



THE VOICE

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Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

Telephone Numbers

Growing Importance in a Digital World

Don't Blame the Meteorologist

The Math is Grueling

Plus:

*The Lie Down Lowdown
The Impossible?
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

Running and the Numbers

Karl Low



Ten candidates are currently in the running for the two seats available in the AUSU by-election. Voting opens on Thursday, so before you vote, be sure to check in on *The Voice Magazine's* website, as we'll be running our usual quick Q&A with all the candidates so that you can get a better idea of who these people are and what they want to do for you while on AUSU Council.

Even though this is just a by-election and those elected will only have a year before facing re-election, the reality is that incumbents often have an advantage, even in student union elections, so who you choose now will likely have an effect on what happens in the next general election.

And speaking of elections, the run-up to the Alberta general election has started, with me having to turn away a volunteer for the UCP candidate at my door the other day. If it seems early, it's because, technically, it is, and the campaigns haven't officially started yet, even though we're starting to get policy announcements from all of the parties, with the Alberta party, for one, promising to enact a recommendation

from the Council of Alberta University Students to provide a one-time cost of living payment of \$54 million for currently enrolled post-secondary students in the province.

Of course, there are spending limits when it comes to the campaign period, which is probably why we're starting to see some action now, before those limits kick in. After all, if the volunteer can deliver campaign materials to people before the campaign period officially starts, well, that doesn't count as campaigning, does it? That's just the normal action of the UCP minister trying to "inform" his constituents of what the government is doing, which is why I turned the guy away. Come to me during the campaign period and we can have a talk (though if you're representing the UCP candidate, you may not like the questions I ask, such as why was the candidate trying to get around campaign spending limits by sending people out early?)

In the meantime, this week, *The Voice Magazine* has a number of looks at, well, numbers. Chris O'Brien returns with an article explaining the numbers behind why the weatherman seems to have so much trouble predicting the weather, such as the multi-week cold "snap" we seem to be having in Calgary, with a few days crossing the -20 degrees Celsius threshold. This is in March, remember. We're supposed to be approaching spring.

We also have a look at the practice of how phone numbers are becoming increasingly important in society and how companies practice of recycling them could be creating significant risks to people being able to control their own digital lives, and an article on how to engage in a hedonistic lifestyle when the numbers in the bank account say otherwise.

And our feature article? Why we interview a student who's pursuing her AU degree with the eventual aim of becoming a CPA, working with the numbers.

But if all that is too much, we still have reviews, advice, scholarships, events, a look at why you might need a meat slicer, or why the examinations of the recent Fergus report may have been lacking, and more!

Enjoy the read!

MINDS

WE

MEET



The Voice Magazine recently had a chance to chat with Meghan Sandbeck (she/her), a Bachelor of Commerce student from Battelford, Saskatchewan, which she acknowledged as “Treaty 6 territory ... the traditional territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Stoney, Nakota, and Dakota, as well as the traditional homeland of the Métis Nation.”

She stated, “My major will either be finance or accounting. I am waiting to see which course materials I prefer before declaring a major. I hope to pursue my CPA designation after graduating. In the future, I will likely pursue a master’s degree.”

On a personal note, Meghan stated, “I hold a journey person license in hairstyling. After working in the beauty industry for 5 years, I was affected by health issues that ultimately led to my inability to continue with that career. I was remarkably fortunate to be offered a position at an extraordinary community-based organization in my area, and I have worked there full-time now for

nearly 4 years. On top of working full-time, I parent my fierce daughters and am in the process of planning my wedding for July 2023. Yep, I’m busy! Deciding I wasn’t busy enough, I added full-time university studies to my plate.”

Meghan had some great study tips for fellow AU students. “I am a very visual learner, so I create a spreadsheet with the suggested study schedules and break it down into chunks on a calendar so I can easily see where I am in my course timeline, compared to other courses. This keeps me from hyper-focusing on only one course.”

She continued, “I study best by learning an entire concept, and then breaking it down into specific components. I struggle learning specific components if I don’t understand how it all ties together in the end. Of course, this makes school challenging! When in doubt, I watch YouTube videos of entire concepts, and then return to my studies to learn the specific components. We are so blessed to live in an age where vast arrays of information are readily available.”

She also some advice regarding motivation. “My vision of the future, coupled with my memories of the past, keep me motivated. Looking back on my life, I realize that every challenge I was handed I handled and made it through to the other side. Now when I am experiencing challenges, I look at how far I’ve come, and how much better I am doing than I ever thought I would be. I tell myself that one day, I will look back on my studying days and think the same thing.”

Meghan continued with some helpful advice for new students and prospective students. “You can do this, don’t doubt yourself. Utilize the tools Athabasca provides such as the Write Site, and

don't be afraid to ask your tutors to clarify unclear concepts. Ensure you have a solid support system."

She added, "Treating school like a job with a specific hour requirement helps me stay on track by allocating a certain amount of hours per week to my studies. This allows me to schedule other 'life stuff' without feeling guilty about not working on school, because I account for those hours elsewhere in my week. Having an hour requirement for myself also helps keep me sane. If I complete the chapters/lessons that I had planned on before I hit my self-imposed hour requirement, I continue working and it feels great to get 'ahead' of where the suggested study schedule says I should be. If I do not complete the chapters/lessons I had planned on, stepping away gives me a much-needed mental break. After a mental break, I find when I resume my studies the following week, unclear concepts have subconsciously sunk in."

When she is not busy studying, Meghan enjoys spending time with her children and partner, "working on wedding planning, and maintaining a social connection with ... friends."

She also enjoys travel, describing a recent memorable vacation this summer with her "two daughters and a very dear, sacred friend of mine." She stated, "We went to Drumheller and the trip was incredibly enlightening. Plus, I have not had many opportunities to take my girls on a vacation—so they were able to create lifelong memories which is huge to me."

She also mentioned taking a memorable family vacation during childhood with her parents and sister to the mountains. "Being from Saskatchewan, the mountains alone were sure an experience to take in. I remember we stayed at a hot springs and had taken in opportunities to go white-water rafting, venture up on the Columbia icefields, take a gondola up a mountain, and take a horseback trail-ride through the valley. I still aim to take my own children on this same vacation one day," she reminisced.

Meghan let *The Voice Magazine* know about an author and book that have made an impact on her life, namely Brené Brown's *Daring Greatly*, which "has profoundly impacted my life by explaining why we should have the courage to show up in our own lives." She explained, "Also, in one of her presentations, 'Why Critics Aren't the Ones Who Count,' she encourages people to invite their critics into their lives, but not take on their feedback blindly, by using the dialogue: '*I see you, I hear you, but I am going to show up and do this anyway.*' I intertwine this concept into my daily life when struggling with vulnerability, courage, worthiness, and shame. It helps enable me to sort through whose opinions matter by defining who is 'in the arena' with me, and who are in the 'cheap seats' criticizing my choices."

Meghan credits many mentors and life lessons over the years who contributed to her desire to learn. She then noted, "The top of the list, though, is a dear friend of mine who saw something inside of me and decided to take a chance on me. I am so blessed to have this remarkable mentor. She patiently guides me, laughs along-side me, and indirectly teaches me how to be a better person just by watching her."

She continued, "Most of my adult life, I have felt that higher education was not on the table for me. I had many conversations with her about my desire to pursue an undergraduate degree, and the situations holding me back. She not only supported me, but fiercely encouraged me to follow my dreams, including helping me narrow down a program that I would enjoy and would be beneficial to me."

Meghan's experience with online learning had generally been positive. "I enjoy online learning because of the flexibility. I am able to bring just my laptop and noise cancelling headphones with me to family functions, my kids' extracurriculars, and work (for studies over my lunch hour)

without needing to lug textbooks around. I am partial to online studies as I can study at my own pace – not a rigid timeline structure where I would almost certainly be either bored or struggling to keep up. The biggest reason I appreciate online studies is that I can continue to work alongside my studies and provide for my family. I likely would not have decided to return to post-secondary studies if attending physical classes was my only option. Online learning has put my self-discipline to a serious test. I also find it challenging that when I have a question, I need to wait (sometimes multiple days) for an answer. When my mind is focused on a subject, I like to finalize my understanding in one sitting.”

Her most memorable AU course so far has been ACCT 253: Introductory Financial Accounting, which “is frustrating and challenging in an extreme way.” In particular, she feels that “it is hard to describe the level of satisfaction when [she] finally understands a concept [she] had been struggling with.”

And communications with her course tutors? “So far my course tutors have been incredible! I receive very prompt responses with in-depth explanations.”

The Voice Magazine asked what her first project would be if she were the new president of AU. “I would consolidate resources onto a single platform. I am currently taking three courses: one course has a digital textbook I can access on VitalSource Bookshelf, one course has an online textbook with explorations on a specific site, and one course is a completely interactive platform on a separate specific site. When first beginning my studies, it was an adjustment to get used to.”

As for which famous person, past or present, Meghan would like to have lunch with, and why, she stated, “I would 100% choose to have lunch with Alecia Moore,” (who is more commonly known as P!nk.) Meghan continued, “She sends an incredible message that you don’t need to change who you are for other people, and is such a strong role model to me.” And the lunch? “I wouldn’t be eating a single thing – I would spend the entire time listening to Alecia speak and impart wisdom on me. I’m sure the saying is true to ‘never meet your heroes,’ however I cannot think of a single thing that would make me like and respect her less. I am captivated anytime I hear her speak.”

She also let us know her most valuable lesson learned in life: “kindness and understanding are the foundation of everything. Approach everything you do and everyone you meet with those qualities, and you will always have a community rallying behind you.”

And her proudest moment? “The proudest moment of my life so far is a cumulative impact of proud moments. Graduating grade 12 on schedule along-side my friends with a baby on my hip, earning a trade certificate with a 92.41% average and later going on to earn my journey person Red Seal endorsement. Most recently, taking the leap of faith to return to post-secondary studies. Looking back at all of the obstacles I have faced, I think about how insurmountable each one of them felt at the time. These memories are both humbling and proudful at the same time.” Best of luck Meghan!

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.

Don't Blame the Meteorologist The Math is Grueling

Chris O'Brien



The words *meteorologist* and *dependable* are seldom spoken in the same sentence. Most of us experience minor forecasting mishaps regularly—it sometimes rains a bit in my neighbourhood when the forecast says, “sun and cloud.” Other times I bring the raincoat only to find that it rains in parts of the city other than where I happen to be.

There is also the probability metric. What is one to do with 40% chance of rain? I have a great raincoat, but it is stifling in even a little bit of sun. Fortunately, and perplexingly, 40% seems to seldom result in rain, while 80% is a guarantee.

That being said, I do think meteorologists get a bad rap. They are, after all, depending on some hideously complex mathematical models to provide them with forecast information. In this article I hope to shed some light on weather prediction models for those who would like a bit more colour on this topic than you would typically find in non-scientific writing, while keeping the symbols and equations to a minimum—a challenge for sure, as the concepts underpinning weather

prediction include advanced calculus, probability, systems of equations, numerical analysis, and chaos theory. But we are not trying to advance these mathematical models (which are still a topic of research (Durbin, 2018)), understand their intricacies, or build software applications for weather prediction. So let's dip our toes in. We can skim the surface of some of these topics to build an understanding of why the meteorologist has such a tough job.

Basic equations & Iterative equations

I expect that you are familiar with functions such as the equation of a straight line: $y = mx + b$, where m is slope, and b is the y-intercept. These equations are “explicit” – you know the exact value of y for every value of x . Many real-world equations, such as those that describe weather, are not so friendly. You can't always directly calculate “ y ”, which might be the temperature in your city tomorrow afternoon.

Iterative equations are an example of these not-so-friendly equations. They describe a system where a variable of interest is dependent on prior values of that variable (such as how the current temperature outside is somewhat dependent on what it was an hour ago). Consider, for example, $x_{n+1} = 2x_n + 1$. You calculate a given value of x by multiplying the prior value by two and adding one. So, as long as you know the initial value, say x_0 , then you can calculate other values by working your way through the sequence. We'll come back to this with something more useful for our topic of discussion.

Many Equations to Solve Simultaneously

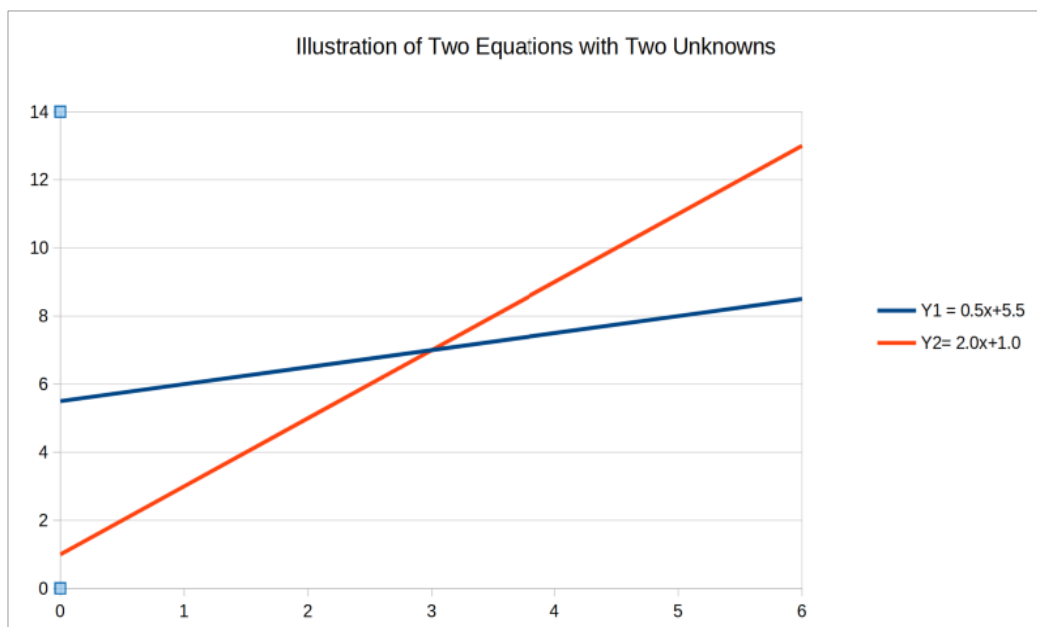
Mathematical weather modeling involves solving systems of equations – solving for many variables with multiple equations. Courses on this topic typically begin by illustrating an example with two equations and two unknowns, which, geometrically speaking, is the intersection of two

lines (if you feel like reading further, Athabasca University's Math 270 Linear Algebra course may be of interest). Consider the following set of equations:

$$y_1 = 0.5x + 5.5$$

$$y_2 = 2.0x + 1.0$$

Where, as you may recall, y_1 and y_2 are dependent on x and can be represented graphically as straight lines. We can solve this (that is, find the value of x such that $y_1 = y_2$) algebraically by setting $y_2 = y_1$ and solving for x . I'll skip the drama and tell you that $x=3$ is the solution. At this value of x , the values of y_1 and y_2 are both 7, as illustrated below.



In a weather model, the equations get more interesting (or ugly depending on your perspective!). Instead of the ubiquitous and abstract x and y , you would have temperature, pressure, wind speed, and humidity, among others.

“Big deal,” you say, “just a few ugly equations.” The challenge for weather prediction, as far as this section is concerned, is that it has to be built on a large scale (e.g. across a country, or global). There is no one single value of value of interest (e.g. temperature)—you have different values for different regions. Imagine the planet covered by giant cubes, or cells, with 1 km per side. Each cell is initialized with known values of interest, and the equations tell us how the cells interact with each other and how the values of interest change over time.

As our planet's surface area is 510 million square kilometers, there are a lot of equations to solve, even for a computer.

OK. So, there are a ton of equations to solve, but we have tools to solve them numerically (which is to say, approximately). So, why does the weather forecast a few days out change so much? Because small errors exist at the input of weather systems and are accumulated throughout numerical calculations. For ‘chaotic’ systems such as weather, these errors can result in outputs that are wildly different from the actual.

Chaotic Behavior & Sensitivity to Initial Conditions

There have been some epic weather forecasting failures that are rooted, at least in part, to chaos and probabilistic forecasting. In 2015 a giant snowstorm unexpectedly veered east of New York

City where it was forecasted to land (Santora & Fitzsimmons, 2015). Similarly, in 2004, forecasters issued a flood watch (lowest level of alert) for Boscastle, UK. An unexpected storm formed locally however, when inland and coastal air masses converged, resulting in a powerful torrent of water that swept away cars and buildings (The Guardian, 2004). Chaos in the real world from chaos in math.

In mathematics, chaos is a term used to describe apparent random behavior while governed by deterministic laws. Chaotic systems, such as weather, exhibit an extreme sensitivity to initial conditions—change the input by a tiny bit from some original amount (or alternatively, if you had some error at the start) and very quickly you end up with an output that looks nothing like what you had without the error.

You don't need a complex weather system to illustrate, a quadratic equation you would have seen in high-school or early university will suffice. Let's consider the quadratic equation:

$$y = rx(1-x) = -rx^2 + rx$$

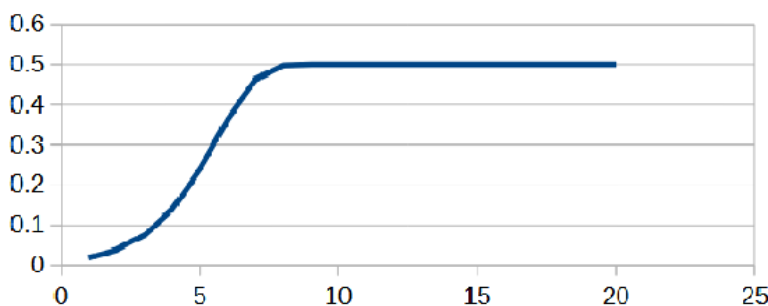
where r is a constant, and x is our familiar independent variable. Let's create an iterative form of this equation by replacing x on the right hand side with x_n , and replacing y with x_{n+1} . Here, a given value of x (i.e. x_n) is used to calculate the next value of x (i.e. x_{n+1}). This equation is used in wildlife population models (Veritasium, 2020), where x_n and x_{n+1} represent the population of interest in the current year and following year respectively. Weather models are similar in this aspect – the current temperature is used, with other values of interest, to calculate the temperature at some point in the near future, say, 1 minute from now and then 2 minutes from now, and so on.

Now with these changes our formula looks like:

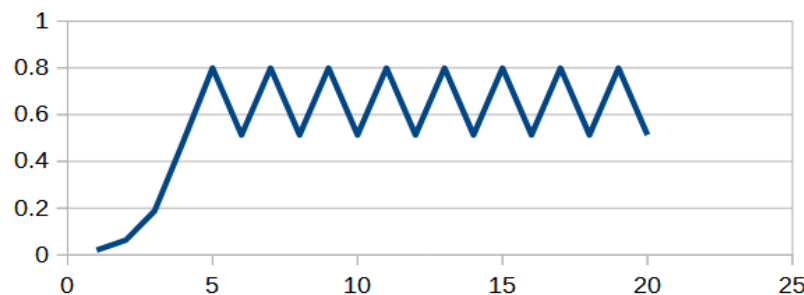
$$x_{n+1} = rx_n(1-x_n)$$

Let's give some examples of how this works. Starting with $x_1 = 0.02$, with $r = 2$ for instance, we calculate $x_2 = 2(0.02)(1-0.02) = 0.0392$, and then $x_3 = 2(0.0392)(1 - 0.0392) = .0753$ approximately. If you are handy with a spreadsheet and you keep going you will see that $x_{10} = 0.5$ with x being stable from there (further iterations don't change x). Different values of r can result very different graphs. With $r = 3.2$ for example, x toggles between two different values.

$x_n (r = 2)$

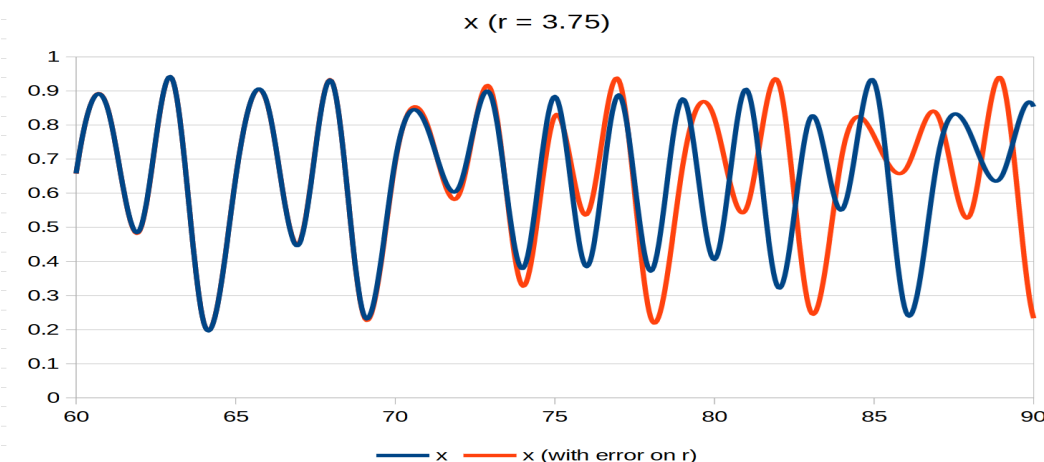


$x_n (r = 3.2)$



With $r = 3.75$, you obtain chaos. x doesn't settle as it did with $r = 2$, and the graph that results is very sensitive to initial conditions. If you obtain a second graph by changing the value of our constant r by a tiny amount (representing for example a tiny error in the measurement of r – in this case we use an error of 0.000000001), it's not long before the two graphs bear no

resemblance to one another. As illustrated in the image, the graphs of these two curves initially overlap (as you would expect with such a small error), but they begin to diverge around the 72nd iteration. By the 80th iteration they look nothing alike.



And so it is with the meteorologist's model: errors at the input (due to value approximation using 'cells', and because the inputs are truncated to a limited number of decimal places), and small errors in numerical calculations make it impossible (at this time at least) to produce an accurate 14 day weather forecast.

And there are still more sources of error. The equations used in weather models are complex, but they are simplified versions of the real-world physical equations.

Probability

Easy now, no talk of permutations or combinations or z-scores here! We discussed above how nonlinear systems can be sensitive to initial conditions, and attempts to forecast the behaviour of such systems can differ substantially with tiny differences in the input. To try and make up for this, an ensemble weather forecast is done—multiple simulations are run, each with a slight variation of its initial conditions. The result being a set of forecasts that present the range of future weather possibilities. If 40% of the simulations indicate rain in your town, then you have that value as your “probability of precipitation”.

I hope now having read this article that you have a more in depth understanding of the difficulty of accurate weather prediction. Perhaps you can forgive meteorologists for such failures, as well as the unreliability of their forecasts, especially a few days out or more. Of course one might ask why we think our climate models are reliable when we cannot rely on a two week weather forecast – I'll leave that discussion for another time.

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The Growing Importance of Telephone Numbers in a Digital World

Alek Golijanin



In 2020, it was estimated that close to 85% of Canadians owned a smartphone, and Canada's big three telecom providers reported having a combined subscriber count of over 33 million subscribers. These statistics are a major positive as our economy looks to embrace the technology changes that are beginning to be brought about as a result of the digital revolution. In that digital world, a telephone number is guaranteed to be as important as a driver's license or even a passport, but there is one major problem that we are failing to account for, and that is the recycling of telephone numbers.

Telephone numbers and social media.

When social media giant Meta first allowed users to create accounts with telephone numbers, their good intentions made it possible for an unlimited amount of accounts to be created under a single telephone number, and it was still possible to do so in 2020. The "good intentions" were not well thought out and it

became possible to exploit this feature in order to create spam accounts which could be monetized for likes, comments, and follows. With a little bit of knowledge on how to code, it was possible for algorithms to create accounts on their own, and the hardest part of this operation would be creating a clean website that offered "boosting services".

While some might argue that Meta and other social media platforms intentionally allowed an unlimited amount of accounts to be created under the same telephone number in order to inflate their user database, the reality of the situation is that telephone numbers have been getting recycled since cellphones became a thing. Tech developers understand that a person who gets a telephone number in 2020 may not be the same person who had that telephone number in 2010. What they failed to account for was creating a set of parameters that specifically tracked the duplicity of accounts created under a single telephone number, but they may have assumed that their databases were already programmed to do so.

There are potential privacy issues with recycling telephone numbers.

There was once a time where an IP address was once seen as the centralized location for all-things digital, but the change from wired connections to wireless connections has placed a greater importance on telephone numbers to serve as a modern-day IP address. That means that there are serious implications for individuals and families that lose access to their phone numbers, since telephone numbers are now utilized for everything from verification and authentication to security prevention. For the average person, losing access to a telephone number that was used to register for various accounts almost guarantees that they will not be able to reobtain access to many of those accounts.

If telephone numbers were treated like email addresses, it is likely that we would not have had these sorts of challenges because once someone gets their desired "@outlook.com" or "@gmail.com", nobody will ever be able to have them. Even if the owner of that email address chooses to permanently delete their account, it is almost beyond probability that it will be "recycled" into use.

All of this brings us to the important question we all need to ask, and that is whether the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission will need to introduce new rules around the recycling of telephone numbers given their growing importance in the digital world. Perhaps, it requires connecting with different oversight bodies and asking them about their long-term strategy for telephone numbers and to what extent are they aware of the potential privacy concerns.

In a world where getting access to your accounts requires having your phone number be you, recycling phone numbers is closer to Soylent green than environmental.

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

Fly on the Wall

Pulling up our Big Scholar Undies

Jason Sullivan



Emergent within our adult lives are many facets to be proud of: kids, families, careers, car payments, mortgages. Yet, where there's responsibility there's also the potential for stress and strain and the pressing need to, as the saying goes, put on our big boy undies or big girl panties. Some realities of growing up apply at any phase of life, right? Cultural times change and so do mythologies about what sort of society we live in; while all the world may be at our fingertips along with that comes a whole galaxy of stresses and distractions to derail our AU careers.

Consternation in the face of macro-sociological reality is not a new event; an 18th Century German philosophy movement even named themselves after these twin structures of moribund bliss: *Sturm*

und Drang. “Although it’s now a generic synonym of ‘turmoil,’ the term was originally used in English to identify a late 18th-century German literary movement whose works were filled with rousing action and high emotionalism, and often dealt with an individual rebelling against the injustices of society” (Merriam-Webster, online). While *Sturm und Drang* encapsulated responses to vanishing romanticism and ascendant industrialism, it remains today in such challenges as the perpetual pecking of clickbait into the limited space of our studious attention spans.

The struggle to find meaning and focus to one’s life is as real then as now, and, as students, the differences may be less than they seem. No matter how we mature in other areas of our life, becoming socially adept at kibbitzing through multiple simultaneous conversations for instance, the oldest yoke of all remains: the learned ability to affix our mental cart to one topic for prolonged succession. Attention span is surely a holy grail adult skill. In particular, good scholarly efforts remain a journey guided by, and wholly requiring, an effective attention span. There’s no cap and gown and diploma without them, just as there’s no older, wise, toddler without the underwear to match.

Whereas in the past basic life needs, like drinkable water and decent nutrition, may have vexed would-be academics, our challenges now more likely involve an excess of distractions often claiming to count as entertainment. Ground zero for this struggle, and its attendant requirement that we don our adult apparel for our adult education, is surely that magical pocket humunculus known as the smart phone. From the chemical outcomes priming our neurological pathways due to its incessant beeping and buzzing and intermittent rewards thanks to a social media like or a comment, one commentator even claims that “The short-term, dopamine-driven feedback loops that we have created are destroying how society works” (Palihapitiya in Haynes, online). And if that’s not enough, there’s even phantom text message syndrome whereby our brains *think* our phones are vibrating when by all objective measures they are not. “The phenomenon is also known as ‘vibrantxiety,’ ‘ringxiety,’ ‘fauxcellarm,’ ‘phantom phone calls,’ or ‘audio illusion’ (Sauer et al., online). No one needs *more* ghosts to haunt their complex schedules and conflicting life realities!

Clearly those big adult britches have changed context, if not necessity. Nevertheless, we at AU are granted the possibility to allow modern technology to enliven our studies. With the right priorities and motivation, online learning has never been more interactional or held more potential for personal growth. During COVID-19 everyone, in a sense, became a distance participant in their lives and this allowed many of us to hone our already elevated learning skills. Distractions, though awfully abundant, can also be teaching moments: if we can overcome our smart phone, we will become more disciplined students. Every challenge indeed is an opportunity.

Finally, the mark of a successful scholar remains the ability to engage with material in isolation. Rene Descartes famously sat pondering a candle and wondering how he could know what he knew beyond the baseline fact that he was a knower knowing. And at AU, no matter our chosen academic major, the key to us learning is us being there, fully present and aware, to absorb course material. Whereas a good telephone conversation with our tutors takes basically the form of snaring a brick-and-mortar professor in her office, the world of online interaction means there are an awful lot more

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

Designing for communities of inquiry in online courses: MOOC

Mar 12 to Apr 15

Online

Hosted by AU and the Commonwealth of Learning

news.athabasca.ca/events/designing-for-communities-of-inquiry-in-online-courses-mooc/

Register through above link

Library Chat

Tues, Mar 14, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabasca.ca/library/index.html

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

Writing Forum:

Idea development and paper organization

Tues, Mar 14, 12:30 to 1:30 pm MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU's Write Site

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

No pre-registration needed; access through above link

Library Chat

Wed, Mar 15, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabasca.ca/library/index.html

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

Library Chat

Thur, Mar 16, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabasca.ca/library/index.html

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

2023 AUSU By-Election: Voting Period

Mar 16 to 21

Online

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/2023-by-election-voting-period/

Ballots emailed directly to undergrad voters; more info on above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

non-academic moments of discourse that compete for our attention spans. Now, online phone calls are literally a possibility at any moment. Sometimes talking, even with peer students, can get in the way of the actual writing process. Although Zoom chats and online conferences among students do imply a certain interface of beings with beings that ought to encourage the flourishing of our studies, we, in the end, remain alone in a physical location to write our essay outlines, drafts, and final papers.

In this sense, to truly buck up and get our schooling done means actually making our studies for a time more isolated, individual, and solitary. Loneliness is part of every writing project and that allows us to reflect down the mysterious hall of mirrors of our minds as they ponder and ruminate on our course material and what we can add to the proceedings. Like musical composers or thespian playwrights, it is what happens in our solitary dens that leads us to share our creativity and insights with others. Sometimes the inverse is true, but, even then, we must first read the assigned readings and answer questions pertaining to learning objectives.

The essence of learning is about learning to learn for ourselves, a core reason Athabasca is such a great university. Divested of security blankets and easy cheats, our AU student-hood teaches us the ways and means to truly succeed, such that we can say with certainty that we were the main impetus to our success. Sink or swim, our best selves will emerge with each assignment, essay, and exam. Besides rote rooting for facts and figures, our adult education focus as students requires us to combine old information into a semblance of new ideas. While some essay topics are more direct than others, the purpose of exams and assignments involves us coming up with a thesis of our own to explore, illustrate, and defend. In terms of being personally involved with our studies, there's surely no App for that!

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- Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.*



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

This winter's deadly avalanches in western Canada got us digging around in the archives for the blessedly few references to those mountainside slides of snow.

A vital link. Deanna Roney of BC finds out firsthand the value of a satellite communication device when her husband encounters an injured snowmobiler in the back country. "I watched the helicopter fly over my house and head over the mountains toward where they were, the sun was setting, and the temperature was dropping, it had been -30 C the night before." *InReach*, February 23, 2018.

Romancing the snowflake. In one of the earliest *Voice* articles published online, Zoe Dalton looks beyond the English language's limited snow terminology to the beauty and magic behind the snow bank. "Beyond indicating a verb (i.e. it is snowing) as opposed to a noun (i.e. it is snow), many of us tend to regard snow as a vast, homogeneous pain in the butt." *Nature Notes – From the Backyard to the Biosphere: Let it Snow, Let it Snow*, January 1, 2003.

Can We Compete With Shania Twain in our 90s?

Marie Well



Many religions believe in reincarnation. I believe everything we do in this lifetime has implications for at least the afterlife. But if there is an afterlife or reincarnation, we should ask ourselves this: What if we're better looking, fitter, wealthier, more famous, more talented, sweeter, and more intelligent than Shania Twain next lifetime? Now, that's a goal.

But we must prepare during this lifetime, even when we turn 95—especially when we turn 95. So, how might a 95-year-old compete with Shania? I saw a grandmother in her 80s who looked fit and attractive—for any age. So, acquiring a fairly intense level of fitness is one requirement.

And we all know those 90-year-olds with the sweetest personalities—potential matches to the sweetness of Shania. But they developed the wisdom to radiate the soul's beauty. And these women may often be wells of unconditional love due to that wisdom. And wisdom can be found in every religion or self-help book. So, wisdom

is another criterion.

And don't we all love the 80-year-old woman who pursues her dream of acquiring a university degree? And I've learned that some institutions won't charge for an undergrad after a certain age. I know I would've stuck like glue to an 80-year-old fellow female student simply for the sake of adoration and admiration. So, lifelong learning is another component of topping Shania's act.

And what about these billionaires in their 80s or 90s? At the very least, don't disqualify the possibility of billions in your life. Instead, please put it on your radar and tuck it away for the moments those doors open. I guarantee doors are opening everywhere around you as you read this. You can always push the bar higher and higher or take a giant leap into new possibilities. Therefore, desire and self-belief are essential to making more money than Shania.

And, last but not least, talent. I saw this extraordinary ballerina in her 70s or 80s or older. True, she started young. But what if she accumulated even more talents throughout her lifetime? After all, one talent builds on another. Just ask Wayne Gretzky, who developed outstanding skills in multiple sports. The better we get at one talent, the better we get at the next. So, one way to top Shania's talent is to gain plenty of skills of our own.

Oh, and I forgot the part about fame. All of the above can be catalysts for great fame. How many fantastic movie producers are 70 or older, for instance? And how many 80-year-old intellectuals or wise souls have published bestselling books? The list goes on and on. We can be as famous as Shania in our niches. But we need to get our stuff out there. Learning how to work the media can be as simple as phoning a news station, asking whom to contact, and pitching our story. So, to get as famous as Shania, we need our gifts out there in the world.

Finer details come into play, such as turning every thought into a source of personal and professional development. I plan on topping Shania's stellar performance next lifetime. And if I plan things right, I'll achieve it in my 90s. After all, we've all got Shania's potential.

Grounded in the Now with Gratitude

Practicing gratitude improves focus

Barbara Lehtiniemi



The first two winters of the pandemic provided ideal conditions for cross-country skiing: just the right amount of snow, and not much else to do. My husband and I went for a ski almost every morning. We're fortunate to be able to ski right from our back door—across our yard and then on to our neighbour's 100-acre farm property.

Once we had our tracks set in the snow, the skiing was easy. I found these outings provided me plenty of time for thinking ahead. In a one-hour ski outing, I could plan my day, or think up my next piece of writing. The open skies and fresh air inspired creative thoughts.

I found when I arrived home, however, I couldn't remember much of the ski outing. While it was pleasant and productive to think of other things while I was skiing, I began to feel like I was missing the skiing itself.

One day, a fall on an easy stretch left me in a tangle of skis, poles, and legs. I wasn't hurt, but I realized my mind was not focused on skiing—my thinking had taken me miles away. So after that snowy tumble, I decided to focus only on skiing while I was skiing. But my mind

liked to leap ahead and I found it difficult to pull myself back to the present.

I have used a regular practice of gratitude to make other changes in my life—to change a mood, change my outlook, or focus attention. Could I employ a practice of gratitude to keep my mind in the present while I was skiing?

On our next outing, I cast around for things to be grateful for. I didn't have to look far. I was grateful for the amazing snow conditions, the blue sky, the light wind. I was grateful for the early signs of buds on the treetops, the rap-tap-tap of a woodpecker hammering away at a tree, the crisp scent of winter air.

The more I paid attention, the more I found to be grateful for. The icy swish of my skis on the snow. The percussive beat of my poles keeping time with my strides. As I focused on the sound, I noticed it changed depending on the depth of the snow, or the density of the drifts.

As I let each element of our ski environment percolate through my senses, I felt totally immersed in the moment. Every thought of gratitude for what I was experiencing kept me grounded in the experience. Being grounded in the now filled me with elation—I felt alive on every level. I was living every aspect of the now!

I find that I enjoy our cross-country ski outings even more now. And the fresh air and activity still prompt creative inspiration—I've just learned to harness that energy for when we return home.

The gratitude practice that grounds me in the "now" when I'm skiing can do the same during other activities. When I'm driving, I try to use gratitude to keep me focused on the road and my surroundings—expressing gratitude for elements of the experience instead of making a mental list of what I'll do later.

The same method keeps me focused during other activities, like walking, cooking, and even studying. Even though I don't enjoy reading a textbook like I enjoy skiing, expressing gratitude as I go along introduces a bit more pleasure in the task—I'm grateful for the research, the illustrations, and (hopefully) the feel of the paper as I turn pages.

I still find it tempting to use my morning cross-country ski outings as an opportunity for thinking and planning. But that's not what skiing is for. Gratitude keeps me focused, and it keeps me grounded in the present.

Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU graduate (BGS 2018.) She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario.



Music Review—Pure Particles/Green Dream in F#

Jessica Young



Artist: The Bug Club

Album I: *Pure Particles*

Album II: *Green Dream in F#*

Welsh indie/garage-pop band, The Bug Club, has signed with a new record label, We Are Busy Bodies. To celebrate, the band has reissued their first two albums, *Pure Particles* and *Green Dream in F#*. The albums are available for streaming anywhere you get your music.

The three-piece band consists of Sam Willmet on guitar and vocals, Tilly Harris on bass and vocals, and Dan Matthew on drums. The Bug Club was formed in 2016 and released *Pure Particles* and *Green Dream in F#* in 2021 and 2022, respectively. According to the band, The Bug Club topics including space, small town life, love and swearing—focussed on telling tales of the everyday that we often take for granted, shot through with

humour and riffs-a-plenty.

The Bug Club's sound reminds me of bands like The Beatles, The Guess Who, and The Strokes. They have a very groovy, 70's rock vibe. Each album has a mix of very unique songs—some leaning more towards an indie, far-out, relaxing sound, and others leaning more towards a grungy rock sound—but the album is still able to maintain a cohesive story.

Pure Particles consists of nine tracks: The Word of God; My Baby Loves Rock & Roll Music; Vegetable Garden; The Fixer; Pure Particles; Jonathan's Gone; If My Mother Thinks I'm Happy; A Love Song; and Pure Particles Theme.

My favourite song on the album is probably "My Baby Loves Rock & Roll Music" because of the absolutely shredding guitar solo at the end of the song. "If My Mother Thinks I'm Happy" is a beautiful, sad song, with lyrics like, "No it's not all about me/But sometimes I wish it would be."

Finally, “Pure Particles Theme” is an instrumental track that would fit perfectly on the playlist of any hip café.

Green Dream in F# consists of fourteen tracks: Only In Love; 6 O'clock News; Little Coy Space Boy; Love Is a Painting; It's Art; Love for Two; My Guy; Going Down; Yesterday's Paper; Sitting on the Rings of Saturn; Christmas Lullaby; Love Letters from Jupiter; Some Things Sound Better in Space; and *Green Dream in F#*. This album clearly has a “space” theme going on.

My favourite song on the album is “My Guy.” It is such a peaceful song, with lyrics like, “Someone to keep you safe/Safe from a single ray of sunlight in your eyes/Oh, they'll say it's fun and games/That love treats us all the same/But some are just born blind.”

While The Bug Club doesn't seem to have any music videos for their songs, they do have their music available on [YouTube](#) that features some cool artwork.

Overall, I really enjoyed *Pure Particles* and *Green Dream in F#*. I wish The Bug Club the best of luck with their new record label!

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

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



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Retail Education Scholarships

Sponsored by: Retail Council of Canada

Deadline: March 30, 2023

Potential payout: up to \$3000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be enrolled part- or full-time at a Canadian college or university for fall 2023; be pursuing a retail, business, or marketing/design related program; and currently working within the retail industry.

What's required: A completed online application form, an official academic transcript, proof of enrolment, a reference letter from a current employer, a 800-1000 word essay addressing a specified statement on diversity and inclusion in retail, and a 2-3 minute presentation..

Tips: Read the [Application Guidelines](#) carefully for valuable info on the application requirements.

Where to get info: www.retailcouncil.org/resources/education/retail-education-scholarship-program/



[blue rare]
Confessions of a Small-Time Hedonist

Oliver Moorcraft-Sykes



I admit it, I have no grand *raison d'être*, no time for minimalism, asceticism, or self-denial. I am a hedonist, through and through, a born romantic with a taste for the extravagant and the exotic. Also, something of a layabout, truth be told. We each have, at best, only a short stroll between cradle and grave, so why not make that brief journey as scenic, carefree, and memorable as possible? Mission statements are exhausting.

Granted, the relentless pursuit of pleasure and adventure may not be the foundation of a weighty, meaningful life. What will my legacy be? How am I contributing to the betterment of the human race? Don't I want my life to actually mean something? These sorts of questions occasionally occur to me between negronis. I confess that I have no adequate answers to them. Overthinking is not one of my many, many faults. The best I can say is that I love my family and friends, and I do my best to treat everyone I meet with kindness and respect. I know it's not tremendously impressive; feel free to judge me—I promise you won't ruin my day.

The more essential question, to my mind, is how to satisfy all my wagyu and champagne tastes on a hot dog and President's Choice cola budget? Part of that answer, I have found, lies in making choices that prioritize the things that are most important to me. Experiences, for example, mean much more to me than material possessions. I would prefer to go out for sushi or spring for a theatre ticket than buy a video game or upgrade my steam-driven computer. I have no use for an expensive wristwatch, and I would much rather drive a cheap car and live in a small home than forsake a camping trip to Iceland or a pub crawl in Dublin. When I get wherever I am going, I will eat where the locals eat, and two-star hotels or a tent are all the accommodation I need.

And when (as is often the case) there is no cash for dining, live entertainment, or travel—barely any funds available at all, beyond putting food on the table and keeping the furnace going—I gladly indulge my sweet tooth for spectacle and adventure in the extravagant worlds crafted by the creativity of others. I may not have a wine cellar, or even enough money for a bottle of wine, but I have a well-stocked bookshelf, so I can wander freely across the persian carpets of Gatsby's Long Island mansion, or marvel at the alien, spice-rich sands of Dune. When I don't have enough room on my credit card for plane tickets to Manhattan, I can still put my recording of Sonny Rollins' 1961 performance at the Village Vanguard on my turntable and, with the exercise of a little imagination, I am transported across space and time to that smoke-filled bar.

Food, friendship, travel, art. A lifetime of small, indelible moments feels to me like a life well-spent.

Things You Can Make with a Home Meat Slicer

Xine Wang



Walmart meat slicer I purchased for about \$80

It's been a while since I've done a kitchen gadget review. Buying pre-sliced meats for my stir-fries can be expensive. When I try to cut a whole beef shank or pepperoni by myself it becomes uneven. The meat cooks unevenly and thus parts of the meat are undercooked and others become overcooked. Now, imagine a versatile electric kitchen counter appliance that cuts your meats, but also can cut veggies, cut bread and even make your own potato chips. I was skeptical at first, but for a home chef like myself, this is a must-have.

Stir-fries

Whenever I go to Korean restaurants, I like to order the Korean BBQ. The charred meat, coated in a sweet but savory sauce, is out of this world. While I enjoy eating them at restaurants, the bills do add up. With the new meat slicer, I'm able to make thinly sliced meats that cook almost instantaneously. The meats are so thin you can put them into homemade pho, homemade barbecues, and stir-fries easily. The versatility of this machine is endless. My personal favorite is grilling my meats on a cast iron grill over a gas stove. It takes only a minute to cook before the meat is charred and ready to eat.

Hotpots

While this is not a common occasion for myself, this is yet another feature of the meat slicer. Before my meat slicer, I was purchasing a lot of pre-cut frozen meats from grocery stores. However, the pre-cut meat was less fresh, and also pricey. Now, whenever I have guests over for hotpot (a traditional Chinese cuisine where food is boiled in hot broth at the table), I resort to my trusty home meat slicer for perfectly sliced lamb shoulder, pork belly and beef shanks.

Perfect homemade chips

One of the dietary changes I made in the last two years was to cut down carbohydrate and sodium intake. I found that store-bought chips tend to be oversalted. However, there were few options available for lower salt chips that were not ridiculously expensive. Now, I make my own taro chips, parsnip chips, and potato chips. Since I also have an air fryer, tossing the thinly and uniformly sliced veggies into the air fryer results in a crispy, almost gourmet snack that you can't stop eating. I also found it to be healthier than purchasing fried chips.



Potato chips sliced to the right thickness.



Golden, crispy and unsalted potato chips which is a healthier alternative to the processed store-bought chips.

Cold cut meats

Previous to using my meat slicer, I would be purchasing pre-cut ham, prosciutto and Italian cured meats. However, pre-cut meats are not always fresh and are also can be pricey since they are purchased by weight. Now I purchase an entire slab of

prosciutto and cut the meat myself. Cold cuts are perfect for sandwiches and meal prep ideas.

Bread

If you're a fan of artisan bread like myself, you might benefit from a meat slicer. My favorite feature of the slicer is that the thickness of the cut is customizable. I can cut as thin as 2 mm and as thick as a slice of bread. If you're purchasing loafs of sourdough bread or baguettes, instead of struggling to cut a hardened piece of bread, the meat slicer does a phenomenal job of ensuring the right thickness of each cut. Now, you can serve beautifully cut bread for appetizers at your own family gathering or party.

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



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Second go-round. A question about whether a successfully-completed course can be retaken or challenged to boost GPA is quickly answered—yes for retake, no for challenge.

Discord

Loans that cost an arm or a leg. A thread trading woes about OSAP student loans has one loan recipient musing that their local crime organization gives better loan terms than OSAP. Ouch.

reddit

Pick and choosing. A student mulling over elective course choices asks others how they choose; responders use various criteria, following either personal interest, career relevance, or easy-peasy.

Twitter

@austudentsunion tweets: "It's campaign time! Get ready to vote March 16-21 by meeting the 10 candidates who self-nominated for AUSU Students' Council in the 2023 General Election! Find more candidate info at <https://ausu.org/governance/elections/>."



How do Black Canadians Feel about the Fergus Report?

Alek Golijanin



Ever since the release of The Fergus Report by the Ethics Commissioner, the news talk has been flooded with bylines claiming that Canada's democracy is devolving and exaggerations about Canada "dying a little", but with little details on the specifics of this report. The day after the report was released, I went online to hear the various perspectives on the situation from mainstream political segments that followed the traditional "expert panel" approach to talking policy. However, there was a noticeable absence from every one of these political segment panels and it was that they were absent of any black voices.

This matters because the entire premise of the "ethics violation" is based on a letter of support that was provided by The Honorable Greg Fergus to an organization that was dedicated to celebrating the history and everyday contributions made by Black Quebecers in their pursuit to better Quebec's society, and which was looking to obtain "basic cable" status, thus celebrating Quebec even more. And despite all of this, not a single Black Canadian or Black Quebecer was present on any of the political segment panels that discussed the issue of ethics.

The million-dollar question we need to be asking is why there were no Black Canadians or Black Quebecers represented on any of those political segment panels and why were they not provided the opportunity to speak on The Fergus Report? Although non-Black Canadians and non-Black Quebecers are capable of providing a quality analysis of the report, it is not the same as hearing from members of the Black community and so better understanding how they felt about the report's findings. After all, this had to do with the creation of a basic cable channel that would focus on celebrating the history and everyday contributions made by Black Quebecers in their pursuit to better Quebec's society.

The Fergus Report is not what it is made out to be.

The basis of The Fergus Report revolves around how a letter of support that was provided by Mr. Fergus to Natyf Inc. in 2021 had been submitted by Natyf Inc., a full year later, in 2022, along with other letters of support, to the CRTC after the organization had requested feedback on Natyf Inc.'s application to obtain basic cable status so that the channel would be accessible to all Quebecers.

All of this started in June of 2021, when one of Natyf Inc.'s director asked Mr. Fergus for a letter of support that would be in favor of their proposal for a television station that targeted a more diverse and inclusive Francophone audience. The director was a Black Canadian who approached Mr. Fergus, a Black Canadian and Black Quebecer, who also was the Chair of the Parliamentary Black Caucus, based on Natyf Inc.'s goal to celebrate the history and everyday contributions of made by Black Canadians and Black Quebecer in their pursuit to better Quebec's society.

With all of this in mind, the Ethics Commissioner decided to commence an investigation into the nature of Mr. Fergus' actions, potentially contravening the Conflict of Interest Act (Act), in order to determine whether Mr. Fergus had attempted to use his position in an attempt to influence a decision of another person in order to further another person's private interests. Although there were pre-existing guidelines for ministers and parliamentary secretaries that advised them not to write letters of support to quasi-judicial tribunals like the CRTC, given their governmental roles and the influence they possessed, Mr. Fergus' letter of support was written on his Member of Parliament letterhead, and he also happened to be the Chair of the Parliamentary Black Caucus. However, the Ethics Commissioner decided that Mr. Fergus' role as Parliamentary Secretary could not be disregarded, and he determined that Mr. Fergus had contravened section 9 of the Act.

The "smoking gun" was that Mr. Fergus' letter of support had included Natyf Inc.'s CRTC application number, and the Ethics Commissioner determined that the only possible reason for this was so that it would influence the decision of the CRTC and to further the private interests of Natyf Inc. Although the Ethics Commissioner was not wrong in his position, it seems a very narrow view as to why the application number may have been included in the letter of support.

It is just as likely the application number was meant to acknowledge the fact that the application was pending CRTC's approval and to provide Natyf Inc. with the necessary credibility required to seek out potential advertisers, despite the uncertainty around their pending application. However, the absolute manner in which the Ethics Commissioner justified his position leads me to believe that he lacked familiarity with the media sector and just how difficult it has become for legacy media to secure advertising revenue, and how much harder it would be to secure advertisers for a station that did not exist. It is also just as likely that the letter, which was provided to Natyf Inc., over a year before it was submitted to the CRTC, could have been accidentally submitted by a Natyf Inc. director or that a Natyf Inc. director may have misunderstood the nature of the CRTC's request when it invited the submission of letters of support. Simply put, I believe the Ethics Commissioner is wrong to claim that "there is no doubt that the letter of support was intended to influence the decision of the CRTC so as to further the private interests of Natyf Inc.", when it seems there could be more than a reasonable doubt as to the intention behind the letter of support because of the date it was written and the manner in which media companies secure advertisers. Case dismissed with prejudice.

Being a Black Canadian is not an ethics violation.

From the inception of the Parliamentary Black Caucus in 2015, the honorable Greg Fergus has served as the Chair and with the purpose of ensuring that Black Canadians are able to see themselves better represented and for them to have a channel to address issues of importance. It seems obvious that the letter of support had nothing to do with Mr. Fergus' role as a Parliamentary secretary and everything to do his role as Chair of the Parliamentary Black Caucus. It is as simple as this, one Black Canadian asking another Black Canadian, who was responsible for ensuring the representation of Black Canadians across Canada, to support a venture that would ultimately help celebrate the history and everyday contributions of made by Black Canadians and Black Quebecer in their pursuit to better Quebec's society.

This entire fiasco was a classic case of unforeseen intersections between the different roles and responsibilities that members of federal government can get tasked with, and how those roles and responsibilities can conflict with one another. Simply put, this situation should have been acknowledged for what it was, a precedent-setting situation where a benevolent letter was identified as running counter to the Act due to the incompatibility between the role of a

Parliamentary Secretary and a Chair of the Black Caucus. Nothing more. But we can conclude that common sense is no longer that common.

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



Nothing Can Limit Us

Marie Well



The only thing that can limit us is how we think. That's because we are going to act based on our thoughts. And while our friends in the philosophy department may study metaphysics, they will perhaps encounter the many worlds theory. This theory states that whatever we can imagine has, is, or will occur in another world. It's similar to the notion of parallel worlds. And our Sikh friends may concur with this view, as their religion suggests the existence of infinite realms. Some mathematicians might agree with the notion of infinite realms too, given the idea that wherever infinite variables can be applied, infinite possibilities, too, apply.

I will call up scenarios from my imagination where extreme limitations could not hold back a person's potential. Some of these scenarios are premised on true stories. But the more extreme ones are based on true stories.

A student in the special class (considered as having below-par potential) goes on to become a famous Ph.D., publish a book, and research intelligence. Hint: this is true.

A child labeled a vegetable has someone who sees her potential. She goes on to get an advanced education and write a best-selling book. (I'm unsure if she went to college or wrote a book, but I wouldn't doubt if she did.)

A woman who became unrecognizable due to severe drug addictions and criminal offenses turns her life around to become a CEO of an energy firm and fitness instructor.

A boy with autism, with the help of his entrepreneurial mother, starts a business based on his passion for gaming sports for people with disabilities and opens up franchises globally.

A man with schizophrenia and a knack for mathematics wins a Nobel prize. In addition, he has a feature film (*A Beautiful Mind*) made of his life story.

A woman with no arms and legs becomes a para-Olympic pole vault champion.

A woman who scientists later discover has almost no brain matter, just a brain stem, is valedictorian of her high school and later becomes a famous medical doctor. (It's true that a woman without brain matter, just a brain stem, had a high IQ.)

A woman with the most severe mental illness becomes a professor and doctor (in Canada). She researches high-functioning people with her condition. (I tried contacting her.)

A woman diagnosed with highly aggressive cancer climbs the highest mountain in icy conditions, following the teachings of the Ice Man (Wim Hof), thereby curing her disease.

With that said, I'm genuinely not a believer in setting realistic goals. When I came down with a severe disability, I was told to set realistic goals—to have "small" dreams. No. I believe in unrealistic goals. They are the most fun to strive to achieve.

It's time to face the truth: we are infinite souls with unlimited capabilities. We are unstoppable and can transcend anything, no matter the obstacles. So, we must drive forward with every fiber to the next goal. Maybe it's to cure ourselves, acquire higher education, earn an insanely high income, and find true love. It's all ours! We've got everything it takes to achieve any goal we imagine. And if our goals are ridiculously unrealistic, we've got a stamp of approval!

Beyond Literary Landscapes

Film and 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 week's column is a bit different as it focuses on a very wide-ranging topic, namely Literature and Film. Although this may be taken in a variety of directions, this column focuses on famous literary

works that have been transformed into successful films.

Examples of authors whose works have become feature films include James Baldwin, Alice Walker, and Jane Austen.

What

Some well-known literary works that have been turned into films include the novel *If Beale Street Could Talk* by James Baldwin, with a 2018 film of the same title, starring Kiki Layne and Stephan James; *The Colour Purple* by Alice Walker, with the 1995 film of the same name, starring Oprah Winfrey, Whoopi Goldberg, and Danny Glover; and *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, with a 2005 film of the same name, starring Keira Knightley.

Where

These novels and films take place throughout the United States and Great Britain.

When

These works take place during the 20 and 21-centuries.

Why

These novels and film adaptations may be of interest to AU students who would like to see their favourite literary novels on the big screen, as well as those interested in film studies and film adaptations.

How

AU's wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to Literature and Film 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 373](#): Film and Literature, a senior-level, three-credit course, which "is designed to introduce students to the study of the relationships between literary and cinematic forms." (Please note that completed prerequisites are required prior to registration for this course, including [ENGL 211](#): Prose Forms and [ENGL 212](#): Poetry and Plays. In addition, at this moment, this course is currently closed for revision).

Students may also be interested in [CMNS 425](#): Film and Genre, a senior-level, three-credit course, which "looks at the historical, economic, political and social factors that influence filmmaking, particularly genre films." (Please note that while no prerequisites are required, [CMNS 301](#): Communication Theory and Analysis and [CMNS 302](#): Communication in History are recommended.) Happy reading!

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





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Killing Time

Dear Barb:

Hi, hope you are doing well. I am a man in my forties, and I occasionally read your column. My question is about procrastination. I am a big-time procrastinator. I can't seem to get anything done, even though I have full intention of completing the task at hand. I work in a fast-paced demanding environment and have no problem getting my work done, it's just in my personal life that I fall short. My apartment is a complete mess, to the point where I can't invite people over. My refrigerator has expired food from 2019 which I fully intend to clean it out, but I never do. I planned to begin working out at the beginning of the year, so I bought a gym membership, but I have only gone to the gym a handful of times. I am the same way with my relationships. I know I need to do certain things to improve them, but I don't do anything. I haven't seen my mother for two years and every week I tell myself this will be the week to go see her, but I always find an excuse not to go. I just can't seem to get my life together. Do you have any suggestions that may help me organize myself?

Thanks,

Ben.

Hi Ben:

Good to hear from you. According to a 2010 estimate, 20% of US adults are procrastinators and that number is on the rise. Therefore, you have lots of company. Procrastination is when a person finds excuses not to do something until the very last minute or even past the deadline.

There are six types of procrastinators: Dreamer, Worrier, Defier, Over-doer, Perfectionist, and Crisis-maker. Each type has its own unique behaviours. All types of procrastination include a level of fear and perfectionism. The definition of perfectionism is refusing to accept any standard short of perfection. Procrastination can result in many negatives including low self-esteem, increased stress, poor impulse control, and an increase in anxiety and depression. Avoiding doing something does not make it go away, or cause you to think about it less, you continue to agonize about the things you haven't completed.

Also, studies have shown that people who procrastinate experience weakened immune systems therefore often suffer more colds and flu, and other illnesses. There are things you can do to overcome this debilitating condition. For example, reduce large tasks into smaller ones. Work through each task, then proceed to the next. Allow enough time to complete the task. Most importantly set accurate goals and strategies to complete the tasks at hand. The following site will provide more detailed ways to achieve and overcome procrastination ([14 Ways You Can Overcome Procrastination](https://www.forbes.com/sites/stevekirschner/2016/01/14/14-ways-you-can-overcome-procrastination/) (forbes.com)) I believe reading and practicing these suggestions will help you become a more productive person in your daily life.

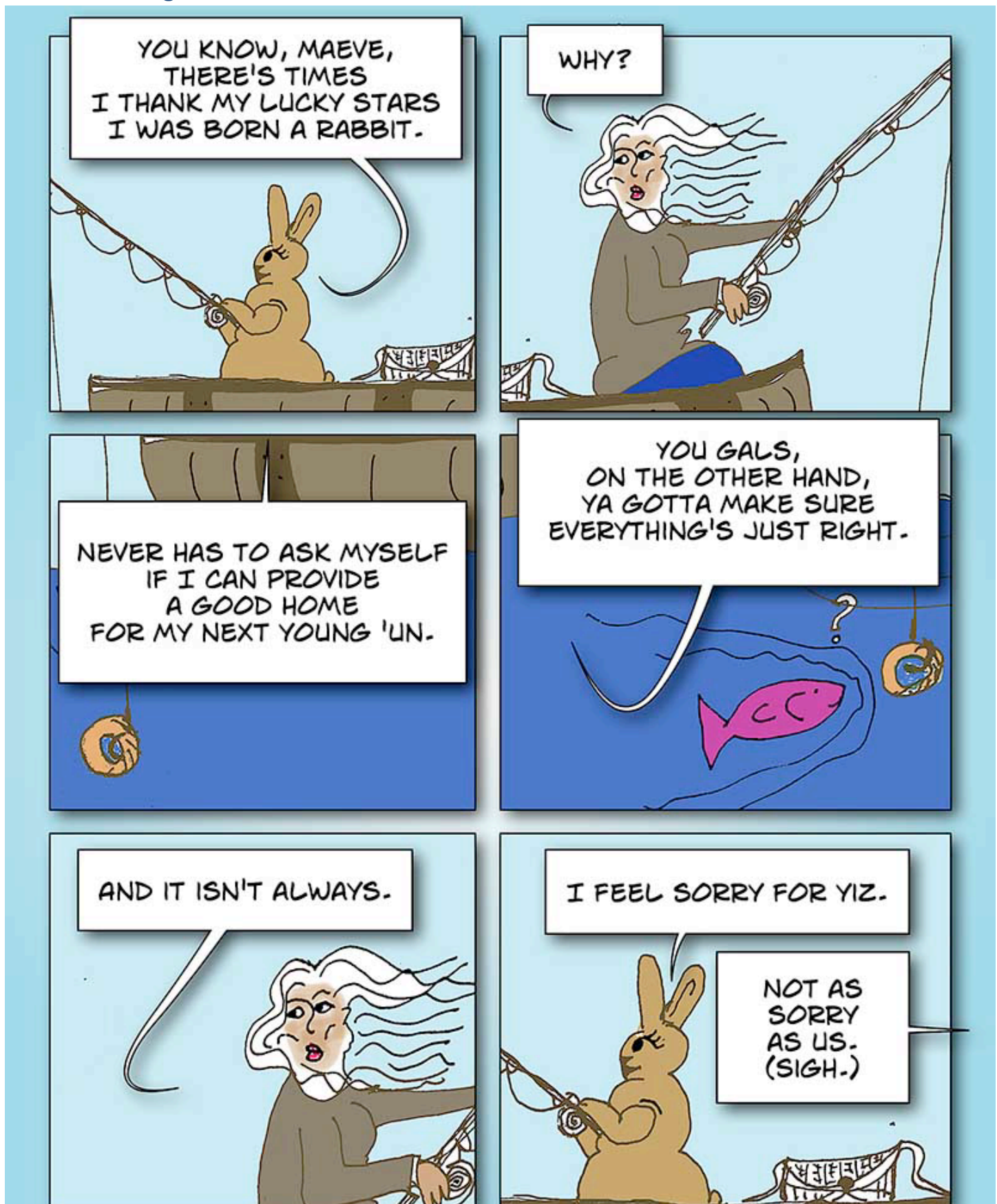
Thank you for your email, Ben.

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



Poet Maeve
The Next Young'Un

Wanda Waterman





"In the end we will remember not the words
of our enemies but the silence of our friends"

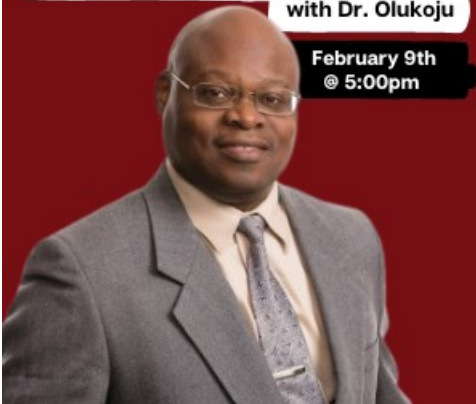
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

**AU
SU** February Events

**RSVP On
Eventbrite**

Politics, Voting, and Inclusion of the Black
Community in Canadian Governance
with Dr. Olukaju

February 9th
@ 5:00pm



Join us on Feb. 9 at 5 p.m. MT
on Zoom and celebrate Black
History Month with Dr. Olukaju
from AU as he discusses [Politics,
Voting, and the Inclusion of the
Black Community in Canadian
Governance](#). Dr. Olukaju holds a
Ph.D. in Public Policy and
Administration and a second in
Theology.

[RSVP on Eventbrite!](#)

**AU
SU** Athabasca University
Students' Union

**2023 By-Election
BECOME A
LEADER
ON STUDENT COUNCIL**

Nominations Open February 13

**Council By-Election Nominations
Open Feb. 13**

Feb. 13 is the start of
the 2023 Student Council By-
Election with nominations opening
for all AU undergrads like
you. Voting will take place March
16-21 to fill two (2) available seats
on AU Student Council. More
details to come! Questions?
Email us at ausu@ausu.org.

Velma Morgan on
OPERATION  **VOTE
CANADA**

February 15
@ 5:00pm



Then return Feb. 15 at 5 p.m.
MT to celebrate with Velma
Morgan during [An Introduction
to Operation Black Vote
Canada](#). OBVC works to ensure
that equity is activated in our
democratic institutions in order
to create opportunities for
Black Canadians to fully engage
civically at all levels in Canada.

[RSVP on Eventbrite!](#)

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THE VOICE

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