

THE VOICE

Vol 32 Issue 15 - 2024-04-12

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

We, the Immortals

[blue rare]

Experience, Eclipsed

What Flares Up

Plus:

Foreign Interference, Week 2

Research for a Better Tomorrow!

and much more!



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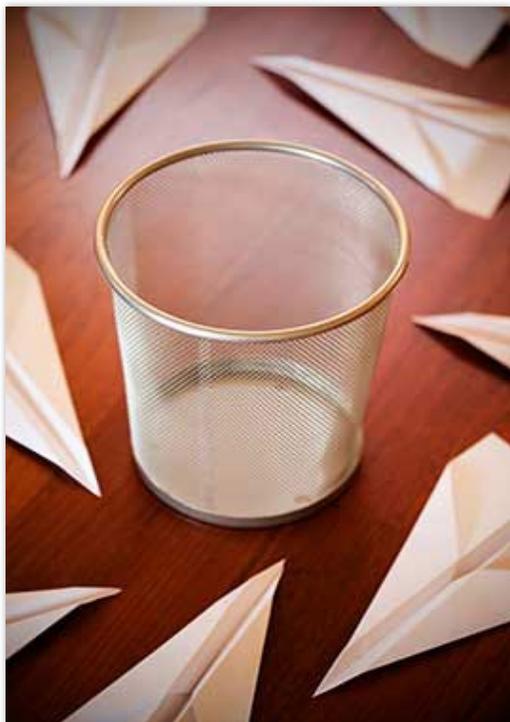
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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 Justified Cynicism

Karl Low



Start your weekend off with some great reads, because we've got them!

This week, we feature a brand-new interview with a student who I think you'll be hearing more from very soon. She's big into music, has some pretty solid tips for new AU students, and looking to connect with some Calgary AU students. Why not add a bit of physical to the virtual?

And if you're one of the many, many students who took in the recent eclipse, you'll still want to read our writer's take on it. Out here in Calgary, we tried watching it, but we're so far from the path of totality that it was a lot of hullabaloo about nothing. Still, getting outside for a bit wasn't a bad thing. But our writer was able to get into the "path of totality", a phrase that demands to be read in a deep, sonorous voice.

Find out what she took from it, or perhaps it's what it took from her. Either way, this complete two-part story is an unusual and interesting read.

Also, this week, we're featuring the latest from the [blue rare] column. I think this one is a definite read for anybody,

because, at least in me, it pushes the emotional buttons in just the right way to be haunting, satisfying, and just a little bit sad, even with the happy ending, and all at the same time.

Meanwhile, it's come to my attention that what the Alberta government did to university boards, they are now attempting to do to every professionally registered organization (PRO). That includes everything from the various colleges of health professions to things like the professional associations that certify everything from accountants to veterinarians, shorthand reporters to engineers. Apparently, new rules are going to require that, to be recognized by the government of Alberta, they'll have to be open to the government adding as many people as they want to their boards of directors. We know how that turned out in post-secondary education, with the hastily replaced AU Board of Governors when the previous one didn't goose-step to Advanced Education's requests.

Even if nothing untoward is planned, at the very least it will set up the means for the government to load up on cushy trough-feeding positions for their loyalists, as some of these associations provide pay and perks for board members. In fact, that was the reason that the NDP disbanded several fully public boards while they were in power, because it was determined that they weren't doing much of anything to justify the pay that was being provided. With this new set-up though? Those can't be easily disbanded because they're actually representing various groups of people.

Is this a bit cynical of me? Absolutely. Is that justified? Given what happened at AU, given what happened with Steve Allan's inquiry into foreign influence on Albertan pipelines, a fun bit of nothing that cost us 3.5 million dollars over two years? Yes, yes, I think it is.

But anyway, also this week we have a smattering of articles from informative to inspirational. With events, scholarships, social media reports, the continuation of the Foreign Interference in elections meetings, and more. Plus, if you don't know, there's an AU research forum coming up where you can find out what your faculty has been up to, as well as a few students. There's still time to register, but until then, enjoy the read!

MINDS WE MEET



The Voice Magazine recently had a chance to chat with Halen Deng (she/her), a Bachelor of Commerce student, with a major in Business Technology Management, living in Calgary, Alberta. She mentioned, “This program allows me to merge my interests in business with the constantly evolving field of technology. In my future career, I am open to various positions in business and technology-related fields.”

Halen let us know that while she currently lives in—and grew up in—Calgary, she was born in China, where she attended elementary school. She acknowledged,

“Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut’ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta (Districts 5 and 6).”

Halen had some great tips for fellow AU learners. “Understanding how the course content translates to real-world applications is my primary motivation for studying. Like many AU students, I juggle studies, work, and family responsibilities. To manage these effectively, I rely on a digital planner with separate to-do lists for each area. This approach enables me to focus on my studies during dedicated study times.”

She also had some advice for new students and/or prospective students. “Don't be shy! Try to connect with other AU students. Although AU is an online university, there are plenty of networking opportunities both online and in person for students to connect. If you need any help, whether it's study-related, career-related, mental health-related, or financial-related, make sure you reach out to AU ASAP!”

When this busy student is not studying, she told us “I like to listen to music, record music, enjoy outdoor activities and local events, and edit videos.”

Halen credits her grandfather had the greatest influence on her desire to learn “when [she] was a child.” She continued, “Despite facing the hardship of a lack of financial support, he worked hard to complete his post-secondary education.”

As for her experience with online learning so far? “I appreciate the flexibility of online learning, which allows me to complete my course studies at my own pace. However, I believe there could be more interactions in the course, both among students and between students and the course coordinator.”

Halen's most memorable AU course so far has been ADMN 233: Writing in Organizations. She stated, "It's a fun and interactive course where you interact with AI playing different roles. You receive responses from the AI based on your messages. The course teaches you to write in various formats and create infographics."

If she were the new president of AU, her first project would be to "enforce a rule mandating that faculties provide students with networking opportunities both within and between faculties."

The Voice Magazine asked Halen which famous person, past or present, she would like to have lunch with, and why and she chose inventor Nikola Tesla. "I'm curious to ask him about his thoughts on Tesla Inc. being named after him, and whether he prefers the 21st century over the 20th century. I know Tesla had a very healthy diet, so I would prepare a home-cooked meal with fresh fruits, vegetables, and proteins. I would invite him for lunch and ask for his opinion on whether my cooking is both healthy and delicious," she explained.

Halen also shared her most valuable lesson learned in life with readers. "You'll never know if you'll succeed unless you try." And her proudest moment? "Maintaining emotional control in challenging situations is a source of great pride for me. No matter the circumstance, I can calm myself down and adopt a positive self-talk approach. Reminding myself to persevere and give my best effort fosters a sense of resilience that allows me to navigate difficulties."

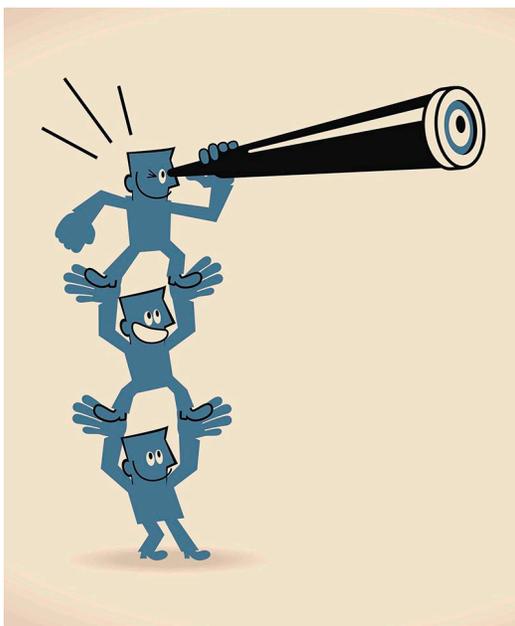
As a final note, she added, "I hope I can connect with more AU students from Calgary. I hope there is a group available for AU students in Calgary." Best of luck, Halen!

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) recently completed her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.



Research Assistant Opportunity! Freudian Transference Returns – In Drag!



This research seeks to explicate the interactive therapy region of reality as it relates to our friends in the transgender community. As allies, it behooves us to understand "the ways in which a clinician's unconscious prejudice can be felt, and potentially acted out, within various medical settings." For instance, if therapists unwittingly project their biases about gender nonconforming people; a therapist may mistakenly feel a drive to save the client from a failure to "grow up"; that is, to resolve an Oedipal or Elektra complex that most of us overcome and take with us as an unconscious mark of our maturation. This growing up can be seen to include adopting a normal posture in terms of one's gender performance. Yet, presumably, for transgender people this framework may not apply—or be far more complex. This research also seeks to uncover new facts about the ubiquitous agency-depriving reality of the Covid pandemic. But hey, you don't have to take my cursory glance at all this: please email your resume, cover letter, and transcript to Dr. Wiggins at twiggins@athabascau.ca

[blue rare]We, the Immortals

Oliver-Moorcraft Sykes



As we all know, there are certain things that happen to other people that will never happen to us. Chief among these is death. Other people will pass away, and we shall mourn them and miss them terribly. We will miss their companionship, and all the things that were so lovely and infuriating about them. We will miss their off-key singing, their dirty jokes, and their lopsided smiles. We will miss the stylish way they wore their scarves, and the way that the ash at the end of their cigarettes always grew impossibly long, without ever falling.

But, of course, we ourselves shall never die. It simply cannot happen. We shall never die because we are too busy; there are too many things to do. Like baking bread, learning French, and pruning rose bushes.

Besides, we have taken certain foolproof measures to ensure our immortality. We dance and talk and laugh until the early hours of the morning. We drink black coffee and red wine. We play hockey and teach each other new guitar chords. All of these, we have reason to believe, will indefinitely extend our lifespan.

Another reason we shall never die: we have an insatiable hunger for life. Always wanting to see what will happen next, what is around the next bend in the road. So many things to live for. A bowling tournament, an eclipse, a friend's wedding, another season of our favorite show. Things that we want to do again, and again. Another ski slope, another full moon. Another plate of pasta in Rome, another chance to fall in love.

And it's impossible to imagine leaving this beautiful, terrible world behind, with so much still left undone. To have never seen a ghost or a u.f.o., for instance. To have never been forgiven for some hurtful thing we've said or done. Or, worse still, to have withheld forgiveness out of stupid pride.

No, I think it's safe to say that you and I shall never die. Or, if we do, we shall absolutely come back as beautiful ghosts. And not in some condemned gothic pile in the middle of nowhere, either. By sheer force of will, we shall learn how to haunt cool places that we've never even been! Trendy shopping malls, perhaps, or the International Space Station. And, as ghosts, we shall even learn new skills, like roller skating and crochet.

Besides, you never know, there might even be a Heaven. We will definitely be in good company, then. Isadora Duncan will be there, and David Bowie, too. Plus a whole bunch of people I really, really miss, and one or two who still owe me money.

So, to recap: we shall never, ever die. Unless we do. But even then, it won't be so bad, what with the afterlife and all. And even if there isn't one, at least we've lived a life for a moment or two. And perhaps we'll be remembered quite fondly, if only for our bad karaoke, and our lopsided smiles.



Experience, Eclipsed

An eclipse event, in two parts

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Eclipse, part one.

Like many others in Ontario who live in or near the "path of totality" for the April 8 solar eclipse, we made plans to view the event. We live about 15 kilometres away from the northern limit of totality as it crosses eastern Ontario. Why not make the short drive to experience the Whole Thing?

Using an online map, we identified some possible parking and viewing locations in a small community within the path of totality. We drove there the day before the eclipse to scout out several parking options, depending on how busy eclipse day turned out to be.

We needn't have worried about traffic. When we drove south early afternoon on April 8, we encountered few vehicles on the road, and certainly not streams of traffic heading south. The parking lot of a local community service group was empty, as was the public park next to it.

After setting up camp chairs in the park, we passed the time reading and writing and chatting. We had arrived about 45 minutes before the beginning of the partial eclipse phase and during that time a couple dozen other people arrived at the park to view the eclipse.

Once the partial phase began, we used our eclipse glasses to periodically monitor the moon's progress as it nibbled away at the sun. The process seemed slow, and it took a long while before there was any noticeable change in the quality of light at ground level. There was still daylight, just somewhat diffused.

But within ten minutes of totality, when the moon would completely block the sun, daylight dimmed quickly. Automatic exterior lights at a nearby school came on, as did streetlights. The blue of the sky deepened, much as it does around sunset.

Then the magnificent period of totality. We had only one minute, from 3:25:54 to 3:26:57. With no sun visible at all, we could remove our eclipse glasses and gaze at the spectacle of the black moon surrounded by rays of light from the hidden sun. It's a sight we wished would last longer—those lucky enough to be at the centre of the totality zone would get almost four minutes to view the total eclipse.

I spent part of our precious minute of totality gazing around at the landscape. Despite the sun being obscured, it was not dark like night. Everything in the landscape could be seen clearly, and objects still cast shadows on the ground—like they do under a full moon. The sky was a dusky purple, and clouds still discernible. Around the horizon's perimeter the sky displayed the colours of sunset. We could see two planets: Jupiter and Venus.

All too soon, our minute had ticked away, and we donned our eclipse glasses to see the sun emerge from behind the moon. The landscape brightened surprisingly quickly. The main event over, we packed up our chairs and headed home.

Eclipse, part two.

We got home by 4pm. While the partial eclipse continued for another half hour at our place, the quality of the light seemed little different than normal daylight. I felt really chilled. The temperature at our eclipse-viewing location had dropped from 21°C to 14°C in the half-hour before the total eclipse, so my chills didn't surprise me.

Then I began to feel weirdly fatigued. Had I gotten too much sun? I'd worn a brimmed hat the whole two-and-a-half hours we spent outdoors, and I'd had my back to the sun for part of that time. A look in the mirror showed my face didn't appear sunburned at all. But by early evening my fatigue was overwhelming, and I could barely hold up my head. I didn't feel particularly sleepy, just drained of all energy. I collapsed on the sofa at 7pm.



At 8pm I staggered to bed and remained there for the next ten hours. By then I had a fever. Despite my fatigue, I woke every half hour or so, burning hot and parched for water. I don't remember if I dreamed, but during the foggy transitions from sleep to waking I experienced persistent vivid images and sensations. They are impossible to describe and seem bizarre now, but at the time they felt normal, even comforting.

Waking again around 4am, just over twelve hours after the eclipse, I noticed the fever and all other sensations had eased. When I got up later, I had only a lingering tiredness due to fractured sleep. Otherwise, I felt fine again.

Curious if there was any possible connection between my symptoms and the eclipse, I searched online. I discovered that some people report experiencing fatigue and fever in the 24 hours after a solar eclipse, but nobody knows why. (Some scientists pooh-pooh the connection, scorn often being the refuge of scholars who have come up against something they can't explain.)

Although it's possible for anyone to exhibit psychosomatic symptoms, I can't accept that mine were mental constructs. I didn't expect to feel any physical effects from the eclipse, and I'd never heard that such effects were possible.

I didn't find the total eclipse exhilarating, exciting, or spiritual, as others have described it. The one minute of totality was interesting, and I'm glad I experienced it. But the experience of the post-event effects have, in a way, eclipsed the event itself.

Two days later, my post-eclipse symptoms have completely disappeared—now replaced with a renewed respect for the power and influence that the sun and moon wield over our puny selves.

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



Paradise Is Right in Front of Us

Marie Well



People always want to go somewhere to feel paradise, but it's all right here! It's always been here. It's the biggest endorphin rush on the planet, making even a grocery store build-your-own sandwich taste like five-star gourmet eating. And anyone can do it. It's called exercise. The greatest secret is that the more we exercise, the more of a rush we get from it. And we can build up from it, where it starts painful, like when I walked the hallway for ten minutes with chronic fatigue, but gradually ends in high-performance bliss.

Recently, I increased my weekend swimming time to three hours, although I'm doing 4.5 hours of swimming this weekend. And it's blissful. The food afterward tastes heavenly, and I like to drink a beetroot kombucha for a blissful rush of probiotics. And then, I have the sweetest nap when I get home, which sends me straight to cloud nine, and I have no worries for the next seven hours.

Let's face it: exercise is fun. When I went to Hawaii, the luau was fun with its roasted pig and the Hawaiian dancers, but the real fun was in the 24-hour gym. It had no windows, so the fresh, humid ocean air filled the room. And I'd go several times a day to lift weights. I even went

at 2 or 3 in the morning, much to my companion's dismay. Fitness is bliss.

We can do any fitness and gain benefits, but the real endorphins happen the more we gradually increase our intensity to the point of "rush." With that said, for us dreamers who want to end up in the rush zone, here are some [upcoming 2024 Olympic sports](#) we can train for, maybe one day with the world's elite (as anything is possible!):

Archery, athletics, badminton, basketball, basketball 3x3, boxing, canoe slalom, canoe sprint, road cycling, cycling track, mountain bike, BMX freestyle, BMX racing, equestrian, fencing, football, golf, artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, trampoline, handball, hockey, judo, modern pentathlon, rowing, rugby, sailing, shooting, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, triathlon, volleyball, beach volleyball, diving, marathon swimming, artistic swimming, swimming, water polo, weightlifting and wrestling.

Additional sports include climbing, skateboarding, and surfing.

Of those, I'd like to learn BMX racing (you've got to see it in action to understand why it's a rush), wrestling, swimming, boxing, and shooting. There is just nothing I want to shoot at.

My desire to learn combative arts and stunts first arose from playing many superhero-roleplaying games as a teen. That's partly why I developed martial arts and weightlifting skills later in life and pursued wrestling. I had always striven to acquire combative skills as a superhero in the game. If we fathom ourselves as imaginary superheroes, we become more inclined to develop combative skills in real life.

The Marvel superhero roleplaying games also made me more inclined to increase my strength, endurance, speed, intelligence, wisdom, and other measures that made a superhero stand out, which is why I'm so skills oriented. I delight in learning skills at work, during fitness, or through

studies. Skills float my boat, and Marvel Superheroes as a teen was likely a catalyst for this mindset. I prefer physically playing sports rather than roleplaying them, however. We should all learn physical skills to feel that endorphin rush. And it doesn't matter how old we are, what disabilities we have, or any other limitation, such as finance or obesity. We can all access fitness on an incredible level.

Also, physical skills are more fun to master than watch. Just like football, physical activity is more fun to play than watch. Just ask any superstar being introduced with white rays of light beaming on him, displayed on cross-national media, within a stadium of thousands of cheering fans on game night as he engages in focused play. Why watch it when we can play it?

Sports and fitness are not just endorphin rushes; they are rollercoasters to heaven. Fitness makes us look better, gives us a thousand times more energy, fuels us for immeasurable success, yields greater happiness, directs us to make healthier choices, and so on. And it's a blast, significantly once momentum shifts into high gear!

So, dream up a sport or physical activity that could take us from novice to world-class. It doesn't need to be remotely possible, not at first. It just needs to start as a goal. And if we become world-class, even if we start off extremely overweight with five autoimmune conditions, we read it here: anything is possible!



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

Facebook:

AU telephone quizzes? A student asks what the AU telephone quizzes are like. One student with phone anxiety requested and received a format change to an open book written exam. Another student also experienced anxiety and blanked out during the phone exam. Another student has severe anxiety and was advised to email the tutor for a change of test format. Other students who didn't experience anxiety had favorable impressions of the phone exam, indicating tutors are encouraging, may provide study tips, and may engage in meaningful conversation. Some students also prepared the answers in advance, so the responses were read from their notes.

Reddit:

Academic AI? A student is eager to see GPTs (AI) introduced into courses as a means for course orientations or additional context. The student believes that AI can help them determine whether the course is a fit before enrollment. Another student states that the idea is not a good one but doesn't provide a rationale for the position against AI.

Twitter:

Open resources and photo sharing. [@aulibarchives](#) posts, "Learn about Creative Commons and Open Resources and what to look for when sharing photos in your projects: <https://libguides.athabasca.ca/c.php?g=723952&p=5181686> #CreativeCommons #OpenUniversity."

Risks associated with AI in graduate studies. [@athabascaUBiz](#) retweeted, "Are you interested in the role, potential, and risks of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in graduate education at #AthabascaU? Register for the 2024 Open Forum to learn more! <https://athau.ca/3OfeMlu>."



Fly on the Wall: Postmodernism in Ironic Historical Perspective Can You Hear Me Now? Part II

Jason Sullivan



Postmodernism, that hall of mirrors whereby relativism takes its place on the mantle of truth largely by batting, like a playful cat, other contenders off of the throne and onto the floor, is a sight to behold. Shattered into their parts by deconstruction and shorn of their clothes, like a goat-bearded emperor donning new apparel, the basic tenets of modernism find themselves dismantled, disregarded, and defunded by Postmodernism's aggressively playful, impulses: ungovernable, as it were, by expectations of consistency or objectivity.

Like the game of telephone, preconceived as a means to test the efficacy of getting a message straight and putting it across (or perhaps putting it over) to an audience, the simplest of monkey wrench monkey business messing with the functioning of the system proves to be enough to throw all of culture, or at least the humanities, into disarray and disorder. It began

in some ways with the artist Andy Warhol repeatedly painting images of a Campbell's soup can. What did it all mean people asked. Apparently, the message was that visual repetition reflected that assembly line of life and identity whereby consumerist ethos has, in our times, become the stuff of authenticity. It's an ironic thing, like how the lead solder that held food cans together spoiled the stew on Franklin's Arctic expedition such that everyone went nuts and, instead of hunting and eating seals to survive the winter, eventually hunted and ate each other. Little fissures matter most and are weak spots in modernity; that's where you find the calorie-rich marrow. In 1989, for instance, a simple phrase by East Berlin officials announced the opening of the Wall that had for decades separated into two camps families, the German people, and, symbolically, the world.

"Notes about the new rules were handed to a spokesman, Günter Schabowski - who had no time to read them before his regular press conference. When he read the note aloud for the first time, reporters were stunned.

'Private travel outside the country can now be applied for without prerequisites,' he said. Surprised journalists clamoured for more details.

Shuffling through his notes, Mr Schabowski said that "as far as he was aware, it was effective immediately." Therafter, millions of people were free to travel anywhere in Germany. So the devil's in the details, the stitches that make the garment of meaning, the delivery of facts combines with their reception therein lying the message.

Sixty years ago, in 1964, a Toronto thinker named Marshall McLuhan put it succinctly: *the medium is the message*. His rejoinder to those fuddy-duddies among us who truly believe that reality and the truth are out there, and like Fox Mulder of the *X Files* bunkered in the basement of epistemology, can be uncovered with bravery and certitude, goes as follows: "What we are considering here are the psychic and social consequences of the designs or patterns as they amplify or accelerate existing processes. For the 'message' of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs." In this sense, pedagogy

teaches one industrial truth: how to listen, learn, recount and repeat. How to behave, in other words. Yet in life, as in the real world and in university studies, we do well to remember not only to listen but also to recant what others have said—the better to think for ourselves and to truly express something new.

Just as Marx famously said that the hand mill produces the feudalist and the steam mill the capitalist, perhaps the distance education mill can produce something more than the run of the mill graduate with a sheet of paper and no road map to success. Perhaps, at AU, we can become the outcome of a process that pumps out diligent thinkers ascending to innovative new heights of success. At the very least we learn how much labour truly goes into the production of academic success in a class of one, where we are the medium through which we learn the message.

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



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: Odenza Vacations College Scholarship

Sponsored by: Odenza Vacations

Deadline: May 1, 2024

Potential payout: \$500

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be residents of Canada or the U.S., be between the ages of 17 and 24 as at September 1, 2024, and have a GPA of 2.5 or greater.

What's required: An online application along with a maximum 1000-word essay explaining why you want to be in College/University.

Tips: Read the essay essential elements section on the application form carefully.

Where to get info: odenzavacationsscholarships.com/vacations



Chazz Bravado World's Top Billionaires

Wanda Waterman



IF YOU GATHERED
BERNARD ARNAULT,
ELON MUSK,
JEFF BEZOS, AND
MARK ZUCKERBURG
TOGETHER
IN ONE ROOM,
WHAT DO YOU THINK
THEY'D TALK ABOUT?



MY HUNCH IS
THEY'D TALK ABOUT
HOW GREAT IT IS
TO BE SO RICH
AND HAVE ACCESS
TO COUNTLESS
CHICKY-POOS.



NOT THAT
I MIND BEING
A CORPORATE
SECURITY
SPECIALIST.



THAT'S RIGHT. I
REALLY DON'T
MIND WATCHING
THE CHICKY-POOS
CLIMBING OVER
EACH OTHER FOR
A DATE WITH
A BILLIONAIRE.



WHY?
BECAUSE WHILE
MR. MONEYBAGS
IS SWEATING OVER
THE BOTTOM LINE,
THE CHAZZ MAN
IS FOOTLOOSE
AND FANCY FREE!



I'M CRYING
ON THE INSIDE.

The Foreign Interference Commission, Part II

Stage I, Week 2 (Overview)

Alek Golijanin



On April 2nd, 2024, stage one, week two of the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Process and Democratic Institutions (The Commission) began. The four days of hearings featured testimonies provided by national party chairs, current and former Members of Parliament, and leaders from the security and intelligence community.

Some of the issues raised by national party chairs.

What the testimonies provided by the party chairs of Canada's big three federal political parties seemed to indicate was that there was quite a bit of confusion when it came to classified briefings. All three chairs were subject to a background check, although the full extent of the background checks was not specified. The meeting held with public safety stakeholders occurred under strict conditions; it was exclusively verbal and there were no paper or notes.

Some of the briefings they received were described as overly general, and that it was the media who they considered to be the leaders with stories and information as it related to foreign interference. This is where they said the main information about foreign interference came from. Media reports were described as being far more detailed than the security briefings, and that there were times where they would learn nothing from them at all.

Some of the documents related to the election integrity briefings submitted to the court and referenced by lawyers were not recognized by any of the party chairs—they were never seen. All the chairs raised issue with the details within the submitted documents, saying there was never that level of specificity at any of the meetings and that the documents being discussed were only seen by the chairs in the early mornings hours as they were submitted at the last minute.

Overall, none of the chairs had foreign interference on their radar, they all saw the engagement process with security briefings as being inconsistent and that it required operational improvements. They suggested it may be necessary to receive more extensive background checks because the meetings that took place were superficial.

What came as a surprise during this panel was the acknowledgement that non-residents of Canada were eligible to vote in some nomination elections, even though non-residents can not vote in the federal election.

Matters addressed by past and present Members of Parliament

Both past and present Members of Parliament (MPs) suggested that they would have preferred that security briefings began earlier because foreign interference was not on any of their radars. Predictive modelling, a more comprehensive system than traditional polling, had identified that the results of some ridings were significantly outside of the modelling window, and between five and nine ridings may have been impacted as the first indication of potential "foreign interference". Additionally, the MPs highlighted that most of the information they were receiving on foreign interference was also through the media.

The MPs were not favourable of the security and intelligence community's work, and suggested there was a lack of information provided on foreign interference or the locations of such activity. While none of them suggested that the foreign interference affected the election, there was a belief that seats were lost because of the interference. There was also mention of political stakeholder concerns being downplayed and that the communication channels between those stakeholders and the security and intelligence community were limited. While political stakeholders would submit information on suspected acts of foreign interference, it was not reciprocated.

Some other issues raised by the MPs focused on the approach to foreign interference being overly broad and should have focused more specifically on ridings than the national outcome. There was mention of foreign actors being able to amplify and boost different posts without anyone knowing, different digital platforms shadow banning some candidates, agencies not having a direct line of sight into different apps, and how elected officials and regular citizens deserved to know when they were the targets of foreign interference.

What came as a surprise during their testimonies was the suggestion that ballot secrecy at the polls was not enough, because whether someone voted was public knowledge. This was considered to be a big enough hindrance to keep some ethnic Canadians from voting, but it was suggested that legislation was in the works to address this privacy vulnerability.

GAC, RCMP, CSE, and CSIS. The intelligence alphabet soup.

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) described their mandate as falling under the purview of three Ministers: the Minister of Foreign Affairs, focusing on foreign policy; the Minister of Trade, focusing on international trade policy, exports, and imports; and the Minister of International Development, focusing on spending around the world. GAC also spoke about the world of diplomacy and how diplomacy was about establishing foreign influence, building networks, and getting familiar with counterparts from around the world. They said Canada was in the business of diplomacy and would try to influence legislators of other countries, their staffers, and different levels of government. Diplomacy was described as a contact sport, where Canada's representatives would actively pursue policy positions that were favorable for it, but they never got involved in the elections process of foreign countries. In short, GAC was focused on international affairs.

AU-thentic Events

Upcoming AU Related Events

Library Chat

Tues, Apr 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

The Writing Process

Polishing the Assignment

Tues, Apr 16, 12:30 to 1:30 pm MDT

Online via MS Teams

Hosted by AU Write Site

www.athabascau.ca/news/events/the-writing-process-webinar-series

Register through above link

MBA for Executives Webinar

Wed, Apr 17, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

www.athabascau.ca/news/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20240417

RSVP through above link

Faculty of Business Undergrad Program Orientation for New Students

Wed, Apr 17, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

www.athabascau.ca/news/events/faculty-of-business-undergraduate-program-orientation-for-new-students-20240417

RSVP through above link

www.ausu.org/governance/meeting-agendas/

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

More AU-thentic Events

2024 AU Research Forum

Research for a Better Tomorrow

Wed, Apr 17, and Thur Apr 18

Online

Hosted by AU Research Office

<https://site.pheedloop.com/event/AURResearch2024/schedule>

Register at:

<https://site.pheedloop.com/event/AURResearch2024/register#category>

Library Chat

Thur, Apr 18, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT

Online

Hosted by AU Library

www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html

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

AUSU Student Council Meeting

Thur, Apr 18, 6:00 to 7:00 pm MDT

Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/governance/meeting-agendas/

Download meeting agenda through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

The RCMP described their mandate as not being related to elections, but a memorandum of understanding with Elections Canada assured cooperation with various stakeholders. The RCMP explained they would pursue criminal investigations only when there was a violation of the Criminal Code or Security of Information Act. The RCMP confirmed it did not have any criminal investigations for foreign interference during the 43rd and 44th general election, but some post-election files are still under investigation. Additionally, it was explained that, prior to the 43rd general, there was no hub to share which agencies were watching elections, how all stakeholders were far better off since the 42nd general election, and how, despite that, there was room for improving systems. In short, the RCMP was the sole stakeholder with policing powers, so they cooperated closely with different national security investigations.

The Communications Security Establishment (CSE) described their mandate as focusing on providing cyber security and information protections, gathering foreign intelligence, carrying out defensive and active cyber operations, and offering technical and operational assistance. The CSE explained how they offer robust intelligence dissemination and tracking tools, as well as access to databases on top secret systems available to individuals with clearance and need-to-know accounts. Primary consumers of CSE intelligence include GAC, CSIS, RCMP, and various clients across government. In short, the CSE was centered around signals intelligence, but did not have policing powers.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) described their mandate as focusing on collecting information and intelligence on activities suspected of constituting threats to the security of Canada. It focused on advising the Government of Canada and supported different departments and agencies through screening and foreign intelligence collection. More specifically, CSIS investigations focused on espionage; sabotage; foreign influenced activities; terrorism and subversion; and assisting with security assessments, screening, and collecting foreign intelligence. In short, CSIS was centered around human intelligence, but did not have policing powers.

Another key cooperative group, Security Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force (SITE TF), also provided an overview of their responsibilities. SITE TF is a whole-of-government working group created in 2019 that coordinates the collection and analysis of concerning threats to Canada's federal election processes. SITE TF is comprised of experts from GAC, RCMP, CSE, and CSIS. In addition to cooperating with those agencies, SITE TF engages with key senior decision makers within government and political party representatives. In short, SITE TF focused exclusively on election-related matters, including everything from the actions of specific hostile state proxies or agents to acting on sources of disinformation.

How digital platforms operate within Canada is likely to change.

Canada's lax laws on the kinds of digital interactions that occur or the digital material that is accessible within its national domain may allow some digital platforms to become arbiters of what happens digitally within the country. The lack of digital legislation is further complicated because some digital platforms obliged to requests from national governments to block access to certain digital content across their national domains, while resisting such requests when they are made by countries like Canada.

Unlike Canada, many countries around the world have already begun a comprehensive process of creating this type of legislation. While different digital platforms have the right to determine what can or cannot be posted on their platforms, countries have the same right to determine what can or cannot appear within their national domains.

Ultimately, the lack of willingness of some digital platforms to engage with the government of Canada to help ensure safer societies and a more robust democracy is why the operation of all digital platforms within Canada's digital landscape is bound to become confined within specific digital legislation. It is very likely that The Commission will recommend specific legislation be introduced to address the issue of non-compliant digital platforms, as, since they are based outside of Canada, it is the only way to account for the threats posed by them.

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



An Easter of Love

Marie Well



On Easter Friday it somehow slipped my mind that it was Easter Friday. We had just seen a movie, when we suddenly pulled over, and I was asked to run and pick up a submarine sandwich. Quickly flying out of the car, I was lost at first, especially as I have very poor vision, and I had never been to this Subway in my life.

I went in, and a lady was at the till, waiting to pay; her hair was receding, but she had an attractive figure, and I wondered what condition caused her hair, which was tied in a tight ponytail, to recede so much. I stood beside her as she dug into her purse for some change. I noticed she may have had hardships, but her face was soft. The look on her face was gentle and kind. There was a slight look of concern on her face as she dug for money in her purse. And when I saw her digging in her purse for every last coin, I announced I would pay for her meal.

She said, "Why are you doing that? Why?!" I told her she looked sweet and kind, and God wanted me to do this for her. Her eyes watered, and she said that she burnt dinner, that her son wanted food, and that the money for the sub was all she had for the weekend. And then she said, "God bless you." And I

said, "Maybe this money is from God, not me. I have the honor of delivering it to you." I tried to think of a way to give her extra cash, but I only had my debit card, and I knew no banking machine nearby.

I told her she was a good mom, and tears formed in her eyes. "But I burnt his dinner," she said. I told her, "If I had a choice between a mom who made perfect dinners and had billions of dollars but no love versus a mom who burnt my dinner but was filled with love—your love—I'd take the mom who burnt my dinner any day." And she repeated, "Who burnt the dinner."

And then I said, "When we leave this world, the only thing we take is love. We don't take material objects, feasts, submarines, none of it. Just the love, which you are filled with." Her eyes were watery, and she said something I can't recall, and I replied, "What do you think this all is? I bought your dinner because I could see the love. You came all the way here to spend your last bit of money to feed your son. The look on your face is love. You are filled with love." I wondered how I could help her more, wishing I had cash. The woman said she'd pay it forward. I said she paid it forward enough with her service to her son. She didn't seem to hear me and repeated, "I could pay it forward." Her face looked like innocence. I paused and then agreed with her, as any act of generosity is a beautiful gift of love, and her generosity would bring her closer to the light. The woman looked so beautiful in her heartfelt suffering. Her eyes welled over with tears, and she left the store with her sandwich.

And then I remembered it was Easter Friday. And I realized she probably had Saturday and Sunday to feed her son before she got paid. I hoped she had food for Sunday, and I wished I had asked her if she wanted me to pay for more subs to take home and soups. I felt the pain of a missed opportunity.

Later, I remembered a story I saw in a news video. It was about a woman starving with her children at a hotel, and they had no food for the Thanksgiving holiday. A woman invited her family for dinner, and they feasted that holiday. The woman who invited them seemed to know personal details about the hungry woman she couldn't have known. And when the hungry woman went to return the next day to say thanks, she discovered the hotel room had been empty, and no one had occupied it. If I recall correctly, the room was undergoing renovations. It was a story about angels narrated by John Boy Walton for those fortunate enough to have seen his shows.

I wish I could've given that woman and her son a big feast. It's Easter Sunday, and I hope they had something to eat today. I wish I would've been on the ball and given more. I had forgotten it was Easter Friday and that the month was ending. I do a task and can barely tell if it has taken me ten minutes or three hours to finish. And a one-week holiday feels like six months to me. In other words, I don't have the best sense of time.

We will all have those moments when someone in line in front of us is scrounging for change or must put something they can't afford back. Or we see someone sitting against a building with a white sheet over his head. It's moments like these that I believe God calls us. We feel it tugging at our hearts to do something. Those moments draw us and those we support closer to the light. The woman's soul was more beautiful than an eternal choir of angels in her magnitude of love. And my little act of kindness was God's way to turn a burnt dinner on Easter Friday into the realization that she, like all of us, is pure love. And I believe nothing can truly hurt us, as we are all eternal souls of pure love. Nothing can hurt pure, unconditional love. Nothing.



Beyond Literary Landscapes Post-War Novels

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

In this week’s column, I focus on—what have been termed—post-war novels.

These novels focus on the lives of characters following various types of catastrophic wars that left

the geographical areas devastated, as well as negatively affecting individuals. Indeed, many of the characters in these novels were left feeling a sense of disconnect, apathy, bleakness, and fear.

Authors well known for post-war novels include Michael Ondaatje, Virginia Woolf, Joseph Heller, J.D. Salinger, and Khaled Hossieni.

What

Novels focusing on post-war experiences include *The English Patient* by Michael Ondaatje, *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, and *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini.

Where

These novels are set throughout the United States, Great Britain, Italy, and Afghanistan.

When

These works are set in the 19, 20, and 21-centuries.

Why

Post-war novels may appeal specifically to ENGL students who are also taking or interested in POLI, SOCI, PSYC, and HIST courses. These novels may be of particular interest to learners who would like to learn about the historical, political, and sociological causes—and aftermath of war—as well as its effects on the human psyche.

How

AU’s wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to the post-war experience 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 specific courses fulfill your personal graduation requirements!)

AU students interested in learning more about this topic may enroll in [HIST 367: The Second World War](#), a senior-level, three-credit course, which “provide[s] a fuller understanding of the events and attitudes of the war years and of some of the arguments that are very much alive today concerning what really happened in that vital decade of 1937 to 1947.” (Please note that while this course does not require prerequisites, [HIST 202: The West from the Enlightenment to the 21st Century](#) and [HIST 216: Europe, 1618-1939: From the Thirty Years’ War to the Age of Dictators](#) are both recommended. At the time of publication, this course was currently closed for revision).

In addition, student may consider [SOCI 339: Sociology of War & Armed Conflict](#), another senior-level, three-credit course, which “is the study of war as a social process involving social institutions, social structures, and the socially learned behaviour of individual social actors.” While this course does not require prerequisites, [SOCI 287: Introduction to Sociology I](#) is recommended. Happy reading!

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

2024 AU Research Forum

RESEARCH FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Research for a Better Tomorrow

AU Research

The [2024 AU Research Forum](#) is just around the corner, on April 17 and 18!

[Register now](#) for virtual sessions on a range of topics, from ethics and sustainability, to knowledge mobilization and media relations, and much more.

The forum isn't just for researchers – all AU team members, staff and students are invited to learn about, engage with, and celebrate the research taking place across our university.

About this year's forum

This year's theme is *Research for a Better Tomorrow*.

Grand challenges require urgent action and AU researchers are tackling some of the world's most pressing research questions. The 2024 Forum will celebrate research impact but also serve to equip members of the research community with knowledge and tools that will help ensure inclusive research excellence for a secure and sustainable future.

AU researchers will deliver talks that engage with the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) and proposed signature areas of research and make meaningful contributions towards grand challenges that have impact from the local to the global.

Poet Maeve
Nice People from Denmark

Wanda Waterman



MY PARTY GETS MORE MONEY IF WE TELL DONORS WE'RE BEING OVERRUN BY IMMIGRANTS FROM UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

STILL, I WISH MORE OF OUR IMMIGRANTS CAME FROM NICE COUNTRIES, LIKE DENMARK.



DENMARK'S ONE OF THE HAPPIEST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD. WHY WOULD THEY COME TO A POOPHOLE COUNTRY LIKE THIS?

IF DENMARK IS SO GREAT, WHY AREN'T IMMIGRANTS GOING THERE?



THEY ARE, YA DILDO!

HEY, THAT MEANS THEIR RIGHT-WING PARTIES SHOULD BE GETTING BIGGER DONATIONS, TOO! CONSERVATIVES CAN TAKE OVER THE WORLD NOW!



(SIGH)
I DO BELIEVE THAT THERE SHIP HAS ALREADY SAILED.

AUSU UPDATE

April 12, 2024



Passing the Baton:
Welcoming the 2024-2025 AUSU
Executive Committee

"Passing the Baton: Welcoming the 2024-2025 AUSU Executive Committee"

The Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) would like to thank our outgoing 2023-2024 Executive Committee, including President Naju Syed, VP External Manmeet Kaur, VP Finance and Administration Chantel Groening (formerly Bradley), and VP Community and Wellness Natalia Iwanek. Their commitment and dedication to student success have helped guide our organization and enhance the student experience at Athabasca University (AU) over the past year.

To celebrate and reflect with them, check out the latest AUSU Open Mic Podcast, "[Episode 86: AUSU Executives Wrap Up Their Term.](#)" This episode explores the wins and personal growth experienced by your outgoing student executive leaders.

With the upcoming AUSU Council changeover meeting on April 18th, we are thrilled to [welcome the incoming 2024-2025 AUSU Executive Committee](#). Chantel Groening will be moving to the role of President, having served the past year as your VP Finance and Administration. Jan Lehmann will step into the role of VP External, eager to forge strong partnerships and advocate for our students on a provincial and federal level. Diana Ramirez, your new VP Finance and Administration, will help ensure the organization is fiscally responsible and managed effectively. And, Olivia Shepherd will take on the VP Community and Wellness role, committed to fostering a supportive and healthy learning environment for all AU students.

We are excited to see the new heights this dynamic team will reach and look forward to a year of growth, achievement, and student advocacy!

[The Voice Magazine does not edit or review this content.]

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THE VOICE

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Alek Golijanin, Wanda Waterman, Xine Wang and others!

www.voicemagazine.org

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