



# THE VOICE

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## **Minds We Meet**

Interviewing Students Like You!

## **The Case of Karamjeet Kaur**

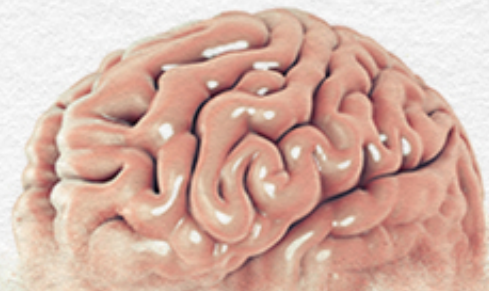
International Students Defrauded

## **Fly on the Wall**

Vacuums and Brain Fog

**Plus:**

***A Life Saving Perspective  
[blue rare]: Another Excess  
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****Taken Back by the Election****Karl Low**

The election is over, the results as was suggested would happen by the previous polls, and Danielle Smith and the UCP have retained a majority government, albeit a much smaller one. While it would have taken less than 2000 votes in crucial ridings to send things the other way, our first past the post system often makes such small differences mean far more in the resulting make-up of our legislature.

As a first priority Smith has made a promise to pass a bill that will require any future tax hikes to go through a referendum of the Alberta people, which would essentially prevent any tax hikes in future, because most people have difficulty connecting things like a lack of fire protection in Northern Alberta, causing smoke to blanket the province, as being related to the tax bill they receive in April. Of course, legislative bills like this are largely symbolic, as a future government in Alberta, which will also likely be a majority, would just as easily remove such a law if they felt they needed to raise taxes.

That her first priority, the thing most important to her to do immediately upon election, is to pass a bill to prevent her government from doing something it doesn't want to do anyway, to me defines all you really need to know about how her governance will play out. I expect it will do a lot of nothing, while making a great show of doing it.

The larger concern, for me at least, is the threat of David Parker and the Take Back Alberta group that has worked in the background to take over the governing structures of the United Conservative Party, and now has half of the seats of the board of the party. This essentially puts them in control of the direction of the party, as they can choose to oust any UCP member from caucus, including the Premier.

Parker, the leader, is the home-schooled son of a religious pastor in central Alberta, whose primary cry, at least for now, seems to be about wanting to protect and increase freedom, with a particular focus on the freedom to avoid having to take a vaccine. A responsibility to protect fellow citizens doesn't seem to be among his concerns.

Other things he's noted in his speeches is that a woman who wants to have a career rather than a baby is anti-human, and that while you may vote in socialism, you almost always have to shoot your way out. His home-schooling evidently didn't include the history of Canada where the NDP have been elected multiple times in various provinces and removed peacefully. Or anything about the Nordic nations or China which are increasingly moving further away from socialism, China by direction of the ruling class, and the Nordic nations by their elections currently seeming to have a slow drift rightwards.

My concern is that a focus on freedom without responsibility almost always seems to include things like reducing societal support for things that people need, like schooling or health care, and tends to believe in simplistic points of view like taxes hurt economies (again, studies of the Nordic nations tend to refute this). Whether those views get translated into this new government's actions remain to be seen.

Until then, enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.



# MINDS WE MEET



*The Voice Magazine* recently had a chance to chat with Kalob Sharan (he/him), a Bachelor of Commerce student, with a major in Human Resources Management, located in Surrey, British Columbia. Kalob stated, “I would like to acknowledge that the land I work, study, and live on is part of the Kwantlen First Nation’s territory. He plans to continue on to AU’s Master of Counselling program post-convocation, and has already “planned several psychology courses as option credits.”

On a more personal note, Kalob was born and raised in Surrey, stating, “I am 18 years old and I am of mixed descent, my mom is Ukrainian/English and my dad is Indian. I didn’t do so well in high school due to both my great grandparents passing away in grade 12 and it took a big effect on my health. Most universities wouldn’t even consider me, but Athabasca took me in without question and I am loving the quality of this education so far. I am currently working on my first three courses of my program while working 32 hours a week, but will go full-time as a student in September.”

This AU student had some great study tips to share with fellow learners. “I best study in a quiet environment with some classical music or music I like playing in the background. Sometimes I also enjoy a quiet *YouTube* video playing in the background.”

He also had some tips for new students like himself. “The only two pieces of advice I have for new students are to treat online university just like regular school and create a schedule as soon as you get to see your first few courses. Unlike regular universities, where professors plan out the whole year with AU, you plan it out yourself and are just given a course end date. You can get really behind if you procrastinate too much. The other piece of advice I have is to keep in touch with your high school friend group and try to connect with as many people as you can outside of that as well. Online school can make you feel really alone unless you know many people to talk to and meet with.”

When he is not busy studying, Kalob enjoys watching *Netflix*, including series such as “Suits,” “Brooklyn 99,” “Riverdale,” and “Everybody Hates Chris”; gardening; and catching up on sleep. He continued, “I am also a Taekwondo 1<sup>st</sup> Dan blackbelt so I like to practice that whenever I have a chance as that counts as my exercise for the day.”

This busy student also finds time to read, sharing that the *Harry Potter* series has “had such a big impact on me since I relate to them so much. Harry Potter came from not having his parents, and studying really hard with a dark wizard after him to succeeding in all his classes and defeating the dark wizard defying all deniability.”

He also lets us know about his most memorable vacation, which “was to Saigon Vietnam for [his] aunt’s wedding.” He recounted, “It was 35 degrees Celsius and I wore a suit for the flight, the moment we touched down I had to strip down to my undergarments, or else I would boil alive. The cost of living there is low as well as beautiful views of the many islands and clean air.”

He credits his grandfather as the one person who has had the greatest influence on his desire to learn. He explained, “He was a schoolteacher in his home country Fiji. He keeps encouraging me every day to keep up with my studies. He has gone through many hard times in his day and still kept the family surviving, all the while going to school and earning his degree. He gave me the motivation and the privilege I have to study hard and earn my degree.” He continued, “I will be the first person in my family with a degree in Canada.”

Although a newer student, Kalob’s experience with online learning has been “great,” so far, and he notes, “it is sort of a continuation of high school since I also did my high school online.” He continued, “I love the fact that my studies are at my own pace, and that I can do whatever I want to do during class instead of being stuck in a room for 4 hours. The only dislike I have about online university is that it is very hard to make or meet any friends. I find that when I was in high school, I had my own little friend group to study online with and it helped to have a peer to ask whenever I came across a problem. I really wish AU had some sort of networking in place to get students to communicate with each other. Sort of like some courses have their own optional team pages.”

Although he cannot yet choose a favourite course, he does find his current courses interesting, including ACCT 253: Introductory Financial Accounting, in which “the instructor is really great with communication, as well as the established course content.” He added, “I also do accounting as my part-time job, so it really enforces my views on accounting from a career perspective. FYI, I am also taking ADMN 232: Introduction to Management as well as ECON 247: Microeconomics. I am finding all of those courses great.”

He also points out that “Communication with my course tutors has been excellent so far, they have been open with course expectations and usually communicate back to me within a business day if I have any problems. They are very kind people.”

*The Voice Magazine* asked Kalob what his first project would be if he were the next president of AU. “I would make is to hire a social media team to get the word about our school out worldwide. I am very surprised that I found this school as I did heavy research about online schools in Canada. If I was the new president, I would make sure that if someone searched Google for online school Canada, we should be the first result to pop up. The next action I would take is to develop a student networking app that would allow students from similar geographic locations as well as programs of study to network with each other,” he explained.

We also asked which famous person, past or present, he would like to have lunch with and why, and Kalob chose “either Warren Buffet or Bill Gates the world’s richest people.” “It would be at a five-star restaurant and I would discuss with them how they were successful, how did they fight procrastination, and what made them determined to open up their business. How did they become successful? All of those questions answered and I would follow in their footsteps to become successful,” he stated.

On a final note, Kalob shared the most valuable lesson of life that he learned in life, namely to “never let anyone tell you anything is impossible.” He explained, “I came from a really poor, non-educated family; all my friends were saying I would never make it to university. I proved them wrong, and I will prove them even more wrong when I graduate with my Bachelor’s.”

And his proudest moment? That would be obtaining his “first-degree black belt in taekwondo after 13 years of practicing.” Best of luck Kalob!

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.*

## The case of Karamjeet Kaur and 700 should-be Canadians

**Alek Golijanin**



Writing about the case of Karamjeet Kaur and 700 should-be Canadians was a very unpleasant experience. Worst of all, it seemed as though journalists, immigration lawyers, and academics with expertise in immigration all seemed to accept the narrative that this was a bogus admissions letter issue, and it seemed as though we would be poised to forget about Karamjeet and those other 700 as if their lives were meaningless and worthy of being an afterthought. None of that sat well with me, so I decided to reach out to the few journalists who wrote about Karamjeet’s situation, the lawyer who represented Karamjeet, the appropriate Federal Ministers, Canada’s Federal Court, and Immigration Canada.

This was not a “bogus admissions letter” scandal, it was a national security issue because of how our student visa program was successfully weaponized by a foreign actor (calling himself an “immigration consultant”) to defraud unknowing international students without ever being

detected by anyone at Immigration Canada, and only getting discovered years later by our policing agencies. The narrative that was floating around needed to change, and I went after it.

### The Journalists

Although I knew that I could have some success with putting forward questions on my own, the reach and power of news agencies is something that I could never replicate, so I decided to reach out to journalists and “Ask them if they might ask...”.

My questions revolved around the circumstances of Karamjeet’s hearing, things I thought were issues of significance and worthy of follow up questions, but that were not showing up in any articles. I made sure to explain my thinking behind these questions with hopes that they might give way to other questions of significance that might get investigated by the journalists.

There were five questions in total. The first question had to do with the importance of having the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship as a respondent since the student visa program was under his portfolio and given that Karamjeet Kaur’s fake letter, which came by the way of an “immigration consultant”, also happened to affect hundreds of other should-be Canadians who relied on that same consultant. The second question built upon the first, focusing on the



importance of the judge being able to inquire about the flaws within the student visa program, and potentially making recommendations on improvements. The third question had to do with Immigration Canada's immigration officer diagnosing Karamjeet's disability (chronic fatigue syndrome) and how it seemed that the judge was also echoing similar verbiage, all without the testimony of a medical expert. The fourth question focused on pointing out another inappropriate connection made by the judge when stating, "Karamjeet portrayed herself as vulnerable and lacking resources, but that did not seem to be so." The fifth question was related to the removal of the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship and how that decision by the judge was the reason that Karamjeet was unable to make a claim for an appeal under *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act subsection 74 (d)*.

I did not hear back from any of the journalists.

### **The Lawyer**

The questions I put forward for Karamjeet's lawyer in the trial were similar to the questions that I had put forward for the journalists, but they were more along the lines, "Why did you think these points were not issues worth bringing up?" The response from the lawyer, was only an automated message reading, "I'm way from the office."

### **The Federal Ministers**

Based on my experience with interacting with Federal Committees, as well as other branches of government, I knew that my message needed to be serious, rooted in facts, but it also had to sound right. The Ministers I decided to reach out to were the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, and the Minister of Justice—who also happened to be the Attorney General of Canada. Their Ministerial roles are what interconnected them with fate of Karamjeet and those 700 other should-be Canadians.

It was important to change the framing around this situation from a "bogus admissions letter" scandal to a matter of national security because our student visa program was successfully weaponized by a foreign actor ("immigration consultant") to defraud unknowing international students without ever being detected by anyone at Immigration Canada. Given the severity of this situation, lawyers should not have been omitting this class of information from a judge because it was unfavorable to their side, nor should it be permissible under the law, but it is and there was no mention of the prevalence of this issue or the interconnectedness of these should-be Canadians in the judge's judgement and reasons.

I also segued towards another pressing issue that had to do with questioning the processes in place when our branches of government identify the exploitation of any of their programs, like the student visa program, by foreign actors who were leveraging the vulnerabilities of these programs to commit financial crimes, noting that this was a matter of national security.

I felt it worth mentioning that it was possible to suspend the deportation orders until a review of the student visa program was conducted, and for the deportation orders to be reviewed with consideration for the findings of that review. That outcome, however, would likely result in the should-be Canadians being allowed to stay, setting a legal precedent, and thus opening a can of worms that many individuals with decision-making powers would prefer to avoid, starting with the question, "What are we going to do about all the previous international students who were deported for the exact same reason?"

I heard back from my MP's office that it would be brought to his personal attention.



## The Federal Court

When I reached out to the Federal Court, I made it clear that I was writing about jurisprudence related to immigration since Canada was aiming to double in size by way of immigration and that the driver behind the article was the case of Karamjeet Kaur.

Once again, there were five questions in total. The first question had to do with uncovering the way judges felt about making precedent-setting decisions because of the implication that precedent-setting decisions have. The second question had to do with uncovering the familiarity that judges had with the inner workings of immigration programs, like the student visa program, and whether Immigration Canada was required to make judges aware of any loopholes or flaws that might result in large-scale problems for the student visa program, prior to any hearings. The third question had to do with determining whether the approach to making rulings on a “case-by-case” basis would shift if the same loophole or flaw impacted upwards of a thousand international students by the way of the same consultant, and in the exact same manner. The fourth question had to do with the act of omitting information and determining how it had the potential to impact a judge’s ability to make an appropriate decision. If a judge was not made aware of instances when a loophole or flaw from a government program was successfully weaponized by a foreign actor to defraud unknowing international students and without it coming to the attention of our policing agencies, then that was an unethical approach to immigration law, and it threatened to undermine the integrity of our courts. My fifth question had two parts, the first was an indirect ask about whether what transpired with Karamjeet Kaur and 700 should-be Canadians was a matter of national security and whether omitting the details of that class of information was something that the Federal Courts would deem acceptable, and the second was whether it was within the Federal Court’s powers to rule for a government program to be reviewed and that the court be updated on the fixes, as might be the case in a national security matter, and whether Federal Courts had the power to create a commission to explore the ramifications of those loopholes and flaws and explore ways to reverse the damage done relating to past rulings against international students and should-be Canadians.

The Federal Court would not respond to the questions, and while I have no authority on the matter, I found the initial ruling by the judge on Karamjeet’s deportation to have some reviewable errors and conclusions, but with the judge’s final decision being something of a paradox. The judge was making the appropriate decision given the information that was made available to them, and that is where the issue lay.

## Immigration Canada

When it came to Immigration Canada, I had questions about how everything that transpired was possible. I wanted to know what the procedures and policies looked like when new deceptive practices were uncovered, how fast was that information disseminated across the frontlines, how many lines of defence did we have against deception and what did they look like, whether there were proactive measures like a database of known consultants or agencies that were flagged for previous actions, and how often did the uncovering of a single incident give way to the uncovering of other incidents. Most importantly, I wanted to know how often were procedures and policies revisited for improvements.

In their response, Immigration Canada highlighted the Letter of Acceptance Verification Project (LoAVP), launched in 2018, as a centralized office in communicating with learning institutions to verify the authenticity and validity of letters of acceptance. What the LoAVP would look out for was fraudulent letters, altered genuine letters, or letters that were no longer valid, and these violations could result in an international student being found inadmissible to Canada and barred from applying for permanent residence for five years. Additionally, post-secondary institutions

were expected to report the enrollment status of study permit holders, twice a year, and if an international student was found to be non-compliant, then that information would be added to the individual's file and taken into consideration for any future immigration applications.

What I found most interesting was that in 2021, the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants was launched, something resembling a professional association for immigration and citizenship consultants who were federally regulated here in Canada. Although a novel idea, it seemed limited in its ability to stop immigration consultants that operated outside of our borders and who chose to earn their living by finding ways to stay involved with the student application process.

Oddly enough, what was transpiring with Karamjeet and 700 should-be Canadians reminded me of what was said at an event hosted by the Canadian Club of Ottawa that focused on the future of cybersecurity in Canada, and where the conclusion was that government always had to keep an eye on systems that were going the way of the dinosaurs. While Canada's approach to cybersecurity was foreign to what was taking place at Immigration Canada and the vulnerabilities related to administrative loopholes, the approach to always having an eye on expiring ways of doing things was an approach that was transplantable.

### **Think beyond "Welcome to Canada".**

Throughout this process, the only thing that was confusing to me was the fact that nobody was considering what was transpiring with these should-be Canadians as a national security issue. Not journalists. Not lawyers. Not academics. Not Members of Parliament. Not judges. Nobody. Why not, and how come?

Perhaps my questions were loaded questions, but they were also serious, fact-based, and with a coherent position, whether these stakeholders agreed with them or not. They were direct and not disrespectful, but if any of these stakeholders were made to feel uncomfortable by them, just imagine how countless numbers of should-be Canadians have felt, who were as trusting as we are, to a fault, but whose dreams of becoming Canadian were shattered because of their misplaced trust.

Anybody can sum up a press release. But conducting a deeper analysis of a situation and identifying potential inconsistencies requires doing the hard intellectual work. The can of worms that I suggested my questions might lead toward are far better than the can of worms that would be opened if municipalities eventually end up embracing the idea of "sanctuary cities" at some point in the future and after our population has more than doubled; the effect that would have on federal immigration laws and their ability to maintain collective security would be massive. However, if it was understood and accepted that we had a fair and just immigration system, then that type of thinking would not give rise to the type of thinking that can lead people to believe that our immigration system is more capable of getting things wrong than right. All I was doing, I felt, was making an appeal to common sense.

Canada is the most people-loving nation in the world. It is a place that mirrors the highest ideals of an individual human being and collectively as a nation, with a heterogeneous population connected by a shared set of values. Our ambitious approach to population growth make us the fastest growing G-7 country and it presents us with a historic opportunity, and we need to keep that in mind, alongside another idea, represented by a quote by former US President Bill Clinton, *"Create the world you would like to live in when you are no longer in control."*

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



## Fly on the Wall

### Vacuums and Brain Fogs: Being Present in the Classroom Of Life

Jason Sullivan



If you've ever felt overwhelmed by deadlines and study material, there's a philosopher to the rescue. The Greek Parmenides believed that gaps, when explored, are redolent with activity and each instant contains an infinity of information overwhelming the concept of flow so much so that to think of motion belies the reality of the universe as a place full of reality. Concluding that neither motioning particles nor the passing of time were real, he (thanks to an encounter with airborne Goddesses) decided that the universe is, to coin the old hippie phrase, "all good, man" because everything is in its place and time permanently and to stay.

We here at AU can take solace in that, although studying hard may not assuage our invigilated exam anxiety, we can still rest assured that we'll always and forever be ourselves. Our minds and the universe do

seem to be full of stuff, no matter how many times we draw a blank on an exam question. Seemingly, it remains only to us to prioritize our AU coursework to make sure that our brains are full of the *right* stuff. Knowledge and thinking are always happening, and there's nary a dull moment when our brain isn't pondering over something—even if it's whether one can muster the motivation to clean a litter box rather than abide its withering odour.

Over 200 years ago, Thomas Boyle's vacuum experiments at London's Royal Academy showed that a vacuum, far from being a lack of something, is indeed a powerful force in itself: powerful enough to suck the life out of a canary bird placed in the vacuum chamber for effect. In this sense *lack*, including moments between times so to speak, are as powerful as recorded and noticed moments. This, even though such spaces are illusory. Study breaks, for instance, rarely involve merely gazing at a wall or a blank sheet of paper. Usually, a blue screen full of clickbait adverts suffices to fill our so-called free time. Yet, breaks can be as key to learning as moments of rigorous memorization. After all, if life and the cosmos are full of stuff and basically immobile (as Parmenides claimed) then whatever we do is valuable in its own right, rather than a waste of space. Instead of time lost, these moments of rest can actively recharge our full brains. As the industrial banker Thomas Lubbock stated "rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time." (Lubbock, online).

### And With a Symbolic Nod To The Brain-Mongers Among Us

If, in the abstract, all of life is a series of events that fill up our cognitive space, there's probably a neuroscience smarty-pants explanation on offer. Like, why and how do our brains cognate this perpetual flow of facts, figures, and images? Suggested here is how memories, when recalled, emerge more like snapshots. When a person is in transit, the event of consequences remembered (such as arriving at a destination) seems to arise, postcard-style, as individual, discrete, entities. Memories tend to appear as singular units, in other words, although we assume they are part of a larger life flow. Recalling that motion to Parmenides was illusory such that no one is really going anywhere and neither is time, the hard science question remains as to how our sense of motion and time gets that way. Neuroscience notes that the brain indeed fails to give us a flowing display



of reality, instead “precluding the blur of events in order to yield a composite image of our prior fifteen seconds” (Manassi & Whitney, online). This might explain why Parmenides saw the universe as a realm of illusory motion—our brains present it as such. “What the brain is essentially doing is procrastinating. It’s too much work to constantly deal with every single snapshot it receives, so the brain sticks to the past because the past is a good predictor of the present. Basically, we recycle information from the past because it’s more efficient, faster and less work” (Manassi & Whitney, online). In other words, the past *is* the present to our brains.

Being socially conscious about how we apply time in our lives leads to a common ideology in our modern realm: *presentism*. While our brains can’t help us simplify matters of passing time and events, our conscious minds certainly can choose to place reality within a historical (personal and/or political) perspective. Presentism, noteworthy especially in current events mashups where newest always gets top billing, is defined as “an attitude toward the past dominated by present-day attitudes and experiences” (Merriam-Webster, online). Parmenides might have appreciated this now-new; after all, when all is so and nothing not so it’s not like one can get outside the fray to adopt an objective perspective. On the other hand, being all in on the present presents its own challenges, like how to not privilege current events or fads over the equally-there-now nature of all that’s past and all that’s to come.

Presentism does allow us to find daily meaning in the ongoing story of our lives, a river of perception that admittedly can seem to carry us away largely without our consenting participation. Perhaps to gain a better view on this illusory flow of reality, where subconscious bias leads our brains and the powers that be to privilege some events over others, and leaving other realities to fall between the cracks of media silence if not actual cosmic gaps, we might recall that our chosen attitude toward past and future says much about our motivations in the eternal academic present of studying in the here and now. Marxist theorist Walter Benjamin, who fell victim to the worst of all presents in the form of the NAZI holocaust (thus providing dire perspective to those who see school shooters as somehow victims of their own crime) claimed that “an irretrievable image of the past threatens to disappear if any present does not recognize it as meaningful to itself.” Our AU schoolwork surely behooves us to remember the past and pine for a better future even while recalling that we and our society can only truly inhabit a series of eternal nows.

If we maintain an eye on the prize of our credential we will overcome the seemingly insurmountable odds of being cognitively tied into the present tense and culturally bound up with an eternal shortness of attention span. So let’s study now, for the future!

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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.*



## Greetings and Rapport to Win a Good Friend

Marie Well



Is rapport any good? It's more than reasonable! It's blissful when done right. We can walk into any storefront, greet the cashiers, smile, say it's nice to see them, and ask how their day is. And do they ever love it! We can thank them for their service, compliment their strengths, and encourage their dreams. And it's so much fun! By doing these acts, we make instant friends everywhere.

Four-months at the swimming pool, I made more friends than during my eight years at the university. And I can now walk into a store and befriend the entire staff. But it's a different talent when the store owners give us free items and incredible discounts. Someone I love has this gift. And he's been teaching me the art of friendliness. Plus, my sales training is showing me how to gain rapport with customers, so I have some insights to share.

But why is friendliness important? I believe our purpose in life is to love all others unconditionally. And when we are friendly to others, we feel bliss, and they feel pleasure. It's like an explosion of love that goes on for all eternity—and grows bigger and more dynamic with each soul it touches along the network.

But is rapport a skill or innate? Rapport can be learned and mastered by anyone. All it takes is a spark of love. So, here's how to do rapport building and demonstrate friendliness:

**Use warm greetings and politeness.** Politeness means using "please" and "thank you" often while not interrupting the other person's conversation. It also means not criticizing the other person but appreciating the uniqueness and free will of everyone. As for warm greetings, "How is your day?" or "It's so nice to see you," or "It's a pleasure to speak with you," or "It's lovely to see you" go a long way toward building bonds. These are vital non-negotiables to add to conversations with strangers, merchants, and friends—if unified love is the goal.

**Smile.** Smiling at others releases endorphins. And people often mirror our body language, so that means we create a double whammy of endorphins. In other words, that dopamine rush boosts both parties' happiness. What better way to make an immediate bond of love? And that smile goes on for all eternity in ways we may never fully grasp.

**Learn about the other person's interests, hopes, and dreams.** Ask questions to know better what the person enjoys, such as hobbies, sports, or talents. It's best to ask questions as well as talk, finding a friendly, positive, loving balance. But don't ask questions that get too personal unless your social skills are through the roof and people tend to be receptive. I know someone with incredible social skills, and everywhere he goes turns into a social club where everyone gets along—and he is the focal point.

**Find points of commonality.** To establish commonality, we can tell the other person about our favorite hobbies and inquire about theirs. Who doesn't love to know the pursuits of others? And it's summertime soon, so why not ask others, "Do you have any plans for the summer holidays?" It creates instant rapport. Or if we're bookworms, ask, "Do you like to read?" and "What is your favorite book?" Whatever we like, they might like, too. And whatever we experience, they may, too. That's commonality.

**Use positivity and uplifting words.** Seek out only the positives about other people—and ignore all the flaws. And compliment other people. Everyone is beyond valuable. We all are incredibly meaningful to this world—no exceptions. We all play essential roles. And we need to be nice to all others. So, when we reply to others' questions or comments, we must word things positively, appreciating the other person's unique perspectives, even if we don't, on the surface, agree. It's that unique perspective that makes every single person fascinating—like eight billion rare diamonds, each with one-of-a-kind crystalized structures.

In sum, friendliness and generosity of spirit go far in building rapport. But we may be shy, introverted, and apprehensive about trying these tips on others. If so, I found a course I will enroll in three days from today. It's a course by SocialSelf, costing around \$350 US. It's called "Conversation skills for overthinkers" and is intended for people with social anxiety as a key target market. For some reason, these types of courses often appear in my search feeds, and in the recent past, I wondered if I have social anxiety. But now I'm trying it out and will let you know if it was worth it.

So, is friendliness a virtue? Yes, because, as Buddhists believe, every soul was once our mother. And we can take that further and say every soul was once our soulmate. In other words, we are meant to love all others. And friendliness is one of the purest foundations for us to love everyone.



## Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

We'll overlook the fact that June 2nd's National Fish and Chip Day is sponsored in the UK by the National Edible Oil Distributors Association (yuck, too much info!) and instead just lift the basket with a pair of digestible articles.

**Breaking bread.** Janice Behrens learns that rigidly sticking to her diet leaves an empty feeling that has nothing to do with hunger. "I watched to others tucking into their delicious looking meals, and heard their comments about the crispness of the batter and the perfection of the

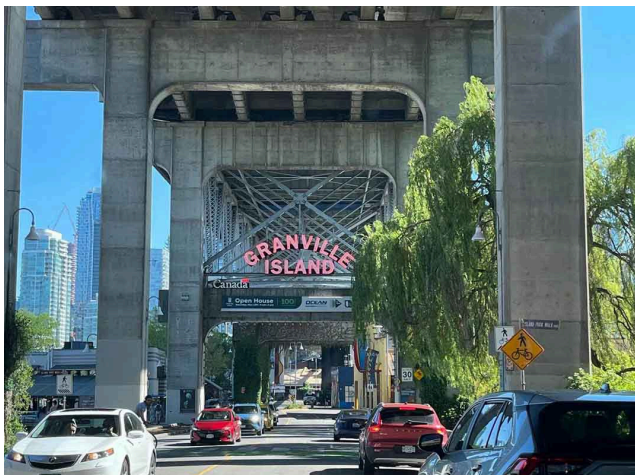
chips with a mixture of moral superiority, irrational resentment of the others' enjoyment, and a strange sense of guilt." The Good Life – Food and Companionship, July 14, 2006.

**Let them eat (rice) cake.** Busby LeClair isn't prepared to let healthy-eating suggestions interfere with his joy of food. "I am, in fact, somewhat of a guru in this area, being the very first amongst my group of friends and acquaintances to embrace the concept of a raw food only diet, albeit it strictly vicariously." When Health Food Goes Too Far, July 14, 2006.



## Summer Adventures in Vancouver and Nanaimo

**Xine Wang**



*Popular tourist destinations in Vancouver include Granville Island which features a farmer's market, live performances and breweries.*

winter this area turns into a ski destination but in the summer, you can see lots of wildlife and even visit the salmon sanctuary which is in the vicinity of the hike. For lifestyle, I really enjoyed visiting Granville Island, this is a hub of artists and foodies alike. The public market at Granville Island has incredible samples of locally brewed beer and wine.

The English Bay is hands down one of my favorite areas to walk around and people watch. The scenery is unbeatable. On one side you can see the entire cityscape of Vancouver and on the other you have marinas and ocean that span as far as the eye can see. Even casually walking through Stanley Park and English Bay makes you feel that no problem is too big for you to solve. Perhaps this is why retirees are drawn to Vancouver as one of the popular destinations.

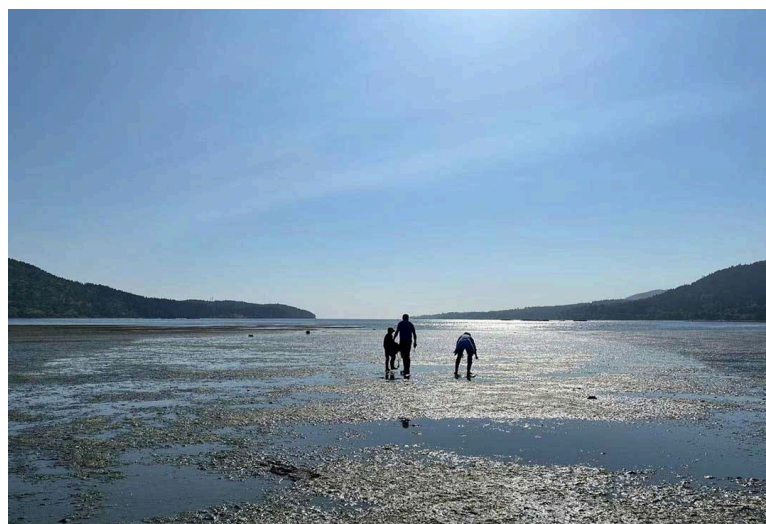
My trip couldn't be complete without visiting the Vancouver Islands just a short ferry ride away

from the coast. Unlike Vancouver, the islands offer a much cozier, small town feel that is perfect for a relaxing weekend journey. On the island, we leisurely strolled along the coastline and marina. You also have to try the classic Nanaimo bar on the islands, which is a treat featuring chocolate, custard, and coconut.

Some of the unique things that are not on the tourist books is to try to catch your own seafood. On my last trip to Vancouver, I had a chance to try freshly caught rock crabs. This time, we were interested in catching clams. I recommend familiarizing yourself with the local regulations first before harvesting. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is what we consulted prior to fishing for clams. We also had to get the right equipment including a clam shovel, a mesh basket

I spent a weekend recently in Vancouver and Nanaimo, BC. It was the first weekend BC trip I had made for a long time, since pre-COVID. As an Albertan, weekend adventures in BC are the perfect getaway because they are so convenient. The plane ride is only about an hour and a half. The coastal charm of Vancouver and the islands is something that Albertans like myself do not get very often. The fresh seafood, picturesque hikes, and cityscapes are something I adore. Despite not being able to afford the high rent and living costs of BC, it still is a fun visit for the weekend.

We started our trip in Vancouver. This city is diverse and allows for a range of experiences for visitors. If you're into the outdoors, there's many hikes from easy to difficult, such as Grouse Mountain. In the



*Nanaimo's coastline is stunning and also features some opportunities to try catching your own clams.*



*The clams we harvested.*

and gloves to help with the harvest experience. Some locations are very difficult to find clams but others have tidal flats which makes clams easier to find. It was such a unique experience of harvesting clams and then cooking them ourselves back at the hotel.

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



*Walking along the English bay and people watching is one of the most serene activities I've done in a long time.*



## Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** AU First Nation Colleges Student Awards

**Sponsored by:** AU

**Deadline:** July 1, 2023

**Potential payout:** Tuition costs for three, 3-credit undergraduate AU courses

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be students who attend or have attended a First Nation College (preference given to students from Red Crow College), be a current AU undergrad student, have a GPA of 2.0 or higher, and demonstrate financial need.

**What's required:** A completed application form including contact, academic, and detailed financial information.

**Tips:** Read the [application form](#) carefully.

**Where to get info:** [www.athabascau.ca/support-services/financial-aid-and-awards/award-details.html?id=79](http://www.athabascau.ca/support-services/financial-aid-and-awards/award-details.html?id=79)





## A Life Saving Perspective

Elisa Neven-Pugh



I write this flabbergasted. Once again my feminist course, this time contemporary theory, shows disability to be something that one tries to avoid or escape, etc.. This time using how a woman who wanted to commit assisted suicide wasn't facing discrimination because she wasn't allowed to have someone help her practice individual autonomy with life and death (Majury, 2002. pp. 119-120). There are so many things wrong with this picture I'm just going to stick with my personal reaction and issues here. However, let me just say that the idea of a judge in the Supreme Court of Canada basically telling a disabled person "I do not see any problem with you're not being able to practice self-determination" (Majury, 2002. pp. 119 [Paraphrased]) is the problem. No matter that I don't personally agree with the action the plaintiff wanted to take. I am so sick of minorities being asked, "What's your problem?"

You want to know my problem? I'm tired of people only pointing out my problems as soon as I leave my loving family members. Quite honestly it feels like this world hates people like me. The worst part is a lot of the time I don't know where this reminder will be coming from.

Consequently, every single day, sometimes every moment, I have to make a choice. Either submit to the BS about my physical circumstances being tragic or inconsequential and lose my soul in depression; or resist with love and joy by connecting to my faith. In this way that plaintiff is not submitting to eugenic ideas about ability but wanting to exercise freedom in self-determination. That person who looks like they want to cry? They aren't feeling superior to me but showing compassion as my muscles contract in a busy shopping mall.

Finally, this article is allowing me to find motivation to keep fighting the good fight. Don't get me wrong, I want things to change. What I'm saying is it starts with me, and I cannot do that without what I believe in. That there is someone with me being my strength and my shield (psalms 28:7) in the world that pretends problems stemming from disability discrimination do not exist; causing love and happiness to be the first to die in promising people with different bodies.

Yes, I have a problem with how things are going, but I can be part of the solution. And because of this, I can honestly say that believing in Jesus saves my life because I am still able to love despite everything. Every day, by believing in love conquering the world of hatred through the symbols of the cross and resurrection, I am able to smile. I am able to be the hero of my own story. And hopefully an inspiration to others. Anger turns to compassionate power, thanks be to God, amen.

### References

Majury, D. (2002). "Chapter 3: Women's (In)Equality before and after the Charter." In Jhappan, R. (Ed). *Women's Legal Strategies in Canada*, 101-138. University of Toronto Press



## Music Review—Heavy Machinery

Jessica Young



**Artist:** SLIP-ons

**Single:** Heavy Machinery

Vancouver's SLIP-ons have released their newest single, "Heavy Machinery". The track is from the band's upcoming EP of the same name. A music video for the single is available on [YouTube](#), and the song is available for streaming anywhere you get your music.

SLIP-ons are a guitar forward, power-pop band from Vancouver, BC. The four-piece was formed in 2012 by Brock Pytel (singer/songwriter) and Brian Minato (bass). The band also includes Rob "Shockk" Matharu on guitar, and Shane Wilson on drums.

Bryan Pytel also releases solo music under his own name, including two recent singles, "Hurrah Hooray" and "Anemic Heart." Pre-2020, Pytel was

buried under seemingly endless hours working in Vancouver's film industry where eventually the stress and lack of sleep caught up with him and resulted in serious health issues. Reflecting on his mortality, Pytel explained, "One of the things that really hit me at that time was how little music I'd put out into the world compared to how big a part of my life making music is. I was really motivated to get things going in that regard."

Pytel and SLIP-ons plan to complete more recordings and videos in the months ahead and announce their North American tour dates for 2023 and 2024.

"Heavy Machinery" reminds me of The Flatliners later work (2017 onward), The Menzingers, or The Pixies, which is unsurprising considering the band credits some of their inspiration for the song coming from The Pixies. The song perfectly captures the feeling of nostalgia, painting a picture of being young and carefree, wandering the streets on a night out. Pytel sings: "We walked back to your house/We went upstairs and made-out on your couch." Meanwhile, the intense guitar solo mid-way through and well-placed gang vocals add interesting depth to the song.

The music video for "Heavy Machinery" features black and white footage of the band rehearsing. It has a chill vibe that really lets the music shine through. I will say that I am not a fan of the constant swirling edits throughout the entire video—I thought it made the video seem dated and gave me motion-sickness trying to watch it.

Reflecting on the video shoot, Brock says, "I've always been a bit iffy on music videos, so we just borrowed some grip gear and lamps from my film buddies and created a bit of a playground in our rehearsal space for RD to do his thing. Jam Space Confidential was the theme. RD was really working up a sweat directing traffic, and I love that you can see the crew moving around with us moving ladders and waving light wands."

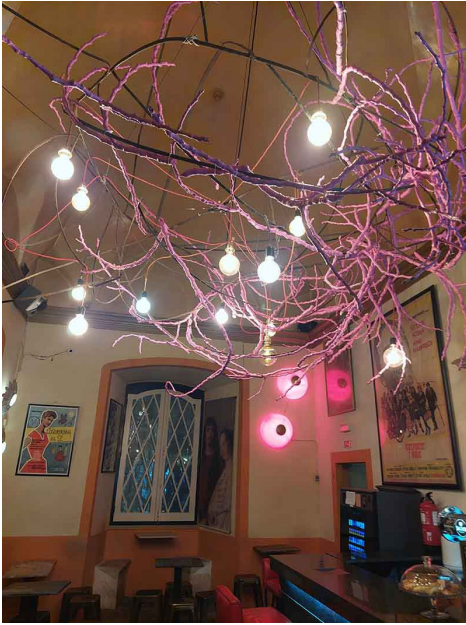
Overall, I enjoyed "Heavy Machinery." I'm excited to hear the rest of the EP!

Check out SLIP-ons on [TikTok](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

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

## [blue rare] Another Excess

Oliver Moorcraft-Sykes



I'm sure we have all overdone it and "made a little too merry" at some points in our lives. Perhaps, against our better judgement, we have indulged in that second gin and tonic at the vicar's charity lawn party. Or else we have gone out for a quick game night pint and some chicken wings with some friends, yet ended up entangled in a lost weekend of debauchery that would put both Catherine the Great and Keith Richards to shame.

If we're being completely honest with ourselves, who among us has not started out sipping a nicely chilled bellini on a sun-dappled Granville Island restaurant patio, only to find ourselves, seemingly no time later, gobbling high grade hashish and downing shots of Jagermeister in some illicit, after hours, underground bar in Berlin? Or, perhaps a time or two too often, we have found ourselves standing on the roof of the provincial legislature, naked except for a tutu of chartreuse tulle, drenched head to foot in lizard blood, biting the head off a fruit bat, and screaming a raw throated death metal version of Petula Clark's

1965 hit song, "Downtown".

Experiencing, at some point in our lives, these high-spirited exuberances can be all to the good. It is only by overshooting the mark a little bit that one attains true personal growth. As the Romantic poet William Blake tells us, it is the "road of excess that leads to the palace of wisdom." The great Oscar Wilde himself, reputedly no stranger to hedonistic impulses, once observed that the healthiest approach to life is "everything in moderation, including moderation". Perhaps this sentiment is most eloquently expressed, though, by the Swedish synth-pop group Yello, who remind us that "you gotta say yes to another excess!"

Likely, many of you readers are nodding your heads and smiling to yourselves right now in sage recognition, recalling those youthful indiscretions that have resulted in taserings and tear gassings; that ultimately made you a sadder, wiser person. It is, after all, good to "live in the moment".

But the rub is, one moment we live in tends to be followed by another moment, and another. Sometimes those subsequent moments can be a real bitch. For every *night before*, there is (hopefully) a morning after. And the problem with mornings is that they tend to show up quite early, when one is not awake, and wholly unprepared for them. Far from being a *tabula rasa*, these dawns frequently come bearing tainted gifts, such as life-altering hangovers, vague-but-dire recollections of the previous evening, along with inevitable self-recriminations. My partner likes to refer to these sorts of existential comeuppances as "natural consequences," an attitude in which one cannot help but detect a note of smarmy, puritanical judgement.

Still, I get the point. As Wilde's quip also recognizes, moderation is also a part of the equation. Moderation and excess? Perhaps the trick is to find a balance. On a societal level, prohibition has never worked. And a messy human life doesn't necessarily have to resemble a didactic high school public service campaign. But neither does it have to be a reckless suicide mission. A friend of mine counsels her teenage kids to follow their hearts, but to always be sure to bring their brains along for the ride, which sounds like pretty good advice. After all, a good trip is one that you know you can walk away from.

## Beyond Literary Landscapes Shakespeare's Comedies

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 begins a two-part series focusing on two types of William Shakespeare’s plays, namely comedy and tragedy. As a brief introduction, we begin with the major comedic works of the playwright.

Born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, William Shakespeare was an “English poet, dramatist, and actor often called the English national poet and considered by many to be the greatest dramatist of all time.”

Considered an Elizabethan playwright, Shakespeare wrote “during the reign of Elizabeth I of England (1558–1603).” It should be noted that this term only refers to a timeline, not any writing characteristic. This time period was also known as the golden age of drama. Some of his contemporaries included Ben Johnson and Christopher Marlowe.

His plays continue to be read, studied, and performed throughout the world. In addition to these theatrical works, Shakespeare was also well known for his sonnets, of which the prolific author wrote an impressive 154.

### What

Although known for a variety of plays and poetry, some of William Shakespeare’s most famous comedic works include *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Additional works include *All’s Well That Ends Well*, *As You Like It*, and *The Comedy of Errors*.

### Where

Shakespeare’s comedies are mostly set in the United Kingdom.

### When

These works were published in the 17th century.

### Why

Shakespeare’s comedies may be interesting reading material for AU ENGL students, as well as those students who would like to learn more about early dramatic comedy.

### How



AU's wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to Shakespeare's Comedies 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 in ENGL 324: Shakespeare I, a senior-level, three-credit course, which "an introduction to the age of Shakespeare and his plays." (Please note that ENGL 211: Prose Forms and ENGL 212: Poetry and Plays, or ENGL 325: Shakespeare II are required as prerequisites). For those interested in reading additional works, consider ENGL 325: Shakespeare II. Happy reading!

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



## 10 Skills to Go From Housewife to Domestic Goddess

Marie Well



Is it anti-feminist to want to be a domestic goddess or a housewife? Not when we throw in skills like IT and home repair. And not when we don't have to be female to gain the status, either. All we need is the intense desire to be the best homebody ever.

But it's not enough to be a domestic goddess wannabe. No. The ultimate state is to be the ideal domestic goddess—a vision of household excellence. So, what does an iconic domestic goddess do? Here are ten superpowers domestic goddesses must have to be the stars of domestic performance:

**Janitorial and decluttering skills:** Have we ever had our closets organized where all the reds, blues, pinks, and yellows each had their section? Sigh! I had it once, and to be domestic goddesses, we must have it again. Decluttering requires extra shelving, storage bins, downsizing, and labels. But the janitorial arts, too, are a must. We have room to grow as domestic goddesses if we don't yet have microfiber cloths, an ostrich feather or microfiber duster, a whisk broom, a cleaning toothbrush, and a cleaning apron.

**Interior Design:** Do we follow the rules of three (three vases; three bowls) and have wall pictures that contain colors of the furniture, pillows, or ornaments in the room? If so, we've likely mastered interior design aesthetics. But can interior design be a hobby? Yes, and it can be more—it can be the hallmark of a goddess. It can increase home value, improve mood, and enhance productivity. Therefore, every domestic goddess needs interior design courses.

**Ironing and laundry military style:** Every domestic goddess must know how to make their loved ones look as good as highly decorated military personnel. This can go as far as ironing pants using wax in the creases. My grandma's obituary had one person comment that she "had the shiniest shoes and the sharpest creases." That's the mark of a domestic goddess.

**Gardening and landscaping:** Plants, flowers, and gardens signal that a domestic goddess is nearby. We can sign up for gardening classes. And gardening counts for exercise, improves

mental health, and helps with anxiety. Gardening as therapy has two prime benefits: the act is cathartic and soothing, and the vegetables and herbs are health-giving. And we mustn't discount the excellent oxygen from fresh plants. Mom had plants hanging everywhere in her home—and seven acres of flowers. Domestic goddesses give their households the optimal in plant life.

**IT skills:** What are the best IT skills for a domestic goddess to learn? AU has an introductory Web programming course. That's an excellent start if we like unstructured, project-based learning. Other IT skills are mastery of Microsoft Office, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and AI. A true domestic Goddess will not just have a cursory understanding of these topics but be able to program in at least one area.

**Financial investments:** Domestic Goddesses don't just do budgets and manage finances; they also invest in the stocks and options markets. A family member says the stocks and options markets are a sure-fire way to lose money. But that's not the case when we've honed the craft. And it can take years of study on stocks and options to have profits vastly outweigh losses—and it's still not guaranteed. Some investing skills to learn are technical analysis, trader psychology, and day trading. And once we master essential stock investments, we can graduate to the Chicago Board of Options Exchange's free options education. Options investing is the sign of a domestic goddess with financial wizardry.

**Sewing:** The ability to sew a button is necessary for any domestic goddess. But what about the ability to take a pattern and make a clothing item that perfectly fits our loved ones? Now, that's a domestic goddess! Better still, what about the ability to create a pattern—from scratch—and make an original dress or suit? Let's take that reasoning further: how about the ability to modify clothing to give the illusion that our household members are all hourglass figure types? Again, domestic goddesses have this knack.

**Home repair and renovations:** A domestic goddess who can repair a sink, TV, sewing machine, toilet, and washing machine is admirable. In other words, a domestic goddess with trade skills is a household boon. I read that hardware stores, like Rona or Lowes, offer classes in home repair and renovation. Some home repairs may even be tax deductible; others require a permit. A DIY home repair goddess can transform any bathroom, floor, and kitchen into a domestic paradise.

**Dietician and culinary skills:** Every household demands a dietician, given the rise of inflammatory and chronic diseases. And who better to assume this role than the domestic goddess? The home may even need a dog dietician. Indeed, a dietician with culinary skills is the lottery prize for any household. Fresh fruit, flaxseed smoothies, kale, and spinach salads are tell-tale signs that a domestic goddess lives here.

**Massage:** Who doesn't love a massage? The massage benefits range from stress relief to muscle tension alleviation. And every domestic goddess must have massage skills. Community colleges offer massage therapy training for professional purposes. But for those who want massage expertise but are pressed for time, there are YouTube videos, library books, and online courses. So, massage the whole household. Massage the kids' backs. Massage the dog. Dog massage is an art every pet owner should know, especially if the pet is stressed. And massage everyone's feet. Foot massages are highly coveted in other parts of the world.

Nothing is more fun than gaining skills—and everyone who lives in a home needs domestic skills. So, why not fine-tune our inner domestic goddesses for the sheer fun of it? There's nothing anti-feminist about caring for the places we spend most of our time. And there's everything right about aspiring to become a 21<sup>st</sup> century domestic goddess.

## My Crazy Life

### The First 48

Alek Golijanin



*The First 48* is one of the most popular crime documentary series that provides a glimpse into real-life violent crimes by focusing on the first 48 hours of an investigation. Thankfully, “*The First 48*” in this article refers to the total amount of hours it took me to identify and locate the persons who got a hold of my Mastercard and spent \$1,700 at a shopping mall in Ottawa as well as online, but also having them right their wrongs, and quicker than the time it took for the Ottawa Police Service to assign my criminal complaint to a police officer. The best part of this story is that the location from where my credit card was snatched up was the budget-friendly gym that has provided me with ample material for *The Voice Magazine* since the start of 2023.

### **The kidnapping and assault of my RBC WestJet Mastercard.**

On the night of May 5<sup>th</sup>, my credit card fell out of my Lulu Lemon Olympic-themed Team Canada crossbody bag, but I had no idea until I showed up the next morning to rent a van from Home Depot to pick up a

freezer that I had found on Kijiji because my grandparent’s freezer had died. While waiting for a van to become available, I drove to Starbucks to order a trenta-sized dragon drink made with lemonade and light ice. But as I was pulling into the Starbucks parking lot, I received a scammy-looking text from a random number telling me that my credit card had been used and that they wanted me to confirm that it was me who made the purchases. I ignored it and paid for my order.

While waiting for my drink, I received an additional text message with another warning, and that is when I knew that there was a problem. So, I replied back with an “N” and that immediately triggered an incoming call from RBC’s credit card fraud team. When I opened my RBC app, some son of a gun had racked up \$1700 in charges, buying stuff from Walmart, Zara, Sportchek, Sephora, LCBO, and Shein. Out of all the charges, the only one that bothered me was the LCBO charge for \$165 because I viewed it as this person ‘toasting’ to me.

At Home Depot, my two other credit cards got locked because I did not know their pin codes. After having my credit cards locked and with my grandfather by my side, I had to tell the customer service representative that I needed to call my father to come and make the \$500 deposit for me so that I could rent the van. It really made me feel like I was “18 years old” all over again, but it also gave me time to file a police report.

After finishing the freezer errand, I got on the phone with RBC, and they provided me with the details of the fraudulent transactions that were done on my credit card. After a little bit of my



own digging, I was able to uncover the identity of one of the users, an international university student who was living in Moncton New Brunswick and working at a local shelter, and I emailed her at her university email and sent her an iMessage, the very next day.

On the evening of May 7th, and few minutes after I messaged this international student, she called me and we talked it out, but then I told her to go talk to her “friends” and get them to reach out to me, so that we could resolve the situation without the “assistance” of a police officer because of what they were potentially facing as international students: deportation.

On the morning of May 8th, I received a call from the international student who picked up my credit card in Ottawa and we talked it out. For some reason, he tried explaining his temptation, but everything he was saying was a synonym for still being in the “humble beginnings” phase of his life and he sounded quite scared. We discussed some possible alternatives, and I suggested that we go together and return the items at Bayshore because of what \$1,700 would mean to him if he had to pay all of it. Although he liked the idea, he said he wanted to pay for all the items, which was approximately \$1,000 since we were able to cancel the two online orders from Sephora and Shein.

Weirdly enough, two of the biggest purchases this international student made were for his long-distance girlfriend, who lived in Moncton, getting her \$450 worth of clothing from Shein and \$200 of make-up from Sephora, but he was buying it using my credit card and with my money. Although I spend my money to buy my girlfriend presents, spending another guy’s money to buy your girlfriend presents comes across as somewhat of a reverse dowry. Technically speaking, if that girl is getting herself items including lingerie and swimwear courtesy of my money, then does that not make her my sugar baby?

Once the international student paid me out for the purchases he made on my credit card, I reminded him about his golden ticket and the opportunity he was being provided to change his and his family’s life and not to waste it. After our interaction, and to bring a close to the situation, I sent an “invoice” to RBC’s fraud department, the Ottawa Police Service, and the Crown, for doing all three of their jobs, all on my own.

### **The Reality of Being an International student**

Why was it important for me to give this international student a chance? Well, it all has to do with the lives that most international students live and just how big of a secret they tend to be. The assumption that most people make about international students being “well off” because of the exorbitant tuition fees they pay to study could not be further from the truth. In fact, there is a dirty little secret that happens to be a burdening reality for many international students, and it has to do with how their families are often forced to borrow money basically from loan sharks so that they can pay for their children to study abroad, and this is especially true for international students from Africa.

In many African countries, there exists an entire industry dedicated to providing money to families that are unable to obtain loans from banks, specifically for their children to study abroad. By our standard, this industry would qualify as being a loan sharking business because of everything that is associated with the loan. Quite a few of my friends who started off as international students, before calling Canada home, have shared stories of this dark reality that many international students are often forced to endure. Failure for these students is not an option, and they are expected to support their families, helping to pay back the loans and more. Their explanation as to why more international students do not talk about this issue has to do with stigma, fear, and shame, and they say that it is far more common than we can imagine.

Worst of all, it forces many students to ration everything to the point that they are just surviving and it definitely takes a toll on their wellbeing.

Every one of the loss prevention managers I talked to told me that this international student deserved to have their study visa revoked and to be deported, as did most people I spoke to regarding the matter. At the end of the day, this was a crime of opportunity, plain and simple, but nothing is ever truly “plain and simple”.

The late teens and early twenties are a period of time where the brain is developing, and individuals are still in the process of building out their identity. It is also a period of time during which individuals are most susceptible to impulsive behaviors and where the majority of their focus goes to caring about what others think. Although a person may be considered an adult at the age of 18 for the sake of legal purposes, science tells us that most of us do not become “mentally mature” until many years later, and an unfortunate few remain “Peter Pans” and destined to live out their lives in Neverland.

Had I listened to what others were telling me, this kid would get deported back to Ivory Coast, and he would be losing out on the tens of thousands of dollars that had already been spent on his education, and he would struggle to make a living in Ivory Coast. It is more likely that he would spend the rest of his life in obscurity and without knowing “what could have been”.

My thinking was, did I lose my credit card as a result of an armed robbery? No. “Did I lose my credit card as a result of a break and enter? No. Was this person a career criminal with a checkered past? No. Instead, was this a young kid who was in school, struggling to get by, and who may have wanted to have nice things like others do? Yes. So, should he have been looking for a part-time job? Yes. Was he wrong for what he did? Most definitely. But were his actions criminal enough that he was deserving to get banished from Canada for a single stupid decision to go on a spending spree with a stranger’s credit card given everything we know? Not really. Was it likely that this situation could be turned into a positive learning experience for him. Definitely so. Did he deserve another shot at reaching his full potential and was

## AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

### Library Chat

Tues, Jun 6, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

[www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html](http://www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html)

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

### Library Chat

Wed, Jun 7, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

[www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html](http://www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html)

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

### Vaccine Confidence – open educational resource virtual launch

Wed, Jun 7, 5:00 to 5:45 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU

[news.athabascau.ca/events/vaccine-confidence-open-educational-resource-virtual-launch/](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/vaccine-confidence-open-educational-resource-virtual-launch/)  
RSVP through above link

### Library Chat

Thur, Jun 8, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

[www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html](http://www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html)

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

### Write Site Writing Forum: Quoting and paraphrasing

Thur, Jun 8, 12:30 to 1:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Write Site

[news.athabascau.ca/events/write-site-writing-forum-spring-sessions/](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/write-site-writing-forum-spring-sessions/)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

### AUSU nights: Drag Queen Bingo

Thur, Jun 8, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT

Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

[www.ausu.org/event/drag-queen-bingo/](http://www.ausu.org/event/drag-queen-bingo/)  
RSVP through above link

*All events are free unless otherwise noted.*

he likely to make the most out of it? Absolutely. All of this leads me to believe that giving them a “do-over” is the only choice that truly makes sense, since everyone is better than their worst moment.

Despite the fact that the world can be a cold and unrelenting place, we do not have to be that way since every one of us has the ability to determine the context we create around our interactions with others, nor does it always have to be that way. What matters most in this saga of events is what has yet to unfold, it has to do with what these international students do with their second chance, and I am looking forward to it.

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



## Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

#### AthaU Facebook Group

**Ain't over until it's over.** Responses to a post confirm that courses end on the final day of the month, no matter whether the month has 28, 29, 30 or 31 days. Always the final day, by the end of that day (Mountain Time.)

#### Discord

**Broken link.** A student experiences delays getting a broken link replaced on a required course element. (Hmm, wonder if that will result in a free pass? Haha! No.)

#### reddit

**Mind the hornet's nest.** A query about whether the low AU ratings on Rate My Professor are indicative of the quality of AU overall sparks off a lengthy thread with varying opinions and experiences.

#### Twitter

**@AthabascaU** tweets: "It's getting easier to access and share your [#AthabascaU](#) transcripts thanks to [@my\\_creds](#), a secure online portal owned and operated by the professional association for Canadian college and university registrars. Learn more about this new service! [t.co/tWpPw6YXDv](https://t.co/tWpPw6YXDv)."

[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](mailto:karl@voicemagazine.org) and let him know!]







Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## Father Fears

*Hey! My wife and I are in our early thirties and have been married for five years. We are expecting our first daughter in September. Everything is going well with the pregnancy, and we are so happy. The issue that is bothering me is that I am very anxious about becoming a father and I want to be the best father I can be. My own father left my mother when my sister and I were very young, and I always missed the presence of a father in my life. I want to be there for my daughter and be a good role model. Would you be able to give me some advice on how I can best accomplish that?*

*Thanks, Nat.*

Hi Nat:

Thank you for your email. You have a very important task ahead of you and you are approaching from a good place. You are aware of how important it is to have a father since you did not have a father in your life. The relationship between a father and daughter is vitally essential to the development of a girl. Research has shown that girls who have a father present in their lives grow up healthier, more confident, and with a clearer understanding of what they want in their own life. According to the following website: [Strengthening Father-Daughter Relationships \(verywellfamily.com\)](http://verywellfamily.com) there are many benefits for a daughter who has a healthy connection with her father. For example, they are more assertive without being aggressive; are more likely to pursue higher education; feel better about themselves; feel more confident in relationships with partners; have better grades.

This process can begin on the day your daughter is born. Become an active part of her life, including caring for her, changing diapers, feeding her, and simply providing a comforting part of daily life. As she grows you can become a teacher, taking the time to acknowledge her accomplishments, and encouraging her to learn new things. Also, be an active listener and offer encouragement for your daughter to share her hopes and dreams with you, without lecturing her. Playing games together is an important aspect of the father-daughter relationship. Go to a baseball game or to see a musical group that you both like. Be loving, patient and supportive, even if they do something wrong. Take the time to explain why it was wrong and how they can learn and move forward from this event. Most importantly, be a role model and display the healthy life choices you want your daughter to make for herself. These are just suggestions, as you become more comfortable being a parent, you will find ways to achieve the goals that you want for your relationship with your daughter. I believe you are going to be a great dad, not that you won't make mistakes all parents do, but mistakes can always be acknowledged and corrected.

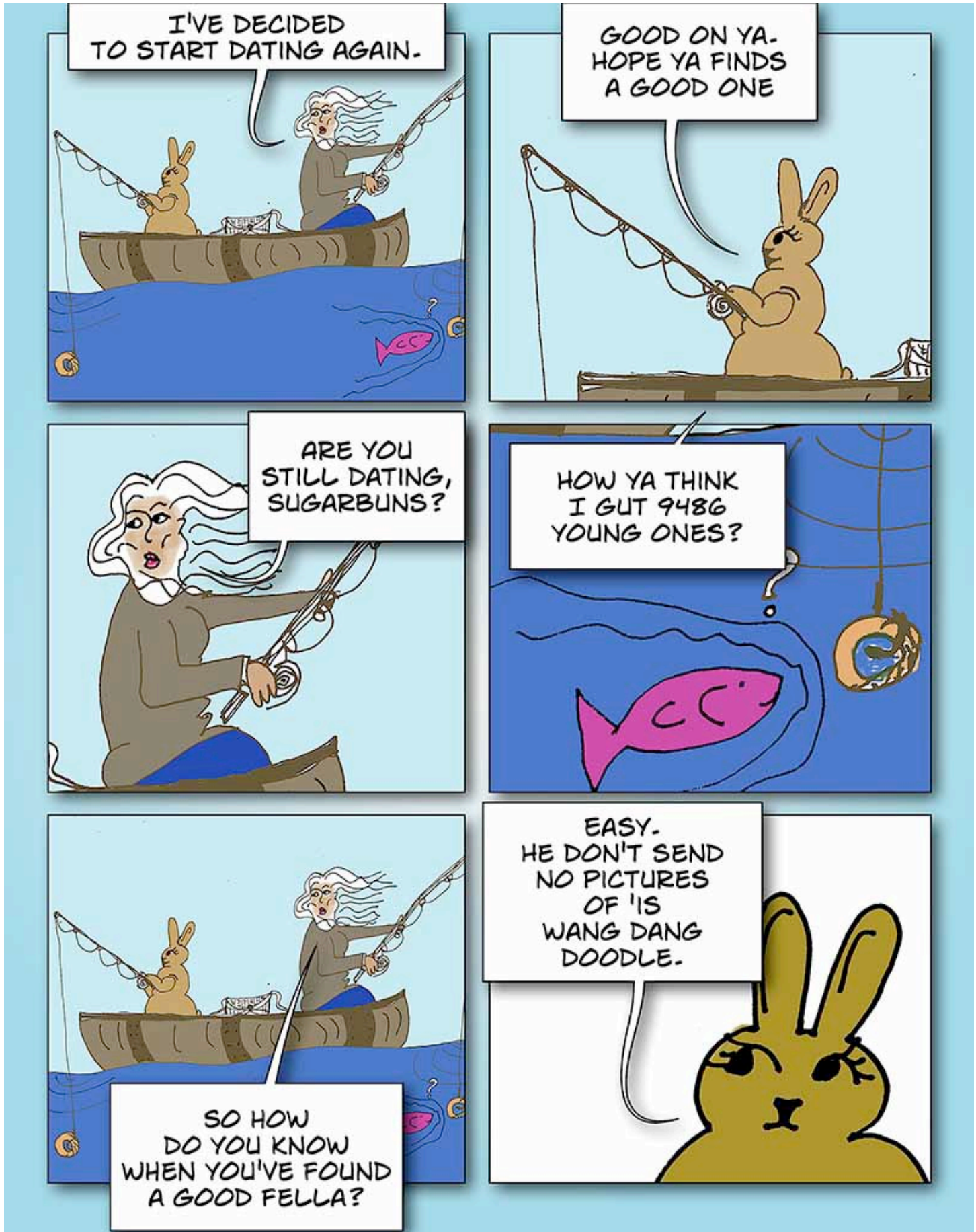
Best of luck Nat!

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



Poet Maeve  
The Dating Standard

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](mailto: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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# CLASSIFIEDS

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Classifieds are free for AU students!  
Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

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## THE VOICE

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<b>Managing Editor</b>	Karl Low

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Jason Sullivan, Wanda Waterman, Xine Wang and others!

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[www.voicemagazine.org](http://www.voicemagazine.org)

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