



THE VOICE

Vol 31 Issue 48 2023-01-13

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

“Rats Get Shot! Snitches Get Shot!”

A Threat of Violence

Leading a Less Materialistic Life

Tips to Make it Happen



Plus:

Lucky Start?

Resolute Within Your Limit

..and Much More!

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Lucky Start?

Karl Low



It's been five years since the first brand new issue of *The Voice Magazine* landed on a Friday the 13th. I was reminded of this because of the Vintage Voice column, which likes to dig out little bits and pieces of *The Voice Magazine* history. Having almost our entire history online and available to read means that there's pretty much always something new for you to find here, even if it may not be the most current.

Of course, not having enough distractions really isn't anybody's problem these days, is it? These days, our attention is really the most valuable thing on the market, with over 800 billion dollars of advertising revenue estimated to have been made by media owners. But that's just a part of it. After all, there's all those other places advertisements show up that aren't media agencies. Advertisements on the bus and at the bus stops, at the gas pumps, at stadiums and arenas. These days, you can't even go to the bastion of consumerism itself, the mall, without there being advertisements for stores and products that aren't in the mall itself being played at the food court and other areas.

So, since it really does seem that your attention is the most valuable thing you have, I just wanted to say thank you for being willing to spend a little of it here at *The Voice Magazine*. This week, you can spend that attention checking out our latest featured interview with a student. And if you've just stumbled on *The Voice Magazine* yourself and haven't been interviewed yet? Consider writing to mwm@voicemagazine.org. You'll be able to see yourself featured and get a bit of fun Voice swag to show off.

Also this week, *The Voice Magazine* writer Alek Golijanin tells us about a run-in he had back on New Year's Day. It brings a whole new meaning to starting the new year with a bang.

And, if all the gift-giving and wrapping and everything else doesn't seem to be doing it for you just yet, check out Xine Wang's tips on some ways to try living a less materialistic lifestyle. Some of them aren't exactly what I was expecting when I read the title of the article.

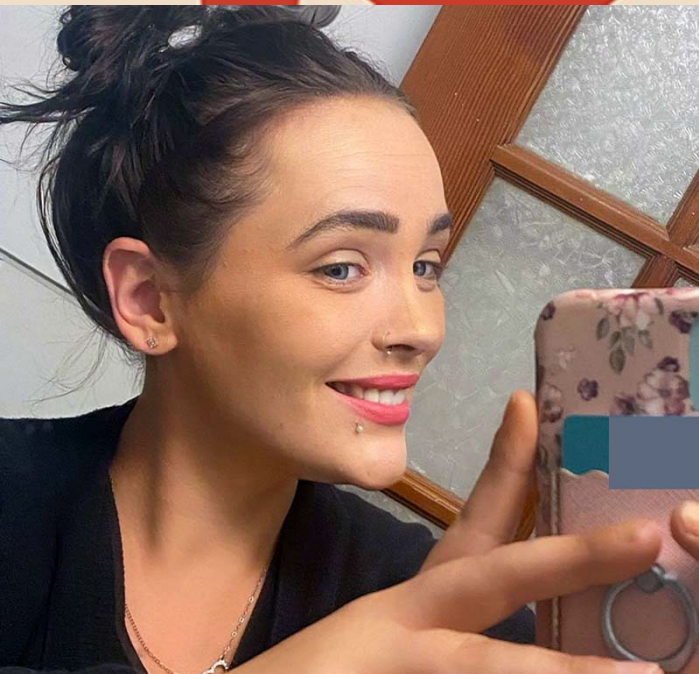
But getting back to the original topic, does anybody still associate Friday the 13th with bad luck anymore? I know that everybody's aware of the idea, but is there anybody that believes it? It may just be my social circle, but nobody I know really believes in the idea. Is it the same in yours? If you know somebody who believes in the idea that Friday the 13th means bad luck, please write me, I'd love to hear about it just because I'm starting to wonder if it's time we just forget about the superstition. I tend to think it's become a superstition of a superstition; it exists only because we believe somebody else believes it.

And so now I'm introducing a third level to that meta. Now you could argue that I believe others believe that others believe in the existence of a 'bad luck' day. But I've got no evidence of that either, because at the end of the day, what others believe is entirely their own idea, and the whole house of cards collapses on itself except for one key point. It's still Friday the 13th.

Which means it's time that you got a whole new issue of articles by and for AU students, along with scholarships, reviews, recipes, advice, and more. Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl".

MINDS WE MEET



The Voice Magazine recently had a chance to chat with Kartina Felske (she/her), an Ontario student, currently pursuing a 4-year Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Gender Studies.

Located in the Ottawa Valley, this firefighter, wife, and mother of three boys has already completed two Diplomas, including Early Childhood Education in 2008 from Algonquin College, as well as the Social Service Worker program in 2014, also from Algonquin College. After her current AU Degree, Katrina is still undecided whether to pursue her master's degree or to work toward law school. She explained, "Either way, my intentions are to be in a supportive role for women leaving intimate partner violence."

The Voice Magazine asked this busy student how she best studies. "I find education without lectures both freeing and terrifying. It takes a lot of dedication to remain on track. For that reason, I plan ahead and live

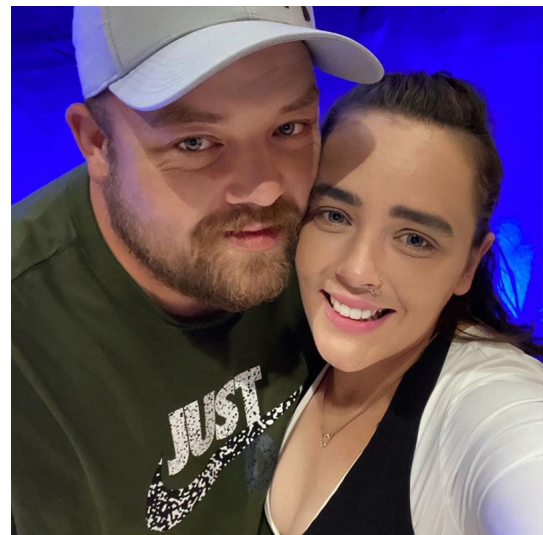
by schedules. I begin by reading the material, then look to various resources (*YouTube* and professional websites for example) to make the material feel comfortable. After that I create study cards that I read and reflect on. Although this type of education can be intimidating, I find it has given me skills that will benefit me in the future, such as being a self-starter and personal accountability," she stated.

She also had some great advice for new students. "I have started living by the motto, 'If I'm not ahead, I'm behind.' Holding the keys to your own future without a professor in front of you can create panic at the end of the term. If I always feel a little bit ahead, I have time to fix anything that has been granted another opportunity while keeping me stress free."

When she is not busy studying, Katrina enjoys spending time with her family. She added, "In addition to my children and spouse, I am the youngest of 7 children. We talk on our family group chats often with our mother, which keeps a sense of family even though we have all separated geographically. I also enjoy spending time with my best friend, who is my biggest support outside of my home."

She has also found time in her busy life to relax, describing a memorable vacation. "I went to the east coast of Canada, and it was absolutely breathtaking. Sitting on the sandstone, watching the ocean is forever engraved in my mind."

She also enjoys reading, letting *The Voice Magazine* know about the one book that has made an impact on her life, *Harry Potter*. "When



things are difficult, or when I need comfort—I pick up the books. To imagine a place of magic and mystery has always been comforting.”

Katrina credits herself with having the greatest influence on her desire to learn. “I have gone through situations that have kept higher education from me. I felt like it was always just out of reach. With persistence I have made it to a place where it is tangible and real. As a child I had difficulties in school, and a teacher once told me I couldn’t make it. Since then, I have worked very hard to make sure that I am the only person who will decide how far I go and what I can do. There have been many situations since that have given me an excuse to stop but I don’t care for excuses much.”

As for her experience with online learning so far? “I like that I have the ability to design my plan. Although the study guides give great examples, I can modify it as I wish. That can be a challenge in its own right, but the flexibility as a parent is appreciated.”

And communication with her course tutors? “I find them helpful and available. Considering their students are at all different points in the course, they have always been accommodating and quick to respond,” she stated.

If Katrina were the new president of AU, she would implement video lectures, explaining, “I would love if some of the courses had lectures that could be accessed to help with challenging concepts.”

When asked which famous person past or present she would like to have lunch with and why, Katrina chose Anne Frank. “As young female in such a devastating situation, I have always found her to be the strongest person I can think of,” she stated.

The Voice Magazine also asked Katrina about her most valuable lesson learned in life. She stated, “You are the only person to choose your destiny. Everything you do, and don’t do is your decision—so choose wisely.” And her proudest moment? “When me and my children started our new life after leaving a very challenging family situation. Knowing that the hardest days were ahead of me, and choosing to give them the best life regardless of the difficulties was my proudest moment. Here we are, 7 years later living the life I dreamed of.” Best of luck Katrina!



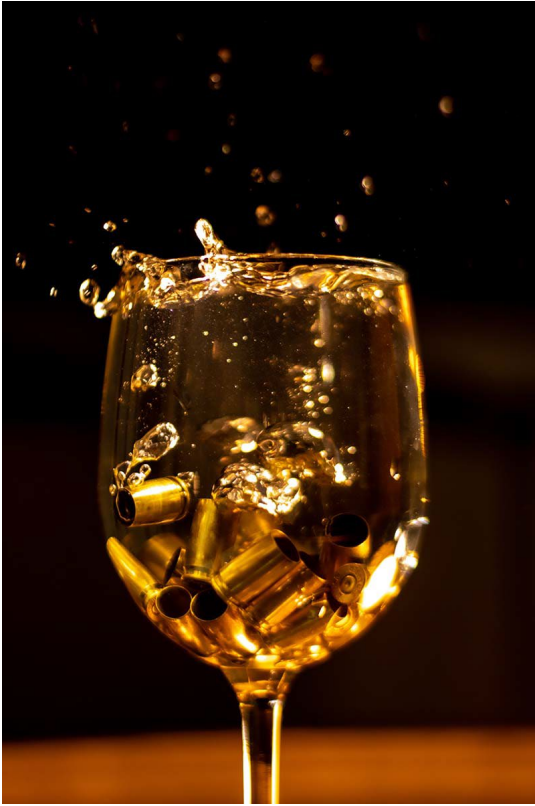
At times, in an online learning environment, it can feel like you are all alone, but across the nation and around the globe, students just like you are also pursuing their Athabasca University (AU) studies! Each week, *The Voice Magazine* will be bringing you some of these stories. If you would like to be featured next, do not hesitate to get in touch!

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



“Rats get shot! Snitches get Shot!” How I Responded to the Threat of Weapon Violence

Alek Golijanin



When people say that they want to start the new year with a bang, nobody is thinking of gun violence. One way or another, I always seem to find myself in the most bizarre situations that a person can find themselves in. Let us start by getting one thing straight, life in Ottawa South can be stranger than Quentin Tarantino's Pulp Fiction. In 2018, the Ottawa Police Services' guns and gangs unit declared Ottawa South as the most active part of Ottawa for weapons violence and we 'led' the city in shootings. Although we often get what we pay for, going to a budget-friendly gym should not result in weapons violence, and yet, it almost did.

The story goes something like this: on January 1, 2023, two individuals with an age gap between them that was larger than the age gap in Leonardo DiCaprio's relationship, got in a fight at the aforementioned budget-friendly gym—a fight that was entirely avoidable. There was modest trash talking and antagonizing which resulted in a sucker punch being thrown, followed by a Muay Thai combination being returned, and it ended with a fistful of ripped hair. Both males were conscious after the 15 second exchange. And although some people rushed to break them up, I was not one of them. I know trying to restrain one individual while

the other can throw punches is a no-no because it can lead to complications if your peacekeeping results in a fighter being defenceless and taking extra hits. Once they were split up, I thought that would be the end of it, but it was just the beginning.

The next day at the gym started like every other day: on the treadmill with a brisk walk on max incline. A little later, one of my gym friends arrived and we talked a bit before he went to see who else was here. When he returned, it was clear that he was uneasy. It turned out that some of the older fighters' gym buddies were telling him that they wanted to know where the younger fighter lived. Except my gym friend had no idea where that was; he only associated with the younger fighter at the gym, though he had held him back to help stop the fight. However, after my friend had gone to look, the older fighters' gym buddies had messaged the older fighter and a few others to make their way to the gym. And just like that, we were about to get into it.

Once their reinforcements had arrived, one of them came inside the gym and motioned to my gym friend to come outside. Of course, most people in their early-to-mid 20s would also be uncomfortable at the thought of a large group of bulky guys surrounding them, and although he made it clear to me that he did not want to go outside to “talk” with them, my friend started walking towards the doors.

I followed him, telling him that he did not have to go and that nothing would happen to him if he chose to stay inside. The guy who had called him, however, was not happy that I followed my gym friend, and tried to intimidate me, telling me to mind my own business. Although I would have liked to respond by saying “*I make business with my Bachelor of Commerce from Athabasca University*,” the guy did not strike me as a Tony Soprano kind of guy. I knew it was more important to diffuse the situation. Instead, I grabbed the rotating door and told my gym friend that he did

not have to go with them, and I told the guy between the doors that he was blowing things out of proportion. That guy became furious with me and scanned his card so he could enter the gym.

He stormed toward me, opening his eyes as wide as they could, and started making partial threats while keeping his hands in his pocket. I was unphased, repeating that he was blowing things out of proportion and that my gym friend did not feel comfortable going outside with them, but I did extend my hands below my waist in case he pulled out a knife so that it would be easier to go for his hands. He made another partial threat to which I responded by asking him whether he really wanted for the police to show up, and his response was that he did not care. Thankfully for the angry guy, one of his gym buddies was there, telling him to cool down. It was working, but my friend relented to the peer pressure while I was preoccupied with the angry guy and went outside.

Outside, I saw that there were four guys around my gym friend, and one of them told me that they were just talking to him. I responded by saying I would wait at the doors until the conversation ended. I could not forcefully remove my friend from the conversation because it seemed he willingly went to them. However, it seemed that things would be taking a turn for the better since a fifth guy had joined the group and he was saying how he was ecstatic about finishing an interview with the RCMP, although he followed that up by saying that the deep background check might complicate things for him.

At this point the situation was approaching the 30-minute mark and I was getting annoyed. I had both of my phones out and this appeared to startle the group of guys. They seemed to be getting quite concerned with my presence and they started talking amongst themselves, debating if I was an “uskar”, a Somali word for police officer. Prior to this, they were even using some Jamaican Patois words, and although they all spoke the same language, a non-English non-French language, none of them were members of a visibly racialized group, but what they did not know was that I was more fluent than all of them in both Somali and Jamaican Patois.

After hearing them talking about whether or not I was an “uskar”, I started to think that they were coming to their senses and realizing how ridiculous this whole situation was. I decided to go

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Blended Learning Practice MOOC

Jan 15 to Feb 11

Online

Hosted by AU and the Commonwealth of Learning

news.athabascau.ca/events/blended-learning-practice-mooc-fall-2022/

Register through above link

Library Chat

Tues, Jan 17, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

Writing Forum: Open forum and tour of the Write Site

Tue, Jan 17, 12:30 to 1:30 pm MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU's Write Site

www.athabascau.ca/write-site/writing-forum.html

No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

MBA for Executives Webinar

Wed, Jan 18, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20230118/

RSVP through above link

Library Chat

Wed, Jan 18, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

inside the front doors to heat up a little since I was without a coat, but I was back outside less than a minute later. It was at this moment that I was threatened with the prospect of gun violence. When I came back outside, the group was obnoxiously shouting, "It is open hunting season for rats and snitches!", "Rats get shot! Snitches get shot!", "Once we shoot them, we let them bleed out, blood everywhere!", and "You are known for hunting rats and killing them! How many have you killed?" In addition to these statements, they were making ratchet shooting noises like "Pop! Pop!", "Blam! Blam!", and "Bang! Bang!" To say I was embarrassed for them is an understatement. After all, they were all young adults in their mid-twenties, and if they had a gun, nobody dared to show it.

After all the shouting, the group of guys turned around and attempted to stare me down. When they looked towards me, I paused before asking them, "Are you well?" It should come as no surprise that the angry guy from before decided to react, hurling more threats, and asking me to repeat myself as though he had not heard me. I repeated, "Are you well?" The angry guy started walking toward me and asked me to repeat myself a third time, to which I just said, "Are you well? Do you know what you are saying?" This time he stopped dead in his tracks, and although I would like to credit my resting face stare, it is more likely that my question helped him have his "eureka" moment.

Finally, the situation had died down, angry guy returned to his group, and my gym friend came back inside. Before they all left, they came to say bye and we exchanged "bro handshakes". There was nothing that I took personal since I know that once people get emotional and out of balance, they will often act out of character. Many of the actions and comments were in poor taste, but maturity is something that can not be taught, and it takes time to grow into. All of it reminded me of past friends, so I was well prepared to handle the situation.

I want to make it clear that I feel bad for that group of guys. They were doing what every child that has grown up in a toxic environment has been socialized to do when their friend gets beaten up, they try to even the score. It is this type of cultural socialization that has added to the challenges that many adolescents experience when transitioning into adulthood. When individuals do not grow out of these 'behaviors', and if they lack the presence of positive figures in their lives, this combination often prevents them from realizing their full potential.

The way we carry ourselves matters

My decision to act in this situation was pretty simple, my conscious was talking to me in a way that resembled John Wayne's Davy Crockett in The Alamo. The way I spoke to the group was how Dr. Phil spoke to his guests, practicing good judgment and not losing my temper, so it was not matching their energy. Although the situation at hand was a four versus one, had there been an extra pair of skilled hands and skilled legs that I could have counted on, like Richard Widmark's Jim Bowie in The Alamo, this story may have turned out much differently. Perhaps it may have gone the way of The Replacements bar fight scene, and maybe we all may have ended up singing and dancing inside Elgin police station similar to how The Replacements sang and danced in jail. However, we will never know how that version of events would have played out. So, the end!

How can I be a "rat"?

One of the most mind-numbing things during this interaction had to have been the guy who celebrated completing his RCMP interview and how he was also embracing this level of stupidity. Although he was the one who responded to my final question, "Are you well? Do you know what you are saying?", trying to cover for the group by implying that they were talking about hunting animals and not people, he should have known better if he is serious about pursuing a career in policing. Had that situation escalated and had someone got hurt, there are cameras both inside

and outside of the gym, he would have had a totally different interview with the police and it would not have had anything to do with a job. However, if he does end up in policing, I hope that we do not see him on national TV news for some sort of scandal since that is the last thing that Canada's already fragile policing institution needs.

The origin story behind the "rat" label dates back long before Rap and Hip Hop became mainstream, but Rap and Hip Hop culture has embraced championing the toxic idea that "rats" are somehow people who interact with the police. The reality of the situation is that the people who champion the human trafficking of girls, the trafficking of drugs to people who struggle with substance use, and committing weapons violence on others, those are "rats", and they belong in the sewers along with their value systems.

Popular culture continues to brainwash societies vulnerable young into believing that the police are the enemy even when most communities are being destroyed from within, by predators that prey on the vulnerable by means of intimidation, scaring them from going to the police and preventing them from getting the support they deserve so that they can live their best lives. That is why I can never be a "rat", and in the words of the Reverend Al Sharpton, "I am a cat, not a rat!"

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



Four Tips on Leading a Less Materialistic Lifestyle

Xine Wang



I love purchasing a new purse or a cozy jacket. But at what point do these items become meaningless? When you already have them but need five more of course! Our relationship with items is very much governed by our capitalistic and consumption-focused world. It's difficult when social media is used as a form of advertising and when we are surrounded by people who are materialistic. This is what we were taught to believe, owning more things, more houses, more bags, more items means more success.

Starting the new year might feel daunting when we have such busy schedules, ambitious dreams, and many objects that we attend to. I've heard so many times when people have purchased unnecessary goods for their home and their families. Materialism is dangerous because it means having to keep up with trends. It also means you will spend more time maintaining your items. For example, when I moved to larger living quarters, it also meant that I needed to clean up more space. When I purchased more furniture, it also meant I needed to spend time cleaning them. When you own more

clothing, it takes more mental energy to decide what to wear. So how can we escape this never-ending cycle of materialism?

Focus on experiences

When I first became more independent with my finances, I went on many shopping sprees. I emptied my wallets on new purses (yes, I was quite obsessed with beautiful bags), a better car, and designer furniture, but, as time passed, I realized an additional purse or an additional car added no meaning or value to my life. It didn't improve my quality of life and it certainly didn't make

me happier. Experiences are valuable because they become a memory or a topic you could connect with someone down the road. Last week I went to spin class for the first time and now I can strike a conversation with a spin fanatic.

Focus on relationships

Sometimes it might be easy to forget that we don't own our relationships. We don't "have" a boyfriend or girlfriend or partner, we don't "have" a friend or a mentor. We shouldn't stop investing in a relationship just because we know it is there. Spending time with our loved ones and meaningful experiences will mean you're less tempted to purchase unnecessary items.

Create distance between your money and yourself

If we view money as an extension of ourselves, we will constantly be looking for ways to showcase this - whether it be through purchase of status symbols such as luxury goods. By creating a buffer between

your money and you, your money will be used to better your experience and lifestyle. But you will not be trapped in a cycle of consumption.

Cleanse

Just as you would cleanse your body and mind with a hot bath and meditation, donating or trashing old items in the house can be liberating. It means you're letting go of what you don't need. I'm guilty of hoarding things I don't need all the time. I have the mindset that "perhaps one day I will use this" however if you haven't used something for 5 years, chances are you're not going to need it.

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



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

You'd think with all the people claiming they "follow the science", that Friday the 13th wouldn't still be a thing. But here we are.

Not the Greeks again. Deanna Roney muses on the sketchy origins of Friday-the-13th superstition and wonders why people persist in the belief of bad luck on that day.

"While Friday the 13th has historical significance, can we really attribute the bad things that happen to it? Or, is it all in our heads?" Unconscious Superstitions, April 13, 2018.

But what's with the crossing cat thing? Voice editor Karl Low searches for the sense behind the non-sense of superstitions. "If you read up on superstitions, however, you find many of them make a lot of sense, when taken in context. Breaking a mirror causing seven years bad luck, for instance, came about when mirrors were extremely expensive." Editorial – Super Stitchings, January 13, 2017.



Navy Seal Stress Buster

Marie Well



If you want to combat extreme anxiety or fatigue, then learn from the elite forces. Elite forces, such as the Navy Seals, are trained to cope with severe stressors. These stressors include having a limb blown apart to witnessing the most inhumane acts. This sounds morbid, but there is wisdom in how the elite forces train to combat extreme trauma.

I've been reading *Building the Elite: The Complete Guide to Building Resilient Special Operators*. This book is loaded with strategies for combatting anxiety and fatigue, one of which is to reframe adverse events and memories into positives. For instance, I've been taking my own memories and flipping them into loving-kindness. It's like flipping a switch where the dark room instantly fills with empathy and joy. Best of all, converting negative memories to positives ensures we can manage even more extreme stressors. Indeed, positive reframing is how the Navy Seals survive unthinkable horrors.

So, how can you, as a student, benefit from reframing events and memories? First, if you get a bad grade, don't see it as an indicator of your ability. It's more an indicator of the level of preparation or other circumstances. So, view the grade as a beneficial signal telling you to adjust to guarantee success. And the more you make a bad grade about something you control, the better you will tackle it.

Another strategy this book relays is to prepare for all scenarios, especially the worst. During combat training, the Navy Seals will take a plan, say combat in Afghanistan, and prepare for as many outcomes as possible. For instance, if a one-way mountainside road pass could be blocked, they strategize what they'll do in this scenario. They'll plan their response in fine detail, even simulating it on a local mountain pass.

So, how can we, as students, apply this? Imagine you have a tendency toward panic attacks during exams. If so, you would benefit by clearly laying out strategies, step by step, for how to respond to a panic attack during an exam. You will gain from laying out different scenarios, such as an uncooperative exam moderator or technical issues. You will also want to make advanced preparations, such as accessing special accommodations. You may also benefit from simulating the exam testing environment. The more worse-case scenarios you address in advance, the better you will manage the actual event.

This book also talks about how to cope with extreme fatigue. While some people may quit during severe fatigue, others keep moving. For instance, a Navy Seal might feel extreme fatigue while carrying a massive weight for miles and miles. This Navy Seal might decide to quit and drop the package, returning later to retrieve it if it's still there. Alternatively, he or she might keep going. In this scenario, the Seal might adjust the weight to the more muscular arm while using the hip for support, switching sides once one becomes fatigued. Did you see the nuance in this? The Navy Seal's response to keep going in the face of extreme fatigue can be as minor as a slight body adjustment.

So, what does this mean for you as a student? Adjust if you need to study for sixteen hours straight for an exam but feel extreme fatigue. For instance, try something as minor as a cup of water, a five-minute ice-cold shower, or a five-minute comedy break to keep you in the game.

So, this book presents hundreds of strategies to combat extreme anxiety and fatigue. Whatever trauma you face is readily surmountable—even under extreme duress. But it takes positive (loving!) reframing, preparation, and sometimes the simplest adjustments.

And what the Navy Seals can overcome, we can, too. And why wouldn't we? After all, success begets success; happiness begets happiness.



Fly on the Wall **Know Your Limit, Resolute Within It!**

Jason Sullivan



It's 2023 and the path to our future is clear if we choose to walk it! Resolving to put one foot in front of another might be the first step, followed closely by actually picking a specific resolution or series of goals for the New Year. But where to begin with identifying actual targets? As those who partake in therapist ideologies are apt to recall, the best predictor of future success is past behaviour. To be resolute begins with realizing what candidates for resolution are reasonable.

We need doable goals, as the margin of failure is sky-high: "48.1 per cent of respondents marked a lack of motivation as the reason, while 14.9 per cent forget about their resolutions. Losing track of their progress on their resolutions throughout the year was the reason for 12.2 per cent of the respondents" (Amanat,

online). Another study found that "14.1 per cent of Canadians welcome the new year without setting resolutions at all, and for those who do, almost 70 per cent fail to stick with their resolutions." Finally, there's costs to self-improvement: Canadians "spent an average on \$252.12 on failed resolutions per year." The case can certainly be made that we'd be better to just keep calm and carry on with our studies as we've always done, rather than attempt such an insurmountable climb. Maybe it'd be better to just bake some instant croissants out of a can that pops open noisily like a leftover Christmas cracker with a gimmick inside. You know, the ones the kiddie table opens while salivating over their dinner saucers waiting to be filled. If anticipation is its own reward, maybe we ought to just congratulate ourselves on completing another spin around the sun.

Obstacles in the System

While the odds of success aren't in our favour, we at AU can at least point to past coursework victories as displays of our self-starter prowess. From this positive plateau we may proceed to identify remaining conundrums. Impediments to maintaining steadfast resoluteness are cultural, physical, and psychological. The latter category, the nether region of the mind and its mysteries, experts claim can be tamed by simple choosing a goal that we can get excited about: "I will find ways to challenge myself" (Dylan, online). Pooper scooping the yard more often is off the list; trying a new vegetable deep fried each week is a more likely candidate for honours. If we take seriously the spirit of the season then any resolution will do, so long as its trackable and allows a certain degree of gloating over our success, no matter how tenuous or tiny. To identify challenges itself is a form of success, as we know when we try to chart out an upcoming essay. So, by resolving to ponder resolutions we've already chalked up a victory!

Know The Self...and Thy Self's Potential

To know our goal is itself a goal but if that's a bit of an obscurantist tautology, the Frankfurt School social theorist Herbert Marcuse offered up, by way of a discourse on the straitjackets of technology, some wisdom on the nature of path-finding. First we have to define our selves as beings in search of meaning; to make a personal resolution starts with taking an abstraction, our self in isolation from context, as the baseline of our action. Then we must note literal and metaphysical impediments on our path to success: "the countryside is shaped and organized by the highway: what one finds en route is a byproduct or annex of the highway. Numerous signs and posters tell the traveller what to do and think; they even request his attention to the beauties of nature" (127). No less are the ideological barriers present to our happiness; just think of all the negative responses a big life choice such as the pursuit of a new career or the abandonment of an old responsibility meets! Maybe there's a reason New Year's is in winter: in early January few Canadians among us are likely to hit the road for a hitchhiking adventure of self-discovery.

And as without, so within. The cloistered nexus of our personal subjectivity likewise contains many an impediment to a serious life-changing resolution. Individualism, let our sociological imaginations recall, is not a natural fact so much as a series of historically situated beliefs. Marcuse concluded that individualism stemmed from the most unlikely of ideologies: "radical Puritanism", where each "had to break through the whole system of ideas and values imposed upon them, and to find and seize the ideas and values that conformed to their rational interest" (125). These Puritans subscribed basically to Descartes' evil demon view of reality, that a mythic bad character tended to lead us astray through deception. Under these circumstances "false standards still governed the lives of men, and the free individual was therefore he who criticized these standards" (125). Thus, to know our goals is to critique our context.

When pondering our goals for this year, then, it may be crucial to first think away from our first instinct and thus to cross examine where our ideas are coming from. With context in mind, we might approach New Year's resolutions by taking stock of

Developing Your Research series Session 2: An Intro to the Literature Reviews

Wed, Jan 18, 12:00 to 12:30 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.facebook.com/events/1139661466913266/1139661483579931/

Register through above link

Faculty of Business Undergrad Program Orientation for New Students

Wed, Jan 18, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

news.athabascau.ca/events/faculty-of-business-undergraduate-program-orientation-for-new-students-20230118/

RSVP through above link

Library Chat

Thur, Jan 19, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

Getting to know MLA

Thur, Jan 19, 12:00 to 1:30 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU's Write Site

news.athabascau.ca/events/getting-to-know-mla/

Register through above link

Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) Info Session

Thur, Jan 19, 3:00 to 4:00 pm MST
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

news.athabascau.ca/events/doctorate-in-business-administration-dba-information-session-20230119/

RSVP through above link

AUSU Student Council Meeting

Thur, Jan 19, 6:00 to 7:00 pm MST
Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/ausu-student-council-meeting-8/

RSVP through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

macro-sociological reality in the form of the historical epoch we inhabit. From this view, maybe the most valuable resolution is to realize that even our most whimsical epiphanies are constructed culturally out of a finite number of doable options and thinkable thoughts. Far from individuals in the splendid isolation of our minds, even our most intimate thoughts are sculpted from societal material. Marcuse suggested that modern man (sic) is used to “subordinating his spontaneity to the anonymous wisdom which ordered everything for him” (127). To increase our schoolwork success, then, we might simply be resolved to remember that we’re structured by so much that seems natural and inevitable. To be resolved to give our studies the best effort we can is to see what might have held us back. And from there we can with confidence know our limit and resolute within it!

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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: AU Award for a Mature Undergraduate Student

Sponsored by: AU

Deadline: February 15, 2023

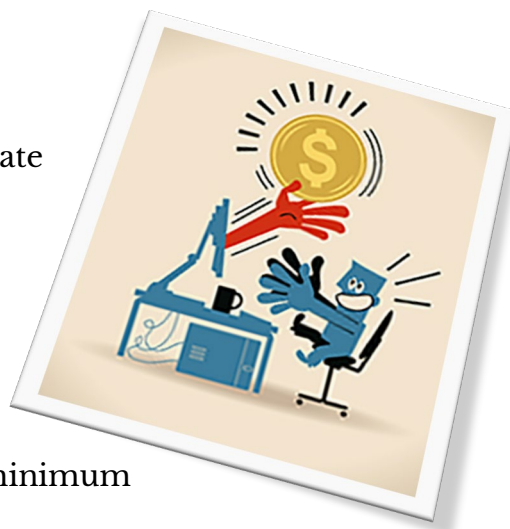
Potential payout: \$750

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be mature (40 to 60 years of age) AU students who began their university education after April 1, 2022, have successfully completed a minimum of 6 AU credits, and have a GPA of at least 3.0.

What's required: A completed application form, including contact and academic info, along with a maximum 300-word essay outlining how you have approached your educational goals despite personal challenges.

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

Where to get info: www.athabascau.ca/support-services/financial-aid-and-awards/award-details.html?award=53



Music Review—Till the Grey Skies Are Gone

Jessica Young



Artist: Hollow Hour

Album: *Till The Grey Skies Are Gone*

Progressive metal band, Hollow Hour, will be releasing their debut album on January 20th, 2023. The album is titled *Till The Grey Skies Are Gone* and will be available anywhere you get your music.

Hollow Hour is made up of four members and hails from a small Danish town outside of Copenhagen called Køge. Three of the current band members formed a band in 2015 under the name Mosaik. Eventually, the fourth member was added, the band became Hollow Hour, and they released a string of singles in 2022.

Of the album, the band says, “*Till The Grey Skies Are Gone* was written during and after a two-year period of lockdowns, which gave us many opportunities to reflect on ourselves and the world around us. We

found no shortage of real-life issues, experienced both collectively and personally. The album reflects our journeys with hard-hitting tracks such as “Ember”, “Deafening” and “I Got the Knife”. Moreover, songs like “The Mirage” and “The Canyon” soothe you in an anthemic soundscape filled with uplifting hooks. The grey clouds were the stones in our path, scarring and altering the realities we each had to face.”

The album consists of ten tracks: I Am No God; I Got The Knife; Cipher; Deafening; Ember; The Canyon; Summer Sun; Gemini; The Mirage; and Neon. “The Canyon” and “The Mirage” have music videos on the band’s YouTube.

Hollow Hour reminds me of bands like Volbeat, System of a Down, and Three Days Grace. They combine technical instrumentals and melodic vocals with the typical guitar-focused aggression of metal genres. Additionally, the lead singer has an amazing, powerful voice without any screaming.

The band kept it fairly simple with both available music videos, although if you are sensitive to flashes I would not recommend watching. Both videos feature simple shots of the band performing against various backgrounds, however they may have gone a little too hard with the special effects (hence the flash warning). I think more laid-back music videos show that the band is more focused on the actual music.

My favourite song on the album is “I Got The Knife,” with its slower, haunting sound. I also seriously appreciated the artists sharing the deep meaning behind both “The Canyon” and “The Mirage”. “The Mirage” is about the downsides of organized religion, with lyrics like “God drowns/the whole world now/Don’t be fooled/by the temples’ shady vows/Bright eyes, the mirage lies/Don’t be fooled/by the deceiving light.” Meanwhile, “The Canyon” is a personal story of betrayal and the struggle to move past it, with lyrics like, “It’s not pride nor hate/It’s my inner shame/Wounds are canyon-shaped/And I need you to break my chain.” I love when bands are able to be vulnerable without losing the musicality and relatability of the song.

Overall, I really enjoyed *Till The Grey Skies Are Gone*.

Check out Hollow Hour on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Homemade is Better

Cauliflower Crust

Chef Corey



With the holidays over, we are getting back to our usual routines. Many of you made a new year's resolution to lose weight and start shedding the extra pounds or toning those muscles. I hope you have an achievable plan. Set those smart goals and get out there. One year I set a new goal to learn to run. I trained, and for a few years, I ran quite a bit. I've gotten four half marathons under my belt.

This week's recipe is a cauliflower crust to help with that healthy lifestyle. My spouse and her sister have been working on eating less gluten, claiming they feel much better. To support her with Friday night pizza dinner, I scoured the recipe blogs and looked for some ideas for cauliflower crusts. Each recipe had some similarities. I made a few tests, and this recipe

seemed the best. It's vegetarian, with some protein from the egg used to bind the ingredients.

I have been skeptical of these no-gluten or less-gluten diets, but I also have started to see that we eat more wheat products than we need to. We are more passive than we were 100 years ago or more. More people worked labour jobs, farmed, or were outside doing more back then, and we burned calories more efficiently. In the last 100 years, we developed ways of mass-producing bread products and pushed more gluten and sugar products. Let's try to eat less gluten this year and see how we all feel about it. I'm not suggesting you pass on that morning muffin, but maybe have dinner with more protein.

Enough of my preaching. Here is my recipe for making cauliflower crust for pizza.

Cauliflower Crust

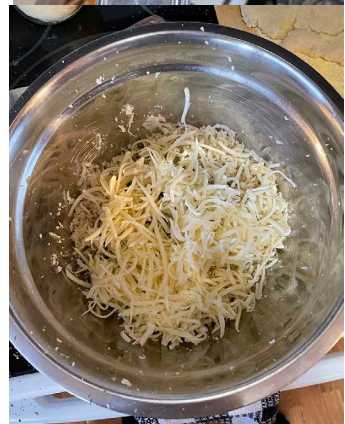
Ingredients:

- 2 x 340g packages of pre-cut cauliflower
- 1 egg
- 1.5 cups mozzarella cheese
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tsp basil
- 1/2 tsp parsley
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

Directions:

- 1) Heat cauliflower in the microwave for 3 minutes.
- 2) Strain the water from the cauliflower. This is done best with some cheesecloth or a clean dish towel.
- 3) Mix all the ingredients into a food processor and blend until you get a mixture that will hold together when pressed.
- 4) Spread into a 10-inch disc on a sheet pan, and keep it as flat as possible but mashed together.
- 5) Pre-cook for 10 minutes in a 450F oven. Add your toppings and cook for another 20 minutes. You'll know it's done if your cheese is browning on top.
- 6) Let the pizza rest for 5 minutes, then carefully serve. It won't hold up like a wheat crust, but it is close.

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.



Beyond Literary Landscapes Spring

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 underscores and outlines various literary genres, authors, and recent reads and serves 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

Inspired by last week’s column on winter literature, this week’s column focuses on a season many of us may already be dreaming of as the cold weather settles in many parts of the world, namely spring.

Some examples of notable writers who wrote about springtime weather include Walt Whitman, Lucy Maud Montgomery, and William Shakespeare.

What

Some examples of springtime-focused works include *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman, *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery, and *Sonnet 98* by William Shakespeare.

Where

These texts take place in eastern Canada, the east coast of the United States, and Great Britain.

When

These works take place in the 17, 20, and 21-centuries.

Why

These lighthearted texts may be of interest to AU students who are looking forward to warmer weather, as well as those interested in the symbolism behind springtime, including renewal and rebirth after a long, cold winter.

How

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

AU students interested in learning more about this topic may enroll in *ENGL 324: Shakespeare I* and *ENGL 325: Shakespeare II*, two senior-level, three-credit courses, which serves as “an introduction to the age of Shakespeare and his plays” and “an introduction to the study of the plays and sonnets of William Shakespeare, focusing on his later works (tragedies, tragicomedies, and romances).” (Note both these courses require prerequisites, including *ENGL 211: Prose Forms* and *ENGL 212: Poetry and Plays* or professor approval.)

Students may also be interested in *ENGL 212: Poetry and Plays*, a junior-level, three-credit course, which “introduces forms of poetry, with a wide variety of examples from Shakespeare to Atwood,

examining themes, structure, style, and imagery.” (Although no prerequisites are listed, students are strongly encouraged to have completed ENGL 211: Prose Forms prior to registration.)

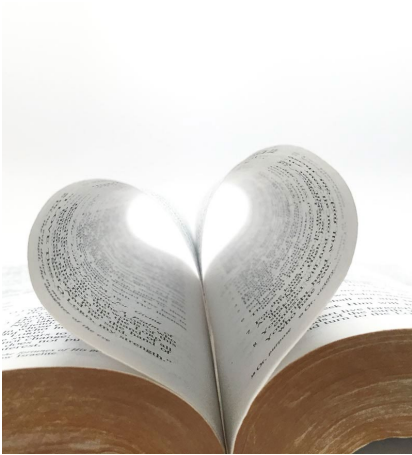
Finally, students may be interested in ENGL 492: Research and Writing Projects in Literature, a senior-level, here-credit course, in which students “may wish to focus on a particular literary theme, idea, or theoretical problem.” (Please note that ENGL 211, ENGL 212, plus two senior-level ENGL courses, and professor permission is required to register for this course.). Happy reading!

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



What Could Happen if Academia Accepted the Spiritual

Marie Well



Academia is largely divorced from the spiritual. I believe that it will reach its full potential only once academia embraces spirituality—or unconditional love.

As background, when I was in graduate school in communications studies, I had a choice of methodologies. On one end, I could say I was victimized as the "other." Many methodologies pertained to this. One such methodology was performance ethnography. With this methodology, I could perform a stage performance seeking my emancipation. And then other methodologies suggested a person's lived reality was a form of "truth." But nothing I found formed the basis for genuine cooperation rather than victimization. And nothing I found implied there was a higher truth, a spiritual truth, particularly one founded on principles of selfless, unconditional love. There once

was one theory, I believe, that entered the spiritual domain, called "transcendentalism." Still, it was no longer in vogue, so I couldn't apply it.

So, I had a choice of methodologies I didn't believe in. However, I wanted to research how methodologies were created so that I could one day make one. But I was just a master's student and bore no clout.

I did find a methodology that was also a theory that inspired me. It was spiritual feminism, but it was no longer in vogue. Instead, what I considered to be the abrasive form of feminism prevailed. These feminists are more self-interested rather than selfless. The structure of feminism I wish to see one day is based on selfless, unconditional love.

Even the psychology department's treatment of marital therapy emphasizes self-interest with "I" statements, venting, shared responsibilities, and expectations. I'm getting certified with the Marriage Foundation, which, although unaccredited by the psychology discipline, believes the psychology community's low success rate in saving marriages has much to do with conditional love. They advocate for unconditional love, which is entirely selfless, void of expectations, but ripe with service and appreciation. I can tell you from experience that my giving unconditional love has brought immeasurable joy in my life. It turned my world into a beautiful place. And I keep learning the principles of unconditional love daily.

So, I believe academia would flourish if it embraced spirituality, or in other words, unconditional love, which to me, is the highest form of spiritual awareness. For instance, mathematicians a decade ago were researching the existence of a fifth spatial dimension where people's innards would be visible. At least, that's what a math professor told me. And he said a subset of spiritual mathematicians inferred this concept was related to the afterlife.

And what about the countless stories of people who undergo near-death experiences? These people almost always claim to be enveloped in this indescribably blissful feeling of unconditional love that brings some of them to tears when they retell the tale. Shouldn't their first-person accounts qualify as qualitative research, not just from the perspective of religious studies but from a more holistic academic inquiry?

And what would be the implications of cruel research on animals if love was the foundation? Or what would be the implications of robotics, physics, business, art, or medical school if unconditional love were the basis? At the very least, I would find academia less stressful and more purposeful. And I wouldn't feel my heart break looking into the terrified, sweet eyes of the last surviving mouse. But, naturally, empathy should prevail when seeing a tiny mouse placed upside down in a beaker. The researcher's goal is to see how long it would survive in such brutal conditions. So why not study how long it would survive in situations where it could thrive? Or, at the very least, the researchers could offer the slightest bit of humanity along the way.

A discipline called positive psychology is emerging. It emphasizes the value of spirituality. But, in my view, it's only optimally favorable once it embraces that selfless state of unconditional love, which is the true essence of all positivity. I believe pure love is your true essence, too.

The scientific method has its place, but could it intersect with spirituality or unconditional love? The two perspectives may clash on many levels, but opposing views often coincide, such as in politics or everyday life. And perhaps actual science does not conflict with spiritual, unconditional love, but advances from it.

One day a revolution founded on spiritual, selfless, unconditional love may occur in academia. That revolution will cause academic progress to skyrocket at unprecedented rates, in my opinion. After all, isn't true progress the realization of happiness and joy?



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

AUautomatic email. After registering for a course, a student wonders why the confirmation went to an AU student email address, having not set one up. Replies point out that each student is assigned an AU student email address automatically; it just requires a log in (after which email can be redirected to another account, if so wished.)

Discord

Segway bounce. A conversation thread in the #coffee-shop-lounge starts with an outing to see the Harlem Globetrotters then plunges into a series of video games.

reddit

Straying from the business lane. A business student expresses frustration at having to take non-business courses, but is pleasantly surprised to learn that there are some COMP courses that look interesting.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "The deadline is approaching for several #Athabasca scholarships, awards, and bursaries. Funding opportunities include @austudentsunion Indigenous Student Award and the Laurence Decore Award for Student Leadership. t.co/hYcceKxdZV."





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

The Lights of Christmas

Dear Barb:

Dear Barb:

Hi, I am a young mother in her thirties with two young children. This Christmas I noticed only a handful of houses with Christmas lights and decorations. When I was a kid almost every house on my street had lights at Christmas time. I feel bad for my kids that they don't get to see the glorious sites that I did. I don't know if this is a sign of the times, in terms of Canada now being a diverse country, with many cultures, or if people are just so downtrodden because of the state of the world. My children have not known anything different, so they don't seem to notice. What is your opinion, the state of the world, or the result of cultural differences?

Thanks, Robin.

Hi Robin:

I do not think the answer to that question is either/or, rather it's a combination. According to Abacas Data, a research team, who interviewed 1500 Canadians, 41% state they will celebrate Christmas as a religious holiday while 50% will celebrate it as a secular holiday and 9% are not sure. Many Canadians participate in Christmas celebrations for non-denominational fun and festivities, rather than for the religious dimension. One in ten consider Christmas to be primarily a religious

celebration.

The reasons you are seeing fewer lights and decoration could be a result of many things. For example, the minimalist movement is still thriving, and people are downsizing their Christmas celebrations. Part of this could be for financial reasons, which would fall into your question about the state of the world at present. For many, Christmas is an anxiety-producing time as they do not have the money to buy extravagant presents for their children, or if they do, they will be paying for them long after Christmas. Also, the Christmas season brings to light loneliness and family conflicts, which can be suppressed at other times of the year.

For others, it is just too much work to drag out all the decorations and lights from storage for such a brief time since they may already be tired and overworked. Also, many organizations create professional displays for people to visit. Often at these displays families can have a hot drink and join in games. The thinking is why do all the work of decorating your house when only your neighbors will see it? Families enjoy these events and may create new traditions. I do not know if this answered your question.

Happy New Year Robin!

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.





UPDATE

COMMUNITY. RESOURCES . SERVICES



The AU Students' Union would like to wish you a happy New Year and all the best in 2023! Pursuing an education can be challenging so it's important to celebrate milestones, big or small, and you did it—you made it another year! Not only did you make it, but you're bettering yourself through post-secondary studies and we couldn't be more proud to represent you.

Enjoy a safe long weekend and check out ausu.org for the latest in AUSU [News](#), [Events](#), and [Services](#). We're here to help members have an exceptional student experience in 2023 and beyond. Questions or concerns for your Athabasca University Students' Union? Email ausu@ausu.org.



Have you wondered how cutting-edge academic research is done? Have you thought about broadening your experience with a research assistant role? Join us Jan. 23-27, 2023, for [Research Week](#) and learn how undergraduate research at AU can strengthen any CV!



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Please send us your valuable opinions, feedback, and suggestions. We are committed providing quality content and look forward to hearing from you!

CLASSIFIEDS

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