In particular, it “resemble[s] real life, and fictional characters within these stories react similarly to real people.” Other examples of realistic fiction include Ivan Turgenev’s *Fathers and Sons*.

Authors similar to Tolstoy include 19-century Russian authors covered in a previous column, such as Fyodor Dostoevsky, author of *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov* and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, author of *Gulag Archipelago* and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Readers may also enjoy the works of Anton Chekov and Alexander Pushkin.

What

Some well-known Tolstoy novels include *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*.

Avid readers may recognize the now-famous quote, ““All happy families resemble each other; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way,” from Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*.

Other popular works include the novellas, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* and *The Kreutzer Sonata*. Readers may also be interested in the novel *Resurrection*, Tolstoy’s last.

Where

Many of these novels and novellas are set throughout the Russian Empire, including St. Petersburg.

When

These works often take place during the 19th century.

Why

The works of Tolstoy may be of interest to learners who would like to consider philosophical topics, such as ethics and existentialism, in addition to religious thoughts and ideas, such as redemption and conscience. In addition, Tolstoy’s works may be of interest for students who would like to learn more about Russian history.

How

AU’s wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to Leo Tolstoy 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 HIST 327: Imperial Russia, a senior-level, three-credit course, which “explores violence, coercion, religion, gender, ethnicity, and identity as means of expanding, unifying, and modernizing the Russian empire.” The course also “looks in detail at the reigns and accomplishments of the most important Romanovs, ranging from Peter I the Great to Nicholas II.” Topics, include “Patriarchy in Practice: The Russian Empire Through a Gendered Lens,” “Patriarchy in Practice: The Russian Empire Through a Gendered Lens,” and “Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity Building in the Age of Nationalism,” among others. (No prerequisites are needed to enroll in this course.)

In addition, students may also be interested in PHIL 231: Introduction to Philosophy: West and East, a junior-level, three-credit course, which “introduces students to philosophical debate over some of the most fundamental questions humanity has encountered and continues to encounter.” (No prerequisites are required.) Happy reading!

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



Music Review

Jessica Young

The Road to Hell is Paved with Good Intentions



Artist: These Fast Times

Song: The Road to Hell is Paved with Good Intentions

Montreal's punk rock band, These Fast Times, have released their EP, *The Road to Hell is Paved with Good Intentions*—tackling issues such as “substance abuse, mental illness, relationships and hard life choices.” The album is available anywhere you get your music.

These Fast Times describes themselves as “formed from the ashes of multiple bad decisions, misspent youth and a unified-need to cause a major ruckus at any given time.” The band consists of Jeffrey Vuorela on vocals and guitar, Jason Bellefontaine on bass and vocals, Thomas Kolofsky as lead guitar, and Ryan Kennedy on drums.

The Road to Hell is Paved with Good Intentions has six tracks: White Lies; Sweaty Eyes; Empty Cup; Little Red Tent; Wanted Dead; and The Disconnect. The songs “Empty Cup” and “The Disconnect” have music videos on YouTube.

These Fast Times reminds me of 90's punk bands like Blink-182, Green Day, and Sum 41. The first track on the album, “White Lies” is reminiscent of Rise Against or A Day To Remember. It's short, clocking in at only 1:47, but it's my favourite song on the album—it's acoustic, heartfelt, and sneaks in several references to the rest of the album. The next song, “Sweaty Eyes” kicks off the fast-paced punk vibe of the rest of the album. “Empty Cup” reminds me of my favourite Blink-182 song, “Adam's Song.” It focuses on the theme of mental health, with lyrics like “self sabotage I think I deserve/When there's no help down the line/Clinging to what makes me feel fine/And now this empty cup/Can't fill me up.” A sad, but necessary song, I think it's something that many listeners will be able to relate to.

The music video for “The Disconnect” features the band driving in a minivan—Carpool Karaoke style—acting silly, singing, and playing their instruments. This is cut with close-ups of each band member using various props in what appears to be a dark basement. I love this music video. It's fun, high-energy, and shows that These Fast Times has a sense of humour. I love when punk or heavy metal bands don't take themselves too seriously—no need to be “hardcore” all the time! The music video for “Empty Cup” is certainly more serious. The band keeps it simple and really showcases their music with this one, featuring only continuous footage of the band playing in a blue-lit room.

My only (very small) complaint about the album is that the lyrics of the songs aren't posted under the YouTube videos, however they are available when I streamed via Apple Music.

Overall, I really enjoyed *The Road to Hell is Paved with Good Intentions*.

Check out These Fast Times on [their website](#), [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.



How to Live the Dream

Marie Well



Living the dream” isn’t sipping Pina Coladas on a Mexican beach. It isn’t sleeping until noon and lying on the hammock with a good mystery novel. It isn’t working a four-hour workweek where the rest of the time is spent window shopping and gabbing in cafes.

That’s not truly living, at least, not in my mind.

I believe genuinely living is getting up early and training in the gym. It’s working hard each day while intending to work even harder the next day. It’s getting at least 1% better each day at everything you do, so the cumulative effects over time are magnificent. Finally, it’s using your mind more and more actively throughout the day so that you maximize every precious minute of performance.

Now, that is truly living.

Here’s how you can live the dream, in my view:

Focus exclusively on your strengths.

In last week’s article, I said to focus solely on your strengths. But I also said that if you keep tripping at the fifty-yard line, you’ll need to fix what went wrong. But I was wrong. The aim is not to dwell on why you may have tripped. Instead, the aim is to assess and build on your strengths, which serve as workarounds to your weaknesses.

Use visualization.

In downtime, avoid thinking about issues or complaints. Instead, picture yourself as if you’re in a movie theatre, watching yourself doing the day’s tasks with increasingly high proficiency. Throw in visuals of your glory moments, too. But to get to those glory moments, the daily tasks are vital. The more you visualize, the more your mind translates those visualizations into long-term success.

Use positive self-talk.

A friend and former colleague often says, “Whatever happens, I always find a way to make it work.” Now, that’s positive self-talk. Positive self-talk can guide you to success even in your darkest moments. Positive self-talk is never airy-fairy. On the contrary, it has merits, such as health benefits, including joy and stress reduction. So, whenever you have a stressful thought, flip it to a positive. It’s part of training your mind. If you can maintain a constant state of positivity, you can accomplish anything, in my view.

Firmly choose highly disciplined thoughts and actions.

Make strong, committed decisions throughout the day. For instance, perhaps you like to sleep in. If you’re in bed and the alarm goes off, then say something strong like, “I’m getting up straight-away to drink a healthy shake, make the bed, do the laundry, groom myself, and get to work.” But say it firmly and follow through. Or, if you are procrastinating with studying, say,

"I'm going to crack open my math text and start solving problems." But say it with conviction and fire. Make that conviction and fire your motivator throughout the day.

Keep your energy high.

With positive self-talk, healthy choices, a healthy diet, the right balance of sleep, and a fitness regime, you can maintain high stamina throughout the day. Then, draw on this stamina to push yourself to even better performance levels.

In my opinion, living the dream is not a cruise to Aruba or a ticket to the theatre. Instead, living the dream is the "process" of getting better, smarter, kinder, more productive, and more successful—every day. After all, you are built for high performance!



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

AU's Convocation 2022 is coming up June 17, and that makes us all nostalgic for past convocations and graduates.

What was it like 20 years ago? Then-AUSU council president Debbie Jabbour shares her experience of attending AU's 2002 convocation ceremony. "We started the day off with a pancake breakfast in the parking lot, sponsored by AUSU." From My Perspective – Convocation 2002, June 12, 2002.

Putting the degree to work. Debbie Jabbour reflects on her recently-acquired degree, further education, and future earnings potential. "While statistics certainly don't tell the whole story and are open to wide interpretation, I did find it somewhat discouraging to note that none of the high-earning occupations were in Arts, since this is the degree I now possess!" From My Perspective – Graduation – What Comes Next?, July 9, 2003.

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

Text Books—As In Paper A student seeks if there's a way to get actual textbooks for AU courses, and is pointed to the Athabasca University Textbook Buy/Sell Facebook group, as well as it being noted that you can rent textbooks from Amazon.

Reddit

Course Tips A number of people are looking for course tips, and notably in Psych 289/290 there was some concern about the research participation requirements. Respondents note it's just a short survey and very easy to do.

Twitter

@AUSStudentUnion tweets: We are thrilled to announce that we are now accepting applications for two student bursaries of \$1000 each, open to any 2STNBGN undergraduate student at AU! Information on these one-time bursaries and the application process can be found here <https://ausu.org/services/2slgbtqia/...>



An Anxious Ask

Dear Barb:

Hi, I read your column every week and finally decided I should write in. It can't hurt, right?

I am writing about my anxiety. I have suffered from anxiety for the last 3 years. When the symptoms first surfaced I thought there was something seriously wrong with me, like a brain tumor or a heart condition. I went through all kinds of tests and the diagnosis ended up being anxiety attacks. It was difficult for me to accept the fact that I have a mental illness.

When I finally told my family, they did not believe me. They accused me of always being dramatic and wanting attention. It hurt me very much that they did not believe me. As a result, I stopped seeing them and now my anxiety attacks are getting worse. I am at a loss for what to do. Should I continue to see them and have to deal with their negative remarks, or should I stay away from them even though my anxiety is worse? I need some direction. Thanks, Ken.

Hi Ken:

Good to hear from you. Anxiety is at an all-time high right now, with Covid, the war in Ukraine, and rocketing prices for food, gas, housing etc. You are not alone, many people are experiencing

high stress levels, which result in mental disorders such as anxiety and depression. We all like to think we are strong and can power through anything, but that is not always the case.

Anxiety disorder is described by The Mayo Clinic, which says "Experiencing a lot of stress over a long period can lead to an anxiety disorder. Environmental factors: Experiencing a trauma might trigger an anxiety disorder, especially in someone who has inherited a higher risk to start. Heredity: Anxiety disorders tend to run in families."

As hard as it may be you need to ignore your families' comments. I assume you have been diagnosed by a reputable doctor; therefore, it is important to follow his or her instructions. However, I feel that you should make every attempt to remain in contact with your family members, but if they flatly refuse to believe that you have anxiety, then it may be a good idea to limit your contact with them. Be honest with them and explain that if they choose not to believe your illness is real, then you will have to limit your time with them because it negatively impacts your mental health. Continue to reach out for support from other's who understand what you are going through. Join a support group, where you will receive the encouragement and understanding that you need. Follow your doctor's advice and you will get through this. Thank you for writing Ken.

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
Crazy Sauce

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



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](#).



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!



CLASSIFIEDS

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

THE VOICE

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

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

Regular Columnists Barb Godin, Barbara Lehtiniemi, Corey Wren
Jason Sullivan, Wanda Waterman, 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.

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

© 2022 by *The Voice Magazine*

ISSN 2561-3634