



THE VOICE

Vol 31 Issue 30 - 2023-08-11

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

A Holocaust Survivor's Perspective

Making Light of Life Through the Darkness

Network of Angels

The Wings She Needed to Fly

Plus:

*[blue rare] Just Tripping
The Condemned Girls of India
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 Good Stuff

Karl Low



Welcome back! So, after a short staycation we return with the latest issue of *The Voice Magazine*. This week, we start it all off with a feature interview with a student raised in Zimbabwe and now pursuing his psychology degree at AU with an aim to take it to post-graduate studies.

Also this week, we continue being able to bring you our Fiction Feature, with another story from Lucy D'jorno.

Then I had a decision to make, as Alek Golijanin submitted a couple of articles, both very much worth a read. Whether it's his disturbing article about pre-teens in India or his uplifting article about some of the people in concentration camps, both are good reads and informative as well. In the end, the uplifting story took the feature position, but that doesn't mean the other articles are any less, whether it's [blue rare]'s look at the costs and benefits of travelling or Marie Well's ideas for finding and following your life's mission, I'm pretty happy with this week's Magazine.

Meanwhile, here in Calgary, MRC, SAIT and the U of C are all noting a lack of available housing for their students, with rental inflation and AirBNB conversions taking many homes outside the range of possibility for many students. It's become so severe that the University of Calgary is taking to posting advertising in community newsletters to try to convince people to consider renting a room to a student.

It seems very strange to me, these days, to be worried about whether you'd be able to take post-secondary education simply because you can't find a suitable place to live, but this is one of the restrictions of brick-and-mortar schools. A restriction that often means these schools receive higher levels of government funding to be able to build new classrooms and new facilities to house and serve the needs of physically present students.

Also recently, the Alberta government has put a moratorium on approving any new renewable energy projects because, it claims, the Federal Government's attempt to seek Net Zero emissions means they wouldn't be able to bring enough natural gas plants online to back up the power production that these new renewable efforts would cause. Suggesting that the variability of renewable power generation, as the wind or sun go down, means we'd all be suffering blackouts unless there was sufficient natural gas to back it up.

Even if things like batteries didn't already exist, we already know that there is sufficient power capacity to back up the renewable plants, because there's enough capacity right now to supply our power needs without any renewables. They seem to think that being able to add more power to the system will instantly cause people's power needs to go up.

In truth, all it will do is force the fossil fuel companies to lower prices to be able to compete with renewable energy generation. And that is what I think is the UCP's actual concern. With a budget dependant so heavily on royalties, and with a royalty rate that, for some reason, automatically adjusts as the price of oil adjusts (what other industry has their suppliers automatically adjust the purchase price as their own prices vary?) Anything that drives down the price of oil also drives down royalties, and their ability to argue they're budgeting sensibly will be exposed. In the end though, it's still Albertans who pay, we just don't pay it in taxes, we pay it in our utility bills.

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', written in a cursive style.

MINDS WE MEET



The Voice Magazine recently had a chance to chat with Ernest Banda, a Bachelor of Arts Psychology major currently residing in Calgary, Alberta, although he is “an African native born and raised in the beautiful nation of Zimbabwe.” Ernest considers himself “a passionate and enthusiastic individual who intends to further pursue a master’s degree in the same field once I complete my undergraduate studies.”

Ernest had some great study tips to share with fellow AU learners. “My commitment to academic success has allowed me to create a study routine that includes regular visits to the library, where I immerse myself in my coursework. I read through my coursework and create my own notes, this consolidates my understanding. Additionally, I also turn to educational *YouTube* videos to expand my knowledge and understanding.”

He also had some great advice for new and/or prospective students. “Drawing from my personal experiences, I advise new and prospective students to pursue their goals with unwavering determination. Education is the greatest tool to navigate one’s life through the ever-evolving world we live in. I always wish I had embarked on my educational journey earlier, and I encourage others not to hesitate when it comes to their academic dreams. I also want to remind students that working hard and dedication are the key ingredients to success, which should be embraced wholeheartedly.”

Ernest considers his family as the greatest motivation on his desire to learn, stating “I find motivation through my loving family, my wife, and kids stand as a constant source of inspiration, helping me navigate difficulties and challenges that arise along the academic way.”

This busy student also enjoys travelling, sharing his most memorable vacation with readers. “Durban, South Africa, is the most memorable getaway so far, it was an adventure-filled trip that allowed me to swim with dolphins, creating lifelong memories. I realize that am an outdoor person enjoying nature, and that when am not immersed in my studies and work, I indulge in activities like hunting, hiking, and fishing; these activities bring joy and allow me to recharge and connect with nature.”

He also enjoys reading, mentioning an author who has greatly influenced him. “John Robert Landrum is my esteemed writer; one that has left an indelible impact on my life. Landrum’s book, *Treason Betrayal*, has a profound influence on my perspective on contemporary political situations of today, giving me a deeper understanding of the complexities within the world of politics.”

As for his experience with online learning so far? “Online learning has revolutionized my educational experience,” he stated, “granting me the flexibility to study from anywhere and work

simultaneously to support my family. However, I want to admit that I do not particularly enjoy studying alone, as I normally thrive on social interaction and collaborative learning.”

He shared his most memorable course so far, namely PSYC 289: Psychology as a Natural Science. “Among the various courses I am taking at Athabasca, Psychology 289 holds a special place in my heart. Its thought-provoking content and engaging discussions have made it a memorable and enriching experience. I want to praise the efficient and effective communication with course tutors, the experience is honestly a seamless process that enhances one’s learning journey,” he explained.

The Voice Magazine also asked Ernest what his first project would be if he were the new president of AU. “If I were to assume the role of AU’s president, this is a thought-provoking question, to answer that I would say amongst many things I have in mind, my primary focus would be on devising motivational strategies to empower new online learners, I feel like the availability of more video lectures on the AU platform will foster a supportive environment that promotes students’ academic growth,” he stated.

We also asked which famous person, past or present, he would choose to have lunch with, and he chose Queen Elizabeth since it “would have been an insightful and captivating experience, delving into her remarkable journey and the lessons she has learned along the way, how she had managed a humble and scandal-free life while holding such a powerful position as a powerful figure.”

Ernest also shared his most valuable lesson with us. “My most valuable life lessons came with my move to Canada, where I realized that diversity in culture, race, gender, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation poses no barriers to a thriving and united community.”

As a final note, Ernest mentioned that “education has limitless possibilities it offers to those willing to embrace it wholeheartedly. Dedication, perseverance is the key to success.” Best of luck Ernest!

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.



**Pride Community
Resources**

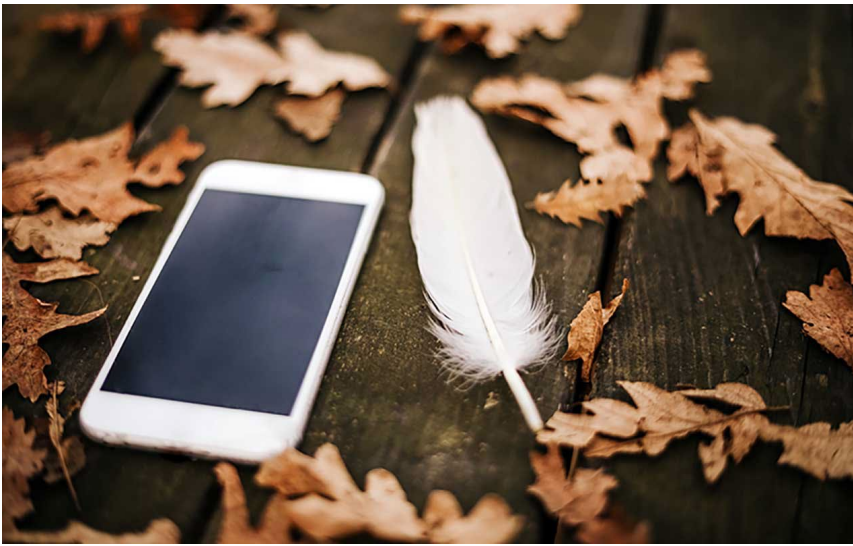
FOR 2SLGBTQIA+ PEOPLE
AT ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY



Network of Angels

The wings she needed to fly

Lucy Djorno



Her hands were sweating against the Jeep's steering wheel, the desert stretching for miles around her. She wiped one palm on her jeans, then the other.

She checked the parched landscape for signs of movement, pivoting her head and using her mirrors to get a full 360° scan. Nothing, from horizon to horizon to horizon. Just puffs of dust in the wind, and the occasional hawk, scanning the ground, just like she was.

Other than the rough track she had followed to this spot, there were no

signs of human activity. Significantly, there were no communication towers. She had driven out here once before. His face when she got home told her she'd been out of range. She paid for that transgression, as she knew she would.

"Short term pain for long term gain," she whispered to herself.

There weren't too many places she could go. No way to get safe. At first she thought it was just cellphone tracking he was using, but when she left her phone at home one time, he still traced her to Marguerite's, where she'd taken refuge.

He knew she wanted to leave, and he took perverse pleasure in making sure she never got too far. No matter where she'd gone—a friend's, a motel, a shelter—he tracked her and made her come back.

He used to smirk while he told her how he tracked her. Little devices that weren't easy to detect, like luggage trackers or Apple AirTags. He'd pluck one of these devices from her jacket lining, or from the bottom of her purse and show it to her.

"See?" Yes, she saw. It was a game to him. Like she was on a leash, and she could go only so far before he'd yank it. She had no doubt there were several trackers hidden in the Jeep.

A puff of dust appeared on the horizon. Not the wind this time. A vehicle.

She gripped the steering wheel. Was it him? Was it possible his tracking devices worked even way out here? Beads of sweat formed on her forehead, and rivulets traced a line down her back.

The vehicle made a beeline to her Jeep and lurched to a halt. Desert dust swirled around it, obscuring the driver. She heard the vehicle door open, then close.

Out of the dust an angel came.

"Hi, you must be Becky," the woman called. "I'm Gloria, from the Angels Network."

Becky stepped out of the Jeep.

"Hi. Thanks for coming. I wasn't sure...."

"Let's talk on the way. We might not have as much time as we think. Here are some clothes, and a bag. Put anything you think you might absolutely need into the bag, and I'll go through that while you change."

Becky stripped—everything came off. She put on the clothes Gloria had brought.

"Jewelry, too, and your hair tie," reminded Gloria. "I'm taking the credit cards out of this bag. Nothing traceable. You won't need much—the Network will provide everything you need to get started again."

Gloria tossed the bag of Becky's former belongings in the back of the Jeep. She locked the Jeep's doors and hurled the keys as far as she could into the desert. Why make it easy for him when he found the vehicle? As he surely would.

Once Gloria was satisfied that no tracking devices were on Becky or her now-meagre personal effects, they got into Gloria's Land Rover. Becky, at Gloria's prompting, sat in the back seat.

"Put this hat on", Gloria told Becky. "If we meet another vehicle, crouch down as low as you can. Just in case. It won't be long. I'm taking you straight to a small airfield, and another angel will whisk you right out of the state. Our Network has many Angels."

Becky watched the dessert recede through the rear window. Then she turned to look forward. She rubbed her neck. It felt different, somehow. Was the stress leaving so soon? No. She smiled a bit.

Her leash was gone.



A Holocaust Survivor's Perspective on Life Man's Search for Meaning by Victor E. Frankl

Alek Golijanin



Iovo Mitrovic

Imagine if a game of finger pointing could determine whether you were going to live or die. Imagine how your view of a chimney might change if you found out that a cloud of grey smoke was the last remnants of your family and friends and other people who were members of your faith group. Imagine deconstructing the horrors of a gas chamber because you thought it was better than running into an electrically charged barbed-wire fence. Imagine if something as small as a blister on your heel constituted that your life was worth ending. Imagined being worked to death on a diet that consisted of less than 250 grams of bread and 600 ml of soup and living under constant mental stress. Even worse, imagine being fast asleep and having the worst nightmare of your life, but if you were to wake up from the terrible nightmare that your reality would be more horrible.

These scenarios were actual reality for Viktor E. Frankl, a Jew by faith and a neurologist and psychiatrist by profession. He documented his holocaust experience in *Man's Search for Meaning* and the valuable takeaways he gained from that experience. The main three are still transferable to today's

way of life: one's attitude can transcend one's immediate surroundings, there are always choices to be made, and there are only two races of people.

One's attitude can transcend one's immediate surroundings.

Frankl discussed the thinking that people are completely and unavoidably influenced by their surroundings, and in his case, it was the concentration camps. But he then goes on to unleash the following series of thought-provoking questions: "What about human liberty? Is there no spiritual freedom in regard to behavior and reaction to any given surroundings? Is that theory true which would have us believe that man is no more than a product of many conditional and environmental factors - be they of a biological, psychological, or sociological nature? Is man but an accidental product of these? Most important, do the prisoners' reactions to the singular world of the concentration camp prove that man cannot escape the influences of his surroundings? Does man have no choice of action in the face of such circumstances?" Frankl responded by saying his concentration camp experience demonstrated that people have a choice of action, and he mentions some of the heroism amongst prisoners that proved to him that apathy could be overcome and irritability suppressed, and that people could preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychological and physical stress. Additionally, Frankl stated how most concentration camp survivors never forgot the names of the men who walked through the camp, giving away their last pieces of bread to those that were nearing their end of days, and although they were few in number, they demonstrated that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances and one's own way.

There are always choices to be made.

Frankl described his mind frame around the concentration camp experience by saying, "And there were always choices to be made. Every day, every hour, offered the opportunity to make a decision, a decision which determined whether you would or would not submit to those powers which threatened to rob you of your very self, your inner freedom, which determined whether or not you would become the plaything of circumstance, renouncing freedom and dignity to become molded into the form of the typical inmate." Ultimately, Frankl's concentration camp experience indicated to him that the sort of person a prisoner became was the result of an inner decision and not of the result of camp influences alone. Frankl also believed that any person could decide what should become of them, both mentally and spiritually, and that it was possible for one to retain their human dignity even in a concentration camp.

Frankl further elaborated on this belief which was based on his psychological observations of the prisoners and how the only way to subside to the camp's degenerating influences was if a person allowed their inner hold on their moral and spiritual selves to subside. Retrospective thoughts would contribute to a man's decline because they could not picture a future, believing the real opportunities of life had passed. Simply put, once a prisoner lost faith in their future, they were doomed because the loss of belief in the future impacted their spiritual hold and started the decay process. Therefore, the loss of hope would result in the loss of courage, which would impact the state of mind. So, Frankl was left to believe that it was a peculiarity of man that he could only live by looking to the future.

Frankl explained that one's approach to everything, from life-threatening challenges to everyday situations, helped shape the meaning of life. It was about the attitude one takes about challenges and opportunities, whether large or small. The opportunities to act properly, the potentialities to fulfill a meaning, were affected by the irreversibility of our lives.

There are only two races of people.

After all the hell that Frankl was put through, the thing he was most sure of after surviving the concentration camp experience was that there were only two races of people in this world: the "race" of decent people and the "race" of indecent people, and segregation along these lines ran

through all nations. Both races of people were found everywhere, and they penetrated all groups of society, and no group consisted of entirely decent or indecent people, so there was no “pure race”. He believed that decent people were the minority, and that they were always a minority, and they were likely to remain so, and that it was something people needed to come to terms with. Above all, every individual had uniqueness and dignity.

The power in Frankl's words.

Perhaps the most powerful takeaway by Frankl was the realization he had from his concentration camp experience that man was capable of overcoming anything, and the power in these words, “Man is ultimately self-determining. Man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become in the next moment. By that same token, every human being has the freedom to change at any instance. One of the main features of human existence is the capacity to rise above such conditions, to grow beyond biological, psychological, or sociological conditions. Man has potentialities within himself, which one is actualized depends on decisions but not on conditions.”

Personal familiarity with the concentration camp experience

The World War 2 concentration camp experience is something that is not unknown to my family and other people who originate from the powder keg of Europe, both Jews and non-Jews. For some of my family, three to four generations before me, their uniqueness and dignity were taken from them the very moment the Nazis came to their rural towns, and there would be no chance of survival by the way of a concentration camp.

A name that has always been familiar to me growing up was Jovo Mitrovic, who was a young man when the Nazis surrounded his rural town and sent him to Mauthausen Concentration Camp. The Mauthausen Concentration Camp was described as having non-existent supplies of food and people would fall dead at different times of the day, and the depravities towards the prisoners were such that they are hard to fathom.

Despite all of this, Jovo managed to maintain a positive attitude throughout his time at the camp by looking out of the little “window” in his cell, dreaming of the day he got to go home and back to Serbia, while also expecting that each day would be his last because of how frequently executions of prisoners took place. Then, one day, one of the guards came to Jovo, with Jovo thinking it was “his turn”, but instead he was told that the war was over and that he was free.

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

Library Chat

Tues, Aug 15, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

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

Library Chat

Wed, Aug 16, 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

Career and education planning conversation with AU Counselling Services

Wed, Aug 16, 3:00 to 4:00 pm MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Counselling Services

news.athabascau.ca/events/career-and-education-planning-conversation-with-au-counselling-services/

Register through above link

Library Chat

Thur, Aug 17, 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

AUSU Council Meeting

Thur, Aug 17, 6:00 pm to 7:00pm or so

Online

Hosted by AUSU

Meeting Via Zoom

Email governance@ausu.org for meeting details.

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

Much like Frankl, Jovo's dream helped him survive Mauthausen, yet parts of both their dreams that involved friends and family would never come true because they would perish at the hands of the Nazis. Although Jovo was not directly related to us, when my parents and I fled the civil war in Sarajevo and made their way to Belgrade, Jovo would encourage my parents by sharing his story of survival, and it helped them overcome their own war experience. I have had two chances to reconnect with Jovo, once in my early teens and once after graduating high school, during summer trips to Serbia. Back then, I was not as interested in the great feats of which people are capable, so I did not ask him the questions I would have asked today, but I do remember my last conversation with him in 2009, his emphasis on "attitude", and being left in awe of him.

The name "Jelka Remic" was one that bore no significance until after my 2019 trip to Bosnia and Herzegovina. As it would turn out, Jelka Remic (1904-1942) was related to my great-grandfather, Marinko Golijanin (1904-1966), on the paternal side of my family. Her story goes something like this: by the time the Nazis had rolled into her rural town, after hearing that there was a large Jewish population living there, many of the men had gone and taken up arms against the Nazis by joining the Partisans or Chetniks. When Jelka was identified as being Jewish, she was with some family that were helping her around because she was well into her pregnancy, but the Nazi soldiers were outraged that there was someone in their midst carrying life within them, a life they viewed as being undesirable and unworthy of living. So, the Nazi soldiers took out a knife and sliced open Jelka's stomach, killing the unborn baby, and they then grabbed a living and breathing Jelka and impaled her on a wooden stake, where she would suffer a slow and painful death while they killed all the other suspected Jews too. This sadism was meant to send a clear message as to what would happen to Jews when the Nazis got their hands on them. Although Marinko would never end up getting captured or taken prisoner, the fighting that he took part in and witnessed had a major impact on his health, and as countless war survivors have done, he turned to alcohol to help him cope. He died relatively young, at the age of 62 years old.

When I visited the rural area's local cemetery in 2019, I walked around observing all the names, dates, and tombstones, and I identified Marinko and Jelka's tombstones. What was unique about their tombstones was that they were some of the few tombstones that had the Star of David on them, and I began asking questions and connecting some loose dots. It turned out that people in the surrounding area were so afraid of identifying as Jewish after the war that they would completely erase their "Jew-ness" and become something else instead. The thought of a World War 3 was unimaginable for them. Instead, they would honor their heritage discreetly at the time



of their death, etching a Star of David for the year of birth, but also etching a cross to mask their “Jew-ness” and to protect their families in case of a third world war. When I asked some of our relatives about Jelka’s Jewish heritage and started making other connections on the family tree, suggesting that Marinko, too, had parents and grandparents of Jewish heritage, I was quickly shut down and told that our family trees were Serbian through and through. And just like that, everyone seemed to forget the reason that Jelka was killed had to do with her “Jew-ness”. It was not surprising, because that part of the world is rife with ethnic nationalism, but, like Frankl had stated before, I knew that there was no “pure race”—only decent and indecent people.

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

Can Making Money be a Passion?

Marie Well 



Making money can be more than a passion; it can become second nature. Whether in wheelchairs, stricken with chronic disease, experiencing extreme anxiety, mentally ill, autistic, or undergoing other so-called limitations, we can all earn over six figures. The abundance philosophy has merit, I've come to learn, and as I write, I'm listening to a soundscape with frequencies oriented toward attracting abundance and positivity. I used to think the abundance mentality was hocus pocus, but I've seen how powerful it is to the psyche. And I recently read about traits of people who have a knack for making money, and I wished I was more like that, but now I realize we can all be like that—easily.

I believed I found a way to come close to or exceed six figures within one year. I don't know how it all came together, but it has percolated for the past year. I couldn't see it until now, but I've been so focused on increasing my income mentally that solutions today instantly appeared, much to my shock.

And all at once. And I can start implementing them any day now. Indeed, we all can make over six figures.

Unfortunately, that was written yesterday, and I ran into many obstacles with my plan. However, just today, I received an agreement from the decision-makers to proceed with two out of three of my strategies—and the third one is still pending. In other words, anything good in life comes with obstacles.

But first, I want to say that I was so hungry not long ago that, to save money, I'd eat bananas—and banana peels. I also had extreme anxiety for nearly a decade, so bad that most days I could hardly tie my shoes without mental agony and confusion. I couldn't work for almost a decade. And then, I came down with chronic fatigue, which was the dying process. I figured I had two years left to live.

But with persistence and a strategy, I cured both conditions and returned to the workforce. And now I'm approaching the six-figure salary mark. Here's what I'm going to do to hit six figures in a year:

One, stay loyal all my life to my employer. I'll be there for him as long as my employer needs me. Already, he's provided me with two raises and an excellent salary. There is the possibility of

another raise next year. So, my role is to perform. And to do that, I need to keep developing myself, which leads to the next point.

Two, invest in professional and personal development. I'm taking many courses lately, spending at least \$400 monthly to invest in my education. However, lifelong learning is my big passion, bringing us to the third point.

Three, when we find our passions, we must capitalize on them. I love two of my course providers so much that I've become a fixture in their company cultures. Curiously, for both course providers, I realized I could generate revenue for both them and me. As a result, I plan on bringing their courses to the school system, which I already do for my present employer, so I have the connections already in place. I'm negotiating a percentage of the revenue. Also, I plan to be a relationship coach and receive referrals from one of my course providers. The big motivator is to bring awareness to the course provider's teachings and to help raise people to a higher state of love. It's part of my life mission. But the financial side is also a big motivator for me. I'm not clear why money motivates me, as I don't spend much on myself outside of education. I'm back to wearing the same T-shirt every day, which I just stained with pomegranate juice, so I'll need a new one.

So, making money can easily become our passion. I'm heading for six figures within one year if all goes well. And once I hit that mark, I am compelled to set the bar to a quarter million. It sounds greedy, but it's simply just a goal. And we all can easily make six figures--no matter our limitations. It starts with knowing we have unlimited potential. And once we realize impossible dreams, up the ante by a factor of 10 to 100 to establish the next dream. After all, we deserve six figures—and every other dream that blasts us into heaven.

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



The recent announcement confirming the separation of Justin Trudeau and Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau got us wondering about the Wives of Trudeau.

The younger Trudeau's missus. Columnist Barb Godin focuses on Sophie in the Women of Interest feature. "Following her completion of radio and television school Sophie briefly obtained a position as an entertainment reporter at station LCN in Quebec. She then began working as a Quebec correspondent and entertainment reporter for CTV television." Women of Interest – Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau, February 19, 2016.

The elder Trudeau's (ex) missus. In an article that first appeared in Wilfrid Laurier University's *The Cord Weekly*, Adrian Ma describes Margaret's legacy, and her charitable work for the WaterCan organization. "She carries one of the most famous last names in Canadian history; a name that remains synonymous with the highest order of politics – a moniker that still brings to mind both success and scandal in almost equal measure." Former first lady carries on Trudeau family values, March 17, 2006.

[blue rare]
Just Tripping

Oliver Moorcraft-Sykes

I suppose, if I'm being honest, I have had more bad travel experiences than good. COVID or no COVID, travel of any form can be a fraught endeavour. On the first night I ever spent in Paris, a man was beaten to a pulp across the street from my cheap hotel room.



Another time, I took a flight from Winnipeg to Atlanta during which the airplane seemed to hop from air pocket to air pocket. We were flying through the heart of a thunderstorm, and lightning was exploding nonstop, like a disco strobe light outside the cabin windows. Alarmingly bright. Almost bright enough to see each other's shadows. Everybody aboard the flight, except for myself, seemed to be airsick. I was far too terrified to vomit.

Again, my partner and I were taking a road trip through the Four Corners area of the American southwest, when we stopped to fill up our water bottles from a tap outside a service station on the Zuni tribal lands in Arizona. A few miles down the road, after we had been rehydrating in our non-air-conditioned Subaru, we heard a report on NPR about a severe outbreak of hantavirus, the epicenter of which was the place we had slaked our thirst. As we couldn't afford travel insurance at that time, I will never know for certain why we were both sick as dogs for the next few days and couldn't manage to leave our hotel room in Santa Fe. But sometimes, you just know.

At different times of my life, during various vacations, I have been stung by jellyfish, attacked by hornets, pickpocketed, nearly mugged, chewed on by bedbugs, ravaged by food poisoning and fever, conned out of cash, knocked nearly senseless by waves, and broken up with lovers. More times than I like to think, the vagaries and challenges of travel have left me feeling drained, unwell, disillusioned, and half-dead.

On the other hand, I have seen the sun rising above volcanoes and hoodoos, from Iceland to Mesa Verde. From the decks of boats and outlooks on soaring coastal cliffs, I have seen whales breaching. I have witnessed glaciers and monsoons. I have seen the midnight lights of Manhattan and the midnight sun of Husavik.

I suppose a life without travel would have made me a more financially secure human being. Except for memories, I have very little to show for a lifetime of hard work. I realize, of course, that this is a champagne problem. I can afford housing and food, and even some more travel. Sadly, the ability to access decent education and health care, not to mention experiencing some adventure and pleasure in this all too short life, is becoming no more than an opulent pipe dream in this obscenely wealthy land. I feel sorry and angry on behalf of all those who have been shortchanged by the rigged game of capitalism.

Nevertheless, there is beauty left in this world if you care to find it. For myself, I've spent the last few days looking at old road maps, looking for my passport, searching in the basement for sleeping bags and the camp stove, dreaming about another upcoming road trip across Canada and the U.S. As with all leaps into the void, who knows what we can expect? Tornados? Wildfires? Biblical hailstorms and locusts? But you can be damaged by standing still, as well. And perhaps there will be unexpected delights along the way, and possibly even friendships. As always, it's hard to tell.

Fly on the Wall

The Conspiracy of Discourse

Jason Sullivan



As students we have the privilege of holding ourselves accountable. We define our success not only by the grades and degrees we receive, but at a deeper level in our being. How we assess our progress is a discourse of our own making, with conclusions that only we can truly affirm. By granting ourselves kudos we elaborate a *muchness* that enables us to proceed with confidence; the courage of our conviction that our studies matter is key to our motivation. Psychologically, this individual sense of reality finds parallels wherever beliefs involve facts as well as feelings. Because hey, when we're sure we're sure in our gut as well as in our brain.

If we feel misunderstood by others who question why we prioritize our studies, we can take solace in the fact that all sorts of public issues also lead people to project personal beliefs onto others, and thereby become frustrated when disagreements ensue. Ego and sentiment underlie much of what is presented as factual; priorities and methods lead some facts (like our desire for good grades) to be evaluated highly while others (say, a favourite hobby with friends) are left by the wayside.

Sometimes a fistful of facts does not an absolution from ambiguity make; this is partly because our identities hold fast to our convictions as a toddler does to a comfort blanket. Our private discourse frames and defines the academic portion of our identity and, as Ernesto Laclau and Chantale Mouffe describe, this discursive process reflects larger societal realities whereby discourses claim hegemony over reality even as relevant aspects of life remain on the outside. Every topic has its own version of what matters most. "Discourses are 'enclosed' totalities – hence Laclau and Mouffe's use of the term 'closure' when speaking of discourse. In their estimation, discourses exclude what they are not from penetrating into the public discourse. That is to say, as an enclosed totality, discourse inhibits the very possibility of changing its own formation. Simply put (or perhaps simplistically?), through discourse various events can be said to have meaning, and this meaning furthermore is given a closure and cannot be rearticulated" (online). In other words, where discourses are concerned, facts that don't fit mean zip! Many a useful tibit has been ignored, however, by deploying the phrase "just the facts, Ma'am".

Consider how assorted conspiracy theories cherry pick facts and evidence, often much of it part of the extensive scientific canon of research on a given topic, and privilege data that fits over that which they feel they can disavow or distrust. Discourse theory reminds us that we all do this, in our egos, whenever we privilege one reality over another. When we slog through a tough afternoon of studying and then reward ourselves with a couple of days of doing *zipola* in the schoolwork department we're holding ourselves up to our private discourse of accountability. Other, exceedingly ambitious people, might to us seem a bit dotty or neurotic with how they appear perpetually displeased with their progress. Yet, that's their reality and their discourse. Elsewhere, if we tell a young friend whose behaviour seems immature that their twenty-one-year-old is showing, we are demonstrating the limits of our discourse. Indeed, to truly understand everyone and everything would require a discourse so grand that nothing could be known—everything would simply be what it is, without us having any specific remarks. Just as we all judge others according to our private metrics, perhaps commenting on a person's youth as

an explanation for their indolence but not referring to their gender or ethnicity, each public issue involves adhering to competing discourses that often appear incommensurate with one another.

Under our beliefs lies, as always, our ego. We pick discourses that match our minds even though some have more factual support than others. Conformists trust experts intuitively just as contrarians, like Socrates, can be accused of perpetually seeking to make the weaker argument the stronger. Very few people revel in thinking themselves evil, selfish, or nasty—our egos are invested in a positive, at times even heroic, self-image. So, when a person attributes nefarious intentions to authority figures, perhaps even believing that a cabal of ruling class figures are plotting to enslave the world, there's no debating them off of their precipice because they've asserted their certainty at an emotional as well as factual level. Discourse theory shows how each way of seeing the world functions to uphold certain values and methods at the expense of including others. What Laclau and Mouffe provide us with is a reminder that even if all available facts are known on a topic, discourses will each sort and organize them according to preordained ideological suppositions. And, if you'll pardon the medical terminology, every suppository is about inducing something to come out more than the fact of what's puts in.

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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.



Ceremonial Tea



Xine Wang

Tea culture forever remains a big part of my life. My parents gave me a cup of tea as early as age three. Despite not being able to appreciate the taste at the time, I certainly have become accustomed to the drink over the last ten years. While most people grab a cup of dark roast in the morning, I prefer my earl grey or ginger green tea to wake my senses. When I first discovered ceremonial tea in 2019, however, I became even more enthralled by the history, culture and art that surrounds tea. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, I had the chance to visit a tea village in Hangzhou China which specialized in harvesting and processing tea of all tiers and grades. I learned about tea produced during heavy rain season vs the dry season and the different taste and textures of such teas. It was such an eye-opening experience that one of my bucket list items for travel is to attend a Japanese tea ceremony.

What was special about the tea ceremony was that it had a significant cultural and spiritual element. For many Asian cultures, tea is symbolic and more than

just a beverage. Oftentimes the tea ceremonies are choreographed and ritualized with a heightened sense of mindfulness.

So why should you attend a tea ceremony?

Mindfulness and relaxation: Tea ceremonies encourage mindfulness and a focus on the present moment. The deliberate and deliberate nature of the ceremony helps to cultivate a sense of calm and relaxation. It allows you to slow down, savor the flavors and aromas of the tea, and appreciate the beauty of the surroundings.

Cultural Immersion: Tea ceremonies provide a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the cultural traditions and practices of a particular region. By participating in a tea ceremony, you can gain a deeper understanding of the history, values, and aesthetics that shape the local culture. Ceremonial tea can be found in various cultures around the world, each with its own unique practices and customs. Some well-known examples include the Japanese tea ceremony (*chanoyu*), Chinese tea ceremonies, Korean tea ceremonies, and Moroccan tea ceremonies.

The Japanese tea ceremony, for instance, is a highly structured and formalized practice that embodies harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility. It involves the preparation and presentation of powdered green tea known as matcha. The host meticulously performs each step, including the cleansing of utensils, the whisking of the tea, and the serving of the tea to guests in a specific manner. The ceremony often takes place in a dedicated tearoom or tea house, which is designed to create an atmosphere conducive to mindfulness and appreciation of the moment.

Similarly, Chinese tea ceremonies vary in their specific rituals and customs but generally emphasize the art of tea preparation, presentation, and enjoyment. Different types of teas, such as oolong, Pu-erh, or jasmine, may be used, and the focus is on capturing the unique flavors, aromas, and textures of the tea.



Aesthetic Pleasure: Tea ceremonies are visually stunning, with attention paid to every detail, from the tea utensils to the presentation of the tea itself. The aesthetics of the ceremony, including the tearoom or garden, can be a feast for the eyes and a source of inspiration. For example, when I attended the tea village, I was mesmerized by the delicate porcelain art on the China used to serve tea.

Health and Well-being: Tea ceremonies often involve the consumption of high-quality teas with potential health benefits. Depending on the type of tea used, you may enjoy antioxidant properties, improved digestion, and a sense of overall well-being. In addition to their cultural and spiritual significance, ceremonial tea practices

often foster a sense of community, providing an opportunity for individuals to come together, share a moment of reflection, and engage in meaningful conversations. They serve as reminders to appreciate simplicity, find inner peace, and connect with others on a deeper level. Not only is it beneficial for our physical health but for our mental health as well.

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



Beyond Literary Landscapes

The Hero's Journey

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, we focus on a well-known literary theme, namely the hero's journey. Also known as the monomyth, [the hero's journey refers to](#) “a basic narrative pattern that

is commonly found in many myths or stories told in a variety of cultures from around the world.”

The term monomyth was first introduced by [American author and editor Joseph Campbell](#) in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. It contains [17 different steps](#), which can be divided into several sections or stages.

During the first stage, termed the departure, the hero is presented with a quest that they can refuse. During the second stage, termed the initiation, the hero faces challenges and tests and begins to understand themselves. Finally, during the third, and final, stage, termed the return, the hero returns home after completing the quest.

Please note that not all monomyths will contain all these steps.

What

Some well-known works related to the hero's journey include J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy, *Lord of the Rings* and Suzanne Collins' trilogy, *The Hunger Games*.

Where

These two trilogies are set in various fictional locations, including Middle-earth and Panem.

When

These works are set in the past and in the future.

Why

These novels may be of interest to AU learners who would like to understand the world of myth, particularly as it relates to literature found across the globe. This topic may also be intriguing to AU students who enjoy film studies and communications studies.

How

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

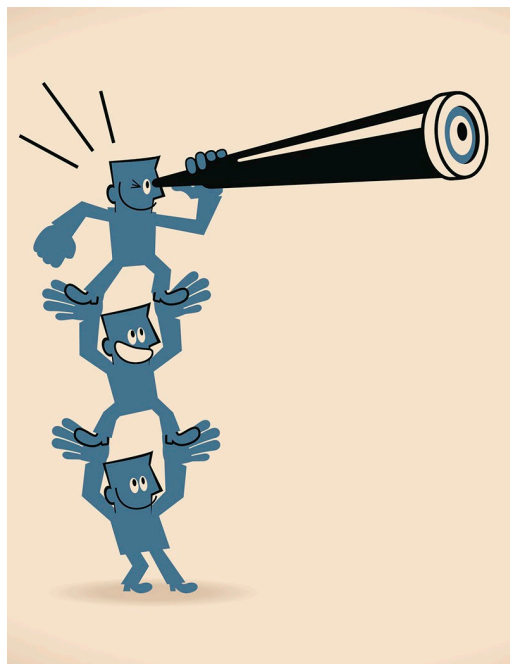
AU students interested in learning more about this topic may enroll in CMNS 419: Digital Storytelling, a senior-level, three-credit course, which "explores a variety of storytelling frameworks." (No prerequisites are required for this course). Happy reading!

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



Research Assistant Opportunity!

Exploring Indigenous Values and Evaluations of Current Events and Climate Calamities



Like neighbourhoods within a town, each with socio-economic indicators, our specific geography and historical culture frame how we describe and define events in our lives. This posting explores how Indigenous people represent reality in their regions, and specifically how they view circumstances such as natural disasters – the Alberta floods a decade ago are given as an example. Evaluating data bases, library resources, and online records will allow the researcher to “determine how they might wish to see their past defined” - within a context of Indigenous issues. Interviews will also be part of this process, with names of key players provided.

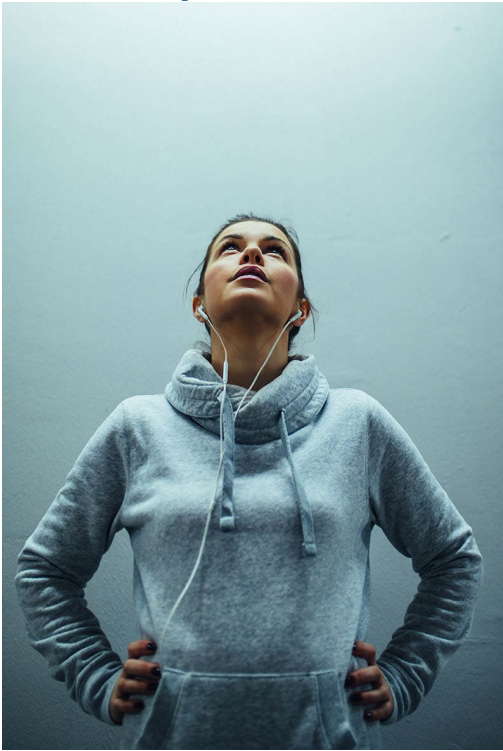
Specific to the AU student experience, remembering as we must that the broader the scope of a course's intrigues the more diverse will be our student body and the realm of a course's relevance, Dr. Pannekoek will ask the successful applicant to consider a general pedagogical question: “What should both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples learn in any course?” To ask is to answer, as intuitive folks claim. Yet

in *this* case research will reveal the ways and means by which crucial life realities come to be represented within given communities that are each unique parts of the mosaic of our great Canadian nation-state.

Interested applicants are to send cover letter, transcript, resume and contact info for one or two human references to fritsp@athabascau.ca

What are your Missions in Life?

Marie Well



We all have life missions. I believe they're preordained. And the people, circumstances, locations, opportunities, and hardships are all parts that our free will must successfully play out to fulfill those missions. It's the true game of life: did we win by realizing as many life missions as we set out to accomplish when we entered this life? No matter our life's state, we can win big in achieving our life's missions.

One of my life missions is to do all I can to ensure Mom doesn't leave this world hating me. It's not just for my sake, but hers too, as leaving this world with hatred for another soul may not result in the optimal afterlife. And I'd be partly responsible, as I'm an object of that anger. I can't control her responses, but I must try to find a way to bring her back to love and stay in that state. I'm sure our shared life lesson is meant to be ancestral forgiveness.

Another of my life's missions is to bring the teachings of a spiritual course into the school systems. (The course got me to a higher state of consciousness.) I need to do this for future generations and myself, should reincarnation exist, and I return to this world. This world without those teachings

would have been too hard and lonely for me to endure.

Yet another is to love all others unconditionally, especially those closest to me. That means I must let go of all ego, selflessly serve all others, and prioritize their needs over mine. It also means I never blame or feel slighted but instead seek to see the situation from the other person's view. And it also means I must always strive to stay happy, no matter the external circumstances.

Beyond that, I feel I have a mission to learn new things daily and advocate for lifelong learning. Learning can be super fun when we know our educational "calling." When learning is a pure joy rather than a rut, we know we are on target for our ultimate life path, despite the stressors from exams and assignments. However, those stressors and subsequent growth are like drumbeats driving us forward to realizing our ultimate purpose.

A final life mission is to accumulate wealth and gain success. It amounts to a goal for success with wealth as a measure. But these material goals only mean something if intended to serve other beings.

But there are missions we may not be aware of, such as ones that may arise in the future or one's that currently exist that we can't yet see. According to some reports from near-death experiencers, they've all been preordained, and we are part of setting that preordained direction. The wise use of our free will will take us to success.

I'm sure we all have life missions, whether we know it or not, and I guarantee that love and learning are tied into them. Love and learning are the ultimate end goals. And we will leave this world with a scorecard that tallies which life missions we have passed and which we didn't. And everyone in our lives is linked to our life missions. No one in our lives is not part of our life missions. And the grading rubric for it all, for even the tragedies and triumphs, is, did we end up in a greater state of love?



The Condemned Girls of India

Alek Golijanin



Human trafficking is considered to be the third most profitable crime, after drug trafficking and weapons trafficking. While human trafficking is a global problem, its worst form might be witnessed in India. It is estimated up to 18 million people in India are living in slavery. This is over a third of the total global estimate of people living in slavery, believed to be 46 million. The majority of those 18 million Indian people who are living in slavery are believed to be women or underage girls that have been human trafficked and forced into sex work or sold off into marriage.

Human trafficking in India gets even more scary with the realization that it is the young daughters, still in their pre-teen years, of impoverished families living in rural areas that are the prime targets to get kidnapped. Human traffickers will then force them into sex work or sell them into marriage, maybe to a random passerby on the opposite side of the country willing to pay the “asking price”, sometimes as little as 50 dollars. Most of the pre-teen girls that get kidnapped from their rural communities across India are never get found. And often if they are found, it tends to be many years later, after they have been

married off and are teen moms, and after Stockholm Syndrome has kicked in and they refuse to leave their abusers, who sometimes go on to father their children. For those that get older and who want to leave, they are often stuck trying to repay their pimps for the money that was paid to the traffickers initially.

A better understanding of India’s human trafficking problem can be found in three documentaries—worthwhile watching to get up to speed with on the matter. These documentaries feature stories of real-life victims and their gut-wrenching tales, clearly depicting the problem and the depravities of certain elements of India’s society.

India’s Slave Brides

India’s Slave Brides documents how girls in rural parts of India are being kidnapped and sold off into marriage by their captors. One part of this documentary covers a 16-year-old girl who was kidnapped while going to the store to buy a notebook for school. It goes over how this girl’s family was living in rural poverty and how her father had recently passed away. The girl’s mother, Majeda, tried everything to get her daughter back. Then, a few months after the kidnapping, her daughter called to say that she was in Haryana and that she would return with her if she came to her. When Majeda went to the local police station to file a complaint with this new information, the police officers demanded that she pay them 700 dollars. Being a single mother to three young children and without the required funds, Majeda was helpless to do anything. Eventually Majeda would learn that her daughter was married away, and those occasional phone calls stopped entirely.

It was the broadcasting crew who interviewed Majeda that decided to help her out by travelling with her to Haryana, hopefully to help her reunite with her daughter. When they found the home where her daughter lived, the daughter, now a mother herself, refused to go back home, and was angry that her mom involved the police. Her now-husband told the police officer that he met his would-be wife at a railway station when a man and woman who claimed to be her aunt and uncle asked him if he wanted to marry her. The husband said his wife seemed disturbed, so he said yes to help her out. The daughter later explained that this couple lied to her about being related to her. They had told her that they could help her with her tuition, but when she went

with them, she realized that it was all a lie. The husband denied buying his wife, but he later told other police officers that he paid the “aunt and uncle” around 40 dollars for their expenses.

Another family featured in the documentary had their daughter kidnapped when she was 13 years old, over 6 years prior to the filming of the documentary, and that family never heard back from their daughter. They believed their daughter’s human traffickers lived in their midst because, prior to the kidnapping certain people were loitering around their home, and after the kidnapping they came to the family and threatened the family to stop blaming them, well before the family even went to the police. This family spent 2,000 dollars searching the whole of Assam, trying to find their daughter, with no success. They now believe that she is far away in Haryana or Rajasthan.

Children for Sale: The Fight Against Child Trafficking in India

Children for Sale: The Fight Against Child Trafficking in India documents how innovative human traffickers are getting to obtain underage children by posing as “labor agents” and offering impoverished families the opportunities for their children to work in domestic work, factory work, or even outside of India, but the traffickers actually sell these children to brothels in major areas like Calcutta, Bangalore, Mumbai, and New Delhi.

This documentary features a former human trafficker who bought and sold children for profit. He talks about how he became a designated human trafficker for his rural community, claiming he was in debt and went to the Delhi which is where he was offered a job to supply girls. His commission was less than 5 dollars per girl, in contrast a buffalo could cost 350 dollars. Eventually the former human trafficker said that he was feeling sick from the hard questions he was being asked and he stated that he was poor back then and realizes how wrong it was now.

One of the girls that was interviewed did her interview in a silhouette because she was too ashamed of what had happened to her: she was promised a waitressing job in Singapore before being locked in a shipping container and being forced to provide sex work to migrant workers. The girl says how the human traffickers told her she could earn her freedom by servicing 240 clients with sex services and that they would kill her if she tried to run away, but she eventually managed to escape after servicing half the clients her traffickers had wanted.

Caged Until ‘Broken’: Life for Mumbai’s Prostitutes

Caged Until ‘Broken’: Life for Mumbai’s Prostitutes documents the story of a human trafficking survivor named Goody, a 26-year-old woman who grew up in extreme rural poverty and who had a desperate desire for a better life. Goody had no intention or desire to work in the sex trade, but she was lured to a big city with a promise of a maid job that paid 5 dollars per week. At the age of 11, Goody had asked her neighbor for help to find a job since they had mentioned how their daughter went to work in Mumbai, but labor agents would take Goody to Kamithapura, informing her that her job would not be that of a maid but that of a sex worker. The 11-year-old Goody refused and demanded to be put back on the train, but instead was savagely beaten and left with a woman who held her hands while the woman’s daughter held her legs, allowing a customer to sexually abuse her. The attack left Goody in the hospital for 3 months.

After recovering from the attack, Goody still rebelled, but this resulted in her getting caged for multiple months, and she described the goal of the caging as being meant to break her will and make her do as she was told. The “cages” were not actually cages in the traditional sense, but they were boxed crates that were 1 meter high and would be padlocked shut. In addition to daily stick beatings, the brothel owner told Goody that she would not get fed if she refused to work, that she might be sold someplace worse, or even killed. She eventually relented.

After a few years, Goody managed to escape and get to a police station to file a police complaint, but that landed her in jail for 3 months before the brothel owner told her that they paid 600 dollars in bail money to free her, and it took Goody three years to pay that money back. Worst

of all, there is a cutscene in this documentary where a police officer can be seen taking bribe money from a pimp standing in front of another brothel in the red-light district. It is explained how police officers will fight for the chance to work in the red-light district so that they can make extra cash by taking bribes.

Perhaps the ending of this documentary might be one of the saddest of them all, when the journalist asks Goody what her hope is for the future, Goody responds "I have a lot of dreams, but they will never happen," she says with a surrendering laugh, "I want to be at home, with my family. I can't go because I've got such a big loan on my head. When I have paid it, I will go home. I hope." With the journalist final remarks on the conditions of despair being, "It's a brutal industry that takes young girls and then enslaves them. A vicious self-perpetuating cycle that offers no way out."

A cold world. A cruel world.

In 2016, the Indian government was in process of drafting the country's first-ever anti-trafficking laws, but little seems to have changed since then, at least for the kidnapping of underage girls who were living in extreme rural poverty. This problem seems to be more of a cultural and social norms issue and how much of their society views girls as being undesirable. In addition to inadequate protections for children, India's institution of policing is extremely inconsistent across the country, and it is not uncommon to have completely inadequate police services in rural areas or for some of them to be rife with corruption and in bed with local crime groups.

Despite that there are statistics related to the kidnapping and human trafficking of children across India, they need to be taken with a grain of salt seeing just how common it was for police to turn away families who could not meet their payment demands to search for their children. Not unless they arrived with international broadcasting teams. The unfortunate reality in all of this is that the condemned girls of India, all of whom seem to come from underprivileged backgrounds, seem to be condemned to serve as soulless bodies that exist for the pleasure of others, unless the Indian government decides to take greater steps. India's great potential does not afford it any excuses as to why some people feel comfortable enough to kidnap children and then traffic those same children into sex work, openly and for the whole world to see.

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

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: James Lee Foundation Scholarship

Sponsored by: James Lee Foundation

Deadline: September 15, 2023

Potential payout: at least \$5000

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be non-professional Canadian residents over the age of 16 who are either in the process of graduating or continuing their education. All fields of creativity related to the advertising community will be considered (e.g. writers, art directors, film makers, recording artists, illustrators, digital artists, etc.).

What's required: An online application form with contact info, a paragraph (maximum 1000 characters) describing how the funds will help you pursue your creative path, and link to a portfolio that you host that includes a maximum of ten pieces.

Tips: Check out the links to [previous winners' websites](#) for inspiration.

Where to get info: jamesleefoundation.com/scholarship/



Poet Maeve
The Imperious Madam

Wanda Waterman



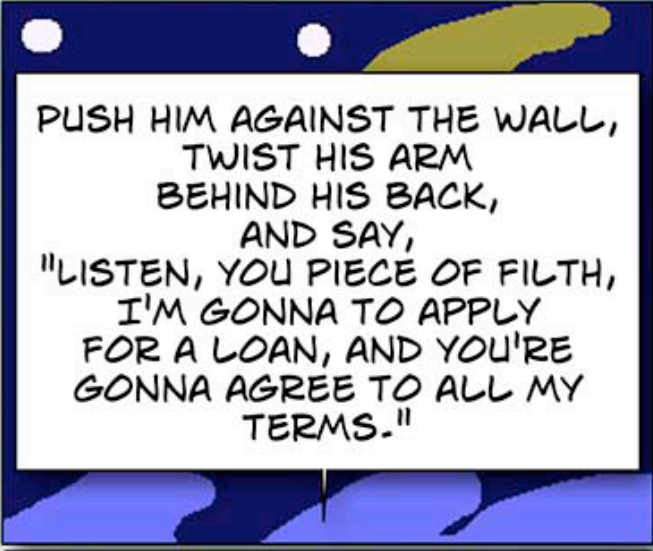
SO I'VE BEEN DATING
A BANK LOANS MANAGER
WHO'S INTO BEING
DOMINATED.



PLEASE TELL ME
YOU'RE GOING TO BE
TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THAT
TO BUY SOME MORE LAND.



WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST?




PUSH HIM AGAINST THE WALL,
TWIST HIS ARM
BEHIND HIS BACK,
AND SAY,
"LISTEN, YOU PIECE OF FILTH,
I'M GONNA TO APPLY
FOR A LOAN, AND YOU'RE
GONNA AGREE TO ALL MY
TERMS."



COME ON!

IF IT WAS
THAT EASY,
ALL THE LAND
IN THE COUNTY
WOULD BE
OWNED BY
DOMINATRIXES!



ALL THE LAND
IN THE COUNTY
IS OWNED BY DOMINATRIXES.

OH, YEAH!
SO THAT'S
WHY!

BETTER YOU THAN
THE IMPERIOUS
MADAM CHEEK SMACKER
THAT WORKS DOWN
TO THE FISH PLANT.

Congratulations, AU graduates!

The Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) extends its heartfelt congratulations to the recent Athabasca University (AU) undergraduates who Convocated on Friday, June 16, 2023, online and in person in Edmonton, Alberta. We are tremendously grateful to have shared part of this momentous day with you.

You have worked tirelessly to reach this milestone, and the entire AU community joins us in recognizing your hard work, determination, and dedication. We want to remind you that your AU degree is not only a testament to your academic excellence but also a symbol of the possibilities that await you.

Once again, congratulations on this extraordinary achievement, and thank you for allowing AUSU to be part of your Convocation ceremony. We wish you all the very best in your future endeavours, and we look forward to seeing your continued growth in the years to come!

Thank you for participating in our 3rd annual Pride Month at AUSU events!

On behalf of the Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU), we would like to thank everyone from Athabasca University (AU) who attended and made our 3rd annual [Pride Month at AUSU](#) events a huge success. We are proud to have had the opportunity to celebrate the diversity, inclusiveness, and affirmation of 2SLGBTQIA+ students at AU.

Pride Month at AUSU provides a safe and welcoming space where diverse voices can be heard and celebrated. The participation of everyone who attended our events was inspiring, and we are grateful for their contributions towards creating an atmosphere where everyone feels respected and valued.

We firmly believe that creating a sense of belonging is essential to our mission of promoting the success and well-being of AU community members. Learn more about the advocacy work AUSU is doing for 2SLGBTQIA+ students [here](#). We recognize that queer students face unique challenges in their academic journey, and we are committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where all students can reach their full potential.

The outstanding participation from AU undergraduates during *Pride Month at AUSU* shows that the AU community values diversity and acceptance. We look forward to doing it again next June 2024, and we hope that even more of you will join us in celebrating queer Pride!

Thank you again for your participation, and we look forward to continuing our year-round support for 2SLGBTQIA+ students at AU.



ausu@ausu.org

Please send the Athabasca University Students' Union your valuable feedback and suggestions regarding our student services. We are committed to providing quality resources for AU undergraduates and we look forward to hearing from you!

Follow us on social media!
We are @AUSStudentsUnion



AUSU Athabasca University
Students' Union

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