



THE VOICE

Vol 31 Issue 15. 2023-04-21

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

When Comedy Stops Being Comedy

A Reflection On The Past

Spring Fruit

Awards Just for AU Students!

Plus:

I Want to be a Janitor

*Council Connection: March Meeting
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

The Conference Impact

Karl Low



I attended the 2023 AU research forum on Monday and Tuesday, as did a couple of other Voice Writers and, honestly, if you missed the opportunity, you did miss some interesting sessions. It was amazing to hear the breadth of research that AU faculty are up to. There was everything from a silent slide-show on the importance of sound in understanding a culture or people, to a look at some of the latest adaptive learning technologies, to studies of architecture in an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion lens, to an exploration of lesser developed cultures on other continents, economics, trade-legislation, and more.

One researcher noted her pilot programs in systems that automatically detected a students' learning style and adjusted the course materials they received appropriately had some measurable results—not on grades, unfortunately, but rather on lowering how long students had to be engaged with the course materials (which I think might turn into better grades in other courses when students have more time to attend to them.)

One of the keynote panels, on how the impact of research was often not captured in lists of the best researching universities (because many of them are based on how much grant money is received, which naturally leads to higher results for medical research and engineering research, while social or mathematic research might have relatively few costs despite leading to immense discoveries and change) had a couple of notes raised by attendees (not myself) about how important it is to get undergraduates into a research stream.

There was also a panel by graduate students on their experience with research that was illuminating and gave some hints on how students might better prepare themselves for advanced degrees.

The online system had an online exhibition hall, which had “booths” from a number of places, including a corporation known as ELIXR that was looking for students to help them advance their extended and augmented reality technology, and as well from Alberta Innovates (helping business and researchers who want to develop their ideas into actual businesses, especially in rural Alberta), and other organizations hoping to help various niches advance. One thing I found was the AU Research Office's [student research assistant site](#), which has multiple positions open right now, most of which offer some form of pay, for students who meet certain criteria and can help an AU faculty member with their research.

There were also some stumbles, as some of the faculty had issues with the streaming technology, with one researcher confounded simply because his computer had too many open files and he could not readily find the presentation he intended, and some sessions having what seemed to be significant bandwidth issues, causing the stream to freeze multiple times over the presentations. Fortunately, most of these were dealt with in a reasonable fashion by the staff and even other faculty members pitching in to help.

I'm hoping to get more in-depth looks at the conference, or portions of it, in the coming weeks from some of the other writers who were there. But suffice it to say, FOMO for this event would have been justified.

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl", with a stylized flourish at the end.

MINDS WE MEET



The The Voice Magazine recently had a chance to chat with Judie Lavigne (she/her), a Bachelor of Commerce – Accounting Major student located in Camrose County, Alberta, who plans to graduate by August 2025. As for her future plans? “Not sure where I am going to go when I’m done but right now my plan is to continue on to earn my CPA. But, right now, taking it one day at a time,” she stated.

On a personal note, Judie is “a 43-year-old woman, born in Medley, AB but grew up in Edmonton for the most part.” She continued, “I did live in the Okanagan for a few years when I was a teen. I have 3 kids, 2 daughters and a son as well as a 5-year-old grandson. I live in a little hamlet in Camrose County with my husky, Nani and my cat, Angel. I have been working full-time for an oilfield company in Edmonton for 12 years as a Jr Business Analyst/Accounts Receivable clerk as well as being a full-time student with AU for the last 2 years. Needless to say, my life is very busy.”

This occupied student had some great study tips for fellow AU peers. “When studying I always have to have the TV on, just something to listen to in the background and its always old TV series like *CSI*, or other criminal shows. I can’t listen to music,

as I lose focus and just want to get up and dance. When I’m starting to feel overwhelmed, I think about why I started this journey and what my goals are. I look at my kids and grandson’s pictures on my walls and it gets me focused again. There have been so many times that I second guess myself but they are the best motivators. Or another way is to take a break and get up and workout. I love doing yoga and using my hula hoop or I get up and take Nani for a walk.”

She also had some pertinent advice for new students and prospective students. “Best advice I can give anyone, set a schedule and stick to it. There will be times when of course life in gets in the way, but try to stay on track as much as possible. If you need to take a break, then do it or you will just burn out and want to give up. On exam day close the books, tablet, laptop whatever you use to study and do something that helps you relax. For me, I turn up my music, clean my kitchen and just dance around the house playing fetch with Nani. Do something that helps clear your mind, keep you calm so that when you go to write you don’t feel overwhelmed.”

She continued, “Something that I have had to learn, unfortunately the hard way, is to have people around you who support and cheer you on, not people who think you are selfish for putting your studies first. And for those that you think who would or should be there by your side during your journey that abandon you then it is a blessing and you do not need them in your life. Remember that you are doing this for you!”

When she is not working or studying, Judie finds time “to hit gym.” She stated, “I try to every other day, and, on the days that I can’t, I workout at home. I enjoy taking my husky out for walks or for road trips to the mountains, that’s my happy place, where I can clear my mind and refocus

on what I need to get done. When I can find the time I enjoy going golfing with my aunt. If I could be outside all summer, then I would be.”

Judie also shared two important people in her life that have had the greatest influence on her desire to learn. “My Aunt Angela has had the biggest impact on me. She is one of my biggest supporters. My aunt got married, had kids and it wasn’t until they were older where she went and pursued her dreams and went to college. It’s the same thing that I have done, I got married and had kids very young and put off pursuing my degree until they were out of the house, and when I can focus on putting my dreams first. Watching her showed me, even though I am starting my degree later in life, that if you want it, go for it.”

She also credits her middle child, Sylvia, as “a great influence.” She explained, “I know it’s probably funny to say that, as she is my child, but she is one of my biggest cheerleaders. She is a hard worker and goes after what she wants and doesn’t stop until she gets it. I’m very proud of her, she inspires me to keep going even when things in my life haven’t been the greatest over the last few years.”

Judie let us know about a very memorable vacation, which was also coincidentally with her Aunt Angela. “The first trip I took out of the country was to Hawaii with my Aunt Angela to go and visit my great Aunt Blanche. Hawaii is special to me as my grandma would go there during the winter for three months to visit her sister. My only wish is that I could have done my first trip over there with her, but she passed before I could go. It’s the first plane ride that I can remember the feeling of the takeoff and landing. It was so amazing. Walking on the beach, the first time being in the ocean, even thinking about it now takes me back.”

As for her experience with online learning so far? “Learning online takes a lot of discipline to stay focused and on schedule. I love it as I like to be challenged. I am the type of person where I need to be left alone to figure out solutions. I’m like this at work too. Whenever there is a project that needs to be done I can figure things out better and have a better understanding when I’m working on it alone.”



“I also like being able to come home after working all day, put comfy clothes on, sit on the couch where I can grab my iPad or textbook, and study or work on assignments. During the summer I can work on my studies anywhere instead of being in a classroom. Whether it’s just sitting outside in the sun, or by the fire, or even down at my aunt & uncle’s trailer at the golf course,” she stated.

Judie’s most memorable AU course so far has been [CMIS 245: Microcomputer Applications in Business \(Windows\)](#). “I enjoy working with the Microsoft Office programs and I’m pretty good at them too. It was the easiest course so far and I completed it in three days. Think that’s why it’s so memorable, because when I think about it I just laugh. Easiest A I ever got,” she explained.

As for communications with her course tutors? “When I have reached out to my course tutors, and it has only been a few times, they have all been great. Gotten back to me quickly and have helped tremendously.”

The Voice Magazine also asked Judie what her first project would be if she were to become the new president of AU. She lets us know, “I would want to hear from students on their concerns about how the exams are invigilated. I know for myself I have had issues with ProctorU, as well I have heard many stories of other students having issues. Whether it is due to certain rules they have

(and they all seem to be different depending on who is watching you) to having issues with the connections. I know for myself that I have had issues with them saying that my connection isn't good, but I know from testing my internet speeds before I write that they are fine. I would want to work with the students and staff and see if there is another way that this situation could be rectified, whether that means AU starts their own online invigilation for exams. Another issue I know for myself is having to pay to take an exam online. As a student I pay a lot in fees and to have to come up with extra fees to write is hard to come up with. Maybe start something to help students like we do with the food program that you can apply for we could do the same to help alleviate the associated costs with taking exams."

Judie's most valuable lesson learned in life is that she has "had to learn is that people leave, whether it is because they have passed away or by just walking out the door." She continued, "As much as this hurts, no matter what the situation is, you have to keep going and move forward with your life. Those that stay by your side when you are at your lowest are the ones who deserve to be there when you are at your highest. Don't let those who walk away when you need them the most come back to be there for you when you are back on top."

And her proudest moment? "I have a few proud moments and it is too hard to pick just one. Watching my oldest daughter, Jen, getting married and her giving birth to my grandson, Noah. My daughter Sylvia and her graduation; not just high school but her becoming a dental assistant as well. My son Ethan, him finally passing his learners. I was so happy for him as he was so frustrated with taking the exam a few times."

Best of luck Judie!

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: Odenza Vacations College Scholarship

Sponsored by: Odenza Vacations

Deadline: May 1, 2023

Potential payout: \$500

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be between 17 and 24 years of age as of September 1, 2023, be residents of Canada or U.S.A., and have a GPA of 2.5 or greater.

What's required: A completed online application form, including a maximum 1000-word essay answering the question, "Why do you want to be in College/University?".

Tips: Check the application form for guidelines on essay content and format.

Where to get info: odenzavacationsscholarships.com/vacations.php



When Does Comedy Stop Being Comedy?

Alek Golijanin



Has anyone seen Chris Rock's new Netflix special where he makes fun of Will and Jada Smith? How funny was it? What was the craziest joke? These were some of the questions that flooded Twitter when Rock's special dropped, before I stopped bothering to read. However, there were a few snippets from Rock's special that started making the rounds over Twitter that I found to be real headscratchers, and I started wondering why Netflix was platforming the dispute that culminated in the physical altercation seen around the world. It had me thinking, "What the heck is really going on?"

Let us go back to the future to study comedy.

Comedy has a long and rich history that we can look back on and laugh at, but which is just as troubling as the situations of which fun is being made. But that might be why people love it, or at least, why some do. Nevertheless, I believe that the trajectory of comedy changed in the early

2000s, starting with the *Ali G Show* as well as the *Borat* segments, after which other comedians tried replicating with their own spinoffs including the *Amazing Racist*, also around the time of the infamous *Bum Fights* videos, and later *Chappelle's Show* and the sitcom *Summer Heights High*.

By the time we entered into the 2010s, societies desire for ignorance and disrespect entertainment remained the same, and it would be fair to chalk it up to a non-existent values system. I would go as far as saying that the gap between the peak and the valley, between society's capacity for intelligence and society's desire for shameless entertainment, it was the greatest deviation between where we should be heading and how far off trajectory we were going – a modern day version of *venatio* and gladiatorial entertainment.

This brief look into the troubling years of "comedy" may come across as a "better than you"-type shaming, but it is far from that. Everyone that I grew up with and was friends with, myself included, during that transition into adulthood, also acted ignorantly and used words that should have always been regarded as misogynistic, racist, or homophobic, and which should have been beneath all of us. But they were not, since it was reflective of society's values at that time. Everyone's actions were influenced by what they were seeing on TV, over the internet and elsewhere. It was reflective of the times people were living in, and we should be careful of judging people too harshly for how we acted then, so long as we are not still behaving in that manner now.

Social media the great saviour.

During this era of troubling comedy, the only thing that remained constant was social media. The early days of social media were just as lawless as society's values, meaning you could post whatever you wanted and all of it was reflective of just how detached we all were from one another prior to the arrival of platforms like Facebook and Twitter. To be fair, comedians and everyday people were not the only ones who were participating in ignorance and disrespect-entertainment, since there was a Twitter account that tracked all the crazy tweets that politicians from around the world had tweeted at one point. That Twitter account was suspended shortly after we entered into the 2010s, and its treasure trove of tweets sank with it, but it was reflective of just how similar elected figures and regular people really were during that period of time.

These days there seems to be a belief that social media has become more toxic, but I feel that is wrong because I do not think social media has changed, people have. Although I could try to explain some of that anger by discussing the connection between trauma and adversity in childhood and how that contributes to angrier adults, the overarching theme is people are tired of being the butt of other peoples' jokes. Perhaps this is how people have always felt, but they lacked a platform to express their feelings, a platform in the vein of a Facebook or Twitter.

Voices worth listening to.

One of the most popular stand-up comedians of all-time, a fellow Canadian, Russell Peters, was recently interviewed on W5 by Sandie Rinaldo. It is worth the watch. Although the episode begins with a notice that viewers are likely to be offended, it does the opposite, and even attempts to address the challenges around comedy.

Russell Peters' segment is the best part of the episode. Intentional or not, even Peters recognizes, "Wow. I can not believe I said that in complete clear consciousness. Wow. I guess I thought it was funny at the time, but at the time it was funny. It was daring. It was 'Wow. Did he just say that?'" After that, Peters mentions how during this time period, comedians were constantly trying to push the envelope and how people were chasing the line and trying to cross by saying, "It was perfectly normal back then. It was perfectly acceptable." When Rinaldo asked Peters if he regretted anything, he responded by saying, "No. The words are irrelevant, everything is about intent." In other words, Peters acknowledged that his past comedy and even behavior was reflective of the times, a period I would describe as being absent of a values system and which blinded many people.

All of the "Rock versus Smith" beef reminds me of another interview, a 50 Cent interview that I remember watching in the early 2000s, on DJ Whoo Kid's Rewind DVD, where 50 Cent talked about a "beef" between two musicians that he thought would turn deadly because of what they were saying to one another. Perhaps if Rock and Smith were two hardened street kids, instead of a comedian and an actor, Netflix amplifying the situation might have already resulted it in turning deadly. Nonetheless, Mike Tyson's comments on the "Rock versus Smith" situation were my favorite, not just because I like Tyson, but because he is real about the situation, and he never tries to make himself come across as a tough guy.

When the topic of "the slap" came up during a *HotBoxin' With Mike Tyson* episode, Tyson joked, "Rocks getting ready to turn into marble. He is getting ready to turn into marble. He has got some lawsuits coming up." In a subsequent episode, Tyson was asked by one of the guests whether he thought that Will Smith would have slapped him if he said the joke. Without missing a beat, Tyson responded by saying, "Well, I would not be talking about his wife, so he would not hit me. No."

And that is how it should be.

Was that not funny?

So, when does comedy stop being comedy? Is it when we go from generalizing and stereotyping to poking fun at specific people's personal lives, especially when they may be falling apart, for things that are out of their control or are situations that we would not want to find ourselves in? Or is it making fun of the specific things that are most important to them and that may be a significant part of their lives, but that we could care less about? Your life, your problem, not mine, right? These are the questions we need to ask ourselves once we start trying to figure out when comedy stops being comedy.

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



Spring Fruit

Barbara Lehtiniemi

Awards Just for AU Undergrad Students are Ready for Picking



Applications for AUSU's spring award cycle opened April 15. Up to twenty-six AU undergrad students will be selected to receive awards of up to \$1000 each. Undergrad students at AU can apply online for these awards, including scholarships and bursaries, from now until May 31.

A brief description of each award follows (visit the [AUSU website](#) for full descriptions.)

2SLGBTQIA+ Award. One award of \$1000. Applicants must be 2SLGBTQIA+, and be AU students who are enrolled in any undergrad faculty (FHSS, FB, FHD, FST, or Open Studies) and have completed at least six AU credits, and have a minimum GPA of 2.0. Along with a current AU transcript you'll need to include a personal statement of at least 250 words describing your personal experience as a 2SLGBTQIA+ student at AU.

#Igo2AU Award. Two awards of \$1000 each. Applicants must be AU undergrad students; there is no minimum number of credits required, nor minimum GPA. With your application you'll need to provide a link to an online two-minute video articulating your

personal experiences in one or more of five given areas related to AU.

Academic Achievement Scholarships. Three awards of \$1000 each. Applicants must be AU undergrad students who have completed at least thirty AU credits, and have a minimum GPA of 3.85 over the most recent thirty credits at AU. You only have to include a current AU transcript with the application for this one.

Balanced Student Awards. Four awards of \$1000 each. Applicants must be AU undergrad students who have completed at least six AU credits, and have a minimum GPA of 2.0 over the most recent six AU credits. You'll need to supply at least two letters of reference, along with a current AU transcript and an essay of at least 300 words describing how you balance your education with other life commitments.

Returning Student Awards. Four awards of \$1000 each. Applicants must have been away from formal education for at least two years before returning to university, be current AU undergrad students who have completed at least six AU credits, and have a minimum GPA of 2.0 over the most recent six AU credits. You'll need to supply information on education prior to AU, along with a current AU transcript and an essay of at least 300 words outlining the challenges you faced returning to school and how you overcame these challenges.

Student Volunteer Awards. Three awards of \$1000 each. Applicants must be AU undergrad students who have completed at least six AU credits, and have a minimum GPA of 2.0 over the most recent six AU credits. You'll need a letter of reference from a volunteer supervisor, along with a current AU transcript and details about your volunteer or community service activities.

AUSU Bursaries. Five bursaries of \$1000 each. Applicants must be AU undergrad students who have completed at least six AU credits, and have a minimum GPA of 2.0 over the most recent six

AU credits. In addition to detailed financial info, you'll need a current AU transcript, plus an essay of at least 300 words outlining your current financial need and steps you have taken to improve your financial situation.

New Student Bursaries. Four bursaries of \$500 each. Applicants must be AU undergrad students who have completed fewer than six AU credits. In addition to detailed financial info, you'll need a current AU transcript, plus an essay of at least 300 words outlining your educational or career goals and how AU will contribute to you achieving those goals.

All awards require a fully-completed online application form, along with the supplemental materials indicated on each award's application. Where an AU transcript is required, a PDF copy of the transcript preview is sufficient; instructions on how to obtain a transcript preview are included on the application form.

Visit www.ausu.org/services/awards/ for more information and full eligibility criteria on each of these awards and to apply. The deadline for the spring cycle is Wednesday, May 31.

The Voice features scholarships each week, often ones that appeal to a broad cross-section of university students across Canada. It's always good to apply for any scholarships you're qualified for—somebody has to win them and it could be you. AUSU awards, however, are like low-hanging fruit: they're just for students like you and totally within your reach.

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



Homemade is Better An Air Fryer Review

Chef Corey



We got an air fryer from a swap page a while ago. It was quite possibly one of the worst machines I've used. We'd tried various recipes in it and most of them did not turn out well. They were cooked, but the machine had a rotating arm that moved the food around, and tended to destroy the item being cooked. I hated this machine that day we got it.

Fast forward to two weeks ago. I have been looking at dehydrators for backpacking meals. We could make meals for the four of us, dehydrate them, and add water on the trail. I discovered that some air fryers could do this, and the cost tends to be similar. One day, when I dropped our oldest off at her martial arts class, I decided to see what was in Costco. That's when I found the Gourmia 7 Quart Digital Air Fryer. I picked it up because I saw that it could dehydrate and air fry, and maybe it would do these tasks better than whatever we had. Besides, if we hated it, we could return it.

I have now used this machine several times. We have air-fried chicken wings, hot dogs, French fries, dehydrated apples, and cilantro. This machine is a game changer for me. The wings are crispy and still moist. The machine cooks them at 400F for approximately 20 minutes and has a feature that tells you to turn stuff over. It also comes with a preheat option for all the air frying foods. I will say that this machine has become part of our Friday night pizza ritual. Plus, with the NHL playoffs coming soon, we'll be able to watch games and have a few beers and wings cheaper than going out. My

initial investment was around \$80 when I bought it, a package of wings might cost approximately \$20, plus a case of my preferred beer is around \$35 - \$40. So all in, for less than \$150, I can have 12 beers and around 20 wings each time I cook, and the machine will pay for itself quicker than if I bought wings from a pizza place or went to a restaurant to watch any of the games.

Should you have a similar air fryer, here is a recipe for some great buffalo wings.



Air Fryer Wings

Ingredients:

10 - 12 chicken wings
1 tbsp melted butter
2 tbsp your favourite hot sauce like Franks

Directions:

1. Set your air fryer to 400F or click the wings setting available.
2. Cook for 20 minutes, turning once.
3. Add the wings to a bowl and combine the hot sauce with the melted butter.
4. Coat the wings with the buffalo sauce and serve with ranch dip. That's it!

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



The Ideal Mindset for Academic Excellence

Marie Well



The "ideal" is the best measure of success when striving for a goal. And we all can achieve the ideal. So why settle for less? But I don't want to assume I know our ideal courses of action, as we all have different strengths, schedules, and life paths. But I do know how to problem solve after taking a critical thinking course, so here are what I assume to be ideal academic mindsets and some suggestions of how I'd personally achieve them. But it's up to us to conceive our own actions to achieve the perfect educational mindset. After all, we are the masters of our destinies. And we can achieve anything, as opportunities are limitless.

Ideal Mindset #1: "I know how to synthesize new information."

Suggestions: Get exposed to different types of knowledge to synthesize in the first place. Take courses that bring us out of our comfort zone. Get exposed to novel things! Explore

shelves in the library we've never considered before. And then use tools like commonalities, analogies, humor, metaphors, homonyms, observations, and eureka moments to connect seemingly unrelated ideas.

Ideal Mindset #2: "I know how to memorize information with the tipping point of effort to produce the best results."

Suggestions: Use acronyms and wild imagery to memorize information. For more insight on achieving this, read a book on mnemonics during a break between semesters. Mnemonics are systems that the world's greatest memory champions use to memorize facts, names, and numbers.

Ideal Mindset #3: "I can replay knowledge in my head without staring at my notes."

Suggestions: When we take notes, text ourselves key facts or acronyms to memorize. Rehearse these in our head and, whenever we forget, quickly review our texts. Or make a few cue cards with such information and pull them out when we need to promptly aid our memory.

Ideal Mindset #4: "I concentrate on my studies 24-7."

Suggestion: Review what we learn after each study session or class. Map out study plans of action. Dream up creative ideas for essays. Memorize facts in our heads. Mentally assess what we have learned. Sneak peeks at our notes regularly and mentally rehearse them. Before bed, mentally list what we've learned and refer to study notes for what we can't recall.

Ideal Mindset #5: "I know what extracurricular activities to adopt."

Suggestions: Choose extracurriculars that advance our fitness, leadership, academics, or desired careers.

Ideal Mindset #6: "I know how to eat healthily and maximize fitness to spike my daily energy, as success requires high energy."

Suggestion: If possible, research or write an essay on how to eat healthy to overcome various diseases, as medical diets are the optimal ways to overcome autoimmune conditions, chronic conditions, and even diseases like AIDS or cancer. See if your nearby gym or brick-and-mortar university recreational center offers a course on lifting weights. Lift weights at least every second day (but eat plenty of protein). Add fun cardio like dancing, swimming, cycling, or a combative like martial arts or wrestling to keep the heart strong.

Ideal Mindset #7: "I know how to make the learning process highly satisfying and enjoyable."

Suggestion: Love and respect our tutors and professors. Get excited about what we learn. Use positive self-talk to turn mundane learning tasks into highlights of the day. Overthink exciting ideas for essays and presentations. Most importantly, study as often as humanly possible while optimizing performance so the mind stays engaged with academics. The more involved we are with academics daily, the more breakthroughs we'll make regarding academic growth.

Ideal Mindset #8: "I know how to avoid negative thoughts; instead, I think optimistically and positively."

Suggestion: When a negative thought comes to mind, generate love for everyone and return to the goal.

Ideal mindset #9: "I know proper study techniques."

Suggestions: Read study tips online or, better still, through books. When doing mundane tasks, play an audiobook of study advice or listen to a study advice podcast.

Ideal Mindset #10: "I have enough time to study to acquire A's."

Suggestions: Assess the current grades. Are they not A's? Increase the study time or take fewer classes until the A's are realized. Once the A's are realized, invest more time and effort by adding an additional class. Repeat this process each semester until we find the right balance.

Ideal Mindset #11: "I constantly evaluate and fix my academic weaknesses."

Suggestions: If we can't get an A in a class, we have a weakness, whether it be limited time, limited study skills, or a knowledge gap. It's all fixable--every last bit. If writing is a weakness, read a grammar book and Helen Sword's books on how to write academically. If math is a weakness, hang out on Khan Academy's website or hire a tutor. Whatever shortcomings might prevail, there are solutions. Nothing can beat us when we bust and move—even in light of imminent failure!

Ideal Mindset #12: "I journal my academic successes, what I did wrong and how to avoid it, what I did right and how to repeat it—and ways to improve my performance."

Suggestions: This is like the sports playbook. It's a great way to figure out what to repeat and fix. Strategy is critical to success. It prevents us from going into limbo and helps us avoid repeating the same mistakes repeatedly. The strategy enables us to take risks and grow.

Ideal Mindset #13: "I set big goals."

Suggestion: Do you want a Ph.D.? Straight A's? Gold medallion? Big scholarship that pays for all of our graduate studies? A research grant? A professorship? A phenomenal career? It's all ours! We just need to set big goals! All it takes to get the ball in motion is desire.

Ideal Mindset #14: "I don't quit! Instead, I accelerate!"

Suggestion: Step on the gas and race the academic Indy 500! Get swept away by the persistence, resilience, and determination that genuinely represents your grit.



[blue rare]**Where the Mermaids are Singing****Oliver Moorcraft-Sykes**

You will often hear people claim that "it's a small world." But this is just a comforting lie that we like to tell ourselves. The truth is that the world is terrifyingly immense, and endlessly strange. It's not small, and it's not smooth, nor round, either. Between wherever you are and the horizon, there are monsters. Take a wrong step, open a wrong door, wander too close to any edge, and you might very well disappear.

"Everything happens for a reason" is another consoling truism we love to spew. I suppose I can go along with that one, as long as the supposed "reason" has something to do with cause-and-effect, or random chance. In the absence of evidence, I refuse to believe in sentient interventionist forces, either divine or infernal. Shit, as they say, just happens. It happens, for good or ill, by virtue of random configuration, or because we bring it upon ourselves or upon others.

I do believe in the power of hard work, kindness, wisdom, resilience, learning, creativity, and joy, the role that they can play in shifting our experiences towards the good. Mostly, though, I believe in the capricious power

of "luck," by which I mean currents of numerical happenstance far beyond our calculation or control. Like horse races and blackjack, life is a game of chance, albeit with far more variables at play. And this world of ours is a silver-blue gambler's coin, spinning eternally in space. Genetics, birth order, where we are born and when, who we are born to, and much of what happens to us throughout our unpredictable lives: all strokes of random chance. Neither good nor bad, just the way it is.

As I started by saying, the world is terrifyingly immense and endlessly strange. Luckily, the other side to this gambler's coin is that it is also immeasurably beautiful, as chock-full of wonders as it is horrors. Cancer and moonlight, brutality and music. At any given moment, there are atrocities being committed, but also acts of breathtaking benevolence. The roots of love are every bit as deep and tangled in the human psyche as the roots of hate, and just as likely to flower.

Perhaps there is no equation that balances out the light and the dark. But perhaps it is enough to believe they are equally profound; just knowing and accepting that our lives are filled with a great measure of both.

Wander into the vast weirdness of the world, travel to the edges of the map, and you might very well encounter a sea serpent. But you might also find yourself standing on a cliff's edge beneath spectacular constellations, looking down upon a sheltered bay where the mermaids are singing.

Either way, I wish for you that your life will be an interesting adventure. Staying in one place and taking no chances may be the riskiest, and certainly the dullest, option of all. And it seems like an ungrateful way to honour the dizzying-odds-defying fortune that brought you into existence in the first place.

But whatever, shit happens. I do hope that good choices and good fortune accompany you, wherever and however far you may choose to roam.



Music Review—Man Out of Time

Jessica Young



Artist: Friendly Rich

Album: Man Out of Time

Canadian songwriter, Friendly Rich, has released his newest LP *Man Out of Time*. The album is available for streaming anywhere you get your music.

Hailing from Oakville, Ontario, Friendly Rich has composed background music for three seasons of MTV's *The Tom Green Show* as well as a myriad of tunes as The Lollipop People released on his own eclectic record label, The Pumpkin Pie Corporation. On top of his musical career, Friendly Rich also just completed his PhD in Music Education from the University of Toronto, under the supervision of Dr. Lee Bartel. His doctoral research was on musical playgrounds as a vehicle for community development.

Of the album, Friendly Rich says, “I really enjoyed making this record, flexing a new collaborative muscle in the process, sharing files internationally, and pulling it all together. The last recording I released before the pandemic was ‘We Are All Terrorists’, a recording that featured over 75 guest musicians, recorded in several studios in Quebec and Ontario. From there, I was wanting to get more insular in my approach anyhow—what I was deeming a return to the days, when I’d record naked in my parents’ basement. Then the pandemic happened, and, voila, I present you...*Man Out of Time*.”

Man Out of Time consists of sixteen tracks: Man Out of Time; Moi, Mes Soldiers; Le P’tit Bonheur; Killdozer; Kiddos & Doggos; Wheels, You’ve Got Strong Legs, Pt. 3; Notre Sentier; Alone on the Bus; Salvation Mountain; Fluffy Clouds; Fomo Yodo; Mother of Tongues; Bozo; Orca Whale; A Reasonable Man; Thanks for All the Fish. The songs “Man Out of Time” and “Killdozer” have music videos available on YouTube.

Friendly Rich describes his music as “dark and deranged folk songs in the vein of Leonard Cohen or Captain Beefheart”. After listening to the album, I would have to agree. Friendly Rich combines folk and blues rock with horror elements to create something that borders on unsettling (and I think that’s what he’s going for!). Specifically, songs such as “Mother of Tongues”, “A Reasonable Man”, and “Alone on the Bus” sound particularly warped. While Friendly Rich doesn’t exactly sing in many of his songs, he used a deep, gravelly, slow voice to contribute to the eerie vibes.

While the album certainly isn’t my cup of tea, the only aspect that I really take issue with is the track, “Killdozer”. For those who don’t know, “Killdozer” references the 2004 bulldozer rampage in Granby, Colorado—where Marvin Heemeyer destroyed 13 buildings and caused millions of dollars in damages with a home-made armoured bulldozer, and ultimately ended with Heemeyer taking his own life, all because of a series of petty disputes between Heemeyer and Granby town officials.

As if this story isn't disturbing enough, Heemeyer's story is being revived in extreme libertarian circles by people who believe Heemeyer to be a hero for fighting against the government. One blogger refers to Heemeyer as a "good man pushed beyond reason", while another says Heemeyer was "living the American dream of crushing your enemies beneath the treads of your bad*** f***** awesome home-made tank". This is all despite the fact the Heemeyer was obviously suffering from delusions of grandeur often seen in mental health crises. In pre-recorded tapes Heemeyer sent to his brother before shutting himself inside the bulldozer, he claims to be acting in accordance with God's will, saying: "God blessed me in advance for the task that I am about to undertake. It is my duty. God has asked me to do this. It's a cross that I am going to carry and I'm carrying it in God's name".

The song "Killdozer" is performed from Heemeyer's perspective, with lyrics like, "You rained on the wrong parade" and "Everybody in the town is going down". I can't imagine how I would feel about this song if I were one of Heemeyer's family members, or if I or someone I knew lived in the town of Granby when the incident took place. Personally, I think there are a million things to write a song about—this is just unnecessary.

Overall, I wasn't a fan of *Man Out of Time*, but you can check out Friendly Rich on his website, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

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



Council Connection

March 23, 2023 Meeting

Jana Menard



As the chair of the meeting, President Karen Fletcher called the meeting to order on March 16th, 2023, reminding everyone that Executive Director (ED) Jodi Campbell is the accessibility officer and to contact him if they require assistance. President Fletcher explained that accessibility assistance does not always have to be related to a disability; if you need help with anything that could allow you to fully participate in the meeting, ED Campbell will try to make those allowances.

Once the land acknowledgement was read, President Fletcher spoke about how in school, she did not learn about the indigenous geography, and she has since learned much more and finds it interesting. Calling for attendance, it was noted that Vice President External and Indigenous Circle Representative

Trishtina Godoy-Contois, and Councillor Amber McDuffe were absent from the meeting.

Vice President of Finance and Administration Dur-E-NajafSyed (VPFA) motioned to amend the agenda to add the AUSU investment guidelines. President Fletcher suggested it be added prior to the annual report. This amendment passed unanimously.

During the approval of the meeting minutes, President Fletcher noted that they were approving a corrected version. Councillor Allie Wojtaszek abstained, and the motion carried.

Since the last meeting, the Council has arranged a workshop to work on the AUSU bylaws and developed the terms of reference for a policy committee which will come to the Council on April 20th. ED Campbell has scheduled a meeting in April with Alberta Blue Cross to discuss options for the health and dental packages and the possibility of options for Athabasca University (AU) students.

Executive Work Plan

VPFA Syed detailed the two most substantive changes to the Executive Work Plan policy. In previous years, councillors were assigned to projects and goals informally, but they have chosen to change the policy to specify which councillors will be responsible for each project and goal within the executive work plan. The other change was the removal of the "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) goals in the work plan; the reasoning behind this is that not everything they work toward can be measured effectively. Karen gave an example "How do we measure 'advocate to make sure online university is included at the provincial advocacy organization'? We are not going to be like, 'Karen must bring this up once at a meeting,' right? So it's just hard to measure."

Though Councillor McDuffe was not present at this meeting, she had left comments to be discussed within the workplan section discussing elections and timelines. Considering how elections are said to occur during the fourth quarter, Amber wondered if this should be changed to signify that EC elections happen after new members are voted in. Governance Advisor Duncan Wojtaszek noted he believed the policy as it stands makes it clear that it is only incoming councillors who vote; this policy is the guide for the ED on when elections happen. This makes it clear that elections happen in February, March, and April. President Fletcher pointed out that, with council terms being two years, the 4th quarter is actually the last 6th month period, so Karen suggests they amend the clause to state that both council and Executive Council elections are conducted between Feb and April, after the new members are elected in a general election.

Getting back to the most significant change to the work plan policy, President Fletcher explained that before she was on council, each council member would create their own individual work plan, but it was hard to see how they all fit together, so now instead of having multiple work plans, we have one work plan so everyone can see how the pieces work together but still assign responsibilities for each part.

Ratification of the email vote on the AUSU EDI Audit

Council voted via email on March 7th, 2023, to approve the AUSU EDI audit, which cost \$2400. As Council must make all decisions in public, they are required to ratify the vote at the next council meeting. The ratification of the vote passed unanimously.

VPFA Syed had made changes to the new investment guidelines, the most substantive changes being allowing councils to use Environmental and Social Guideline practices within their investing; it calls for the investment manager to be signatories of the UN's principles for responsible investing. VPFA Syed proposed a motion to approve this change; President Fletcher seconded it. VPFA Syed also noted that this passed through the finance committee. The motion passed.

Reports

ED Campbell explained that the annual report is presented after the financial audit, which is why it is well after the end of the fiscal year. This document is on the website for any members to view. President Fletcher commented that AUSU is better at gathering this information from students than AU is, so they often share it with AU because there is great feedback within it.

The meeting concluded with reports and recognitions. President Fletcher recognized Councillor Blake Collett, who has been assisting students in finding alternatives to ProcterU for exam invigilation, which she hopes will put pressure on AU to provide better options for exam invigilation.

If you would like to join council meetings to see for yourself what AUSU is up to, they occur on the third Thursday of each month; reach out to governance@ausu.org for more information. Also, there will be a town hall meeting for the adjusted AUSU Bylaws that will happen this Monday, April 24th, at 5:00-6:00pm. Find out more on the [AUSU Event page for this meeting](#).

Jana Menard is a Bachelor of Arts student majoring in Political Science and minoring in English. She enjoys photography, watching documentaries, and hiking, all the while drinking too much coffee.



Making Shrimp Paste

Xine Wang



The finished product has a pungent smell and reddish-orange in colour.

Lately I've been craving some Southeast Asian recipes such as laksa soup, Thai green curry, and tom yum soup. However, every time I purchase premade sauces, my food tastes unsatisfying. Either the broth is not flavorful enough or the dishes taste like Thai frozen dinners. It lacks the strong aromas of Southeast Asian cooking. Shrimp paste is a flavorful and essential ingredient in many Southeast Asian dishes. It is a concentrated mixture of fermented shrimp and salt that is used to add depth and umami to various recipes.

While it can be easily purchased from stores, making your own shrimp paste from scratch can be a rewarding experience that allows you to customize the flavor to your liking.

Ingredients:

- 500 grams of shrimp peels
- 1 tbsp of sea salt
- 1 tbsp vegetable/olive oil
- 1 fresh chilli pepper or chilli flakes
- 1 tsp butter
- ½ tsp pepper
- 2 tbsp chopped onions
- 2 tsp chopped cilantro (optional)
- 1 tsp chopped green onions (optional)
- 1 tablespoon of rice flour (optional)

Instructions:

1. Clean and peel the shrimp. Use the shrimp peels and shrimp heads and add them to a skillet.

2. Add butter, chilli flakes, pepper, cilantro, green onions, rice flour, sea salt to skillet with shrimp peels
3. Spread the shrimp on a baking sheet or a clean towel, and pat them dry with another towel.
4. Place the shrimp in a large bowl and sprinkle the sea salt over them. Mix well to ensure that the salt is evenly distributed.
5. Transfer it to a food processor or a mortar and pestle. Add 1 tbsp of vegetable or olive oil to improve ease of processing.
6. Grind the shrimp paste until it reaches a smooth and uniform texture. If you want a firmer texture, you can add rice flour to the mixture.
7. Store the shrimp paste in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one year.

Bonus Tips:

- Make sure to use fresh shrimp, as stale shrimp can result in a sour taste and spoilage.
- The fermentation time can vary depending on the temperature and humidity of your environment. It is best to check the shrimp paste regularly to ensure that it is fermenting properly.
- If you don't have a food processor or a mortar and pestle, you can also grind the shrimp paste using a cheese grater or a fine mesh sieve.
- Use caution when handling the shrimp paste, as it has a very strong and pungent odor that can linger on your hands and clothes.

Making your own shrimp paste from scratch is a simple and rewarding process that can elevate the flavor of your dishes. My favorite part about making my own shrimp paste from scratch is that it helps me use all of the food scraps in the kitchen. When I meal prep at home I'm in search of soup bases and sauces to help elevate the flavor of my Asian cooking and making shrimp paste from scratch has been so satisfying in that it uses up common kitchen ingredients. With a few ingredients and some patience, you can create a flavorful and authentic condiment that is sure to impress. Give it a try and enjoy the delicious taste of homemade shrimp paste!

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



Adding vegetable oil to the mixture for an easier mixing process.



While some chefs will use fresh shrimp to create the paste, I prefer the scraps from other shrimp dishes as it really makes use of food waste in a delicious way.

Fly on the Wall

Separating Caca From a Cacophany of Epistemic Duck Noises

Jason Sullivan



If you dissect a duck, where do you find its quack? What a query, why even ask that? Nevertheless, the bit about the duck and its quack arose somewhere amidst the fascinating weeds of the AU course *The Business of Emotions*. Years later, that line surfaces now and then when I ponder matters epistemic: how we know what we know and how we choose to approach a topic. So much of common sense hinges on faith that physical reality can explain reality as a whole, and yet it's our minds, our quacks if you will, that truly characterize our being as humans.

With enough critical thinking even the time-honoured duck test, where if something waddles and quacks like a duck then that's gotta be what it is, falls into a state of dissolution, if not disrepute. Common

sense hinges on social context more than one might think; for instance, I once owned a lovely family of Muscovy ducks who, instead of quacking, make a rasping sort of sound – the better to avoid attracting a puma's attention in their homeland of Belize. But even a duck proper, so to speak, resists simple understanding. No dissection uncovers the *process* by which a duck makes its classic noise, for instance. It's like how no brain surgeon can address our sense of self-esteem. Metaphysical reality is a *thing* immeasurable by sensory methods or even the wittiest of AI chatbots.

All the causative organs in the tissues of a duck's birdie larynx can't quite account for the cacophony they can create. Try quacking for yourself, the combination of events necessary is quixotic to say the least. (No really, give yourself a moment to emit a good quack!)

Anyway, even in the playtime of life, no list of goals and principles can summarize what makes each of us who we are. Crucially, we can incorrectly *think* we know something because it seems self-evident. And, as the old saying goes, an unexamined life is not worth living. Thinking creatively begins, then, with remembering that knowledge as we know it begins and ends in the deepest recesses of our minds. Pondering and reflecting isn't only the outcome of evidence, it's what gets us on a path of inquiry in the first place. While asking where-from a quack sound emanates we may as well be wondering where is the *you* that makes you the unique student you are? Framing our thoughts are the assumptions about what matters and how to address it.

In the philosophy of science, Thomas Kuhn stated that the best breakthroughs stem from a particularly oppositional approach. These thinkers who question methods and ideas, no matter how prevalent and common they seem, lead to cultural revolutions in how science and knowledge are done. To Kuhn these people are of a type "little committed by prior practice to the traditional rules of normal science, and are particularly likely to see that those rules no longer define a playable game and to conceive another set that can replace them" (Kuhn, 2023). To them the question may not be whether a duck is present but whether a duck is what we ought to focus on in that moment, no matter how much quacking it does. Maybe it's a duckstraction!

But let's quacktrack a bit.

Any object or idea can lead us to magical places if we alter our perspective. A dalliance with a duck, or specifically the idea of a duck, might reveal the charm of thinking in new ways. Ineffably

charismatic with its phonetic certainty and cadence, the quacking of a duck normally carries lighthearted implications. As that quack echoes through the caverns of our mental realm it can remind us to lighten up about whatever realities are impinging on our life realms.

Here, once again, prevailing wisdom states that a duck's quack does not carry an echo. Spoooooky! Only when researchers took the time to studiously amplify a quack over a cliff was it proven that the "sound produced is rather sinister" (Radford, 2023) and indeed does echo. Clearly, testing any hypothesis can yield a whole flock of new beliefs.

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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.



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

There's always time for social. A student lists all that stands between them and the semester end of April 30 and invites others to share the same. Easily the most responded-to post this week (because it's easier than working, right?)

Discord

Online working. A helpful post in the #general channel for a remote-based summer-student position with AU.

reddit

Walking through the process. Confusion over booking an exam with ProctorU is dispelled by step-by-step tips.

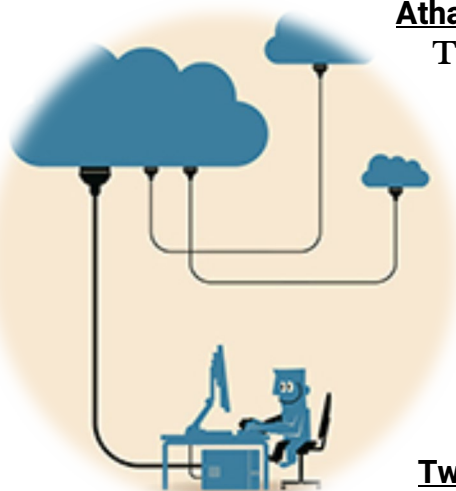
Twitter

@aulibarchives tweets: "Open Educational Resources are not just for traditional classrooms. With no fees or logins required, they can be used for professional development, informal learning, and personal enrichment too! #LifelongLearning #OER #ProfessionalDevelopment."

Youtube

What the future of education might look like is outlined in Education for Everyone, part of AU's Research with Reach series.

[Hey, you! Yes, you! Do you have your finger on the pulse of the AU communities? Do you know what's hot and what's not? Do you think you could compile some of those things each week into the latest Student Sizzle and pick up some pocket change at the same time? If so, contact karl@voicemagazine.org and let him know!]



Beyond Literary Landscapes Autobiography

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 introduces readers to the topic of autobiographies, including recent additions to the genre, some of the genre's classics, as well as inspiration for

further reads.

An autobiography can be defined as “the biography of oneself narrated by oneself.” Many types and forms exist, including letters, journals, and diaries, although more formal autobiographies also exist.

In addition, there exist autobiographies, which are thinly disguised as literature.

What

Some well-known autobiographies include *The Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela, *I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban* by Malala Yousafzai, and *Becoming* by Michelle Obama.

Other notable works include *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Malcolm X, *The Collected Autobiographies of Maya Angelou* by Maya Angelou, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* by Frederick Douglass, and *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank.

An example of a disguised autobiography, includes *The Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man* by James Joyce.

Where

These works are set throughout South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, Afghanistan, and The Netherlands.

When

The majority of these autobiographies take place during the 19, 20, and 21-centuries.

Why

These works may be of interest to AU students who would like a deep look into their heroes’ lives, as well as those who are looking for stories of the world’s most inspirational people. In addition, they can be of interest to students who enjoy riveting true life events, as well as those who seek to better understand historical context.

How

AU's wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to the Autobiography are available in a variety of disciplines, including ones 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 this topic may consider enrolling in [ENGL 491](#): Directed Studies in Literature, a senior-level, three-credit course, which "is designed for students who want to pursue a particular topic of study in literature, cultural studies, or both." (Students should please note that this course requires several prerequisites, including [ENGL 211](#): Prose Forms and [ENGL 212](#): Poetry and Plays. It also requires two additional senior-level ENGL courses, as well as professor approval.) Happy reading!

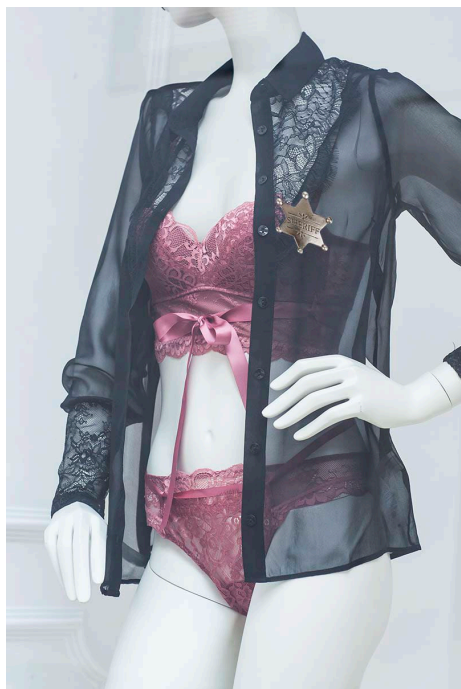
Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.



My Crazy Life

The Gospels of a Gentleman from the Sears Store Sheriff

Alek Golijanin



Life is an accumulation of experiences, and it is up to each one of us to find the takeaways from those experiences and make the most out of them. The circle of life is about the recycling of experience and repurposing it so that others can gain that knowledge and leverage it towards whatever they choose to make their life's purpose.

Preaching the "Gospels of a Gentleman" as a high schooler to other high schoolers.

All of my early sermons would begin with me sharing a tale about the day that I was born and how the nurse was unable to put me on the table and tap my tushy because I had managed to lasso her with my umbilical cord, and how I was the one who was tapping her tushy. Additionally, I tried to emphasize the importance of using hand cream by illustrating all that is possible with soft hands, sharing another tale about the time I spent on a dairy farm. In that story, I talk about an interaction that took place between me and the "Dairy Queen", a cow that was rich in Vitamin D, but one that never allowed anyone to milk her and would use her tail to whip anyone who tried, that is, until I

showed up. On that fateful day, I was soaked in Antonio Banderas' cologne and my hands were all creamed up, and this allowed me to get close enough to the Dairy Queen to set up my stool and bucket and grab her udders. Once I started caressing those udders, I was milking away and filling up one bucket of milk after another; the entire village came out to watch this spectacle.

The show I put on that day became a thing of legend among dairy farmers, with the Dairy Queen squirting out a year's worth of milk, mooing non-stop, all courtesy of my creamed-up hands. While all of this is great news, this tale ends with poetic justice, or injustice. After arriving back to Canada, leaving behind my milky ways, I was made aware that the Dairy Queen had died unexpectedly. When the local veterinarian arrived and carried out a post-mortem, the vet assessed the Dairy Queen as being supremely healthy, but the cause of death was ruled to be a

broken heart, obviously as a result of my departure. By the end of my sermon, and this tale, listeners are left with a clear understanding of the importance of using hand cream and having soft hands.

In the spirit of honesty, and many years later, it is important to acknowledge that some of my early sermons may have stretched the truth. They were inspired by *Aesop's Fables*, but we should refer to my early sermons as "Alek Goli's Allegories". So, I do not feel bad for occasionally stretching the truth, because every cult leader has been guilty of doing it too, though I never had any intentions of running a cult and only wanted to provide kids my age with healthy advice. And it did, in fact, help many of them, I am sure. Despite all of my teachings, though, none of my disciples managed to stay on the righteous path to becoming a "gentleman", choosing instead to revert back to being "gangstas". I imagine that Fonworth Bentley may have felt similarly when he realized that his show, "*Gs to Gents*", was incapable of changing people who did not want to change, and only wanted to stack change.

"You stole my heart" – Unknown

During my time at Sears, I went from Western lawman to Ringo outlaw, but even lawmen and outlaws can agree that the only acceptable stealing is the stealing of a lady's heart. I stole my fair share of hearts while I served as a Sears' sheriff, even after I chose to set aside that Sears sheriff badge (although I was forced to return some of them). From those experiences, I have learned that there are things that work and things that do not, and I want to share them with you so that you do not have to go tiptoeing across no man's land.

It is important to note that there were side effects to handling the ladies' lingerie all those years at Sears, and the biggest side effect was that I now enjoy dressing like a retired golfer, and I have acquired a taste for "old chap" things. Additionally, the time I spent as Sears' sheriff helped me learn how to diffuse explosive situations, thus helping me interact with bombshells.

On one occasion, I was "rizzing up" a gal who also worked out at the budget-friendly gym, one that does not like talking with anyone whatsoever, but who also shared a protein chocolate bar with me. After she shared that bar with me, I told her that I would return the favor. A few days later, I made my way to Bed, Bath & Beyond, and I bought a bath bomb for that bombshell – soon to be my bath bombshell. When I gave it to her, she became blushingly shy, and her heart was literally beating out of her chest and in my face.

The next day I pulled up to the gym dressed like an old chap, in a hand-knitted sweater with a matching hand-knitted scarf and beige khakis, I walked by the treadmills to the changerooms, passing by my bath bombshell. All of the treadmills were being used by women and every single one of them was over the age of 35, except for bath bombshell. All of them were enthralled by my old chap swag, except for my bath bombshell, who seemed taken aback. Long story short, I found out my bath bombshell liked guys dressed in urban attire, but I did not have any Drake OVO or The Weeknd XO clothing. The other problem with my bath bombshell's dress demands, however, was that I last dressed like that some 10 years ago, but even when I did, I was more of a G-Unit kind of guy. Suffice to say, I drove back home listening to a G-Unit classic, "*I know you don't love me*".

On another occasion, also at the budget-friendly gym, as I was walking from the parking lot towards the gym entrance, I startled a gal who was peering into a car, and she asked if it was mine. I told her it wasn't, and asked if she was looking for something particular.

"No," she responded, and explained that she was using the tinted glass as a mirror. I told her not to worry because she looked great as I headed into the gym, and I thought that would be the end of our interaction.

Shortly after I got on the treadmill, however, the same gal from the parking lot had joined my side and she initiated a conversation. It was a fun conversation, and I teased her some more, asking if she had identified whose car she was using as a mirror before suggesting that the mirror in the bathroom had better lighting and that she would look less sketchy if she avoided using tinted windows. After our 10-minute conversation, I asked her if she liked Ferrero Rocher, and she said yes. So, I whipped out a golden ball and handed it to her. Almost instantly, her phone began to ring, and she had to go, but she told me she would be seeing me around.

To my surprise, it took less than a minute for the gal to make her way back to me, but she seemed uneasy, and she was not alone. This time around, her male friend joined my side, after I had started watching a UFC press conference, with the gal to his side. This plump fellow immediately started stomp-running and acting as if he never used a treadmill before. But I am inclined to believe this rascal was following the blasphemous school of thought known as "Top G", and as is the case with every "Top G", he lasted on the treadmill less than the time it took for his gal pal to make her way back to me.

Less than a minute after he had gotten on, presumably having had enough, he jumped on the elliptical right behind me, a machine that was better suited for him, before leaving altogether. Throughout it all, I felt so embarrassed for this plump fellow because he was doing it all wrong. Had I been in his shoes and if that gal had been my gal pal, she would have asked for an additional Ferrero Rocher for the gentleman who had her heart. Heck, if I had not eaten all of the Ferrero Rocher, I would have offered the plump fellow one too, because he seemed to be on the verge of having a temper tantrum, but also because his physique would indicate that he was a sweets kind of guy. In the end, my Sears' sheriff ways guided me, and unlike Buster Scruggs, I chose to let this surly Joe fellow keep his spurs and not trade them in for wings. However, that gal left with her pal, and I hope things turn out better for this lawless couple than they did for Bonnie and Clyde.

Wrapping it up.

These days, my interactions sometimes remind me of the 2007 film No Country for Old Men, a story of past, present and future, and where the failure to acclimate to the changing times brings about catastrophic consequences. By the end of the film, Sheriff Bell comes to realize that what yesterday was, tomorrow will never be, and that he is incapable of staying up to par with the societal changes, as modern-day challenges seem to overwhelm the people of old. What that should tell all of us old chaps is that if we want to seek out younger gal pals, then we are better off visiting Seeking Arrangements or Ashely Madison, because that is where old chaps are most appreciated.

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

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

AUSU Bylaws Town Hall

Mon, Apr 24, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT
Online via Zoom
Hosted by AUSU
www.ausu.org/event/ausu-bylaws-town-hall/
RSVP through above link

Library Chat

Tues, Apr 25, 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 26, 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

Thur, Apr 27, 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

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

When I Grow Up, I Want to Be a Janitor

Marie Well



It's crazy, but professional janitorial careers are fascinating vocations. And if cleanliness is a sign of maturity, I have some growing up to do. You may be like me and have a lifelong history of being scolded due to a lack of cleaning aptitude, despite best intentions and hard effort. Imagine spending upwards of an hour cleaning the washroom, scrubbing so hard that the toilet finishing comes off and still receiving a scolding. That's me. That is, that was me until today. From here on, I'm determined to gain mastery in cleaning—enough to be a serious candidate for a janitorial career—although my ambition is to earn a quarter million annually in a sales and marketing role. I'm not sure which is harder.


So, to turn myself into a professional janitor, at least at home, I've started reading books on the art of janitorial work. I'll eventually take an online three-month professional janitorial course, but first I'll read janitorial books to prepare. That way, I won't fail the janitorial exam. No one wants to fail the janitorial exam.


So, here are some tips I've learned. They may seem obvious, like "don't bring firearms and explosives to work," but other tips may not be intuitive.

The first thing that shocked me involved window cleaning. Did you know you're supposed to heavily douse the window with window cleaner—and use a squeegee, especially for unreachable spots? I always pondered how I'd clean the top of the mirror, and now I know the tool to do just that.

And did you know that you'll greatly benefit if you buy a cleaning apron with upwards of six pockets to store your cleaning supplies? One of those pockets should contain a toothbrush for scrubbing corners and a razor scraper for removing "cling-ons" like soap scum from mirrors, glass, and cupboards.

And you can get super fancy with two-bucket mop pails: one for water with chemicals and the other for plain water for rinsing. Also, you should use only microfiber cloths (packing a dozen of them in your cleaning apron when doing the kitchen), as they tend to remove dust rather than merely displace it. I knew none of this!

Oh, and then there are these systems. For instance, you should always use two hands while cleaning so one doesn't sit idle. So, for example, if you're cleaning a sink with one hand, use the other hand for the next task or a different area of the sink. And every janitorial book I've read says to go in a pattern, starting at the supply closet and moving in an unbroken line from there, circling the entirety of the place, back to the  supply closet.

And clean the washrooms daily. Washrooms  are the most judged space in your home as a measure of overall cleanliness. So the bathroom garbage must be taken out once a day. Bathroom air fresheners are highly recommended, as is daily washroom floor cleaning.

Also, have daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning schedules. I've just started reading this book part, so I can't say much about it yet. One book says to clean washrooms daily, and another says clean bathrooms and kitchens once a week. I'm doing them both daily.

I've only just begun my quest to clean like a professional janitor. It's not an inexpensive venture, at least not at the start. My Amazon shopping cart is filled with a wish list of costly cleaning supplies. I will receive a stack of microfiber cloths and eucalyptus hand soap this Monday. At the end of the month, I plan to buy my cleaning apron and a broom. Yes, I don't own a broom.

So, that's how I've begun to replace all my unskilled cleaning with top-gun janitorial skills. And one day, I'll pass the janitorial exam and move on to the next curriculum in my domestic journey: decluttering. But the ideal, truly the dream, is to one day make the home feel like a Buddhist oasis, with salt lamps, a water fountain, dimmed lights, soothing music, a theater-like smart TV for movies, and giant amethyst rocks. Of course, that was a last-minute speculation, but we can make anything happen once it enters the imagination. And when we reach a goal, it's time to up the ante. After all, every goal opens new possibilities.

Is there anything you can think of that you could hire someone to do for you, no matter how trivial, like mowing lawns or walking dogs? It's likely a fascinating skill to learn once you research it. So instead of letting a task remain poorly done, untouched, or handed over to professional help, why not see if you could turn it into a potential profession? And if you're at all entrepreneurial, it could become a booming business. I've heard of janitorial business owners earning six figures with upward of eighty employees.

(Many of the ideas in this article were taught by Jeff Campbell with Debbie Sardone in the book *Speed Cleaning for the Pros: How to Achieve Perfect Maintenance Cleaning* and by Sakeenah Redmond in his book *Janitorial Service Training Guide: The Universal Way to Clean*.)



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

April 21 is World Creativity and Innovation Day, capping off World Creativity and Innovation Week. *The Voice's* archives are brimming with articles on creativity, and it was a challenge to narrow our focus to just two.

Ontario poaches Alberta's talent. In 2003, AU bid a fond farewell to Alan Davis, who moved on from his position of AU's VP, Academic, after over seven years. "During his term at AU, Davis says he's enjoyed his interaction

with faculty, and the opportunity to support their research, their creativity, and to link that to the teaching. He is proud of the part he was able to play in the implementation of Prior Learning Assessment, articulation, and the launching of collaborations between Athabasca University and universities and colleges all over the country." News from AU – AU bids farewell to Alan Davis, August 6, 2003.

Take your creative spirit on a date. Columnist Hazel Anaka follows author Julia Cameron's advice to replenish her well of creativity. "My dates have included exploring flea markets and junk shops, fingering fabrics and trims at Fanny's and Fabricland, absorbing the scents and colors at greenhouses and nurseries, checking out art supply stores and galleries, looking at paint swatches and wood at lumberyards, reading snippets in bookstores." From Where I Sit – Artist Dates, October 13, 2004.



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Will Worries

Dear Barb:

Hi. My mom passed away four years ago and my dad remarried. Dad always said that he had an agreement with his new wife that his assets would be left to his three children. Dad died suddenly, last month and we have yet to hear anything about the will or any agreement that Dad and Kathy may have had. We all noticed at Dad's funeral that Kathy was distant towards us. She has not invited us to the house, and we do not know what she has done with Dad's stuff.

What would be the best way for us to approach Kathy? We don't want to make her angry, but we want what is rightfully ours. They had only been married for two years, it doesn't seem right that she would inherit the house that my parents bought and paid for. We need some guidance. Thank you, Yvonne.

Hello Yvonne:

So sorry about your loss. Things often get complicated with second marriages, unless there is a prenuptial agreement where the person's wishes are clearly stated. The first thing you need to do is talk to Kathy. Find out if there was a will. If she refuses to talk to you there are ways you can search for a will. The first place to search is the Vital Statistics Wills Registry for a Wills Notice. This can take several weeks and will tell you if a Will has been filed, but it does not contain a copy of the will. This is a good starting point. If there is a will you can contact your father's lawyer or accountant to find out more

information. Although if you were included in the will I believe you would have been contacted by now.

Without a will, it is up to the court to decide what happens to a person's assets. Dying without a will is called "dying intestate," and when this happens, nobody will have any say over who gets the estate. You are in a difficult position and sorry to say you do not have a lot of options. For this reason, people need to have a will. Plus, without a will, a person's assets could end up tied up in bureaucracy for a very long time. The assets will be distributed according to the laws of the province. For example, if you live in Ontario, the first \$200,000 usually goes to the spouse or can also be claimed by someone who was financially dependent on the deceased, and things get more complicated if there was over \$200,000.

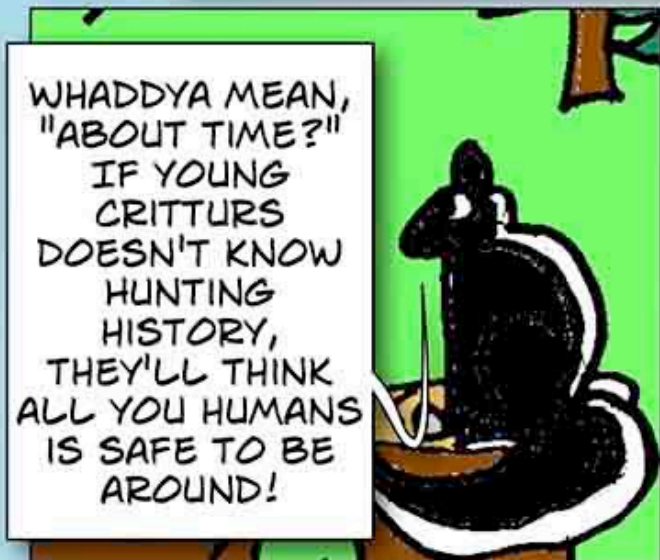
Hope this information will be helpful. Best of luck in the future Yvonne.

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
Book Ban

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
you are an undergrad student taking any AU course at
the time of the application period. Please [visit our
website](#) for more on AUSU awards and bursaries.

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.

Provided by

ausu@ausu.org



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

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