



THE VOICE

Vol 31 Issue 14. 2023-04-07

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

The Teacher Will Appear

When the Need is Greatest

For the Birds

Equip Yourself for Birdwatching



*Plus:
Chazz Bravado
From Sales to Sheriff.
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 Spring Breaking

Karl Low



A quick reminder that there will be no *Voice Magazine* next week, but those of you on the brick-and-mortar schedule are likely knee-deep in exams right now, and everybody else is likely trying to plough through their course work so that they won't have to worry so much once summer hits.

Meanwhile, we'll be back on the 21st of April, but until then, I hope everybody has a happy Easter break. To kick that off, this week in *The Voice Magazine*, Minds We Meet returns, this time with an interview with Darlene Miller, a school principal and AU student of Geology. She's got some great advice for how to take on a routine to get you through your AU courses, and an interesting take on her proudest moment.

Since we won't be around next week, however, I'd like to take this opportunity to point out the upcoming AU Research Forum which is supposed to have presentations from a number of AU academics, as well as some outside presenters and a session as well for students from AUSU and AUGSA. The reason I'm bringing it to attention is because I've been hearing

a bit about some of the presenters and it sounds like it could be a really interesting presentation, and an event the likes of which I'd hoped AU would be having while I was a student myself. I know that brick and mortar institutions often have a variety of presentations throughout the year, and it's something that's a bit harder for AU to accomplish, though they've been stepping up in this area over the past few years.

Still, this was always one of the ways I felt that AU had some work to go to be able to live up to the reputations of its physically based cousins. (Another way was in AU's lack of sports teams. I keep hoping that as professional online gaming grows in popularity, they may decide to sponsor a team, but perhaps that's too frivolous. Besides, Minister Nicolaides would probably insist they all move to Athabasca and practice at the Multiplex.) Often these types of conferences are part of what makes a university shine, although as recent news reports show with various lectures being cancelled for being toxic or intolerant, and the provincial government stepping in to demand 'free speech' report cards, they can also be problematic.

For this forum, however, with presenters including one who focuses on Mathematical Psychology (say what?), or a professor of sound studies, this could be a bit of a mind opening experience, so I hope it's well attended to show that there's a demand and an enjoyment of this type of thing.

Also this week, we're taking a look at how you can get deeper into bird-watching, and the things you can pick up to make it a more enjoyable experience. And [blue rare] this week talks about that one teacher who happened to provide what you needed when you needed it, even if that might not have been a stellar teaching experience.

We also take a look at everything from hobby-horses to spicy foods, lingerie sales to prayer, and more! It's an eclectic issue, yet we still fit in our reviews, scholarships, two weeks worth of events, advice, and more! Enjoy the read!

2023 AU
Research
Forum
IDEAS WITH
IMPACT

Handwritten signature of Karl Low.

MINDS WE MEET



The Voice Magazine recently had a chance to chat with Darlene Miller (she/her), a non-program student located in Rosemere, Quebec. She stated, “I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which I live is the traditional territory of the Kanien’keha:ka or Mohawk nation. The Mohawk Nation is also known as the ‘Eastern Door Keepers’ and is a member of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which also includes the Seneca, Cayuga, Tuscarora, Onondaga, and Oneida Peoples.”

On a personal note, Darlene is “from Quebec, but spent 3 years working in Wildlife Centers and Zoological institutions in NYC.” She continued, “I am 56 years old and currently live in Rosemere, Quebec, with my two rescue border collies and my rescue geriatric (25 years) ball python. I am the principal of a small, alternative high school. I love my job, as I have the opportunity to work with and help guide at risk youth. I have a BSc and a MED from a traditional university.”

She is currently enrolled in GEOL 200: Introduction to Physical Geography and GEOL 201: Introductory Historical Geography. “My goal is to fundamentally

understand how the geosphere around me was formed. Specifically, I want to know how, where, and why rock and land formations came to be. When I retire, I would like to continue to travel and fully appreciate the various landscapes and natural beauty that I see,” she stated.

On an interesting and related note, Darlene let *The Voice Magazine* know about a vacation “that pointed me towards AU” and her courses. She explained, “Last summer I rented a chalet on a lake in the Laurentians. Walking in the woods was beautiful. The rock formations including the Canadian Shield were stunning. I realized that while I had heard of the Canadian Shield, and I could look it up on Wikipedia, I had no real understanding. I spent the afternoons researching geology online, but still did not feel that I really understood. I then decided that I needed a university class and found AU. The rest is history (or rather geology).”

She had some great solid tips for fellow students. “Studying is fun as I am usually genuinely interested in the subject matter. I have found *YouTube* channels from profs from other universities. In general, I listen to these lectures while I am driving to work: that acts as an introduction. I then work through the study guide, first by carefully examining the learning goals, then by reading the textbook, taking notes on the readings, and answering the study questions. I do not move forward unless I feel that I fully and deeply understand the material. Finally, I go back and reread the learning objectives verifying that I can adequately meet the objectives,” she let us know.

She also had some great advice for new and prospective students. “When I first started my class, I worked on the assumption that if I did not understand something, the problem was me. I would

read, reread, watch *YouTube* videos trying to figure something out, and then finally ask the tutor. Several times the answer was that the study materials were not accurate. My advice would be to not wait to reach out for help, as it may, in the end, not be you. This goes for assignments and exams; make sure you understand why you lost marks, as the marking guides may be wonky. Several times a lab mark was reversed as my answer was right and the marking was wrong. Most of the time it will be a valid mistake. But it is important to understand where you made a mistake and where your understanding needs adjustment. This goes for exams as well. You are allowed to ask to know what your mistakes were. For my final exam the professor spent time going over where I made my mistakes. This helped me immensely, as I was able to know where my writing was not clear. And in addition, the computer had marked a multiple choice wrong, when in fact it was right. Nobody is infallible, and we as students should be learning from our mistakes.”

Darlene also keeps busy outside of her study schedule. “My job keeps me busy, but on the weekends and evenings I am learning the piano, I cross country ski when the conditions are good, in the summer I kayak with my dog, and I take daily walks in the woods with my dogs. I am also learning agility with one of my dogs. Her name is Bethany and she is in the photo on the back of my kayak. We have our first agility competition in the end of April!”

She also finds time to read, letting *The Voice Magazine* know about some books that have had an impact on her life, namely *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë and *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams. “The former beautifully articulates the darkness and cruelty of life, the latter the humor and lightness of life. Both outlooks are necessary for gratitude and perspective,” she explained.

Darlene credits her grandmother with having the greatest influence on her desire to learn. She let us know, “Long before the internet, she had a wall of literature and reference books. I would ask her a question and she would head to the books. In many cases the answer would lead to more questions and more books. We would spend hours learning, between cups of tea. She was a strong, independent, inquisitive woman. She would have loved the internet!”

Darlene’s experience with online learning so far has been positive. “I love the ability to work at my own pace, when, and where I want. My experience with the exams via ProctorU was positive: writing an exam in my dining room helped me relax and concentrate (although at first, I was a tad freaked out that somebody was watching me, but that faded). I love that my tutor is responsive and helpful. I was surprised that there were no recorded lectures from the professor nor any direct access to the professor (as is the case in other universities). I miss the camaraderie of my undergraduate, where students would get together and try to figure out the assignments, and work through difficult material. But I do not miss the schedule and need to keep up to a predetermined pace.”

As for communication with her course tutors? “Fantastic. My tutor thus far is extremely accessible and responsive. My tutor is amazing! He replies to all of my questions within a day. Often, I am working after work and before bed. I will email a question and when I wake up in the morning the answer is in. The same is for lab assignments. They are usually returned within 24 hours.”

The Voice Magazine also asked Darlene what her first project would be if she were the new president of AU. She stated, “I would advocate for teaching at AU. Historically and prior to COVID, the AU distance model was cutting edge. During COVID, many universities migrated to distance education via recorded lessons. AU can be the best of both worlds. By maintaining the work at your own pace, and adding prerecorded lessons from the professors, I believe many students would benefit. Nothing would be lost, as students need not use the video lessons if they do not find them helpful, and they are always there for those students who may benefit from

direct teaching. The lessons that I listen to from other professors have graphics, videos, and notes. They were great as you can listen as many times as you like. I also feel that marking rubrics should be made available for all assignments and projects.”

As for her most valuable lesson learned in life? “Life, at times, can be hard and that is OK. It can also be joyous and beautiful. I have noticed that people who have had an easy life, fail to notice how fortunate they are when things are good; rather they seem to expect it, and become angry and bitter when life becomes difficult. As a young girl, probably with my grandmother, I read Kahlil Gibran’s poem, ‘On Joy and Sorrow.’ I frequently return to the phrase ‘The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.’ Life is a journey filled with joy and sorrow. Don’t resent the sorrowful parts, they are carving a space to hold the joy that is around the corner. And when the joy comes, bask in it, be grateful for it, and if it does not last, that too is OK and part of life.”

And her proudest moment in life? Darlene considered this a difficult question. “I have won awards for social justice programs that I have helped develop and promote, and I have stood up to racist policies (and suffered the consequences). But more importantly, in general, I try to live my life with integrity. At the end of every day, I look back for proud moments, and for moments where I could have been a better human being. I then make plans for where I need to improve and/or make amends. Taking pride in seemingly little moments is as important as the photo in the newspaper and the plaque on the wall. We live our life in the little decisions. It is in those little decisions that we sometimes trip and fall, but where we also grow and improve.” Best of luck Darlene!

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.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: 4-H Alberta Scholarships

Sponsored by: 4-H Alberta

Deadline: May 1, 2023, noon (12:00 pm) MT

Potential payout: up to \$2750

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be past or present members of a 4-H Alberta club, and must be attending or planning to attend an officially recognized post-secondary institution as a full-time student.

What's required: A completed online application form, including contact and academic info, summaries of 4-H activity, short answers to specified questions, an official transcript, a photo, reference letters, and a short essay. Review the What You Need info sheet for a full list of requirements.

Tips: The application will take several hours but can be completed in multiple sessions.

Where to get info: www.4hab.com/scholarships/



[blue rare]
The Teacher Will Appear

Oliver Moorcraft-Sykes



"When the student is ready, the teacher will appear."

~ Tao Te Ching

I suppose most of us have a memory from our student careers of a certain educator or two who played a significant role in shaping the course of our lives. Perhaps it was that kindergarten teacher who first brought out in you a joy of singing, the hockey coach who made you realize the ways that individual strengths can contribute to collaborative success, the high school science teacher who bestowed a sense of wonder about the seemingly miraculous workings of the universe, or the comparative lit prof who opened the door to a love of Restoration theatre or French surrealism. For me, one of the most significant teachers in my life was a grade 11 art teacher, who I will call "Mr. M"

I should start by emphasizing that Mr. M was not well liked by my fellow students. Significantly, he didn't seem to have a visible passion for teaching. He was not an angry, bullying teacher, but he did seem

perpetually sullen and withdrawn. Cynical, perhaps. Indifferent.

Each week, he would introduce projects for us to work on, and then seemingly mentally detach himself from the class. He gave us very little feedback or encouragement. Mostly, I picture him staring out the window at the clouds, or perhaps the forest beyond the parking lot. For some of us, most of us, this lack of interaction was a profound turn off. For me, at that point in my life, Mr. M's after lunch portfolio-based art class was exactly what I needed.

For all that he might not have been an exemplary teacher, I was a much worse student. Going through major upheaval at home, whenever I did manage to show up for class, between unexplained absences and enforced suspensions, I was perpetually stoned. Sometimes arriving after lunch high on acid, almost certainly smelling of weed and vodka from my girlfriend's father's liquor cabinet. All too often, mocking, disrespectful, disruptive. At the start of the second semester that year, I dropped out of school altogether for a year and a half. But during those first five months of the school year, that art class was my lifeline, and one of the most transformative educational experiences I've had.

For one thing, Mr. M's obvious lack of enthusiasm for either cajoling or inspiring his students meant that he pretty much left us to our own devices. In other words, apparently having no fucks to give, he let me be. Which was not a great pedagogical approach for every student, of course, but was the perfect scenario for me right then, as I needed lots of time and space, under the radar, to decompress, mope about, work through my adolescent alienation, abuse my mind and body, and, yes, maybe even create some art. I actually worked hard and lost myself in the portfolio work whenever I was there. Despite being generally a mediocre slack ass, I even achieved an A+ in the course, a grade that was as rare as a clouded leopard on my high school transcript.

For another thing, Mr. M had great taste. This was apparent in the music he played in class and the posters of art work on his walls, and the small collection of books he kept on warped shelves at the back of the room. His basement classroom was the first place I ever saw a print of Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, or was exposed to the artwork of Henry Fuseli, Marc Chagall, and Frida Kahlo. It was the first time I ever heard Keith Jarrett's piano improvisations, a Beethoven minuet, Bizet's *Carmen*, or Miles Davis's *Bitch's Brew*. I also remember borrowing a copy of the novel *A Clockwork Orange*, as well as an English translation of Baudelaire's poetry, from the classroom library.

Mr. M seemed never to set foot in the staff lounge, or even converse with other staff members. At lunch and during spares, he would leave his door open for anyone who wanted to hang out in his room, as long as they didn't bother him. Sometimes, he would play the cello that he kept in his supplies cupboard. Only rarely would he acknowledge a student's existence.

With his darkly brooding features, his vintage motorcycle, his air of mystery and melancholy, I confess Mr. M was, for me, something of a romantic, Byronesque figure. I was convinced he had traveled to some otherworldly places on some interesting business. Certainly, a much more interesting person than the embittered, already burnt-out-in-his thirties teacher that my classmates and (I suspect) the school administration saw him as. He was, to my mind, a rebel, an inspiration. Someone too much his own man to play by the rules of the system.

Of course, all things are relative, and so perspective is everything. In some ways, he really was a bad teacher. But for me, at least, he was the right one, in the right place, at just the right moment in time. Although I had hardly exchanged a word with him, I really believe that, without ever knowing it, he might have changed, and perhaps even saved, my life.



For the Birds

Part two, Birdwatching Basics

Barbara Lehtiniemi



In the March 31 article, [Bird Course—Part One: Birdwatching Basics](#), I mentioned that no special equipment is needed to get started. Birds can be found in and around any outdoor area—anywhere they can find food sources, nesting materials, or shelter.

Each species has its own needs and habits, and you can see birds in and around trees, shrubs, fields, parks, lawns, roadsides, and any water course. Birds perch on fences, rooftops, porch railings, power lines, and just-washed cars. And, of course, birds fly from place to place, singly and in large flocks. It's seldom difficult to find birds.

Although you don't need any equipment to watch birds, there are a few items you might find helpful:

Bird guides. If you're interested in identifying the birds you see, or learning more about them, a bird guide is helpful. A bird book that identifies the most

common birds in your region or province is best for beginners. I started with, and still refer to,

Stoke's Beginner's Guide to Birds, available for Eastern or Western regions. With its colour-coded pages, the Stoke's guides identify about 100 of the most common birds seen in either half of North America. Having a physical book provides a convenient place for jotting notes about sightings.

Online guides are another good resource for identifying birds. I use Cornell's [AllAboutBirds.org](https://allaboutbirds.org) site when I need help identifying less-common birds. Online guides provide multiple photos and maps, audio clips of songs and sounds, plus advice for identifying and feeding birds. You can also download mobile bird-identification apps to your smartphone, such as Cornell's Merlin app.

Binoculars. Birds startle easily and it can be challenging to get a close-up view. Binoculars allow you to observe birds at a distance without disturbing them. They also allow you get a closer look at birds in inaccessible (to you) places, like treetops or on ponds. Lightweight compact binoculars that are easy to tuck into a pocket run in the \$20 to \$30 range (with a kids' version around \$15.) From there, the prices increase along with features and quality. You can find good selections at hardware, hunting, or outdoors stores.

Camera. Although not essential, using a camera to photograph birds can help you with bird identification. Birds move quickly, leaving observers little time to note all those details that help with species identification. Having a photo allows you to check all a bird's features with your bird guide long after the bird has left. A smartphone camera is adequate but a camera with adjustable shutter speed is even better to avoid blurry photos of fleeing birds.

Feeders. You will see birds even without providing any birdfeed. However, if you put out birdseed, you will attract more birds, giving you an opportunity to view birds close to where you live. Before considering buying a bird feeder, check your local bylaws as some municipalities have restrictions on bird feeding. If you live in a rental unit, you'll also need to check if your landlord permits birdfeeders. Finally, if you live in or near bear country, check your provincial Ministry of Natural Resources guidelines regarding birdfeeders and bears. We only put out birdseed from November to early April, to avoid attracting bears, raccoons, and other nuisance animals.

A basic mixed-seed birdfeeder can be found at dollar stores for a couple bucks. They won't last more than a season or two, but it's an inexpensive way to start. Better-quality feeders can be found, along with various types of birdseed, at hardware stores, and at feed & seed outlets. Most bags of birdseed will indicate what types of birds they attract. Make sure the feeder you get is suitable for the type of seed you intend to use—the feeder label will usually identify if it is best for mixed-seed, sunflower, or nyjer seeds, or other types of birdfeed.

For a low-price, low-tech option, go without a feeder and sprinkle a bit of bird seed on a railing or windowsill. Or re-purpose another item to hold seed, like the metal lid of a pickle jar or an aluminum pie plate. Just be sure to use birdseed, and never bread crumbs—bread has no nutritional value for birds and can have negative effects on their health.

Friends. One of the best resources for novice birdwatchers is someone with more bird-watching experience. If you can find a friend or neighbour who watches birds, they can provide valuable advice on bird identification and bird feeding. My husband and I have been watching birds for decades, and friends often email us photos of birds asking for identification help. Birdwatchers form a community, and its members enjoy helping each other.

Birdwatching allows you to choose how much or how little time and resources you want to spend pursuing it. All you really need to do is look outside.

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



My Crazy Life From Sales to Sheriff

Alek Golijanin



Last time in *The Voice Magazine*, I wrote about how the Sears' ladies lingerie department helped transform me into a gentleman, but today's crazy Sears story revolves around the time I spent enforcing the law and being the store's sheriff before Sears and I eventually grew apart.

Becoming known as the loss prevention king shortly after the "Occupy Wall Street" movement came to Ottawa.

As good as I was at handling the ladies' lingerie, asking women about their lingerie shopping experience, and helping them sign up for our customer loyalty program, I was just as good at preventing the loss of profits. What really drove me to be the best at stopping theft was the \$25 bounty that I would collect for every time someone I had identified as being "sketchy" had attempted to steal. All of this worked in my favor because I have never been in the business of making friends and always in the business of making money, so I became the number-one-ranked sales associate at foiling petty larcenists from harming our beloved department store.

The greatest number of thefts that I had helped foil in one month occurred during the "Occupy Wall Street" movement in Ottawa back in 2011, and the ridiculousness that followed suite during that period is comparable to the ridiculousness of the Trucker Convoy occupation, almost a decade later. What made the Occupy Ottawa movement so ridiculous was that the protestors decided to take over Confederation Park, setting up over one hundred tents and with hundreds of protestors showing up everyday to the "Freedom Fountain", in solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street movement. The park eventually became a place to celebrate marijuana too, similar to the annual event that was organized on Parliament Hill prior to the legalization of marijuana – but this celebration lasted for 40 consecutive days.

Although the Occupy Ottawa movement was a peaceful protest, I recall media reporting how both pedestrians and protestors were getting swarmed and mugged by small groups that were believed to be acting independent of the Occupy Ottawa movement, and who were targeting people in the vicinity of the park. One passerby who decided to walk by the "no flex zone" ended up running into Sears and screaming for help. Eventually, the media also started to report on the increasing number of fights at the park, how drug paraphernalia could be found all over the park, and that there were even reports of sexual assaults, which is when the Ottawa Police Services moved in and cleared it all out.

Now, throughout the duration of the Occupy Ottawa movement, it was not uncommon for security to thwart multiple thefts in a day, and I contributed to the thwarting of more than 25 thefts. Although management was thrilled with my



contributions, some of the other sales associates complained that I was getting all the rewards. Management caved into their demands and screwed up a perfect situation, with the introduction of what I like to call “Anti-Alek” rules. The “Anti-Alek” rules stated that the \$25 bounty would be split between the first two people who called in and reported “sketchy” activity that led to the thwarting of a theft. I refused to take the \$12.50 when I called in second and I requested that I paid the full \$25 when I called in first, but management said they were unable to accommodate me. So, I decided to stop calling. Although I am a gentleman and a humanitarian, I am not a charity, and I was not interested in splitting the bounty.

In my eyes, it was a “dog eat dog world” and I was a tiger, sort of like Montecore, and people were sort of starting to look like Roy Horn of Siegfried and Roy. The only other way I can elaborate on this analogy is by quoting Joe Exotic’s song “I Saw Tiger”, *“Tell all the hunters to lay down their guns. Tell ‘em that the tiger needs a little bit of love. Let ‘em run the jungle, let ‘em roam their lands. Then stand back and marvel, what a beautiful cat. Cause I saw tiger. Now I understand. I saw tiger, and the tiger saw man.”*

Great coaches do not waste generational talents by prioritizing benchwarmers.

How is it that so many coaches are so great at wasting generational talents and ruining perfect situations? Well, that is the question I started to ask myself after the benchwarmers were successful at forcing yet another change, an “Anti-Alek” rule, that had to do with the recognition received by a sales associate when they helped a customer sign up for our loyalty program. If a customer’s application for a credit card was approved, we were supposed to call switchboard and inform them of the application, and switchboard was supposed to make a store-wide announcement over the PA system which identified the sales associate by name and congratulated them for helping their customer to take advantage of our loyalty program.

The basis of the benchwarmers’ complaint was that switchboard was saying my name so frequently over the PA system that it was causing them to have migraines. It caught me off-guard, only because hearing someone say, “Congratulations to Alek...”, was music to my ears, so I could not fathom it being anything but. Although switchboard was in fact saying my name quite often, an average of 10 times during my eight-hour shift, they were not saying it because they liked me more, but rather because I was signing up that many customers during my shift. My success drove other department managers to demand more out of their sales associates and pressure them to be more like “Alek”.

My primary reason for signing up customers for our loyalty program had to do with the payout system, \$2 for an approved Sears card and \$4 for an approved Sears Mastercard and half of that for declined applications, but I equally loved hearing switchboard make the store-wide announcement that congratulated me for putting the interests of our customers at the forefront. However, management relented to the benchwarmers, with switchboard jumping on the benchwarmer bandwagon, saying that the constant congratulating was making their throats dry, and management succeeded at ruining another perfect situation.

Now, being a gentleman, I decided to be a good steward of talents and preserve the voices of switchboard staff by dialing the PA system code and congratulating myself, “Dear customers, We would like to congratulate Alek at the lower main cash for helping another customer take advantage of Sears’ loyalty program and helping them save money on their purchase. If you are interested in learning more about the savings involved with Sears’ loyalty program, please visit the lower main cash, and ask for Alek. Thank you for shopping at Sears and have a phenomenal day!” Although management thought the announcements were hilarious, the switchboard team started to complain, fearing that I might make them expendable.

As someone who will admit to having been a habitual line stepper, sort of like Rick James, I decided to take it one step further, taking it upon myself to announce various promotions over the PA system, in my late-night DJ voice and for which I received a mountain of compliments. From what I recall, the sales of ladies' lingerie and stiletto heels would spike whenever my voice reverberated across the entire store. However, another "Anti-Alek" rule was instituted, and I was no longer allowed to do my own announcements over the PA system. All of the "Anti-Alek" rules got me thinking about the best way to circumvent them, , so I decided to swap my nametag with various nametags that I had pulled out of the nametag box.



There was a total of 34 different nametags, and my nametag fun would only last for a few months. During that time, I wore each nametag at least once, signing up customers for our loyalty program under each alias, until a female shopper called in to leave positive feedback about her experience with me. The female shopper referred to me as "Justice", the name on my nametag, but the problem was that management had told her that there was no one by that name who worked at Sears. What followed next was a shit show, a total frenzy to identify this mysterious person named "Justice". When management learned that I was "Justice", they were not too happy with my shenanigans.

Most of us know that in the absence of "Justice", there can be injustice, and there was definitely injustice surrounding my paystubs. A little after passing my two-year anniversary mark, I went back to look over my paystubs after another co-worker had complained about inconsistencies on their paystub. When I looked over my paystubs, I noticed that almost every one of my paystubs had irregularities related to the payouts for credit card applications, a manual add-on that was done by the in-house HR team. The problem that I was faced with was that I could only submit a claim for one month's worth of "backpay paystub mistakes" and I was out of luck for anything that was outside of that period. After seeing all the mistakes on my paystubs, I calculated them to be in excess of \$4,000, which I had failed to spot out when they were issued to me because I was a trusting kid who was all-in on Sears. So, I decided to set aside that Sears' sheriff badge, and not long after that I chose to leave like a gentleman.

Leveraging my Sears Experience.

Although I did end up getting shysted out of thousands of dollars while working at Sears, I left with two takeaways that had a significant impact on today's version of me. The first takeaway had to do with me becoming a gentleman and lingerie aficionado. The second takeaway had to do with me learning to trust only as far as I could spit, and I can not spit very far.

However, my lingerie expertise is what has proved to be most valuable to me, and has also allowed me to invest in companies that operate in the ladies' lingerie industry that I identified as having a high upside. Combining investing and ladies' lingerie may one day be a lesson within the Gentlemen's Gospel.

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



How to Be Inspired

Marie Well



There are ways to feel inspired, whether in the good times or bad. It's an accumulative effect: the more "right" things we do, the more we burst with inspiration, although the "wrong" things are intended to put us on that right path, even if the path is miraculously winding. And the beauty is that we all have the key. Opening the doors to inspiration is inevitable in the grand cosmos. So, here are ways to boost our moment-by-moment bursts of never-ending inspiration.

Acknowledge. People love to be acknowledged. So, smile at people. Say hello. Appreciate their choice of fashion. Tell the merchants, "It's so nice to see you again. Thank you for your excellent service. How is your day?" You can't imagine how just those words brighten their day. Whoever you speak to, say, "It's so nice to hear your voice." I told this to a doctor's assistant today, and she paused and then spoke with a softer voice, filled with love, saying, "Same to you!" I learned these

tricks in a sales course, significantly improving my rapport with people. But they're not tricks, per se; they are acts of genuine love.

Appreciate the little things: trees, birds, couples in love, a friendly merchant. All the little things we may ignore can be excellent sources of inspiration. Ask any author, monk, or happy soul. They will all agree: the little things matter. One near-death experiencer in the documentary *Life After Life* said something like, "It's not the big things that matter," such as the graduations or the promotions. Instead, "it's the little things that matter," like the smile we give strangers when they've had a bad day or the warm coat we wrap around a loved one. The more beautiful little things we do, the more we magnificently inspire.

Help others. Volunteering for a cause we love can be inspirational, especially when applying a specialized skill. However, using any skill or effort to help others is immensely valuable. For example, I plan on helping a foundation I love to sell its courses in school systems. And I'd be tempted to do the same for another beloved course provider. Whatever cause we get attached to begs for our service. And when we give selflessly, it generates a bond that goes on forever. What could be more inspiring than that?

Aim so high that the target is way above the stratosphere. And then map out a plan to get there. I was once so poor that I'd eat banana peels to stretch the budget. They are not bad, really. But I've got a four-year plan to get all the education I need to earn upward of \$150,000 a year (ideally \$250,000) should my employer retire, or I outlive him. And if my plan falters, I'll create a new, revised strategy, increasing my upper earnings limit, even if my situation worsens. I heard a quote saying, "If you can see your target, you're not aiming high enough." So aim higher than your vision to create cataclysmic inspiration.

Love others like our hearts are about to burst into fireworks. If we don't feel the tickly, delightful sensation of love, we can easily generate it. And once we feel that burst of love—and not just think it—send it out to every being who comes to mind. This practice is like building muscles

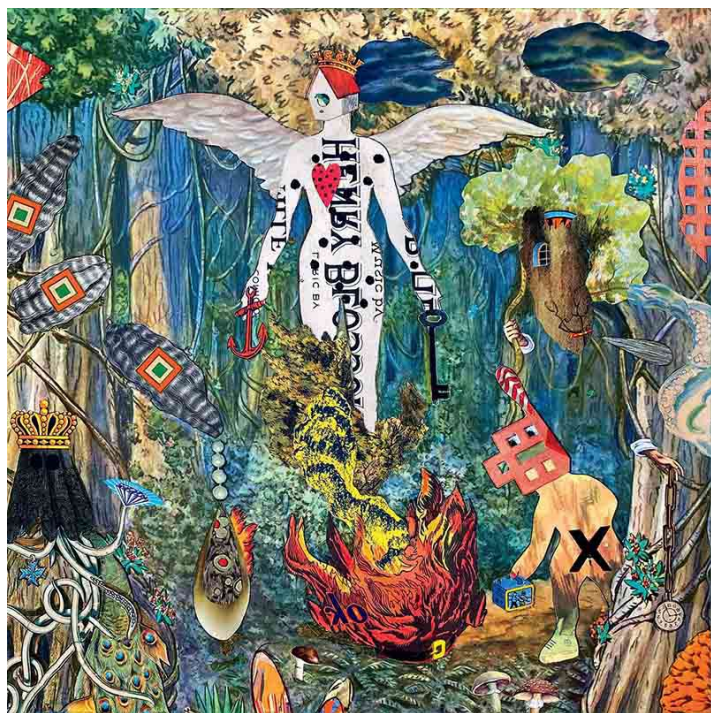
through weights, but it's building love through intention. Then, try to focus that love in abundance on our significant others. The bonds it creates will inspire us with overwhelming love.

And once we start pouring inspiration on ourselves and others, we'll notice even more sources of inspiration. It's like buying a Hyundai and suddenly seeing Hyundai everywhere. In other words, the more we inspire and feel inspired, the more our inspiration skyrockets. And we deserve to burst with inspiration every moment of the day. After all, our authentic essence is exploding with inspiration, behind the scenes, at every loving moment.



Music Review—The Long Con

Jessica Young



Artist: The Revivalists

Album: *Pour It Out Into The Night*

Single: “The Long Con”

Eight-piece rock band, The Revivalists, have released their latest single, “The Long Con”, from their upcoming album, *Pour It Out Into The Night*. The single is currently available for streaming anywhere you get your music, and the album will be released June 2nd, 2023.

The Revivalists consist of David Shaw on lead vocals and guitar, Zack Feinberg on guitar, Andrew Campanelli on drums, George Gekas on bass, Ed Williams on pedal steel guitar, Rob Ingraham on saxophone, Michael Girardot on keyboard and trumpet, and PJ Howard on drums and percussion.

The band's philanthropic umbrella fund, Rev Causes, "is a fund that supports the essential

work of organizations dedicated to reviving and investing in our communities, our health, and our environment. By donating a portion of our ticket sales, and through fan donations and a variety of fundraising efforts, we aim to assist these exciting organizations in building a better future”.

According to the band, *Pour It Out Into The Night* is a life-affirming album about living in the moment that offers both an unburdening and an appreciation for the here and now, fueled by lessons in gratitude and life realizations. As the world came to a standstill in the years since their last album, personal experiences and life challenges abounded, with band members having their first children, getting married, and navigating the mental hurdles of lockdown.

Of the single, David Shaw says, “The Long Con is a song for the marginalized, the underrepresented and taken advantage of. It’s heartbreaking to see what’s happening in our country. I wanted to write a song that we could all sing together at our concerts, and truly feel connected and aligned. It’s a song for the people”.

Pour It Out Into The Night consists of twelve tracks: Kid; Don't Look Back; Good Old Days; Down In The Dirt; The Long Con; Only You; Alive; Wait For The Sun; When I Got You; How We Move;

Say Goodbye; and Pour It Out Into The Night. The track “Kid” has also been released as a single. The song has a music video on [YouTube](#) and is available for streaming anywhere you get your music.

After listening to both singles, “The Long Con” and “The Kid” are pretty different. “The Kid” is has a folk-rock sound—it reminds me Mumford and Sons (especially their more recent songs)—while “The Long Con” is heavier, aggressive, and anthemic. “The Long Con” also sounds very techy—like a watered-down version of Rage Against The Machine.

While I did enjoy the sound of the song, I can’t help but feel that “The Long Con” is the same kind of performative activism we’re seeing more and more of in the media. The Revivalists sing vague lyrics about an extremely broad topic—there’s a lot of words with very little actual meaning. I would also love to know more about how The Revivalists contribute to bettering the lives of the vulnerable populations they’re singing about (and profiting from). While they promote their charity fund Rev Causes, they don’t actually state what percentage of their ticket sales go to the charities they’re working with.

Overall, I wasn’t a fan of “The Long Con”. But you can check out The Revivalists on [their website](#) and [TikTok](#).

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



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

No universal answer. Limited invigilator availability has one student wondering if it's okay to write a final exam before completing other course assignments; responses suggest it's okay in some courses but prohibited in others—check with the syllabus and the tutor.

Discord

Oh look, a squirrel! Conversation in the #coffee-shop-lounge channel ranges from critical thinking, motivating music, baking, and squirrels at the birdfeeder.

reddit

This one and that one. A steady stream of course-specific queries on BIOL 235, CMNS 202, COMP 372, HSRV 201, and MUSI 267.

Twitter

[@austudentsunion](#) tweets: "[@AthabascaU](#) students facing food insecurity can apply to AUSU's Virtual Food Assistance Program by entering in a monthly draw for one of five major grocery chain gift cards worth one hundred dollars CAD. <https://ausu.org/services/food/>."

[@aulibarchives](#) tweets: "Do you keep getting asked to sign in to EBSCO Host? This is probably because your search session has timed out! Learn how to save your search links so you can return to them! http://libguides.athabascau.ca/Discover/saving_searches #AULibrary."



Fly on the Wall

Study as though the Gate were Left Open!

Jason Sullivan



The sound of galloping horse hooves implies action and adventure. The notion of riding off into the sunset of one's destiny provides a frame through which we can view any task. As we climb atop the noble steed of our academic studies, we might reflect on the twin value of fun and function that guide life's enjoyable pursuits. If we can't sometimes have a good time learning then we're much more likely to take a spill or maybe give up the ride. When our grades fall off remembering our successes will help us get back on all the quicker: we're here for a good time as well as a diplomaed time!

For equestrian types, a horse can be a beloved member of the family as well as a useful tool. But there's also stables to shovel and hooves to trim.

Likewise, our studies hinge on us being part workhorse and part weekend warrior; seeing the rewards of our labour can reduce some of the sting of sacrificing our leisure time to accomplish assignments. As metaphor horseback riding is fine, yet domestic horses are a new phenomenon in terms of human evolution. Recent archaeology reveals the first humans to spend significant time riding horses were only 5 000 years ago. Compare this to the first *Homo sapiens* emerging a full half a million years ago! (Handwerk, 2021). That's a lot of time on foot, and it begs the question: after sharing grasslands with horses for so long, did the first would-be John Wayne domesticate and climb atop a steed for a good time or for a certain purpose? Maybe both, and it behooves us (no pun intended) to remember that even the toughest moments of coursework are part of a process of enlightened betterment as we cantor our way to a better future.

Technology is a tricky beast to tame; newness does not unequivocally translate into better. Horses are not so different from glowing blue computer screens that make eyes sore and circadian rhythms askew: riding them can have negative health consequences. In fact, the reason archaeologists know that later models of the human race (later in terms of those half million years of being a species) rode horses is that such people bear the marks of their passion. "Horseback riding is a very specific pattern of biomechanical stress. You use muscle groups in a way you usually don't do in everyday locomotion" (Bartels, 2023). There's even a name for such distress to our corporeal realm: "horseman's syndrome". Anyone who's suffered from carpal tunnel pain from typing interminably on their laptop keyboard can surely agree, as can a person whose thumbs have become fatigued from carrying on endless smartphone text conversations on a warm spring day while lurching from shade to shade to see the screen. Whatever the motivation for new technologies (including technologies on four legs), advances in mental or physical locomotion are not unceasingly positive. To take a balanced view of our studies also means to address problems and to elevate positives.

Ready, Set, Study At Your Own Pace!

A somewhat antiquated phrase for beating an ideological dead horse is to climb onto one's hobby horse. Many of us have key topics in current events or politics that we circle back to endlessly, like a horsey being trained in a pen. Such a journey between ourselves and our companion beliefs bears literal parallels in the realm of literal hobby horses. These toys, often consisting of a crafted

horsey head atop a broomstick or toilet plunger, are hugely popular in Finland where competitors literally engage in steeple chase obstacle courses, all the while clutching their maned pet. Like a favourite pet peeve or pop culture hero, these riders come to value their toy horses so much that they believe them to have a personality and skill set all their own. During online horse auctions they describe these inanimate but attractive pets in equally lifelike fashion: "Some of the horses are good at jumping and some are fast" (Turner, 2017). To make the grade riders must exhibit "elegant movements" and perfect rhythm". Competitions with judges are so serious that a loser may leave the room "to cry" because "your steps have to be light and beautiful". Horseback riders may get weird spinal curvature but clearly hobbyhorses are fraught with emotional peril.

Now, fake it till you make it may have some value in coping with exam stress or bibliography bugaboos, but this fake horsing about seems, if not a bit much, then certainly an example of how the fun of a hobby can lead into function and then, when competition enters the picture, end in tears. Or, for that matter, jubilation over having proved oneself better than others. As for competition and horsey rides ending in tears, AU too is a deeply personal project, and one that can enter tricky terrain if we try to compare ourselves to others too much. Non-students and scholars alike may not agree with, or even respect, our studies, and that's okay. It's not a race or a popularity contest; distance education is about giddy up on the way to our destiny. If we feel lithe and limber and ready to bound across meadows, that's great. Yet in the end it's how we privately relate to our learning that'll form the bond of a lifetime between ourselves and our studies. We're all solitary cowpokes as distance education students.

Finding solace in our solitary studies can provide perspective on society and by extension the social sciences. What does it say about the state of humanity that a timeless childhood toy is now the subject of such rigorous competition? Anyone who's seen a gamer wig out fervidly while playing a video game can glean an answer: we live in the most intense of times where extremes of anxiety are always nearby and persistence of jubilation

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Library Chat

Tues, Apr 11, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

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

Library Chat

Wed, Apr 12, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

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

MBA for Executives Webinar

Thur, Apr 13, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20230413/

RSVP through above link

Library Chat

Thur, Apr 13, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

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

AUSUnights Hot Topic: Networking 101

Thur, Apr 13, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT
Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/ausunights-hot-topic-networking-101/

RSVP through above link

2023 Athabasca University Research Forum

Mon, Apr 17 and Tues, Apr 18, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU's Research Office

news.athabascau.ca/events/2023-athabasca-university-research-forum/

Register through above link

much further away. Playing aimlessly with toys and wandering in a fog of daydreams seems a distant memory. However, the fun of just studying as its own reward can enter our academic picture when we let ourselves wander into the nether regions of our textbooks and extra readings that aren't assigned. Let your mind run wild a bit and that can trigger the imagination which is what makes us the inquisitive and thoughtful students we are all. Like a horse gambolling when released free into a pasture we, too, can at times allow ourselves to study as though the gate were left open.

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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.



Why Do Humans Like Spicy Food?

Xine Wang



Whenever I order any kind of noodle soup, I always opt for the spicier option. Especially in the winter as it acts as an automatic body warmer.

Spicy food is a popular culinary trend that has been enjoyed by people all over the world for centuries. From the fiery cuisine of Southeast Asia to the spicy dishes of Latin America, the love of spicy food transcends borders and cultures. I've always wondered why this became a trend and how some people can tolerate extreme spice and seem to enjoy it, but others avoid it like the plague. For myself, I'm a huge fan of moderate level spices. Whenever I cook, I like to add chili oil or chili flakes to many traditional recipes. But why do people enjoy spicy food, and what are the health benefits of eating spicy food? In this article, we will explore the world of spicy food and the reasons why people love it.

Spicy food is defined as food that contains a high amount of capsaicin: a compound found in chili peppers. Capsaicin is responsible for the heat sensation in spicy food, which can range from mild to extremely hot. While some people may shy away from spicy food, others find it to be a thrilling and enjoyable culinary experience.

So what is it that makes spicy food so appealing to some people? One reason why people enjoy spicy food is the sensation of heat that it produces. When we eat spicy food, capsaicin triggers a reaction in the brain that causes

our body temperature to rise. This causes the release of endorphins—chemicals that produce a feeling of pleasure and euphoria. This sensation is often described as a "spice high," and can be addictive for some people.

For example, in my grandparent's hometown of Sichuan, China there is a love for the "ma la" flavor. It's known as the spice capital of the world. It is well known that almost all dishes are laced with some form of chilli oil.

Another reason why people enjoy spicy food is the flavor profile that it creates. Spicy food can enhance the flavors of other ingredients in a dish, adding depth and complexity to the overall flavor. Spicy food can also help to balance out the sweetness or

richness of a dish, making it more satisfying and enjoyable. Sometimes when I am making myself vegetables, I would sprinkle a few chilli flakes to give it some extra flavor and help keep my palate interested.

In addition to the enjoyment factor, there are also several health benefits associated with eating spicy food. Capsaicin has been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties, which can help to reduce inflammation in the body. It has also been shown to have pain-relieving properties, which can be beneficial for people suffering from chronic pain conditions. And in fact there are many over the counter medications that boast pain relief with purely capsaicin as an active ingredient.

Despite the many benefits of spicy food, it is important to remember that not everyone enjoys or tolerates it. Some people may have a lower tolerance for spicy food, while others may experience gastrointestinal discomfort or other side effects. It is important to listen to your body and eat spicy food in moderation, especially if you are not accustomed to it.

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



Spicy skewers is a famous street food in Sichuan, China. The broth is packed with spices, sesame seeds and pepper corn which adds a "numbing" feel on the tongue.



Spicy boiled fish is another famous dish that I order at in Canada at many Sichuan restaurants. The fish packed with flavor and multiple different spices are used including dried chilli peppers, chilli oil, chilli flakes and chilli powder.



Truth, Difficulty, and Dedication

Elisa Neven-Pugh



“Holy Spirit, help me. Amen”

The above prayer is usually something I keep in secret when I write these pieces. To keep things more secure is usually the argument—usually. But it’s time to step out of the usual in several ways.

First, if I want to be comfortable with who I am, I have to stop overthinking everything and just do it. The very fact that this may sound familiar because of previous work is the basis for my second reason; I do the usual thing of talking about something but not really living up to it. Simply, I can write about giving up self-sufficiency and, most recently, the gift that comes from letting go, but the fact is, in saying that, I gave the universe permission (apparently) to take me out of the frying pan and put me into the fire.

While on a cognitive and spiritual level I understand that I am getting what I asked for, to become who I am meant to be and truly live as a quadriplegic walking by faith, as it says on my

email signature. When it comes to my emotional and psychological aspects, however, this change is disagreeable. Put another way, I know deep down this will be good for me, bringing benefit for me and hopefully many others in the future, while simultaneously hating how it feels at the present moment.

It’s like, I love the scholarship, but university is hard! Citation style? Wait how many, and what version? And it depends on the professor’s preference? “Dad I need you to help me with my paper,” she whimpered.

Now, eight years later I moved to emotional and psychological graduate school—except it’s every day. What? You mean I can’t just pretend I can pick up the popcorn easily, I have to acknowledge I suck at it? And acknowledge that over thinking is a bad thing instead of rationalizing it?

You mean I can’t hide behind wanting to make my heroes proud to cover up the fact that I feel totally inadequate right now? I have to put myself in situations where I feel completely out of my depth? I won’t wake up completely at peace with everything even after prayer? Jesus, I need you. For everything! Amen.

Yes, my journey to understand that human nature is frail is unique because it seems to be on the outside, with the quadriplegic thing, but don’t we all crave independence and exaltation to some extent? The thing is, it’s not healthy. Yes, this realization burns like nothing I’ve ever experienced. This withdrawal from self-sufficiency and arrogance is hell.

But it’s worth it. How? I just know.

I’m Elisa. I have cerebral palsy quadriplegia. More importantly, I have a great family, wonderful opportunities, and a deep faith. I’m inspired to write to help others learn and conquer invisibility syndrome.



Beyond Literary Landscapes

Stream-of-Consciousness

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 considers stream-of-consciousness as a literary technique or device.

Stream-of-consciousness can be defined as a “narrative technique in nondramatic fiction intended to render the flow of myriad impressions—visual, auditory, physical, associative, and subliminal.”

In an attempt to write what is occurring in the mind, stream-of-consciousness often includes “incoherent thought, ungrammatical constructions, and free association of ideas, images, and words at the pre-speech level.”

At times, this literary device is known as “interior monologue.” Note that this is different from a “dramatic monologue,” as it addresses the character themselves, as opposed to an audience.

Examples of authors who experimented in stream-of-consciousness include Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, and James Joyce.

Additional authors include Marcel Proust, T.S. Eliot, Henry James, and Samuel Beckett.

What

Some examples of stream-of-consciousness in literature include *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner, and *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce.

Where

These novels are set throughout Great Britain, as well the southern United States.

When

These works take place during the 20th century.

Why

Stream-of-consciousness, while fascinating, can be a difficult read. These works may interest AU students who would like to challenge themselves, or step out of their comfort zones. They may also attract PSYCH students who would like to learn more about the human mind. In addition, these novels could be of interest for students who would like to know more about the development of early 20-century literature.

How

AU's wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to stream-of-consciousness 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 393: The Early Twentieth-Century Novel, a senior-level, three-credit course, which "focuses on the first four decades of the twentieth-century British novel, its history and development, its rich variety of forms and techniques, and the ideas and events that influenced it." (Students should note that this course requires ENGL 211: Prose Forms and ENGL 212: Poetry and Plays as prerequisites..) Several of the above-mentioned novels are included in this current course revision. Happy reading!

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



Hard Work is Euphoric

Marie Well



I'm never retiring. As long as I can roll out of bed and stay upright for eight hours, I'm manning the battalions of the work front. You see, Mom was meticulous and would tear our bed sheets off the bed, demanding we remake it at the sign of the slightest crease. And Dad was the first business in the city to offer 24-7 service within his industry. So, Dad's phone rang day and night, often requiring him to go to work at three, four, or five in the morning. Dad got his sleep during daytime TV commercial breaks.

Even more compelling, my older brother was a big dreamer. He dreamed of starting a band, becoming a famous actor, or making it big in business. He included me in his dreams. For instance, he almost had a TV sitcom for which he wanted me to produce the music score. He had funding from the Canadian National Film Board, but the project was never completed. And then, he became the global finance

director for a public company, making as much money as a competent psychiatrist earns within a year.

So, my brother conditioned me to dream big, while he and my parents conditioned me to work hard. However, I was stricken with extreme anxiety and chronic illness for nearly a decade, so I could no longer work. During that languishing, I read every book I could find on how to cure myself. Finally, after nearly a decade, I'm back in the race. I aim to earn a quarter of a million annually and achieve enlightenment. I may or may not accomplish this, but it's the process where all the fun lies.

With that said, here are some key reasons why hard work pays off: In her book *Mindset*, Carol Dweck says hard work is the solution to success. It's common sense: effort trumps innate aptitude.

That's because anything can be learned. But talent without action may not manifest the intended heights of achievement.

Hard work helps us overcome failures, and everybody experiences failures. That's because we are all beautifully flawed. And our shortcomings lead to treasures, for our weaknesses trigger the need for growth—like the need for oxygen. And when that need for change is met with hard work, it's like a petunia bursting with its first bloom. Even if the end goal fails, the process is golden. That's because that process has infinite positive implications for future success.

Hard work can make us wealthier, better-looking, healthier, and happier. I can't recommend strenuous exercise enough. My best photos are all taken when I've been exercising hard. And laborious exercise spikes energy. Thanks to hard work, the life force leaving me a year ago is back in full force. Success requires a high level of energy, which exercise gives.

Without hard work, we can show an innate talent. But combine that talent with hard work, and we're unstoppable. Even without profound talent, hard work can make us successful beyond our dreams. And we'll go far if we bust and move long after the first sign of resistance.

Some people seem like they are meant to watch the world go by. Or are they? It's a choice. It's like someone whose never been encouraged or exposed to hard work. They may not like it. But one commonality exists among people who work hard: they taste the bliss. It's pushing ourselves so hard in a workout that our bodies flood with endorphins, our senses heighten, and food tastes more delicious by a factor of a thousand. Or it's stretching ourselves to our limits at our desks daily to gain the euphoria of new skills and a profoundly more affluent lifestyle. Once we've tasted the accumulative bliss from hard work, we'll never aim to settle for less. There is a reason why Olympians, business tycoons, and famous actors work endlessly at their crafts: hard work is a high. And many success stories are about ordinary people who achieve extraordinary results. We all have the potential to transform our lives into dreams—even miracles—by busting and moving.



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

Finland has been much in the news in recent weeks, both for receiving its final approval to join NATO and for a tensely-fought election which saw Sanna Marin ousted as prime minister. Our writers past have made surprising—and sometimes tenuous—Finnish connections.

From Dog River to Helsinki. Then-editor Sandra Livingston muses on the worldwide appeal of the Canadian sitcom, *Corner Gas*. "In a different age, knowing when to leave probably wouldn't seem so remarkable. But overload is the order of the day, and in the stampede of excess, all too often quality is trampled and left to choke on the dust of quantity." Editorial –A Graceful Exit, April 11, 2008.

From Beowulf to Hemingway. Erik Ditz provides summaries of several recently-read books. "On page one we learn that this white guy goes to Spain to join some revolution and instead he gets drunk with Spaniards and plans to blow up a bridge and then the next 503 pages say the exact same thing. And this is supposed to be his best book? Yeesh. " The Milk-Crate Bandit – Books are Carrots for Your Eyes, February 1, 2008.

How to Cheat the Taxman Avoid Paying the Aggravation Tax

Alek Golijanin



If I were to provide readers with the blueprint on how to cheat the tax man, something like that could potentially land me in jail, but I am going to do it anyway because nobody deserves to pay the aggravation tax. Fortunately, revenue agencies are not the “tax man” I am referring to, and the “aggravation tax” has nothing to do with their tax laws. Rather, it is a “tax” that people with poor interpersonal skills pay when they interact with other people, and I want to help as many people as possible to get out of paying this pointless “tax”.

The aggravation tax is a term used to describe the cost that people who are aggravating pay, and it can be a financial cost but also a non-financial cost. Simply put, there is a cost to pay for every interaction or negotiation that we take part in, and we want to steer outcomes to be as favourable for ourselves as possible. What this involves is getting the other person to like you, or at least not dislike you. From

there, it requires you to have an understanding for them as a person as well as their situation. The situation is what determines the costs associated with aggravating that person and it impacts everything from getting a better price during a financial transaction to being able to recover lost property.

Trust currency is equivalent to both hard currency and digital currency.

As someone who was lucky enough to get into digital currency over a decade ago and before it was even considered a “currency”, now exchangeable for hard currency, I would say that trust currency is just as valuable and important as the other two forms of currency, possibly even more. Although every person is born into different financial circumstances, entirely out of anyone’s control, each person is born with the same amount trust currency, and it is our actions that dictate whether we go on to earn more of this currency or lose it altogether.

Society measures trust currency under different pseudonyms, one being a person’s credit score, which should be viewed as a trust score because financial lenders are looking at your history of living up to credit obligations. In other words, if I lend you this money today, can I trust that you will pay me back under the terms of our agreement? As important as trust is in business transactions, it is just as important in life interactions. If people can trust you, rely on you and know that you will not embarrass them, then the outcomes that arise from those interpersonal interactions are far more likely to end in your favor.

Being aggravating can cost you at auction.

As an example, last summer there was a fundraiser auction that was organized by Ottawa’s outgoing mayor at City Hall, and it was a picture that he tweeted of a Team Canada baseball jersey that would be auctioned off that got my attention. Baseball was the first sport that my first childhood friends taught me how to play when my family moved to Canada. I loved playing baseball so much that by 9 years old I was playing overhand baseball games with kids many years older than me, and I was hitting dingers over 200 feet. Simply put, I had to have that jersey.

At the auction, I was amped with excitement and far too much caffeine, to the point that my iWatch detected a heartrate of over 160 beats per second. I met some of the other auction

attendees, and we began talking items. By the end of the first round, I would end up winning all the baseball items, and I was positioning to win a Team Canada Curling zip up sweater until a woman politely mentioned that there was someone who was really hoping to win that item for a specific reason. Although I may be hypercompetitive, after hearing about why that person wanted that item, I stood aside and was happy to see them win that item. Respect is a form of trust currency, and them being kind enough to pay me some saw it returned.

However, it was while I was paying for my items that someone seemed to be requesting that I charge them the aggravation tax. As I was taking out the cash to pay for my items from a bank envelope stuffed in my man purse, a white-haired guy who was also in line and waiting to pay blurted out, "You probably have more of that in a shoebox. Or do you keep it under your mattress?" It seemed this comment was meant to diss me, and the foodbank staffers quickly said something in an attempt to deescalate the situation, even before I could respond, but I always have impeccable control over my emotions, and he was never going to get an emotional reaction out of me.

Despite that this situation would have been perfect for me to apply the infamous "Johnson Treatment" and drop a clever one-liner, I already have somewhat of a MacGruber-like reputation at City Hall, which I was not trying to grow on that day, and I wanted to keep an actual low-profile, unlike MacGruber. So, I went out and made sure to win even more items in the second and third round of auction, especially the items that the brash gentleman would walk in close proximity to.

Instead of trying to embarrass me, had the man approached me differently, perhaps we could have made a deal for him to get one of those jerseys and perhaps everyone else could have left with more items than they did.

Trust currency helped me buyback my snapback.

As another example, over the span of 48 hours, I had two of my baseball hats stolen at the budget-friendly gym, snatched from the top of the lockers. The first hat that was stolen was a black Toronto Raptors hat, while the second hat was a grey Champion hat, which also happens to be my lucky hat and the one I always wear to auctions.

My relationship with the gym staff came in handy because they trusted me enough to show me the CCTV footage and we were able to identify the people who took my hats. To get my hats back, I knew I had to have the perfect approach, and I did not want to give off the impression that

More AU-thentic Events

Library Chat

Tues, Apr 18, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

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

Library Chat

Wed, Apr 19, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

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

Faculty of Business Undergrad Program Orientation for New Students

Wed, Apr 19, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

news.athabascau.ca/events/faculty-of-business-undergraduate-program-orientation-for-new-students-20230419/

RSVP through above link

Library Chat

Thur, Apr 20, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

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AUSU Student Council Meeting

Thur, Apr 20, 6:00 to 7:00 pm MDT
Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/ausu-student-council-meeting-9/

RSVP through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

I wanted to embarrass anyone involved or potentially further aggravate them. I also knew that if given the chance, 99% of people will do what they can to right a wrong.

My Toronto Raptors hat was snatched on a Friday at 2:07AM by a kid in his mid-to-late teens, and what followed after he snatched it played out like something you might see on a Netflix show. After snatching my hat off the top of the locker and into his coat, this kid's friend picked up a sign from the front entrance that read, "Don't Steal!", and they were laughingly mocking him until he walked out the front entrance. They then put the sign back on the front desk before leaving the gym.

When I approached the guy who had picked up the sign and made fun of his friend, I started off by introducing myself and politely bringing up the situation and telling him about what I saw on camera. I mentioned how I did not think it was a big deal, that I hoped to get my hat back, and that I was not looking to embarrass anyone or make anything more out of the situation.

Two days later, the kid who took my hat ended up returning it, and all three of the boys came to me and apologized, but the kid who took my hat stated that he was embarrassed about the stupid decision that he made and that he did not want me to think of him as a petty thief. I was quite impressed with him because he actually had the cojones to come back to the gym and hand deliver the hat, but also because of how responded to his actions. Although he could have stopped coming to this gym and started going to another location, he had the courage to address his mistake head on.

I thanked him for returning my hat and I poked fun at the situation, assuring them that I have made far dumber decisions. However, I also expressed my hope to not allow this situation to make things awkward because we all make short-sighted decisions sometimes and because we all go to the same gym. And just like that, I made three new friends, in addition to getting my hat back.

The second hat, my Champion hat, was snatched on a Sunday at 3:31PM by elderly man whose appearance resembled that of Kris Kringle. Even though Santa has never stolen, even Santa is not above accidentally picking up something that does not belong to him as he looks around to see if he can find cookies and milk, and the CCTV footage showed him surveying my hat from different angles before snatching it off the top of the locker and stuffing it into his coat.

While I have no discomfort in interacting with anyone, I did not feel comfortable approaching this old man because I wanted to avoid the possibility of a "Karen-esque" situation. So, I asked the female workers who already knew him well to ask him for my hat back by saying that my great-grandmother had bought it for me and that I was very sad since losing it, but I also told them that I would throw them a Starbucks party if they managed to recover the hat in one piece. In the end, I got my Champion hat, and throwing that party cost me more than what I had paid for my it, but that was my lucky hat, so it was well worth it.

Everyone is better than their worst moment.

How everything played out should serve as proof of the inherent ability that every person possesses when it comes to righting wrongs and that everyone is better than their worst moment. The only reason I was able to get my hats back was because I was able transact in trust currency while also avoiding the aggravation tax. Furthermore, there is nothing about me and the way that I handled that situation that other people can not replicate or even do better. So, as long as someone is willing to try to make things right, when that situation involves me, then I will always give them the chance to do so. I hope others try to do so as well.

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



The Art of Friendship



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Dear Barb,

Hi, I read your column weekly and I appreciate your advice. My question is about best friends. I have known Chrissy for 25 years and our lives have paralleled in a lot of ways. I believe that is the reason we bonded and were always there for each other.

However, recently, things have changed. For years we had both worked at the same job, but three years ago I resigned and decided to pursue my lifelong dream of becoming an artist. It has taken me a couple of years to find my artistic style, but I eventually did. I have had a few showings at galleries in and around town. I always let Chrissy know where and when the showings would be, but so far she has not attended any of them. She always has an excuse, like someone dropped over for a visit or she had some kind of event to go to. When she comes over she never asks about my art or wants to see what I'm working on. I am very hurt and don't understand why she would be like this. It has definitely affected our relationship. I feel she is not supporting my dream. Aren't best friends supposed to be supportive? I don't know if I should tell her how I feel, or just let it be and spend time with people that do support me.

Thanks for your response, Laurie.

Hi Laurie:

The definition of a best friend is a person who you value above other friends in your life, someone you have fun with, someone you trust, and someone in whom you confide.

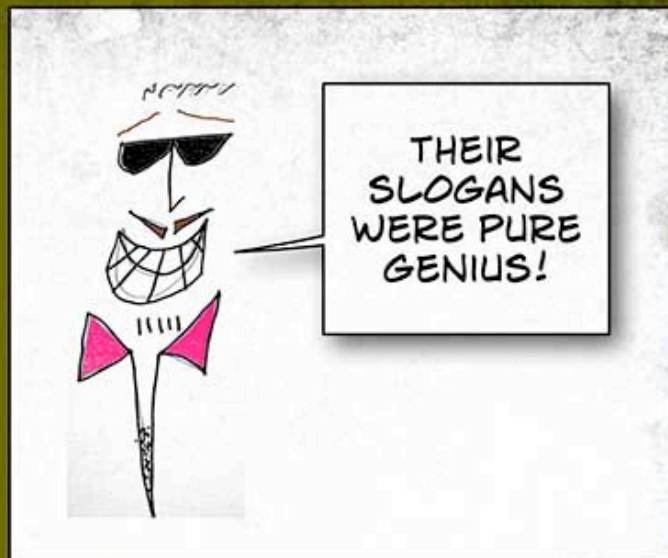
The first thought that comes to mind is that your friend is jealous or envious of your newfound success. If she has a valid reason for not viewing your art, I believe she would tell you. Jealousy is not a healthy quality and leads to all kinds of difficulties in relationships. You are obviously very distraught by this turn of events. If it would make you feel better to discuss it with your friend, then that is what you should do. However, she is unlikely to admit to her feelings, but it may cause her to tell you the real reason, if there is one.

Choosing instead to spend your time with other friends or family who support your dream is a healthy option. As you move away from Chrissy, she may decide to ask why you are not hanging out with her. That would provide a perfect opportunity for you to tell her how you really feel. Unfortunately, these situations often occur when people move in different directions, and one ends up feeling hurt. As long as you haven't been bragging about your success, which may lead to feelings of resentment, I think you should choose to move on and focus on your artistic future. Thanks for your email, Laurie.

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.

Chazz Bravado
Hard On Regina

Wanda Waterman





UPDATE

COMMUNITY. RESOURCES . SERVICES



Apr. 13, 2023
5 p.m. MT
on Zoom

Building Momentum

Networking 101

Looking for to build a professional network?
Want to learn how to network more effectively
with others in your field?

Join us on April 13, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. MT for a
Hot Topic session on networking in any
profession. Host Trishtina Godoy-Contois, VP
External at AUSU, will kick off the hour with a
presentation on **Building Momentum:
Networking 101**. Afterwards, attendees can
participate in an informal, collaborative
discussion on tips that students can use to build
a professional network. [RSVP on Eventbrite!](#)

Spring Awards & Bursaries Cycle Coming Soon!

The AUSU spring awards cycle will be open and accepting
applications from **April 15-May 31, 2023**.

AUSU's Awards & Bursaries Program promotes and
celebrates academic achievement and community spirit
among AU undergrads, and provides aid to students
encountering financial hardship. You're eligible to apply if
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Just starting out? Check out the [New Student Bursary](#).
Not sure you'll meet specific criteria? The [#lgo2AU Award](#)
is open to all undergrads who—yup—go to AU.



**Spring
Awards
Cycle**

**Coming
Soon**
April 15-May 31

**We are CLOSED for the stat holiday April 7 & 10,
RETURNING to regular business hours April 11, 2023.**

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