



THE VOICE

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Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

Stare Decisis

Staring Down Our Past

At the Crossroads

Mental Health & Religion



Plus:

Decorating Your Home on a Budget

Women's Work

and much more!

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

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

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

Editorial

Canada Day 2022

Karl Low



Needless to say, I have yet to feel like celebrating, but oddly, even ignoring recent personal events, I don't think this would have been a Canada Day I felt like celebrating. In many ways, it feels like a good portion of my country has been co-opted by those who distrust what little science they understand, revel in conspiracy, and, in general, have decided to place themselves as more important than their neighbours, all while claiming they're attempting to do this for the country.

It feels to me as if our flag has been co-opted. I see a pick-up truck drive by me now with a large Canadian flag affixed to the rear window, and my first reaction is not one of camaraderie, but rather to think, "oh look, selfish prick."

And that's not fair. It's not fair to them, it's not fair to me, and it's not fair to our country. But whether it's fair or not, the feeling exists, and I expect I'm not the only one. But I think we can take it back. We can take it back by bringing it to corporate events, like Stampede, that have no political overtones or undertones—where

it's just used in celebration, and by making sure to bring it to events that are fully inclusive and not filled with vitriol toward others, even if those others are politicians.

On that front, I read much talk about Prime Minister Trudeau being one of the most divisive prime ministers Canada's ever seen, but none who claim so ever seem to be able to provide factual examples of what, exactly, he's done that's been so divisive, aside from not being a conservative politician, that is. Some attempt to claim the health mandates passed down are divisive, but aside from those relating to international travel and federal employment they've been provincial mandates—certainly the most visible of those, something that could lead to division, masking, hasn't been a federal requirement of the general public at all.

Some claim that by requiring proof of vaccination for certain parts of federal employment, he's setting up a two-tier citizenship. But I'm a citizen who's not employed by the federal government at all. My vaccination status is completely irrelevant, so no, there's no second tier of citizen being made. They then go on to claim that it's a charter infringement. It isn't. No more than firefighters being required to have their tetanus shots up to date to be employed with the fire department.

Some attempt to argue the health benefits and risks of the vaccines, but that argument requires expert knowledge of the subject and when it is pointed out that the vast majority of experts have noted both the safety and efficacy of the vaccines in general you come to the crux. They don't trust them. They've found their own sources on social media, a CDC letter which has a single line they misinterpret as a key to a grand conspiracy of health organizations, a piece of bad science that a newspaper picked up on and didn't adequately explain the issues with, or worse, that an extremist rag that exists only to drive people to remain on its site by motivating anger and fear so that they can profit from advertising views, willingly misrepresents as the "real" science that all the "woke" people don't want you to see. Put all of this together, and I don't know if Canada day is something I really feel like celebrating right now.

All of this ties into one of our feature articles this week, so after you've finished getting to know Anne-Marie Collins in our most recent student interview, check out Alek Golijanin's article about the cross-roads of health and religion. And of course, on top of this all is the recent decision in the US regarding abortion rights. The Fly on the Wall has his take on this this week, and looks at how the idea of changes in precedent might relate to an AU education.

Plus events, scholarships, advice, décor tips, recipes, reviews, and more!

Enjoy the read!

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

MINDS WE MEET



Who *The Voice Magazine* recently had the chance to chat with Anne-Marie Collins (she/her) living in Bonnyville, Alberta, “situated on Treaty 6 land that is steeped in rich Indigenous history and is the traditional homeland and home to First Nations and Métis people today,” and is enrolled in the Post-Diploma Bachelor of Commerce: Human Resource Management. Once she completes this degree, her “goal is to then work towards becoming Chartered in Human Resources with [Chartered Professionals in Human Resources] CPHR Alberta.”

She continued, “The plan is to stay in Human Resources, though, ultimately, I hope this education helps me work towards my goal of becoming a Chief Executive Officer or Executive Director one day. I picked this path because I want to make a positive difference/change in the workplace one day.”

On a more personal note, Anne-Marie was “born and raised north of Fort Kent, AB, a small hamlet and surrounding area located within the Municipal District of Bonnyville No. 87.” She now resides in Bonnyville, AB where she works full time as a Human Resources Assistant/Payroll Clerk for a not-for-profit organization

called Dove Centre.

When she is not studying, Anne-Marie keeps busy. “When I am not hiding behind a screen writing yet another paper, you can find me hanging with my cats, at the local spin studio, hanging at my parent’s farm, and spending time with friends and travelling to Southern Alberta to visit my sister and travel around learning about the history of our province. (I’m a history buff and truly believe our province has so much history and culture to be shared to across generations),” she stated.

She also enjoys reading, and “as a lover of history...read[s] many historical fiction novels;” she is “currently reading *The Alice Network* by Kate Quinn.” Although she does not watch much television, she is “currently finishing up *Arrow* and ... recently started watching *The Queen’s Gambit*.”

When asked who in her life has had the greatest influence on her desire to learn, Anne-Marie admitted that this was “a tough question,” explaining “I can’t dial it down to one specific person, but I can say that I am forever grateful to my parents who continue to push me and support me to complete my education.” She also mentioned one manager during her time as a summer student “who gave [her] some wise words of advice that said, ‘[T]he day you can come to work and enjoy what you’re doing, is the day you have retired.’” She continued, “I know it sounds

crazy, it's been about 10 years since I was told that and I believe it's my drive to continue to learn and find my passion."

Anne-Marie is a "firm believer in online learning." She explained, "I have been studying online since 2015, and I do believe it is the future of our education. Although at times I feel like I miss out on the 'university' experience, online learning has allowed me to explore many new experiences, as well as continue ... working."

Despite this enthusiasm, like many students, Anne-Marie has wavered about continuing her schooling. She stated that it occurred when she "began the post diploma route of this degree at the beginning of 2021." She continued, "I was in two courses. Between the two courses, I had seven papers to write, and although I was very motivated to do this degree, I knew this was the end for me and I was very much ready to give up. Every time I feel ready to give up, I remind myself that I am so close to the end!"

As for communication with her course tutors? "If we're being honest here, I don't normally use the tutors. I wouldn't be surprised if they wondered who I was because I don't contact anyone. Though the communications I have had have been great. Some courses I have done have had tutors who were lawyers and because of what I am studying I felt very connected to them and confident that I would do well in the courses I was taking given their professional background."

If she were the new president of AU, she "probably would focus on making post-secondary learning accessible and affordable for all people."

Her proudest moment in life has been when she "decided to do a spur of the moment 10km run in the mountains." She explained, "I had four months to prepare and build my running skills (I never did any form of running before this), and when I did the run I wanted to give up and was completely regretting the fact I did it. When I reached the final km I was so proud of the fact that I did something I didn't think I could do."

As a final note, Anne-Marie added, "Overall I am grateful that I have been able to complete my career with Athabasca U through online learning. It has shown me what my strong suits are in learning. Although I am learning online, I feel I have had a great student experience with Athabasca, the tutors have been very insightful and helpful in the courses I have taken and I look forward to being able to finish the primary focus of my education with Athabasca! Also never forget that you are never too old to learn!" Best of luck Anne-Marie!



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

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



At the Crossroads Between Mental Health & Religion

Alek Golijanin



There has never been a better time to be alive than now. Thanks to technology and innovation, we are on pace to cure many of the diseases that have long plagued mankind, many barriers to the global economy have been practically eliminated and the standard of living is higher than it has ever been. And yet, we could also say that these might also be some of the most uncertain times too.

In theory, with technology and innovation making life easier and simpler, life should be burden-free and worry-free. But in reality, it is the opposite. The main illnesses that plague today's people have to do with the mind. Although science has provided us with explanations as to what causes them, there are still some people whose belief systems are rooted in faith and who disregard science.

Throughout human history, the world's leading religions have had zealots try to spread their teachings—even going as far as waging wars and

labeling non-conforming ideas as heresy. While it is hard to compare today's standard of thinking with the thinking from various points throughout history, we can make sense of these time periods and get an idea as to why people acted the way they did.

Knowledge, after all, is power and the historical societies that have occupied earth did so without access to a modern education. But that excuse runs hollow today, and ancient theories should no longer be deemed tolerable when it comes to spinning health situations as anything but science-based outcomes.

Not that long ago a member of my ethnic community followed through with self-harming themselves after deciding that life was just too unbearable for them. It is fair to say that they had a troubled childhood that was connected to the war experience and much more. Growing up in Canada is supposed to change everything; it is our golden ticket in life. But each person is different. The path of life is long and curvy, and it can be difficult to trek without healthy support systems.

When I found out this person would not be eligible to have traditional funeral arrangements, which would typically include a memorial ceremony at our ethnic centre, I was pissed. Not only were they ineligible for traditional funeral arrangements but religious leaders also refused to send out a basic email to notify our ethnic community about the tragic loss of life. The excuse was that ancient text stated that people who followed through with self-harming themselves were ineligible for ethno-religious customs. Basically, religious leaders still uphold the belief that someone who follows through with self-harming themselves, these people are to be seen as an abomination and not as victims of a mental health condition. This approach to disregarding people who were living with mental health conditions and who subsequently followed through with self-harm is consistent among many of the world's leading religions.

How is it that we still tolerate this ridiculousness even though science has discredited ancient texts on the belief that individuals or families can be cursed or possessed by explaining these mental

or physical health situations for what they are? Some families have genetic predispositions to certain health conditions, and, when combined with other factors, may result to a baby being born with Down Syndrome, a cleft palate, or other medical conditions. Additionally, if a person develops Alzheimer's, dementia, or schizophrenia, these are conditions which are also the results of complex health factors. None of it has to do with being cursed or possessed, despite what the ancients believed.

At this point we can say that mental health and religion are at a crossroads. Somehow, I am left feeling that there is something inherently wrong with this outcome, not just within my own ethnic community but for members of other ethnic groups who have been admonished themselves. There is nothing any "believer" can tell me that would convince me that any person whose life comes to an end as a result of self-harm that their life was worthless. There is nothing any "believer" can tell me that would convince me that any person born with a physical disability that their life holds less value. Absolutely nothing.

There is a famous quote that talks about how perspective is everything in life, and a simpler way to think about it is that everyone has their own unique lens – a unique perspective on life. The lens from which I operate under is one where I see the future as having the potential to be better than the past, where every single person's life has meaning and purpose, while being in a constant pursuit to unlock my full potential. But not everyone operates under that lens, and for those living life through a tinted lens, life gets dark. So, if you have a little extra light, try to share it with others who are running on a glimmer of light – a glimmer of hope. Remember, we never give up on people and we never leave anyone behind.

If there ever comes a time when someone tries convincing you to think less than of any person or group, especially if it is rooted in ancient theory, bring them back to the future and introduce them to science.

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



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

Canada-Day weekend is, for some, the beginning of camping season. Our writers past have had much to say about this quintessentially Canadian activity.

A place to pitch your tent. Experienced camper Heather Fraser provides a rundown of her favourite central-Canada campgrounds. "On the other end of the spectrum from most campgrounds, it [Lilac Resort, MB] has everything from waterslides to concerts, mini golf to paddle boats, and much, much

more. If you've never camped, or the lake scares you, this would be a good place to start." The Learning Curve – Favourite Campgrounds, July 4, 2008.

Backpack campers. Deanna Roney combines hiking and camping for maximum wilderness immersion. "We shook the dew off our tents, packed them snugly into our packs, strapped on our boots, and hefted the bag containing our essentials for survival onto our shoulders." Wilderness Camping, July 1, 2016.

Fly on the Wall

Stare Decisis and Staring Down Our Past

Jason Sullivan



Looking to the Future at AU while Putting Cultural Conceptions in Perspective

Staring down our own spotty academic past, such as when life that got in the way of our best intentions to complete our degree in a brick-and-mortar setting, it's easy to see how gratifying our return to the role of avid learner has been. If we'd not adjusted our reality to redress our priorities many at AU never would have enrolled in that first course. So when gazing at our personal past we might shout *what are you staring at* when applying that core conception of *legalese* called *stare decisis*. The weight of past rulings and decisions, though important, are not all that goes into our decision making in our future. Were that so we'd have left our

moribund academic career in the by-gones-be-by-gones category.

Topically, the recent Supreme Court ruling that overturned the half-century ago *Roe v. Wade* decision justifies itself with the phrase. "A proper application of *stare decisis*, however, requires an assessment of the strength of the grounds" of the original conclusion." (1) Whatever our opinion on *that* topic, the consequences of which are often rather dire for the maintenance of diplomatic exchanges with those with whom we share a planet, the reality for our AU career is that we can learn to adjust our definitions of any situation as our life evolves. Anything less would leave us paralyzed by our past.

Few of us at AU would ever become adult students had we trusted our past shortcomings in the academic realm of schooling to be our guide. Our inner Jiminy Cricket conscience has guided us back to the righteousness of self-improvement at AU precisely because we did not trust our past experiences alone. Learned from them, yes, but didn't take them as set in stone. Evolution is, after all, core to personal learning as well as to cultural, political, and jurisdictional life. To be still is to be immobile and lacking in innovation; likewise the Latin term *stare decisis* refers to foundational stones that are useful up to and until a river snakes away from a bridge or an oxbow washes out as the socio-geological sands of time unfold.

Unlike in the rat race of the real world, the realm of ideas and actions at some level is tethered to the pole star of ethics. Freedom to change our priorities and liberate our inborn capacities for academic excellence is a personal matter, to be sure, yet one tied to our circumstances. A half century ago there wasn't even a whiff of an internet and most rural students or college cast-offs (like this *Fly on the Wall*) had little recourse to return to their studies. Athabasca University was not even in existence in its early cassette-tapes-by-mail iteration at the time of *Roe v. Wade* just as countless forms of birth control, erectile improvement, and pregnancy cessation pharmaceuticals were undreamed of and/or not available on the market. Correspondingly, there are nowadays countless ways to upgrade our educational pedigree when we cease to seek refuge in our past. Even the simplest things like a computer have long ago replaced the typewriter, it's like how condoms were once made of lamb's skin and now are made of disposable petroleum product.

Definitions change, as do priorities and context; our freedom to study by distance is augmented by the opportunities of our time. The Supreme Court ruling notes the subjective nature of liberty

and how it depends on context: “The term ‘liberty’ alone provides little guidance...In interpreting what is meant by ‘liberty,’ the Court must guard against the natural human tendency to confuse what the Fourteenth Amendment protects with the Court’s own ardent views about the liberty that Americans should enjoy” (3). Normally, an obvious conclusion would be that each of us can do as we feel but, of course, culture comes into the picture and where offspring are concerned it takes two to tango (not to mention relatives with a vested interest in their progeny). Likewise, to embark on an income-free adventure into adult education likely involves consultation with others in our lives. Choices about one’s body are inherently personal yet their consequences are invariably social. Yet in academic terms, there’s no doubt that when we feel the pulse of an inchoate desire to learn and grow and create then there’s little that can hold us back. Call it creative baby fever, if you will.

Quickening our Creative Impulses

Consider the concept of *quickening*, referenced in the US Supreme Court document about their decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. This moment is where the Mother becomes aware of a being within her as the fetus begins to move and generally become felt as a form of potential life within oneself. Whether we can stifle our academic desires is clear: we can, for reasons economic, social, or psychological. Or we might start a course or two and decide it’s not for us. While it’s imprudent to make light of the fact that symbolic creation, even the greatest of literature, is different from the creation of a human, to broaden perspective on any issue is part of thinking critically.

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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.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Dennis McGann Bursary

Sponsored by: The Columbia Foundation, and others

Deadline: August 1, 2022

Potential payout: \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be Canadian Citizens or Landed Immigrants, enrolling or enrolled in a Communications program (full or part time) at an accredited public post-secondary institution in Canada, and demonstrate financial need.

What's required: A completed application form, including academic and financial information, summaries of your education goals and community activities, and a short essay on one of two given topics.

Tips: Read the [application form](#) carefully and complete all areas.

Where to get info: columbiainstitute.eco/scholarships/mcgann-bursary/



Self-Talk for Peak Performance

Marie Well



If you've ever wanted to live the life of a celebrity, star performer, star athlete, or astronaut, then don't wait, you can start working toward it right now. Better still, you can start talking like one upon reading this article.

Of course, you won't be a celebrity or star unless that's your goal in life or unless you unwittingly gain celebrity status. However, I hope to help you think more like a star. More accurately, to use positive self-talk like a high-performance athlete.

But what makes for high-quality self-talk?

Coach yourself with self-talk.

Pretend you're Mike Tyson's trainer. Coach yourself as if you're heading for the world championship—tomorrow. Use step-by-step self-talk, and if possible, say it aloud and say it with conviction.

When I go into the washroom, I'll say aloud, "When I'm done here, I'll open up this file, download an image, study the PowerPoint, and start designing the presentation." But if there is still idle time, I will get

more detailed with the steps or go further down the list of actions.

Try to number these steps: step 1, step 2, and step 3. And if, by chance, you come up with a solid set of numbered steps, then write them down for future reference.

But, even if you're coaching yourself, speak to yourself in the third person. For example, you could say, "Larry, open the textbook to chapter 5, read the introduction and subheadings, and look at the solutions for the end-of-chapter questions. Once you're done, Larry, read the chapter."

Use motivational self-talk.

Tell yourself often that you have unlimited potential and that all your dreams will become a reality. As Mike Tyson's trainer said, "Why them? Why not you? Why should they be the world champion and not you? Why are they any better than you?"

Apply only positive self-talk. Use positive self-talk all the time. Ensure your daily communication is consistently upbeat. Don't let a single negative word or thought sneak through. You have 100% power over your mind.

Battle negative self-talk with positivity. You have your own unique strengths. But what works for me is to send out pure love to any conflictual person. I also agree with any criticisms I receive and try to see how I can grow from them. Lastly, I focus more on boosting other people's self-esteem rather than my own. By focusing on others' needs, I don't get attached to my ego. But you have your own set of strengths. Your unique strengths may help you find the positives in different ways.

For instance, if you are enamored by beauty, which is a strength, you may seek to find something beautiful in everyone and every issue.

Use self-talk that energizes you.

Say words to yourself that excite you. For instance, you could say, "I'm going to work today like I'm about to try out for the NHL." Or say things like, "Star athletes go super hard in practice. If they can do it, so can I!"

Did you know that top athletes work just as hard during practices as they do during actual games? I saw a coach on a Masterclass that told an athlete to run to one side of the court and back. The athlete did. Then, the coach offered a cash reward if the athlete ran there and back within a tiny time frame. The player ran at supersonic speed. That's how hard you should practice every day, said the coach. The coach said athletes perform during the games just below their level of practice due to the stress and other factors.

So, get yourself pumped for high performance each day with positive self-talk. Talk to yourself like a star—to become one!

**Homemade is Better
Redo on Beef Stew****Chef Corey**

I decided to make beef stew a while back. It was a rainy, cool day, and something hardy was starting to appeal to me. I followed my last recipe, but then I thought about how I could improve it. I think this could be a metaphor for life, really. The changes to this recipe are minor, but I found that they had a significant impact on the result.

As cooks, once we start getting confident with our recipes, we begin to see where we can adjust to improve them. Not every addition or subtraction will benefit, and some will be negative. But unless you make a mistake, you won't learn; a lesson I keep telling my kids. In cooking, it's the mistakes that sometimes result in amazing dishes. Chocolate Lava cake is one example.

As the story goes, the man who claims to have invented it pulled a chocolate sponge cake out of the oven too early, and

the center was warm but runny. Another somewhat famous mistake is the sandwich. It is said that John Montagu, the fourth Earl of Sandwich in the 18th century, did want to leave a poker game he was playing. Still, he was getting hungry, so he ordered a servant to grab two slices of bread and some meat in the middle. From there, everyone at the table started asking for the same thing. So, our mistakes can turn out a masterpiece or blunder.

When I made this previously, I wasn't as happy with the liquid-to-solids ratio. So, I made some changes to improve the dish, and it worked out so well that I thought I should update my stew recipe.



Redo on Beef Stew



Ingredients:

2 tbsp canola oil
2 tbsp flour
2 lbs eye of round, cut into ½" chunks
1L of beef stock
2 medium carrots – peeled and diced
6 – 8 medium yellow potatoes – peeled and diced
1 large onion – peeled and diced
4 cloves of garlic – minced
1 can of lager (355ml)
1 small can of tomato paste
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tbsp parsley
2 tsp dried thyme
2 bay leaves
1 tbsp salt
1 tbsp pepper

Directions:

- 1) Grab a 5qt Dutch oven or large pot, place it on a burner and turn the heat to high.
- 2) Add the canola oil and salt and pepper the beef while we wait for it to heat up.
- 3) Add the beef a little at a time, do not crowd the pan.
- 4) Once the beef is seared on all sides, remove it from the pot and set it aside.
- 5) Add the onions and garlic and sauté them until the onions start to turn translucent.
- 6) Add the carrots and start to heat them as well. Give them about two minutes, then add the beef back in.
- 7) Sprinkle the flour over everything and keep mixing for another two minutes.
- 8) Add the beer and stir the bottom of the pot to release all the delicious brown bits that have stuck.
- 9) Add the tomato paste and mix it up.
- 10) Add the remaining ingredients and give it a good stir.
- 11) Bring the stew to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and allow it to simmer for two to three hours.
- 12) Once you are ready to eat, taste it, and if it needs a bit more salt, add some.
- 13) Additionally, this dish can be made ahead in your crockpot. But you'll still need to follow directions one to 10, then transfer it to the crock pot to finish. If you make this the night before, you can rest it in your fridge, then put the crockpot on in the morning before leaving.



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.



Four Tips for Decorating a Home on a Budget

Xine Wang



Lately I've been trying to style my space to look more modern and aesthetically pleasing. Fairly quickly into the home decor game, I've noticed that amidst a supply chain shortage (the couch I ordered took 5 months to arrive), and inflationary pressures the bill for home decor can add up quite quickly. Despite being on a budget, there's quite a few things that can help you reach your home decor goals without emptying your wallet. What are some things you can do?

Know What Style you're After

Before going into the store to find inspiration, look for some images online. Get inspiration first before going to the store. Part of good home decor planning is knowing what style you're looking for. There're so many different decor styles from vintage looks to modern and sophisticated that will impress you. However, if it doesn't fit the atmosphere or feel of your home, you will be disappointed. For example, if your home is a well lit, modern apartment it might be a good idea



My home is more of a modern chic feel and I opted for velvet and fabric lounge chairs in my upstairs space.

to stay away from retro styles such as ornate lamps and complex designs. Knowing your decor style will save you both money and time down the road.

Plan and Prioritize

Planning is key to getting the most out of your budget. While we may want to furnish every room of the house or apartment, it’s not always feasible to do so. Hence, pick areas you will spend most of your time in so you can feel at-home with your new purchases. I like to make a list of items I aspire for in each room and going through the list with highlighters to show which areas are of top priority.

Create your Budget

This is especially important for AU students as we juggle different life commitments and also want to stay frugal with the student budget. I personally love using excel spreadsheets to map out my spendings. Have about 10% flexibility in your budget so you can account for price increases and sometimes having to splurge a little more. Also, if you’re looking to decorate on a tight pursestring, I like to use second-hand furniture sales such as yard sales, Craigslist and Facebook marketplace to find good deals.

home furnishing				
File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help				
100% \$ % .0 .00 123 Default (Ari... 1C				
D23				
	A	B	C	D
1				
2		budget		
3				
4		living room/kitchen	cost	3620
5		central rug	200	
6		fruit tray	10	
7		cushions	30	
8		candles	20	
9		fig plant	40	
10		dining table and chair	400	
11		tv	300	
12		accent chairs x 2	200	
13		painting	done	
14		bar stools x 4	200	
15				
16		bedroom master	cost	
17		rug	100	
18		2 nightstand	80	
19		ottoman	40	
20		king bed	2000	
21				
22		bedroom 2	cost	
23		bedside tables	40	

My own spreadsheet for budgeting my home decor and furnishings. I highlighted items I needed right away vs items I could hold off on.



Given that the dining room is a space I frequently use, I decided to prioritize my furnishings and home decor in this space first.

Look for Value not Price

Despite having informed you on being wise with your budget, I also want to share with you my experience on being value-wise and not price-wise. If you’re simply looking for the lowest price on every item, sometimes you will only get what you pay for. For example, I was looking for dining room chairs and found the cheapest possible ones second-hand from a seller off Facebook marketplace, however the chairs were rickety and uncomfortable. Instead, I paid \$100 more for a brand-new set of dining chairs and they were sturdy, effective, and had I opted for these in the first place, I would’ve saved myself time and money.

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



Music Review—Sometimes, Forever

Jessica Young



Album: *Sometimes, Forever*

Artist: Soccer Mommy

Singer-songwriter Sophie Allison—better known by her stage name Soccer Mommy—has released her third studio album, *Sometimes, Forever*. The album is available anywhere you stream your music.

Sometimes, Forever is a combination of 90's alternative rock, electronic breakdowns, pop hooks, new wave, and country. It is the epitome of Gen Z pop culture, reminiscent of Billy Eilish. According to Sophie, *Sometimes, Forever* fixates on those sorts of contradictory forces: desire and apathy, ecstasy and misery, good and evil, self-control and wildness. Of the album, Sophie says: "the title, *Sometimes, Forever*, refers to the idea that both good and bad feelings are cyclical. Sorrow and emptiness will pass, but they will always come back

around as will joy. At some point you're forced to say, I'll just have to take both."

The album consists of ten tracks: *Bones*; *With U*; *Unholy Affliction*; *Shotgun*; *newdemo*; *Darkness Forever*; *Don't Ask Me*; *Fire In The Driveway*; *Following Eyes*; *Feel It All The Time*; and *Still*. Official music videos for the songs "*Bones*" and "*Shotgun*" are available on YouTube.

A quick note for my fellow nerds: the YouTube audios of the songs that do not have an official music video feature videos of Sophie as an image on various Magic The Gathering cards. The numbers for power/toughness on her cards are actually the track numbers out of 11. I thought this was so cute and creative!

But I digress. Back to the music.

One of the things I love most about this album is that the songs are all so different. The first track, "*Bones*" is a classic soft rock song straight out of a 90's romcom. With lyrics like, "I wanna scream when you don't look at me," I think it's something all of us can relate to. Meanwhile, "*Unholy Affliction*" has the undertones of the *Hereditary* soundtrack—unsettling yet intriguing. According to Sophie, this song foregrounds one of *Sometimes, Forever's* more compelling narrative tensions: the push and pull between her desire to make meaningful art and her skepticism about the mechanics of careerism.

The song "*newdemo*" was Sylvia Plath inspired—slow and pensive, reflecting a sad cynicism of our society. With Sophie's stunning voice being front-and-center, "*newdemo*" is probably my favourite song on the album. With the recent overturn of *Roe vs. Wade* in America, the lyrics of this song may touch your soul. Some of the lyrics to "*newdemo*" read: "And the men up on the hill/Are playing their cards like it's all for thrills/But what about us/We're playing for blood/And we're playing for keeps." Meanwhile, the song "*Following Eyes*" is like a horror movie in song form; contrasted by the light, airy, ethereal-country sound of "*Fire In The Driveway*." A true testament to the versatility and talent of Soccer Mommy.

Overall, I thought *Sometimes, Forever* was an amazing album.

Check out Soccer Mommy on [her website](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

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



Beyond Literary Landscapes Mexican Literature

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 Mexican Literature, a reminder of some of the country’s classics, and as an inspiration for further reading.

Some well-known Mexican authors include Carlos Fuentes, Laura Esquivel, and Octavio Paz.

Readers may also consider the works of Valeria Luiselli.

Fuentes was a “Mexican novelist, short-story writer, playwright, critic, and diplomat,” whose works are available in translation in a variety of languages, including English.

Esquivel is a well-known Mexican author, journalist, and screenwriter, whose popular novel *Like Water for Chocolate* is also available as a 1992 film of the same name.

Paz was a Mexican writer, poet, and diplomat, who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1990.

What

Some popular Mexican literary works include Esquivel’s novel *Like Water for Chocolate* (*Como Agua para Chocolate*), Fuentes’ novel *The Old Gringo* (*Gringo Viejo*), and Paz’s collection of essays *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (*El Laberinto de la Soledad*).

Where

These works are set throughout Mexico.

When

These works take place during the 20 and 21 centuries.

Why

AU students interested in Mexican history, culture, and traditions may find these works a great starting point.

How

AU’s wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to Mexican Literature are available in a variety of disciplines, including one’s that may fit into your

Degree Works. (Always check with a counsellor to see if these particular courses fulfill your personal graduation requirements!)

AU students interested in learning more about this topic may consider ENGL 341: World Literature, a senior-level, six-credit course, which focuses on “[c]anonical and lesser-known authors” from around the world.

Other courses to consider are POLI 342: Comparative Politics, a senior-level, three-credit course, which “studies the political systems of a number of different countries (including Mexico), providing the opportunity to examine the features of individual political systems and to investigate the similarities and differences among political systems in two or more countries.”

Finally, students can also consider POLI 480: Politics of Our Networked World in the Digital Era, a senior-level, three-credit course, which analyzes Mexico and “explores the emergence of the networked society, the information technology revolution, and the consequences for power, production, and culture on a global and a local scale as examined by such disciplines as political science, political economy, sociology, and communications.” 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

Saving saves. A temporary internet connection issue for one exam-studying student highlights the usefulness of saving course materials to PDF or print.

Discord

The course that lingers. Forum posts for a completed course continue to show up in a student's inbox. Responses point to the preferences page on the student profile to opt out.

reddit

Beat the clock. A visiting student pursuing an accounting degree elsewhere briefly summarizes completing an AU course in only 24 hours.

The goal in this case was a pass (which was reached), not absorbing any course material (who needs Professional Ethics, anyway?)

Twitter

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

How to Burst with Energy

Marie Well



If you're like me, you want high performance. So, you might be pushing yourself to work harder each day. In addition, you might be verbalizing your plans of action before tackling each task. However, like, you might also be crashing throughout your day.

So, I've come up with a game for us high-performance machines. Namely, read the following list of energy boosters and note the ones you do or want to do.

Avoid caffeine. If you don't fall asleep immediately at night or suffer from anxiety, consider cutting out all caffeine. Doing so will prevent midday crashes.

I recently drank Matcha tea three days in a row and experienced trouble falling asleep. As a result, I feel more tired during the day.

Get exercise. Exercise nightly before 6 pm but take a rest day at least once a week. Even if walking the hallway, just a half-hour every day builds stamina. But be sure to do some weight training to boost

energy.

I used to get so much exercise that I slept all day. If I walked anywhere, it would be at a sluggish pace. People called me lazy. So, I stopped exercising when I started my new career, but that backfired, too. Tiredness hit me so hard that I slept almost two hours some days during lunch. So, I was forced to exercise at a lighter pace, and I love how it has supercharged my energy. Just five-minute stints, here and there, throughout the workday can seriously boost energy.

Stay hydrated. Coffee and tea are diuretics, so they dehydrate you. But water hydrates you. Like plants, the human body loves water. So, try ice-cold water for a boost in alertness.

Deep breathe. Try the Wim Hof method of meditation to supercharge your energy. It feeds your cells oxygen.

Three times during my workday, I plan on doing five-minute stints of deep breathing exercises followed by five-minute bursts of activity.

Eat low glycemic foods. Low glycemic foods are the go-to diet for many people with diabetes. They release sugars more slowly, so your body doesn't receive a harsh spike in insulin. Low glycemic foods can also keep your energy high.

I eat a lot of frozen pineapple, which is high on the glycemic index, meaning I should cut back. Pineapple is healthy but way too sugary. So, I'll eat more mixed berries and oatmeal instead.

Try ice-cold showers. Suppose you've ever experienced chronic fatigue, as I have. In that case, you may know how glorious ice-cold showers are for increasing energy. Hot showers take away energy; ice-cold showers boost energy, perhaps even more than a workout.

Maximize posture and focus. Sit straight like you're about to fly a rocket in outer space and repair a space station for your first time. Treat your studies like that. Then, talk aloud about each task as if you're reporting to the space crew. This way, you'll skyrocket your focus. That psychology keeps me awake at work. After all, we perform on exams only as well as in our studies.

Clean. Once it's lunchtime, I quickly eat a banana and yogurt or a bowl of mixed beans. Then I force myself to clean for half an hour immediately. I schedule cleaning tasks three times daily. It feels incredible to get so much done. Cleaning bolsters energy.

Get sunshine or turn on the lights. Sunshine emits vitamin D, which is essential for health. In addition, a bright room can give you a burst of energy.

I take vitamin D tablets and spend a few minutes in the sun daily. However, I also work in a dark room to conserve electrical energy. The darkness takes a toll on my vitality.

Sing. I've tried this, and it works beautifully! Just sing your tasks if you want to stay focused. Belting out a tune wakes you up instantly. Better still, energetically whisper-sing positive lyrics, such as "It's going to be a bright, bright shiny day." Or whisper-sing, "I'm going to perform like a top gun!" Sing it with a big smile on your face for maximum results.

Listen to fast music. Fast music makes you more alert. Try Frankie Goes to Hollywood's extended version of Pleasuredome for a quick energy blast. It works for me.

Eat eight servings of veggies a day. Veggies give energy, so make your diet veggie rich. I used to eat massive amounts of veggies a day, but now I eat only two veggies and an enormous number of fruits daily. I plan on adding beets, Brussel sprouts, kale, sweet peppers, celery, sour cabbage, and cucumbers to get the full veggie benefit.

Do affirmations for high energy. Do as I do and wake up every morning saying out loud, "It's going to be a great day today!" Also, say aloud, "I'm going to break records in my studies today!" Say words that get you pumped for a high-energy performance.

Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. A routine sleep schedule can genuinely boost your energy. For example, I feel healthier and more energetic by following a consistent sleep schedule where I get 8.5 hours each night.

Here's how to play the game: try out just three of these energy boosters! The reward? Maybe straight A's, a huge promotion, or star status—whatever you desire! You'll now have the energy to achieve it all!

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

AUSU turns 30!

July 11 to 15

Online and in-person (Edmonton)

Hosted by AUSU

twitter.com/austudentsunion/status/1542576591330500608

1330500608

More event info coming soon!

All events are free unless otherwise noted.





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Women's Work

Dear Barb:

I am in my early forties, and I have been working very hard at surviving in a man's corporate world. People may think women have come a long way, and we have, but we still have a way to go.

I have been working at the same company for almost 20 years and started out with male coworkers who were the same age as me. During those 20 years I had three children and subsequently lost a year with each child. Plus, when my kids were sick, I missed work. I also had some health issues related to painful periods. When these events occurred, I could see the disbelief in the eyes of my male coworkers, it's just not fair. As a result, all the men that started with me have moved into senior positions, while I remain in middle management.

These differences are confirmation that discrimination is alive and well in my workplace and I know I am not alone. Is there anything more we can do as women to help end some the challenges faced by women in this unfair workplace. Thank you Jocelyn.

Hello Jocelyn:

You are correct, the corporate battle is a much harder one for women than men and for many of the reasons you mentioned and more. There are things we as women can do to change the present dynamics in the workplace. Changes are starting to happen, but we also need to take an

active role in many areas. For example, become a leader for change in your workplace. Educate senior management on the benefits of promoting women, such as gaining new perspectives.

Women make up half of the population, but their voice is muted by men at the top. Speak up to prevent your workplace from excluding women from the hiring process, simply because they have not had the opportunity to gain the experience a male counterpart may have. They must start somewhere. Become a member of the board and work towards equal pay for men and women in your place of employment.

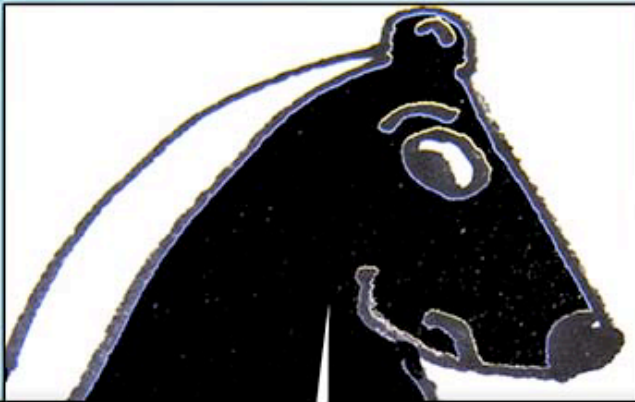
An important consideration must be the work/life balance for women. If a woman is the primary caregiver, her work schedule needs to reflect that as far as hours required to complete a task or encourage the option of working from home when possible. These are just some of the ways woman can become active participants for change in their workplace. Every journey begins with a step. Thank you for your most important 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
This Ability

Wanda Waterman



AU SU

UPDATE

COMMUNITY. RESOURCES . SERVICES

Guess
who's
turning

AU
SU

30 !?

Invitations coming this July...

Celebrate with us July 11-15th as we turn 30! We have a fun-filled week planned, including giveaways, a special AUSUnights virtual student social, and an in-person party with Student Council in Edmonton, AB! Details will be announced in our newsletter and on social media, so watch for your invitation! Until then, mark it in your calendars—you don't want to miss out!

Did AU Know?

AU Library Site Launches Major Improvements

The university has been upgrading many of their websites lately thanks to the [Digital Experience Project](#), and the [AU Library site](#) is the latest to roll out improvements that make it more intuitive and easier to navigate.

AU librarians Jorden Habib and Joanna Nemeth put together an [orientation](#) to walk students through the changes.

Visit athabascau.ca to learn more!



[Listen in](#) as recent graduate Leah Campbell and Tara Friesen, Manager, Alumni and Community Engagement, talk about what it means to be an AU alumni, what happens after you graduate, services AU offers alumni, and what convocation is all about.

**#59 YOU'RE AN AU ALUMNI.
SO, WHAT'S NEXT?**

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