



THE VOICE

Vol 31 Issue 19 - 2023-05-19

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Seven Determined Minutes

Getting Past Procrastination

A Firecracker of a Day

Victoria Days Past



Plus:

DIY Pickled Cabbage

Research Assistant Opportunities

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

Debating the Debate

Karl Low



Last night the one and only leader's debate was held for the main contenders for the Alberta election, and the winner was the media. I don't think there's anybody else who could be said to have gained significantly from the entire affair, not the parties, not the leaders, and certainly not the viewers watching.

Normally I might suggest that Danielle Smith won simply because she beat the expectations of her providing a performance similar to a dumpster fire, but she had to do it by essentially ignoring the whole, well, debate aspect of the debate. You could almost read the cue-cards she had memorized for her talking points, which was especially obvious when there were any questions posed on subjects she did not want to address, as she'd pivot immediately away from the subject and back into the stock lines of how Ms. Notley was refusing to run on her record.

And Ms. Notley did no better, in my eyes, specifically because she took the safer route and didn't attempt to explain her record in the context of the time that she was governing. Alberta was entering into tough times, so much so that even the PC's were

talking about having to raise taxes and fees shortly before the election, and while she didn't get us out of those times, she managed to hold things steady without compromising the services, like post-secondary education, that are the ones that enable future growth.

Not represented were leaders from lesser parties such as the Alberta Party, the Green Party or the Liberals. And while none of those are even running enough candidates to be able to form a government, it might have been interesting to see what issues they would bring forward and how the two contenders addressed them. If they addressed them at all.

However, the debates really aren't held for those who are already decided, but for the group who remain undecided but are likely to vote. In Alberta, that's about 18% of the population, and in an election this close, that could swing things. I tend to think that, in Alberta, undecided means, "I don't want to support Danielle Smith but I don't want to vote for the NDP/I want to vote Conservative." Perhaps for them, Smith being able to get through a public speaking engagement without visibly putting her foot in her mouth would be enough to assuage their fears.

Unfortunately, the results of the debate on the polling will be confounded by her own ethics minister pointing out her interference in the justice system being "a threat to democracy". Currently, the aggregate polling looks like we're in store for a UCP majority.

I'm not happy about this, but, being totally honest, will it have a significant effect on the day to day of anybody who isn't already disadvantaged? Probably not. But I fear for those who are disadvantaged and rely on public supports. Will it have a significant effect on AU? That ship has already sailed, as the UCP has already removed any ability for the academics or the students to have meaningful say in how the university has run and the metrics it will be judged by. My main concern is that, given Ms. Smith's earlier actions as leader, I fear she'll continue to try to consolidate power and control within her cabinet, and look to eliminate as many checks and balances as possible while doing so.

So is Smith getting elected the end of good governance and democratic ideals in Alberta? Again, probably not. But I worry that she's setting the stage.

In any event, enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

MINDS WE MEET



The Voice Magazine recently had a chance to chat with David Story (he/him), a Faculty of Humanities Major with a Minor in Philosophy from Toronto, Ontario.

On a personal note, David let us know that he is “a professional musician and educator.” He continued, “Previously, I spent 4 decades in the entertainment industry as a musician and producer in three countries. I’ve worked with the famous, infamous, hopeful, and hopeless on big stages, little stages, and occasionally on TV; playing jazz, pop, orchestral, and occasionally country music. It was a colorful career. I have a parallel career, that continues, in the arts as a synthesist, percussionist, and pianist playing avant-garde and experimental music.”

When asked how he best studies, David had some great tips for fellow students. “I block off time during the weekdays for a bit each day. On the weekends, I burrow in the office for longer shifts. I do not listen to music when I study. However, I do take a break every hour, and a walk every two hours.”

As for his advice for new students and/or prospective students? David had two main points: “You need to be a strong independent learner,” and “It takes longer than I anticipated to complete assignments.”

When he is not busy studying, David enjoys playing the drums and the xylophone with his friends, as well as spending time with his wife. In fact, he considers his wife “of seven years ... a retired professor of education and former associate dean” to have had the greatest influence on his desire to learn.

He also finds time to read, mentioning *Time Power* by Brian Tracy as the one book that has made an impact on his life. “It is a book that made me confront and organize my priorities at work and play. I return to it every couple of years and reassess my progress,” he stated.

In addition, he let us know about his most memorable vacation, which was “a summer on the Mediterranean playing my piano, drinking wine, eating paella, and hanging out.”

His most memorable AU course so far has been PHIL 240: Ancient Philosophy: The Rise of Reason in a Mythic World. “It brought wonder back into my life. The intellectual life of a 63-year-old man can get a little stale. It is a real kick in the pants, as my grandfather used to say. I find the readings inspiring and the assignments humbling. In short, it has been, and continues to be, a transformational experience,” he explained. He’s found his online learning experience to be “effective,” explaining, “I work online as a musician/educator which helped temper my expectations.”

Although David’s experience with communicating with his tutors has varied “from tutor to tutor,” he mentioned that “everyone has been encouraging.”

The Voice Magazine asked David what his first project would be if he were the new president of AU. He stated that he would “fight to preserve the independence of the university from political interference.”

We also asked David which famous person, past or present, he would like to have lunch with, and he chose French author and philosopher Voltaire. He explained, “He was a real hell raiser against entrenched authority and funny as can be. Lunch would be at a Michelin starred restaurant in the French countryside sometime in June. The wine would flow as he gives me an update on heaven.”

David also let fellow students know about his most valuable lesson learned in life. “Who you associate with determines everything. It is a lesson I unfortunately learned late in life,” he stated.

And for his proudest moment? “The A I earned on my first course at Athabasca. It was ENG 255. My high school career was a disaster, though my college days were a more successful endeavor. However, as my first degree was in jazz composition, I was unsure if I was up to the discipline of academic study.” Best of luck David!

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.



Seventeen Determined Minutes

Jessica Macleod



Can you think of an important task you know you should be completing but you're just not getting around to it? Maybe it's an assignment, or some cleaning and organizing, or your workout. You want to do it, really, you do. Particular goals or dreams may even be tied to this task. You want that end result of a good mark, a clean house, or reaching that target level of fitness, yet you find yourself putting things off. I've found a trick that steers me away from overthinking and non-doing and into productive action. I call it *Seventeen Determined Minutes*.

I know what you're thinking: seventeen minutes is not enough, not for something important or meaningful. Maybe you've automatically rounded the time down to fifteen minutes. Is this your pessimism coming through? Perfectionism? Some all-or-nothing thinking? For whatever reason, your mental refrain probably sounds like this: *I'll get into it when I have more time or a better mindset, and then I can do a better job*. I hate to break it to you, but that sort of thinking only keeps us stuck

and disappointed in ourselves.

When faced with this tiny chunk of time (it's only seventeen minutes after all), many people will check email, scroll through social media feeds, and see what's new in the headlines or on

YouTube. With that kind of mindset, we're blinding ourselves to many daily opportunities for productivity by killing our time instead of making the most of it.

Seventeen minutes can be beneficial, however. In this short period of time you can start that assignment with a brainstorm and notes, you can tidy up, or you can do some cardio. I've used this trick for all those tasks. I swear by it for doing some new writing every day. And guess what: *Seventeen Determined Minutes* may also help you continue the task past the allotted time. It can also make the next step, which is doing it again, more likely.

Try It

Pick a task you dread or have been putting off. Designate a start time. Adjust the alarm on your phone so that when the time expires, you hear something cheerful. Adjust your thinking from the whole task or goal to merely seventeen minutes of effort. Prepare yourself for a tiny bit of progress.

Start your timer and then give it your best shot for seventeen minutes. Open your mind to the experience of doing this one task, right here in the present moment, ignoring inner chatter or distractions.

When the alarm signals your achievement, enjoy that moment. Take a satisfied breath and then either keep going or schedule your next session.

Why it Works

When we change our expectations, we change the experience. At the end of seventeen minutes, the larger task or goal may not be complete. The quality you expect at your finish line may be a far cry from these early efforts. But for that chunk of time, you are turning off cognitive distortions (the perfectionism, pessimism, fear, and all-or-nothing thinking) and instead achieving marginal gains. In his book, *Atomic Habits*, James Clear argues that marginal gains made over time are key. "If you want better results," he says, "then forget about setting goals. Focus on your system instead" (Clear 2018). By systems, Clear is referring to the processes you employ to get things done. In other words, how you do things impacts your likelihood of success or failure. Runners don't reach a finish line just because it is their specific goal. They get there through months of building strength and endurance. They get there one stride at a time. I don't get to be a writer without writing regularly.

Seventeen Determined Minutes can be one of those small but effective changes to your systems. Once we start something and sustain our effort, even for a short period of time, the task no longer seems so uncomfortable. If you're out for a run, you eventually reach a moment when you settle into a comfortable pace and the rest of the run is easier than the first block or so was. In yoga or meditation, the rewards arrive when we can focus more on our body or breath than on our busy day or the world around us. More often than not, those moments of change do not come in the first five minutes. We have to settle into a bit of a commitment, but not one that seems too daunting.

When the alarm sounds at the end of *Seventeen Determined Minutes*, we've accomplished something. We are in process. We have moved. We've achieved a marginal gain, which is way better than no gain at all. Seventeen minutes ago, we had the entire task ahead of us. Now we don't.

After only seventeen minutes of effort, we have put in the time and honoured our commitment. We've made visible progress and built confidence that we can carry forward. We are now more likely to repeat this success. Almost certainly there will be more to do. Quite often our first efforts are pretty rough. However, we will take the next step with more certainty when we know that our previous step was sound.

I see *Seventeen Determined Minutes* as crucial to my writing system. Plus, it almost always leads to a period of productivity that extends beyond the set time. It's my warmup. It's my confidence builder. It gets my butt in the chair, brain working, and fingers moving. I write in stream-of-consciousness style and let any and all ideas, thoughts, and details pour onto the page. This brief period of time is also a respite from my critical mind, which I'll employ at a later stage. While I didn't write this article in seventeen minutes, I did use seventeen-minute chunks of motivation to help me write it.

There's nothing magical about the minutes themselves. The magic comes from how we see those minutes and the system we're building through them. Putting in seventeen minutes of determined effort builds confidence, fights procrastination, and increases productivity. If we know we can meet that simple objective once, we know we can do it again, and again, and again. It's arriving at your finish line one manageable step at a time.

References

Clear, James. 2018. *Atomic Habits: An Easy and Proven Way to Build Good Habits and Break Bad Ones*. New York: Penguin Random House.

Jessica MacLeod is a writer, editor, and indexer happily living with her family in rural Eastern Ontario. She loves learning, creating, reading, writing, and actively enjoying the outdoors.



A Firecracker of a Day

Victoria Day used to have more of a bang

Barbara Lehtiniemi



When I was growing up in the late 60s and early 70s, we had a particular name for the holiday Monday in May. We did not call it Victoria Day (although that was its official name), nor did we call it May Two-Four, like we often do now.

We called it Firecracker Day.

At that time, the only day of the year it was permissible to set off fireworks was Victoria Day (give or take a day due to weather.) It later became common to celebrate Dominion Day (now known as Canada Day) with fireworks, and nowadays fireworks are used to mark just about any occasion.

Back in the day, fireworks could only be purchased in the week leading up to Firecracker Day (aka Victoria Day) and only licensed outlets could sell them. Since they were expensive, some neighbourhoods would pool their resources and buy enough for a decent backyard display, which everyone in the vicinity could enjoy.

Along with the pyrotechnic sorts of fireworks for sale ahead of Victoria Day were finger-sized explosive devices called firecrackers. Their primary function was to produce a large

bang and an impressive flash followed by smoke.

Naturally we children were permitted to play with firecrackers because kids were tougher back then. We had access to all sorts of now-banned items like lawn darts, cap guns, clackers, and metal playground equipment. And, once a year, firecrackers.

Firecrackers came in packages of two or so dozen, and all their wicks were braided together. You could unwind each firecracker to light separately, or light the whole string of wicks for an impressive series of explosions.

When lighting a single firecracker, we'd use a match cord, which is a length of cord that, when lit with a match, burns slowly and can be used for a series of firecracker lightings. Match cords were included in packs of firecrackers. I suppose this was a nod to safety—you wouldn't want the young tykes using matches to light their explosives.

This is the action sequence: A kid is holding the firecracker in one hand, and they use a match cord held in their other hand to light the firecracker. Once lit, the kid hurls the firecracker away from them much like you'd hurl a hand grenade from which the pin has been yanked. The firecracker then explodes, with flash/bang/smoke.

Because we had adult supervision, we were admonished not to throw the firecrackers at other kids, which of course we would have done if not for those pesky adults.

If a kid didn't throw the firecracker before it exploded—say, on a dare—injuries would result. We all knew kids who were missing bits of fingers due to a slow firecracker toss mishap.

The whole firecrackers-in-the-hands-of-juveniles thing came to a halt in Canada in 1972. On September 27 of that year, Canada banned firecrackers after two children were killed and three others severely burned when some older children lobbed a bunch of firecrackers into their tent.

Nowadays, the Explosives Act in Canada prohibits the importation, possession, transportation, storage, or manufacturing of firecrackers in Canada. (Fireworks are still legal to buy for anyone 18 years or older.)

Victoria Day (aka May Two-Four) is celebrated on May 22 this year. Play safely, folks.

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



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

Many Canadian communities continue to mount fireworks displays on the Victoria Day weekend. Our archives revealed some different slants on fireworks.

The smell of gunpowder in the morning. Bill Pollett remembers the quiet hours of reflection after a late-evening fireworks display. "It was long past midnight before the kids were finally bedded down in sleeping bags in the basement. The adults sat around a table on the deck and talked by the light of a half dozen tea light candles stuck in the bottom of a big glass bowl, the flames floating in the still darkness like tiny, luminous goldfish." [Lost and Found – Celebration Day](#), July 14, 2004.

The view from the "mountain." Lonita Fraser shares what makes her hometown unique. "I could tell you about the escarpment that we all like to call a mountain, or how you don't have to be Jesus to walk on water in Hamilton Harbour (hey, really – we have t-shirts with that on it!). I could tell you how the view coming into Hamilton from the Skyway Bridge is so ugly, not because of the industry by the lake, but because we want to keep the Torontonians out." [Hamilton](#), December 18, 2002.

Empathetic Relationships The Driver Behind Comprehensive Adults

Alek Golijanin



I believe the “empathetic relationship” is what creates for a growth climate, the bettering of communication, a respect and interest for others, and it teaches children how to handle conflict and relationships in adulthood. Some children, however, will never be able to get that empathetic connection at home and that should be of great concern to all of us. This is also the reason why teachers are so important for some children, all of whom are both impressionable and malleable.

When children interact with teachers who show an interest in their development and demonstrate patience for their learning needs, I believe it enables them to accomplish more, but, more importantly, it imprints the importance of trying to understand others instead of shutting them out. Providing children with empathetic figures in their lives can enable them to prepare for the social tensions that people experience in adulthood, where people sometimes

give way to the dangerous thinking of “I am right. You are wrong. That makes me good. That makes you bad.” and that people with different opinions become your “enemy”.

Despite how Freud believed that man is wild at his core, I think each of us is far more constructive at our core, and once we are able to get past the surface defences and superficiality then we can reach a person’s positive core, which is where I think we find the innate desires like being social and collaborative. Given this, it would then be fair to conclude that people are inherently good, and it is their environments combined with circumstances that drives them off track and away from the good life, into a spiral. However, even when that happens, they should still be able to be guided back on track, but it would require empathy, mutual understanding, and communication.

Carl Rogers – Empathy, Mutual Understanding, and Communication

Carl Rogers was a master psychologist and is responsible for championing the importance of empathy in the grand scheme of the psychologist-patient interaction. Rogers describes empathy as the key ingredient necessary for someone to overcome their challenges, where empathy turns into somewhat of a mutual understanding during the psychologist-patient interaction and allows for the continuance of communication between the two parties. Rogers’ approach focused on guiding people towards self-realizations, coming to terms with things as they were and not as they had been perceived to be, but, more importantly, it was a self-empowering approach that would show clients that they had it within themselves to find the answers to many of their challenges.

It is important to note that Rogers did have experience with other therapeutic approaches, and he was not against applying other therapeutic approaches during psychologist-client interactions. However, these days, we tend to see those working in the field of psychology and psychoanalysis pushing back against Rogers’ school of thought as well as wrongly labelling him as someone who was hellbent on his methods and nothing else. Outside of psychology circles, many other fields have found practical applications for Rogers’ approach, including high stakes hostage

negotiations. In short, empathy is a healing agent, and it should only be viewed as such, and not as a violation of another person or anything that is sinister.

Empathy has no paradox.

A lot of today's psychologists seem to critique Carl Rogers' focus on empathy and his version of "therapeutic services", which are based on a few videos where he is interacting with patients and some interviews where he is talking about his approach. Most of these same psychologists seem to buy-in to the idea that "empathy is a paradox" and they make jokes about Rogers' approach, how it is reflective listening rather than a form of "talk therapy" and where the client leads the session. It is unlikely that every single session that Rogers had with his clients only revolved around "listening", but it is far more important to address the inconsistency with the claim that "empathy is a paradox".

The entire argument behind "empathy is a paradox" seems rooted in the oversimplification of empathy and the negative assumption that a practitioner is not going to be able to be effective with Rogers' approach: that it was the literal repetition of a client's words, that Rogers' was on record stating that his approach was imperfect, and that nobody could "exactly know" how another person felt. The problem with this view is that it assumes that an empathetic approach has been proclaimed as the golden ticket to all of peoples' problems when it is just one of many tools that a practitioner can utilize during their session with a client.

While it can be difficult to "know" how someone feels, an empathetic approach is not rooted in assumptions, rather it attempts to understand whatever feelings may be present and the drivers behind those feelings. To conclude, practitioners are trained to avoid using words like "know" in their responses, and "understanding" is not meant to calculate or quantify emotions, but rather to act as a starting point that acknowledges their existence and go on from there.

Prime Minister Trudeau's Interaction with a "PPC-Supporting" Student

Canada is one of the few countries where elected officials are able to interact with the general public at public events and in close proximity, and the video filmed of the up-close interaction between Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and a student at the University of Manitoba was a classic example of empathy and understanding, but it also helped uncover far more than what got reported on.

The youngin' who seemed to be in attendance to protest Prime Minister Trudeau, told Prime Minister Trudeau that he supported the "PPC" and that he was against "abortions". Instead of Prime Minister Trudeau telling the youngin' that he was wrong or that there was nothing else for them to discuss, Prime Minister Trudeau did the opposite. Prime Minister Trudeau had a meaningful interaction, probing the youngin' for more context, staying with him when others would have walked away, and to some extent, getting to the depth of his feeling. To the youngin's credit, he was able to articulate his position quite well and with respect, however wrong it was. Thanks to Prime Minister Trudeau's approach, we were able to learn far more about the youngin' beyond the immediate, and it left me feeling as though the youngin' was a classic example of someone buying into an idea so that they could fit in and be accepted by their peers.

A quick analysis of the situation would indicate that the youngin' came with friends who wanted to protest Prime Minister Trudeau. He continued to film Prime Minister Trudeau, and I believe he may have tried to trigger him into a response by saying how he was against abortion because it failed to hold women accountable for "sleeping around". All of it sounded to me like something a youngin' would say to impress his boys and as an excuse for struggling with girls. However, the reason I believe the youngin' knows better than the ignorant remarks he gave has to do with his inability to provide a direct answer to Prime Minister Trudeau's basic ask and his own

acknowledgement that “abortion is complicated”. Someone that was deluded or brainwashed would have made no concessions on their ‘beliefs’, and it is important for us to recognize the youngin’s doubt as positive sign and as the starting point to begin working on the intellectual error.

Every one of us has the ability to understand needs and problems, to gain insights, to reorganize ourselves, and to take constructive action. For some people, they might not be self-starters, and they may require a boost to get back on track---not judgement, interpretation, or advice from experts. That boost is done with a Carl Rogers-like, people-centered approach, where we support and work with people to help them re-examine their preconceived ‘notions’. When people are able to come to their own conclusion or realization regarding an intellectual error they may have had, that leads to lasting growth because self-realized outcomes result in both stronger beliefs and behaviors.

What we need to remember in all of this is that it is very common for people’s philosophies to outgrow their immediate environment and, despite the stagnation around them that may be affecting their friends, families, and communities. Despite knowing better, people will still relent and embrace “group think” even when they know that the “group’s conclusion” is wrong, since the social consequences of going against the group can far outweigh the moral reward of saying what is right. And there lays the real challenge in all of this.

In the end, some people might disagree with my position, but I am sure that all-or-nothing approaches and blaming others for unmanaged emotions and extreme behaviors does not work. Sticking to all-or-nothing approaches is the equivalent to not trying, and we always want to get caught trying.

Helping people grow.

Much of our airwaves are dominated by buzz words and buzz lines, and people seem entirely focused on going viral. That is also why we tend to hear talk of “We have to hold this person accountable” when something goes wrong in our society, and when people go off the rails. Naturally, this leads us to the questions of, “What exactly does holding someone accountable really mean, and what does holding them accountable do to ensure that the issue will not reoccur?” Although certain situations can get us riled up, especially when those incidents involve communities that we directly identify with, we should move away from “activist talk” and toward “psychologist talk”. We should be asking questions like, “Why is this person acting the way they are and how do we address the core of the issue so that we ensure that it does not occur again?” It may be more difficult, but whatever happened to us doing things not because they were easy, but because they were hard?

During one of my Harvard programs, there was a section that touched on the idea of “accountability”, influencing, and the importance of dispute resolution. When it came time for feedback, once again, I had to disagree with almost all my peers. My position was that if we wanted people to change their ways then we needed to do more than just holding them “accountable”, and it involved guiding them to the necessary realizations, but realizations that they would come to on their own terms. Once you help someone come to one realization, like a limited way of thinking about others, it can have a snowball effect that leads them to challenge other ‘belief’ systems they may have. Demonstrating empathy for someone, an understanding of their being, that is the driver that leads them to want to continue with you, and the only way to do that is from a point of respect, open-mindedness, and tolerance.

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



Altruism

Marie Well



I searched on the internet, "What is it called when a person prioritizes others over oneself?" Depending on where you sit between selflessness and self-focused, you might have your own definitions. Interestingly, what came up was the word "altruism."

I once saw a near-death experience account of a woman who prioritized others over herself. She came down with advanced cancer, but when she temporarily died and experienced heavenly visions, she learned to cherish herself upon her return to her body. That's not me. I don't embrace self; I embrace self only as an act of loving or serving others. I recently learned that my personality type is called a "connector." And it's closely tied to altruism. I'm sure there is value in cherishing oneself. I just don't see it.

There are many types of altruism. The most notable is when we do things for others without expecting anything positive for ourselves in return. I once saw a teenage girl at a bookstore begging her father to buy her a programming book that she could use for a designation exam. I overheard her tell her father that the book cost eighty-some dollars. I debated with myself whether I should buy this young woman the book. It would have had

value for her future. But I had recently lost my employment due to company relocation. Outside of groceries, I had \$175 to spare for the month. After a long debate, I held back and didn't buy her the book. Instead, I later purchased a dying loved one a bouquet of flowers. However, I still think of the teenage girl, wishing I had bought her the book. I was meant to do it, and I missed the opportunity.

Another type of altruism is kin altruism, where we give up resources for our family. We may all experience this at times, and some of us may thrive on this activity. For example, I have no problem giving loved ones significant gifts that'll leave me in debt for years. It brings me great pleasure. Those of us who identify with generosity toward family rate high on kin altruism.

Another type of altruism holds the expectation of reciprocated generosity. We have the "You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours" mentality. I used to offer opportunities to people who helped me as a means to reciprocate their generosity. But now, I see relations as karmic bonds governed by my duty to serve, not to "expect then reciprocate." However, if others have expectations of me, I'm happy to comply. Those who like to give and take may identify with reciprocated altruism. However, I believe give and give is the essence of a well-led life.

Altruism can be for the sheer fun of it, too. We get a thrill when we give a gift that helps someone grow. For example, a professor once gave me a book on teaching. I loved that book, and it helped me with a TA role. But the love and nurturing behind the gift mattered most. I later started giving my niece's toddler gifts to help his mom identify his strengths and talents early. Doing so brought me great joy. Also, volunteering for a beloved cause can generate a wonderful sense of purpose. When we sacrifice for someone or some cause, we feel magnificent.

Best of all, we role model generosity for others when we give. My dad loves to share. He taught me how tremendous it feels to be the recipient of generosity. As a result, I have a strong sense of

what a gift can mean for another person. There is no gift too big or too small. Once, I bought a Starbucks drink for a woman counting her change, and she responded like she won the lottery. And once a woman in front of me in line, who I complimented for her celebrity looks, bought my pasta without me knowing until after she had disappeared in the crowd. Her show of kindness flooded me with tears. And at Starbucks, a man bought my tea and the teas of everyone behind me. The barista thought the man was the CEO, Dave Schultz. Whoever he was, his generosity caused me to burst into tears.

To me, altruism is just fun. It's a rush. And it brings joy. In other words, prioritizing others over self is euphoric for everyone. We all stand to gain unimaginable pleasure from altruism.



DIY Simple Three Step Pickled Cabbages

Xine Wang



It is so simple to make and delicious at the same time.

When we think of pickled cabbages, we might think of sauerkraut: finely cut raw cabbage that has been fermented by various lactic acid bacteria. It has a long shelf life and distinctively tangy flavor. For myself, I like a crunchier variety of pickled cabbage. I grew up eating a Chinese cabbage pickle variety that is often served in restaurants as an appetizer. They are so easy to prepare and packed with flavor. When I am meal prepping, I find that adding some pickles to my container increases my appetite and brings a different flavor profile to my lunch.

When consumed in modest amounts, pickles are healthy and low in calories. They offer a good source of vitamins, fiber, minerals, and calcium. In fact, when I pickle my own vegetables as opposed to store bought ones, I add no salt. This means that the pickled veggies may not last as long as store bought ones, but also means that they are healthier to eat.

I recently created a few quick pickling techniques that save you time and doesn't compromise on taste. Generally, I store them in the fridge overnight and they are ready to enjoy. It takes me about 5-6 days to go through a jar (but this is also because I pack my pickles for lunch every day).

Ingredients:

Your favorite pickling veggies. Mine include:

- Carrots
- Cabbages
- Daikon
- Radishes
- Onions
- Cucumbers

250 mL water

250 mL white vinegar

2 tbsp granulated sugar

I wrote an [article](#) about pickled vegetables in 2020. However, I found adding more ingredients to be time consuming, so I



The ingredients are so simple and easily found in your existing kitchen cupboards.



I like to cut my cabbages into 1-2 inch chunks and then soak them into water to better clean them.

The difference between quick pickling and normal pickling is the time and method to prepare the vegetables. Quick pickling doesn't require heat or canning. The vegetables are placed in a jar and a brine (vinegar-based) is poured over the contents. Then the contents are left to sit in the fridge overnight or a few days for optimal flavor. This is perfect for small batch pickling and home chefs. Preparation time takes about 10-15 minutes and is little to no mess or cleanup.

Normal pickling requires canning the pickles and produces more shelf stable products that can be stored for months and years. This is not typical of home chefs and you should avoid eating your quick-pickled veggies months and years after the preparation date.

Steps:

1. Chop your veggies into bite sized pieces (sometimes I like to Julienne my daikon and carrots as it absorbs flavor much better).
2. Place your chopped veggies into a mason jar.
3. Measure 250 mL of water, 250 mL of white vinegar and place them in a pot and boil.
4. Pour the boiled water/vinegar brine over the veggies in the jar and ensure water covers to the top of the veggies. You can use a spoon to compact the contents.
5. Wait until jar cools to room temperature.
6. Store in fridge overnight and serve the next day (for optimal flavor wait 2-3 days after initial preparation).

Ideas for meals with pickled veggies

1. Reuben sandwiches: these sandwiches cannot be served without the famous sauerkraut. However, you can replace the traditional sauerkraut with pickled radishes or julienned carrots or beets.
2. Grilled meats: pickled cabbages alongside grilled or BBQ'ed meats add a refreshing flavor that cuts the richness of the meat.
3. Salads: whenever I prepare a traditional salad, I like to sprinkle some pickled veggies on top to add flavor and crunch to the mix.

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



There's so much flexibility with preparing pickled veggies. You can certainly add spices like this Thai red chili pepper if you're looking for a spicier flavor.



Fly on the Wall Ouch that Smarts!

Jason Sullivan



A Tongue in Cheek Critique of Intelligence!

It seems that no one proclaims that they've taken an online IQ test and found out that they're really *dumb*. Either that or those who fail to pass genius muster are smart enough to keep it to themselves. I've never attempted one of these tests, figuring that at AU our inborn intelligence proffers less rewards than does sheer motivation. Sitting and studying on a sunny day is a hard task and to be smart enough to prioritize our studies is a learned skill, a choice, with notable rewards. The grunt work of readings those many readings and writing those protean essays adds up to a lot more than the average gifted person can muster on wits alone. What's more, studies find that at best "a great intellect makes no

differences to your life satisfaction; at worst, it can actually mean you are less fulfilled" (Robson, online). Maybe feeling superior to the world is a cognitive failure.

Like all of life, practical intelligence is about adapting to context. Our minds as *Homo sapiens* "evolved psychologically based on our ancestors' needs in the days when humankind lived on the savanna" (Berman, 2016). In other words, we did not live in the fast-paced world as we now know it, although running from lions may bear parallels to being stalked by laptop viruses. Nevertheless, ancient humans lived in a world where dynamic thinking meant accessing resources through traditional knowledge and technical expertise. Hunting and gathering involved routes and seasons and was far from thinking outside a box. In fact, innovation (such as techies perpetually fiddling with a social media platform's settings) was detrimental to harmony within an environment. As an unforgettable Kalahari indigenous man once put it (within the text of an AU anthropology course), "why plant when there are so many mongongo nuts in the world?" (Thundi, 2020). Intelligence thus may be seen as nothing more than knowing one's limit and living within it. Yet, feeling smarter than one's circumstances seems part and parcel with many a so-called civilized lifestyle.

From Africa to Waterloo (Go Warriors!)

To counter inborn smarts, one might offer some common sense, given that nary an assignment will write itself without some diligent studying. And what is common sense but an acquired sense of humility and wisdom? Igor Grossman of Waterloo university notes the value of wisdom rather than intelligence. "If you look at the lay definition of wisdom, many people would agree it's the idea of someone who can make good unbiased judgement" (Robson, 2015).

Where there's discourse there's disagreement; indeed, many interactions are of two types: conversations about ideas and discussions about people. The latter, safely cordoned off into matters of gossip and family, are frustrating supposedly to those who are of higher intelligence. "Smart people feel happier alone than when others, even good friends, are around. A "healthy" social life actually leaves highly intelligent people with *less* life satisfaction. Is it because their

desires are more aspirational and goal-oriented, and other people are annoyingly distracting” (Berman, 2016). Maybe it’s that people who perceive themselves as smarter than their neighbours feel held back by their simpleton peers or maybe a simpler explanation is on offer – those who self-identify as smart simply are more willing to be honest about their conversational priorities.

Arguably very few people are truly interested in mundane realms of interpersonal conflict, these topics just surface frequently. What a boon to our AU studies this liberation from the gossip chain can be; instead of wiling away an afternoon hearing about the trials and tribulations of others we can be ensconced in the rarified air of our individualized studies ivory towers! Paradoxically, “the study also found that spending more time socializing with friends is actually *an indicator of higher intelligence*.” (Berman, 2016)

So, despite being statistically less happy in these social settings smart people voluntarily participate anyway! What’s that phrase, insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. Or, smart enough to know better but dumb enough to try again. But let’s be fair to those would-be whizzes in our midst, some of them really do accomplish great things. And the existence of smart people certainly gives motivations to we scholastic underdogs as we climb the mountain of success.

Distance Education – A Context for A Brain Boom

It’s fair to suspect that smarts are as subjective as setting – those who can start their own campfire without a lighter might be skilled and smart in one sense but those who’ve acquired a packet of waterproof matches are surely smart in an different way. Smarts depend on the question asked, much like how different academic disciplines have core epistemic values. A neuroscientist may not appreciate the reality of transference (when a relationship takes the form of a prior core interaction, such as parent or child) whereas a psychology major may not be too keen on hearing that depression is a matter of chemicals rather than core beliefs. Smarts are about being open-minded to others and, studies find, intelligent people actually tend to be less willing to brook opposing viewpoints: respondents who ace standard cognitive tests are in fact slightly more likely to have a “bias blind spot”.

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

Library Chat

Tues, May 23, 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

The Pushkin Question or: Shouldn't You Be Reading Shevchenko?

An Evening with Writer in Residence Myrna Kostash

Tues, May 23, 7:00 to 8:30 pm MDT
St Albert Public Library - Forsyth Hall, St Albert Place, 5 St Anne Street, St Albert AB
In person
Hosted by AU and St Albert Public Library
news.athabascau.ca/events/save-the-date-a-final-evening-with-au-writer-in-residence-myrna-kostash/
Register through above link

Library Chat

Wed, May 24, 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, May 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

Write Site Writing Forum: Writing Process

Thur, May 25, 12:30 to 1:30 pm MDT
Online, Hosted by AU Write Site
news.athabascau.ca/events/write-site-writing-forum-spring-sessions/
No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

Advancements in Sustainability

Fri, May 26, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm MDT
DoubleTree by Hilton West Edmonton, 16615 109 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB
In person
Hosted by AU Faculty of Business and CPA Alberta
news.athabascau.ca/events/advancements-in-sustainability/
Reserve through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

“Such biased geniuses, in spite of themselves, prove “less able to see their own flaws, even though they are quite capable of criticizing the foibles of others” (Robson, 2015). It’s sooooo tough being the smartest person all the time. As students we get to overcome our biases simply by giving a balanced account of a topic in our essays and exam answers; taking an academic position is about giving a broad view of the topic so that we can demonstrate what we’ve learned.

Furthering the case for smarts as sour is the fact that no matter how full their trousers be with intellect, they’re further from the prize of enlightenment than their hoi polloi peers: smartypants are “far more likely to be replaying an awkward conversation, than asking the “big questions”. “It’s not that their worries were more profound, but they are just worrying more often about more things. (Robson, online). Literally, clever people may be too smart for their own good and can actually be “less fulfilled” over a lifetime.

Maybe, like teenagers for whom the world is a series of problems caused by anyone but them, smart people have simply learned to cope with their supposed genius by being adequately miserable. Now that doesn’t sound like a recipe for smarts to be proud of, does it? Levelling the playing field, happily, is the fact that at AU we need to study hard and apply ourselves no matter how well endowed our brains may be. Distance education is uniquely suited to those of us who care less about how smart others think we are and more about how much we can learn and grow as pupils.

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



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: A-1 Auto Transport Annual Scholarship

Sponsored by: A-1 Auto Transport

Deadline: June 30, 2023

Potential payout: up to \$1000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be current full- or part-time students of an accredited or non-accredited institute, truck driving school or other logistics program, and must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

What's required: An email along with a minimum 1000-word essay or article on a topic related to auto/vehicle transport.

Tips: Check out [previous winning essays](#) for ideas and inspiration.

Where to get info: www.alautotransport.com/a-1-auto-transport-scholarship/



[blue rare] All Yesterday's Parties

Oliver Moorcraft-Sykes



Just now, the present seems like a gift that I would dearly love to return to its place of purchase for a full refund. Firstly, there is the ongoing apocalyptic layer cake of war, famine, plague, fire, flood, and Trump. On a smaller, though no less depressing, scale, smug grocery tycoons are wetting themselves laughing over the plight of inflation impoverished consumers, many of whom are being forced into never-ending debt to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. In our favourite south-of-the-border dystopia, right wing politicians are whining that cancel culture is stealing away the God-given right to hate speech, whilst they simultaneously ban books and legislatively crush any expressions of identity that don't conform to the narrow norms of their knucklehead constituents.

On the other end of the political self-righteousness spectrum, a working-class single mom trying to raise two kids on sporadic waitressing shifts at Denny's, or a middle-aged man whose factory job has just been eliminated due to automation, might be surprised to learn that they are the lucky recipients of generations of white privilege.

In Canada, we appear well on the path towards replacing our scandal-prone Prime Minister with yet another venomous conservative demagogue toad who, guaranteed, will be hell-bent on furthering the erosion our fragile social safety net, hobbling our once world-class education and health care, diminishing our public investment in the arts, and doubtlessly ensuring through inequitable tax-cuts that the rich keep getting richer and richer, as they crush the poor beneath the heels of their shiny new Louboutins.

Nor does the future look so great from where we stand right now. Just more of the same, with extra helpings of environmental and economic collapse and the impending pandora's box nightmares arising out of AGI and machine learning. It's enough to make the science fiction predictions of Huxley's *Brave New World*, Orwell's *1984*, and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* seem like optimistic Jetson's-style candy-colored daydreams. At the very least, to steal a phrase from the Velvet Underground, I'm unenthused about attending all tomorrow's parties. I have a funny feeling that not many dreamers, bohemians, or artists will be invited, and the ones that show up will be lucky to pick canapés out of the bins in the back alleys.

Hey, listen, it's no use. I think what we really need right now is a vacation from the present and the future. I think we need to pack our bags, and jet off to the past. I know there are some dodgy neighborhoods in the realms of the past, but we know where they are and how to avoid them. Perhaps we can find some of the good stuff that we lost or left behind. Somewhere in all our yesterdays, I am sure, we can find a good place to hang out with our friends again, around a campfire or on a patio drenched in summer sunshine. Maybe share some laughs and some dreams. And talk about the way that the future used to be.



Beyond Literary Landscapes Postmodernist Literature

Natalia Iwanek



From my early beginnings as a young introvert, the public library has always been a bit of a refuge. Years later, not much has changed, albeit with an additional affinity for endless hours spent scouring second-hand bookstores to add to my ever-growing “to-read” pile.

From one bookworm to another, this column will be underscoring and outlining various literary genres, authors, and recent reads and can serve as an introduction for those unfamiliar with these works, as a refresher for long-time aficionados, and maybe as an inspiration for readers to share their own suggested topics. Do you have a topic that you would like covered in this column? Feel free to [contact me](#) for an interview and a feature in an upcoming column.

Who

While previous columns have focused on Modernism and Modernismo, this week’s column looks ahead to Postmodernist Literature in depth.

What

As a philosophy, postmodernism can be defined as “a late 20th-century movement characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism, or relativism; a general suspicion of reason; and an acute sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power.”

As a literary movement, postmodernism “eschews absolute meaning and instead emphasizes play, fragmentation, metafiction, and intertextuality.”

In particular, intertextuality is an interesting concept, which “posits that everything has some form of influence or borrowing from literary works of the past.” In other words, it “is a literary theory stating all works of literature are a derivation or have been influenced by a previous work of literature.”

Some postmodernist works include *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett, *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller, and *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut. For students who would like to learn more about postmodernism from a literary criticism perspective, consider Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, and Roland Barthes.

Where

These works take place in the United Kingdom and the United States.

When

These novels are set in the 19 and 20-centuries.

Why

These works may be of interest to AU students who would like to learn more about the history of literature, and understand the difference between modernist literature and the later postmodernism. They may also interest students who would like to learn more about the absurd, a theme seen in many 20th century works.

How

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

AU students interested in this topic may consider enrolling [ENGL 316: Approaches to Literary Theory and Criticism](#), a senior-level, three-credit course, which "is an introductory level course designed to familiarize you with a variety of critical perspectives and help you understand literary works more profoundly by integrating literary theory in your response to these works." (Please note that this course requires [ENGL 211: Prose Forms](#) and [ENGL 212: Poetry and Plays](#) as prerequisites.) Happy reading!

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



Music Review—Tired Hearts

Jessica Young



Artist: Bailen

Album: *Tired Hearts*

Alternative/indie band, Bailen, has released their new album *Tired Hearts*. The album is available for streaming anywhere you get your music.

Bailen consists of fraternal twins Daniel and David Bailen, as well as their younger sister Julia Bailen. The band has recently started an initiative called [Family Therapy](#), offering their fans advice on family or friend challenges.

Of the album, the band says, "Intertwined in *Tired Hearts* is the frustration and elation that comes with trying to close the gap between expectation and reality. Through these songs we learn how to dream in the face of uncertainty, anxiety, and depression. We are

stubbornly resilient - gracelessly marching onward; hopeful but with *Tired Hearts*."

Tired Hearts consists of twelve tracks: *Tired Hearts*; *Nothing Left To Give*; *These Bones*; *Leave Me Wanting More*; *Here We Are Again*; *Call It Like It Is*; *Change Your Mind*; *Love You Blind*; *Relic*; *BRCA (Nothing Takes Me Down)*; *Shadows*; and *Hiding*. Several of the songs have lyric videos or visualizers available on the band's [YouTube](#), and the track "Call It Like It Is" has an official [music video](#).

Discussing the track "Here We Are Again", Julia stated: "The song is about running out of things to say to your significant other. I had brought the track home to David and Daniel and we tried to work out a more personal approach to the song. Daniel, in a stroke of inspiration just started writing all of these lines from my perspective – moments of my life and relationship that we had all lived through together or heard about—and the verses just poured out of him."

Bailen reminds me of bands like Vampire Weekend, Sonic Youth, and The Smiths. In some of their songs, I even hear a little bit of The Beatles. Julia has an absolutely beautiful, dreamy voice that reminds me of Kate Bush. If you can imagine yourself sitting in a trendy café (tucked away in a recently gentrified neighborhood, of course), sipping a very expensive ethically-sourced cappuccino—*Tired Hearts* would be the music playing quietly in the background. At first glance, *Tired Hearts* is a relaxing, mellow, almost-groovy listen.

However, it doesn't stop there. It's clear that Bailen has poured their hearts into this album, creating a raw, vulnerable, sometimes heart-wrenching experience for the listener. In "Nothing Left To Give", a song about burn-out, the band sings: "I got nothing left to give, but that's ok/It's just a little less to lose when you're losing your way/Running on empty/Just to make it through the day/And I only have myself to save/Baby I could be brave enough to say/I only have myself to save".

Meanwhile, in "Call It Like It Is", the band writes about a romantic partner who isn't being truthful: "Heavy-handed, demanding to meet your bottom line/If all I ever am is a copy, then what is left to mine?" The corresponding music video is extremely well produced and funny—featuring the band accepting a gracious offer to stay in a "fan's" home during their tour, only to find themselves kidnapped and forced to try to escape. The video ties in so well with the theme of the song, especially the lyric "Call it what it is/You've got some bodies in your basement".

Overall, I really enjoyed *Tired Hearts*. You can check out Bailen on [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#).

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



A "Swing for the Fences" Tale

Alek Golijanin

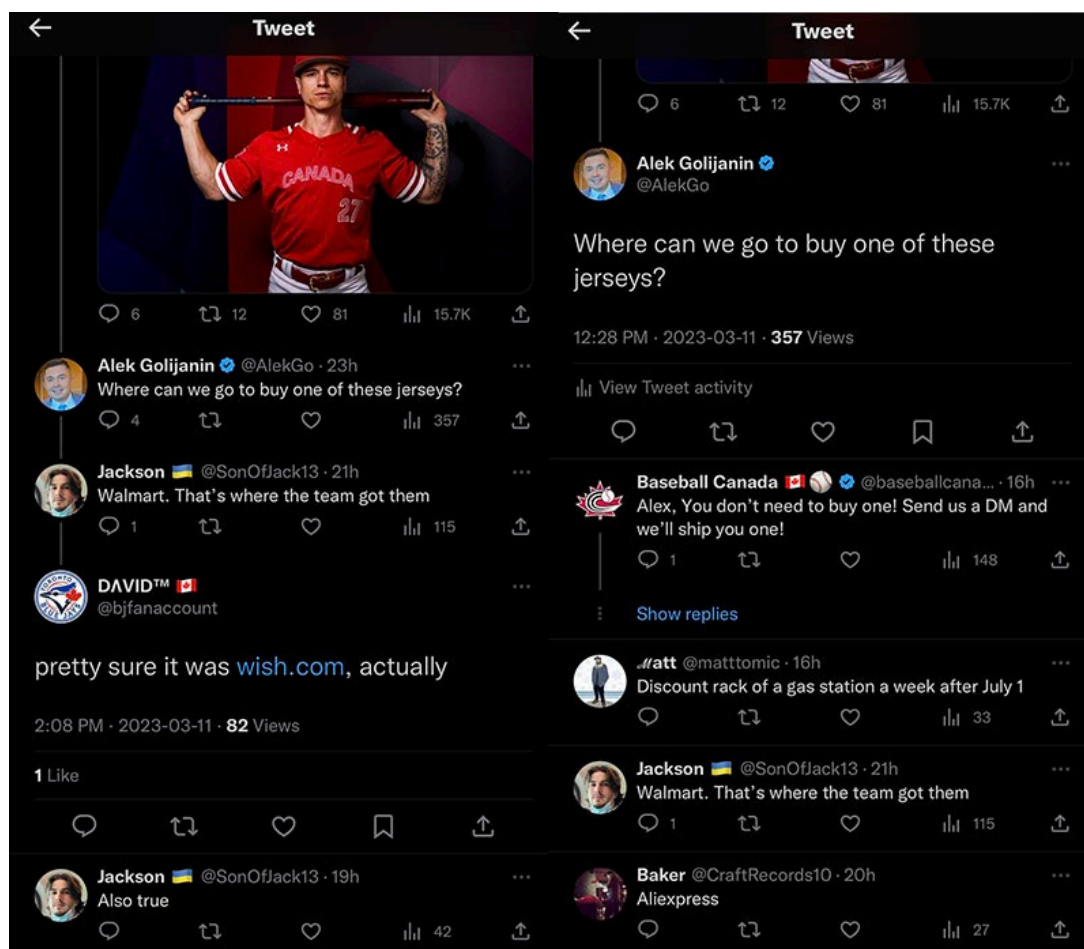


How often does a baseball story play out like the speech Christopher Walken's gave as Mike in the 2002 film Poolhall Junkies, where he talks about nature documentaries and lions, and how a bunch of jackals and hyenas decide to attack a lion that they perceive to be weak, before the lion munches them all up? Well, readers are in luck because I have just the story for them which involves myself, Twitter trolls, and our baseball federation. Here is how it goes.

The Canadian men's baseball team recently participated at the World Baseball Classic (WBC) and they were placed in a group with Great Britain, USA, Colombia, and Mexico. The first game was against Great Britain, and the Canadian men's team played as if they were fighting to break free of the Monarchy, whooping the Brits 18 to 8. After the hype of that first game, I went on the WBC's website and attempted to order a team Canada baseball jersey, but there were no Canadian jerseys for sale. Italy baseball jerseys, yes, Canada baseball jerseys, no. After a bit of contemplating, I jumped on Twitter to tweet at our baseball

federation and ask them about our jerseys, and that is when the Twitter trolls pounced.

My question for our baseball federation was simple, “Where can we go to buy one of those jerseys?” It did not take long for me to get a few notifications, all from trolls, which read, “Walmart. That’s where the team got them.”, “Pretty sure it was Wish.com, actually.”, “Aliexpress.”, and “Discount rack of a gas station a week after July 1.” Funny, right? Well, our baseball federation decided to show the trolls that the joke was on them because they tweeted back saying, “Alex. You don’t need to buy one! Send us a DM and we’ll ship you one!” The beauty of that interaction can be summed up with Johnny Quid’s beautiful monologue in the 2008 film RockNRolla. “That that starts sweet, ends bitter. And that which starts bitter, ends sweet.”



What I struggle to understand in all of this, however, is that there are people who would prefer to root against their country in any way possible, instead of cheering for it. Thankfully for the Twitter trolls and myself, this incident transpired over social media instead of a baseball game, because then I would have channelled my inner-Izzy Alcantara from 2001, which would have left a stain on the game we all love. Somehow, I doubt I could get away with only a 6-game suspension like Alcantara did in 2001, and I feel that baseball would give me the Pete Rose treatment.

Now, since we are still on the topic of baseball and to balance out my self-deprecating jokes, I wanted to share some self-aggrandizing news with readers which is that I am, officially, the first ever inductee into Humongous Entertainment’s Backyard Baseball Hall of Fame after a storied career in Heron Gate’s Cedarwood Drive baseball park.

Humongous Entertainment’s Backyard Baseball Hall of Fame

My Hall of Fame plaque is engraved with the following message, ‘*Aleksandar Golijanin was a legendary Canadian backyard baseball player from Ottawa, Canada, who was also known as “Heron’s Hammerin’ Hank”, “Heron Gate’s Griffey Jr.”, “Ottawa Baseball’s Barry Bonds”, “The Municipality’s*

Miniature Mark McGwire”, and “La Municipalité Mickey Mantle”, and who is the first-ever inductee into the Backyard Baseball Hall of Fame after a storied career in Heron Gate’s Cedarwood Drive Backyard Park. Aleksandar was trained by two legendary backyard baseball trainers, Francophone Matt and Anglophone Peter, enabling him to hit countless dingers over 200 feet. He was scouted by Ottawa South Blues coaches along with his trainer’s parents, but Aleksandar’s parents were afraid of their only child getting hit in the head with a baseball and suffering permanent brain damage. A real-life Pablo Sanchez, pound for pound and inch for inch, had Aleksandar pursued an MLB career, he would have overtaken Jose Altuve, the 5-foot 6-inch 165-pound Venezuelan, and finished as the American League MVP in 2017, and the Houston Astros would have never been able to “signal” their way to a World Series Championship.’

Having the distinction as the first-ever and only inductee (since the studio has gone belly-up and won’t be making any more videogames of the sort) into the Backyard Baseball Hall of Fame, the lesson I want to leave readers with has to do with the importance of swinging for the fences every time and at everything. The best baseball players have a batting average of just over 0.300, which means they only hit the ball 30% of the time, and only some of those hits end up being home runs. And remember, should you ever get hit by a pitch, if you have Twitter trolls on your team and there is a bench-clearing situation that arises, expect the Twitter trolls to stay seated in the dugout.

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



Seven Ways to Make Fitness Fun

Marie Well



Fitness is a blast. It's more fun than traveling to Hawaii. That is unless your hotel is by the 24-hour gym in Honolulu. Now, that's exciting! And fitness is more fun than dining out, cruises or discovering a lost continent. That is unless these activities are accompanied by fitness, such as hikes through ruins, dancing in the cruise ship ballroom, or a 5-star restaurant after skating or cycling.

But some of us don't see fitness as fun. So, as a shout-out to our friends who have a world of benefits awaiting them, from health to happiness to longevity to high energy to better appearance to endorphins, here are seven ways to make fitness fun:

Research a physical activity to gain mastery. Nothing could be more exciting than studying a craft we know nothing about. That's because the learning curve is enormous. We can go from water wings to the crawl and butterfly in the swimming pool in two months by studying YouTube videos and frequenting the pool. I'm learning swimming and skating this year, which I bomb at. So, consider getting a knack for a sport we know nothing about. And study our way to mastery.

Complement our training with activity-beneficial diets. Different activities require different diets for optimal results. For instance, weightlifting demands protein to be eaten within an hour after lifting weights. And it tastes incredible. And high cardio activities will get us craving carbs. And we get to indulge without guilt. Better still, our physical appearance and health will be

transformed into our ideal states while we satisfy our cravings. But eat lots of fresh veggies and fruits to skyrocket our fitness regimes.

Get a recreation membership to explore every fitness activity. Buying a pass to a recreational center is more fun than a trip to Disneyland. So many thrilling activities await us. We can swim, skate, play sports, play racquetball, climb walls, and take fitness classes. The sky is the limit. And we're meant to try all of them, especially if we crave excitement and adventure.

Aim to get the skills to teach or coach the fitness activity. Why not start with no skills in a particular sport or activity, and get all the certifications required to teach it. Now that's fun! Gaining instructor status is also a way to generate revenue while caring for our bodies and mind. And by coaching, we get to nurture a high level of health and fitness in others. Can anything get better than that?

Aim to compete, perform, or go professional with the sport or activity. If reincarnation exists, I will take on a sport every season as young as possible to try out for the Olympic youth hopefuls in Canada. There is such a thing. If we're young, we can register and try out for an Olympic-hopeful role to receive funding and support for the Olympic goal. But we're likely over the required age. If so, many age-specific competitions exist, such as swimming competitions for people in their 30s or even 80s. And I'd recommend competing in a natural bodybuilding competitions (without steroids) if we're revved about lifting weights. And we all should be revved about weightlifting if bone and muscle health is a goal. But take a class on how to do full-body weightlifting routines. The results are fantastic.

Year-round, do the activity five to six days a week, one hour-plus a day. Then, at the end of the year, buy a new wardrobe. I guarantee by the end of a year, we'll be buff. Each sport gives a different bodily appearance. For example, cycling will bulk our legs and gluteus muscles (buttocks) while leaning down our tummies. Weightlifting can address every major body part if we do a "three-day split." Rowing is excellent for back and bicep development. So, search on Google for your sport name and the word "body type." Or Google the sports athlete, such as "swimmer," and look at the images. That'll give you a sense of how the sport will make you look. All sports will make us look better and feel fantastic.

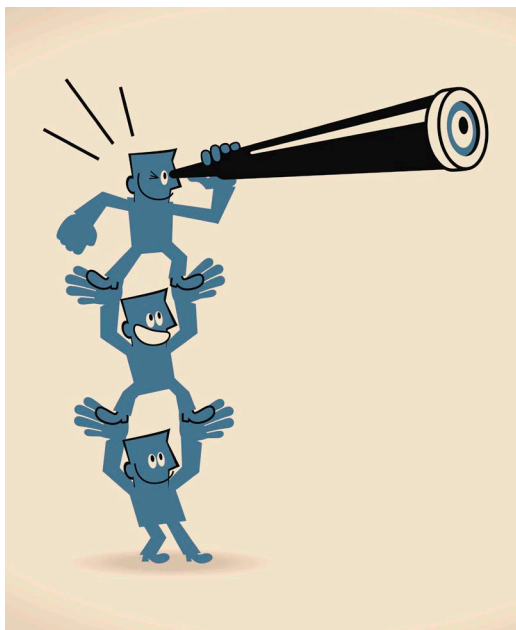
Hire a coach, or join a team or club. Try getting our office colleagues to form a corporate sports team. Sports teams are great ways to learn a team player attitude. When I played sports as a youth, I'd sing sports chants loudly on the bench and give enthusiastic praise and encouragement to all the team members. Those activities were as much fun as playing the sport itself. In addition, at the university, I had the opportunity to access one-on-one coaching from an Olympian wrestler. It was a highlight of my life. So, for ultimate fun, consider one-on-one coaching or a team sport.

All sports and fitness activities are a blast, especially once we learn the craft. But if we have physical limitations, we can always do certain activities to condition ourselves for optimal performance, energy, and physique. For instance, if we are wheelchair bound, we can lift weights for upper body strength, do chair yoga, join a basketball sports team for people in wheelchairs, do upper body dance, or even engage in lower body conditioning to regain some mobility. If I recall correctly, *a book titled Younger Next Year* said that a research study on exercise for seniors showed that, due to exercise, seniors who were on a cane could walk independently; seniors in wheelchairs could walk with a cane; and bedridden seniors graduated to wheelchairs. So, it's assumable that some of us could go from bedridden to athletic. After all, if we can imagine it, it's happened to someone somewhere already. So, it can happen to us. With exercise, anything is possible—and fun.



Research Assistant Opportunities! Environmental Science Student or Outdoorsy and Sci-Curious?

Jason Sullivan



When flushing a toilet we might say a silent prayer to the septic gods for another year of scentless success; nowadays there's no cesspools out back of our homes because water management allows us to flow free of our less desirable productions. Meanwhile, wherever water goes in nature we know that it's vital and has its own rhythms and flows. This most elemental ingredient of life might be said to have created its own technology of existence within the seasons and the geological realities of each geographic region. As such, hydrology research relates to facets of industry that enter into the soil and its waterways and possible pitfall and difficulties ensuing therein.

This field assistant posting offers two position opportunities in fieldwork up at the Stony Mountain Provincial Park, in the general vicinity of Fort McMurray, AB. Applicants should have good grades and excellent outdoor hiking skills. Environmental Science students are preferred. If my experience in forestry ecological research is any indication, you'll want to apply if you're the type of person who enjoys making your own trails rather than seeking for easy footing already made by others. Those interested are asked to immediately send resume, cover letter, transcript, and contact(s) to Dr. Ketcheson at sketcheson@athabascau.ca.

Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

AthaU Facebook Group

Hard deadline. A question that comes up regularly about how strict the 10th of the month course enrol deadline is. Sounds like there's zero flex.

Discord

Getting prepared for outages. A discussion about potential power or internet disruptions produces tips on preparing course material for offline access.

reddit

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. A student seeks insight on which types of courses AU delivers well, not so well, and poorly.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "[#AthabascaU](https://twitter.com/AthabascaU) extends our heartfelt sympathies and support to any learner affected by wildfires. Learn more about the supports available: t.co/vNZYIIANo5 "

[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!]





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

In the Heat of the Moment

Dear Barb:

I am a guy in my early thirties. My girlfriend and I had been living together for eight years until I ended it six months ago. The problem is I did not want to end it, I just got angry and said it was over and that I was moving out. A week later I found my own place. We have been in communication almost daily since I left. I want her back, but I don't know how to change things. I feel if I told her I didn't really mean it, she would become even angrier and may not want to even be friends with me. I have noticed that she has some new friends and seems to be especially close to one guy. He seems like a nice enough guy, but I am still in love with my ex. Do you think I should take a chance and tell her what I'm feeling in my heart, or should I move on and learn from this mistake? I still feel the pain and loss as if it happened yesterday. I need some advice. Thanks, John.

Hi John:

Thanks for your email and so sorry you are going through this challenging time. Breakups are always hard, especially when they result from an emotional outburst that was not meant. It would have been much easier if you had tried to rectify the situation earlier. Six months is a long time and obviously, your ex has been able to move forward with her life, but you have not. My feeling is that you should have a heart-to-heart talk with her about how you feel. It is hard to know how she will take it. She may be happy, or she may be angry and hurt. The fact that she

has another person who is interested in her may color her response. It is very sad when people react with such intense emotion that it messes up their lives. If you choose the other option to move on, you will always wonder what would have happened if you had told her how you feel. Whatever you decide to do, I believe you would benefit from some counseling to learn how to manage your emotions. Following are a few tips to help with your emotions.

To begin you need to acknowledge your feelings, that way you will be able to understand if you are overreacting to a situation. By doing this, you will learn to control your reactions before they escalate. It is important not to make a life decision while you are under stress or anxiety due to lack of sleep, illness, or financial hardship. Wait until you are in a good place with your life and have taken the time to think clearly about your decision. As well, self-care is essential for your well-being, go for walks, cycle, or swim. Physical activities as well as meditation will help to clear your mind and help you stay centered. These are all things you can do no matter what you choose to do about your current situation. Hope I have been helpful. Best of luck in the future John.

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
Nothing to Lose**Wanda Waterman**

ONCE AGAIN
MY BUDDY DON
IS DRAGGED
IN IGNOMINY
BEFORE
THE COURTS.



AND ONCE
AGAIN
I MUST
CONFESS
MY DEEPEST
ADMIRATION.



FOR A GUY
WITH THAT MUCH
MONEY
TO RISK IT ALL
IN A RECKLESS
MOMENT OF
PERVERTED LUST,
WELL, THAT TAKES
SOME CHUTZPAH.



DON HAS
INSPIRED
THE CHAZZ MAN
TO BE JUST
A LITTLE MORE
FORWARD
WITH YOU
CHICKY-POOS.



UNLIKE HIM,
I HAVE
NOTHING
TO LOSE
BUT MY
FREEDOM.



AAAAND
MY FREEDOM
AIN'T WON ME
ANY DATES
LATELY.
OR ... EVER.



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!

CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students!
Contact voice@voicemagazine.org for more information.

THE VOICE

Ph: 855.497.7003

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www.voicemagazine.org

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