

THE VOICE

Vol 30 Issue 32 2022-08-19

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

PTSD & The Menstrual Cycle

Dealing with the Connections

Simple Ways for Summer

Enjoy it without going on Vacation

*Plus:
Classic Children's Literature
Music Review
and much more!*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We love to hear from you!
Send your questions and comments to voicemagazine.org,
and please indicate if we may publish your letter!

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

Got a Need to Report?

Karl Low



August 25th is the next AUSU Council meeting, and it's going to be a large one. Having not met in July, this meeting includes the details of AUSU's next budget, as well as the executive work plans and another look at the terms of reference for the indigenous circle.

If some of this sounds like some vaguely interesting stuff, you should consider taking up a job reporting on AUSU Council meetings for *The Voice Magazine*. You'll find out more about what your student union is doing for your money and be able to earn some spending money while you're at it.

The commitment is to show up for the meetings which happen once a month and typically last for slightly less than an hour (though this one will be longer, I'm sure) listen to the meeting, take notes, maybe ask some questions, and then write up a report that helps students get an idea of what the important bits of the meeting were and what AUSU is doing for your fees.

If it sounds a bit daunting, not to worry, you'll have plenty of support, both with me and from AUSU staff, and in return you'll get a bit of spending money each month. If you're interested, whether in doing it or just finding out a bit more, than by all means, [contact me](#).

While at the moment, the issue of Athabasca University vs. Alberta has died down as the UCP leadership campaign is heating up, that doesn't mean that it's gone. With only a couple of months before the university has to decide whether it will agree to the Advanced Education Minister's new terms, or suffer the financial hit from failing to meet the minister's impossible and ludicrous goals, expect it to get new life soon. While the minister has said he's open to negotiating the terms of the agreement, he's also stated quite clearly that he's not changing anything about the goals he's provided. Either way, the timeline the university has to do anything is quickly running out.

Meanwhile, in this issue, we start off with another student interview that has some great advice for students, this time from a student who spends what time she can travelling and making memories. Find out more about her journey in this week's Minds We Meet.

Plus, Alek returns with a look at how PTSD intersects with menopause and the menstrual cycle in general, with some advice for women about how to ensure they get proper help when they need it. I've done some research on my own about how the medical profession has been failing women for some time, as diagnoses of certain conditions are different from how they're done in men. This is also echoed when it comes to diagnoses of those who are non-white. And while the medical profession is starting to take notice of these problems, they still exist, so it can be important for you to know what to do to help ensure you get the right diagnosis.

Also, as summer starts to wind down, Xine Wang gives us a few options for how we might enjoy the final weeks when we've already used our vacations, or maybe simply don't want to attempt to brave the airports and always changing flight schedules.

Of course, we've also got music reviews, advice, musings about the nature of our education, events, scholarships and more. Enjoy the read!

MINDS WE MEET



The Voice Magazine recently had a chance to chat with Roxan Foursha (she/her) from Rosetown, Saskatchewan.

Roxan is currently enrolled “the last few classes before obtaining [her] Bachelor of Professional Arts – Communications Major.” She related, “It’s been a long journey but I’m almost there.”

On a personal note, Roxan is “a 42-year-old, currently Marketing Coordinator in Rosetown, Saskatchewan,” who has also “worked in the Broadcast/Communications industries for 18 years.” She continued, “I was born in Herschel, Saskatchewan, which has rich Indigenous and Paleontological histories. If you’re ever in the area – it’s a must see.”

She had some great advice for new students and/or prospective students. “My advice would be to make sure to reach out to tutors, student support, join the AUSU and AU social media channels and take part in webinars where applicable. There is also the Write Site—which I just learned about recently and I sure wish

I would’ve known about it years ago. What a wonderful resource that is. I would also say take your time if you can and aren’t under funding restraints. There is no shame in taking longer than most, the end goal is the most important.”

As for advice for current students? “I’m a goal-oriented person. So writing down what I need to accomplish helps. What keeps me motivated to study is setting goals monthly. I try to complete a class once a month or month and a half and that is what I work toward. I try to do a bit of my classes every night.”

When she is not studying, Roxan is “an avid world traveler and this fills [her] cup.” She stated, “I have been to many different places all over the world. I live by the motto that you can always make more money, but you can’t make more memories without doing something—so do it.”

She let *The Voice Magazine* know about one of her most memorable vacations, which was “hands down Africa.” She mentioned, “I travelled to Rwanda, then trekked Gorillas in the jungle in Uganda and then summited Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. Africa is life changing and if you ever have a chance to go, go!” This journey is also closely tied in with her proudest moment in life, which she said “would be summiting Mount Kilimanjaro ... on mom’s birthday.” She explained, “She had passed away a couple of years before that—but I think she was right with me when I was up there.”

As for her most valuable lesson learned in life? “Your mind is far stronger than your body and you can accomplish anything you put your mind too. And don’t take anything or anyone in your life for granted—ever!”

Roxan had a unique response to the question of who in her life has had the greatest influence on her desire to learn. “This is an interesting question, there was no one person who influenced me to start this journey. I have always had a bucket list—and obtaining my degree was on it ... so I started down the road,” she stated.

As for her experience with online learning so far? “Online learning has been difficult at times. There are no other students within your class (unless you search for them or join online groups) to bounce ideas, receive feedback from, etc. so the interpersonal communication can be a struggle. Time management with daily tasks in life can also cause some stress, with deadlines within class looming. However, the self-directed learning that occurs far outweighs it. There was a lot of freedom in some of the classes that I’ve taken to be able to do projects on personal interests. And you can work at your own pace. I have been able to complete some courses within a month so that has been great.”

Roxan’s most memorable AU course so far has been CMNS 419: Digital Storytelling. She explained, “I was a former news broadcaster, so I was able to use my former career and skills to accomplish this class in a short amount of time and the projects were really fun.”

As for communications with her course tutors? “I find it very helpful and for the most part my tutors have been helpful.”

If she were the new president of AU, Roxan had a few suggestions as her first project. “When a student is first accepted into their program, they need to send a physical package of materials to them, outline all of the wonderful resources AU has, such as Write Site, student counsellors, HealthLink, the library, etc. Everything that’d you’d be able to physically find at a university in person,” she continued, “make a big binder and send it out. I’d designate one person to each student to be their contact for their term of their schooling that can help them with any questions and directions the student may have. I would also implement the option of either having paper copies/textbooks or strictly online options. There are still some people that prefer paper and books to online.”

When *The Voice Magazine* asked which famous person, past or present, she would like to have lunch with, and why, she chose author Chevy Stevens, stating “she is one of the most amazing authors I’ve ever read.” She continued, “I have read everything she has ever written, and I hope she’s writing another book currently. I think she lives in Vancouver, so I’d let her pick the place as there are some great places to eat in that city.”

On a final note, Roxan stated, “I wish everyone wherever they are in the world and within their educational journey the best! You got this!” Best of luck Roxan!

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.



Simple Ways to Enjoy the Rest of Summer Without Going on Vacation

Xine Wang



Given the recent chaos in the airports and with flight bookings, it might be worth our while to stay in our own cities and towns for the rest of summer. Although I had plans to visit the US this summer, I've opted instead to spend most of my summer here, in Calgary, Alberta.

Despite being known for dry summers, there are a number of exciting things that can make your summer eventful without traveling far. Here's some of my favorite summer things to do:

Host a barbecue:

Having a barbecue with friends and family is a great way to enjoy the outdoors in the comfort of your home (or someone else's home). Barbecues are easier to prepare than other dinner gatherings I've hosted, mainly because the biggest challenge is ensuring your proteins are prepared well and there's no food poisoning. Other than being creative with salads and sides, your main dish is practically ready to go out on the grill. My last

barbecue featured my signature punch made of fresh pineapple, sparkling water, and a generous amount of alcohol. The summer doesn't have to be that dry, after all. If you're feeling more adventurous, hosting a barbecue in a provincial or national park makes the experience even more memorable.

Explore a new neighborhood:

Despite having lived in Edmonton most of my life, I was surprised to find there are still many neighborhoods I have not ventured into. As for Calgary, I've only recently made the move to this Southernmost major city in Alberta and everything is fairly new and fresh. New neighborhoods usually have their own shopping centers, fast-food and sit-down restaurants with their unique flares that are worth checking out. I loved even just walking around new neighborhoods to check out newly built houses and developments

Pick berries:

One of my favorite activities in the summer as a child was picking berries at farms not too far from the city. Even at half an hour outside of the city you can hit some local farms that entertain guests with a "pick your own [blank]" option. It's a chance to learn more about local produce. I find that learning where my food comes from has a huge impact on waste. Whether you're doing this with an entire family or just a friend or significant other, it is a great option to stock your fridge with fresh produce.





Rent a boat:

There's nothing quite as peaceful as rowing a boat down the river in the summer. For my city, there's a significant river flowing through the heart of the city. Every summer, raft rental companies have rentals that let you experience floating down the river. It's a serene experience that's great with friends. The best part is that there's usually a great view to go along with it.

Have a picnic:

This is another activity that is exclusive to our precious Canadian summers. It's an easy way to stay entertained and not break the budget. I personally love charcuterie boards for picnics and a bottle of wine. It makes a great date night activity but also an excellent family activity as well.

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



How PTSD Can Impact Menstrual Cycles in Women

Alek Golijanin



Menopause can be a difficult health challenge for women. It's when the women's menstrual cycle—how the body prepares women for pregnancy—has essentially stopped for 12 months and not produced a menstrual period. The cycle itself repeats about every 28 days and continues until menopause at a certain age, usually when the woman is above the age of 40. But there are treatments that health professionals can recommend to alleviate some of the health challenges that come with that stopping, so it's good to talk to your doctor if you're experiencing difficulties.

The interesting thing about the female hormone estrogen is that low estrogen levels are associated with symptoms of anxiety and depression. What is even more interesting is that lower estrogen levels can also result in greater reactions to fear-inducing events.

Researchers seem to believe that the hormonal cycle might be to blame for the higher prevalence (more than twice the rate of men) of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in women. And conversely, if a woman develops PTSD, either acute or chronic, it seems to carry over and affect the hormonal cycle experience for a woman of any age.

Some healthy women have reported struggling with mental wellness during menstrual cycles. Even women who have never experienced any adverse childhood experiences or traumas can struggle with these cycles. For women who have experienced early childhood trauma, it can send their body out of loop with the effects only being realized in adulthood. There also appears to

be a connection with early onset of menopause for women that are survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault. Although these are painful wounds, they are invisible wounds, and not being able to see them makes it hard for health professionals to diagnose them.

While I was going over research centered around PTSD and the unique impact it can have on women, I also stumbled across two rare psychiatric disorders known as premenstrual exacerbation (PME) and premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD). The scary thing about the two illnesses is that no one is certain of the exact causes for either, but changes in hormone levels is believed to play a role along with a person's genetics. PME tends to worsen the symptoms of pre-existing conditions like depressive disorder or generalized anxiety disorder, whereas PMDD occurs before menstruation and goes away after bleeding, and the severe rise and fall of symptoms may mimic the symptoms in bipolar disorder.

What really struck me with PMDD was that, in layman's terms, it was the result of having an oversensitive response to natural and normal changes in hormones and that it increased the likelihood of women attempting self-harm. There is so much we still do not know about the conditions that plague our health like how many "sister illnesses" there might be that mirror other illnesses but that are their own unique illness. PMDD also seems to be more common in teenage girls, but there seems to be a total lack of awareness around this health issue, which has implications for diagnosing and treating it.

So when it comes to living with PME or PMDD, it is important to document the occurrence of any extreme fits of feelings like anger, sadness, anxiety, and restlessness, as well as physical pains like cramps, bloating, breast tenderness, and joint or muscle pain. It is also important to keep track of the menstrual cycle and when you have your period. Having this information handy can help health professionals better diagnose you. It can be a real gamechanger, but it emphasizes the need for everyone to keep greater track of their health at all times.

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: Canadian Western Agribition Scholarship

Sponsored by: Canadian Western Agribition (CWA)

Deadline: October 1, 2022

Potential payout: \$2500

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be in their second or subsequent year of a post-secondary education program, be passionate about agriculture, and have participated in CWA. See [full eligibility requirements](#).

What's required: An online application form including contact and academic info; summaries of your experience in agriculture, community activities, and career objectives; academic transcripts; and contact info for three references.

Tips: Check out the other two scholarships that can be applied for using the same application.

Where to get info: www.agribition.com/scholarships-awards/scholarships



Once You Find Your Passion, Keep Doing It

Marie Well



Once you discover what you love doing, do it for the rest of your life. Don't listen to the naysayers who argue that there is no such thing as a passion-filled life—that there's just discipline. Those people merely haven't found their passion yet.

There are different ways to discover your passions. For example, you could compile a list of every activity you've gravitated to since childhood. Or you could consider things you often purchase at stores or discuss with friends. Then, select the activities that sound most enjoyable. Next, research them on a job board to see what it takes to turn each one into a viable career. And if you want the utmost passion, find ways to combine as many of your passions as possible in your everyday life.

But what type of passions drive you? I've listed several to consider and explore. But before reading them, consider taking a [free personality test](#). It'll reveal your personality type.

Mine is INFJ, which stands for introverted, intuitive, feeling, and judging. After, search each of the main headings listed below, followed by the words "... ideal for INFJ" or your particular personality type. For instance, I would search "exercise ideal for INFJs." But don't limit yourself to one search result. Instead, search multiple articles and make a spreadsheet of all the possibilities. Once you do that, try one of the results that sounds most enticing from each of the three categories listed below.

With that in mind, here are the three essential categories we all should feel passionate about: exercise, career, and hobby. Try to pick one possible passion from each category. That way, you'll come closer to discovering what really excites you. I illustrate each category below with desires deemed suitable for INFJs.

Exercise. Fitness is one area we all should adopt if longevity, health, a fit body, increased energy, and stamina are goals. But even if none of those are goals, fitness can still make a difference in every aspect of one's life.

The ideal fitness activities for INFJs include hot yoga, outdoor sports, running, and circuit training. Try one or two of whatever workouts are suited for your personality type.

But don't let the list stop you from branching out. You, like me, may like martial arts, weightlifting, dance, or cycling—none of which are on the list. Try them all. And remember, fitness activities are best when they balance strength training (such as weightlifting or calisthenics) with cardio (such as dance or cycling) with stretching (such as yoga). Combining multiple fitness activities is essential for optimal health.

Career. Don't waste a moment randomly choosing a career. Instead, use your personality type to Google all the professions that fit you. Then search on a job board like [indeed.com](#) for what it takes to gain that career and what to expect regarding job demand and pay.

INFJs make good nutritionists, psychologists, counselors, psychiatrists, designers, teachers, writers, entrepreneurs, marketers, and more.

If you focus on a career suited for you, you may go far. But be sure to know the upper limit in pay and job title if wealth and career advancement are goals.

Hobby. You might not yet have a clearly defined hobby. Or you might want to explore a new creative project. Take heart. A search for ideal hobbies for your personality type will give you lists of suitable activities to try.

To illustrate, INFJs would do well with writing, reading, designing, and gardening. Combining them into a single pursuit can be highly rewarding, too. For instance, you could write and illustrate a book on best gardening practices.

Once you start exploring an ideal sport, career, or hobby, you may notice significant improvements in your quality of life. But don't stop there. Instead, keep exploring your passions until you find a blend that leaves you stimulated throughout the day. That's the sign you discovered your ideal recipe for a vibrant life.



Fly on the Wall

Jason Sullivan

Waiter, Waiter, there's a Hole in My Agency



Who is the you that makes your choices yours? AU lets us put our option muscles to work in a big way; these decisions embody our personal agency. We exercise agency each time we prioritize our individual studies over calls for attention in our private and work lives. To have agency is to have a positive grasp on our faculties of decision making. From there we can put plans into action. Student life is full of choices: when to study our course material, when to let it lapse until a bolt of scholastic stimulation strikes; even when we feel like getting down to business, external forces can muscle their way into our minds and lead us astray from our noble intentions. Choices are never cut and dried, and to address the nature of our personal agency is essentially to

better understand our selves and our context. Consider what happens when we say to ourselves that, just now, we don't feel much like studying. AU can invoke an awful lot of *just now I don't feel like* moments. An invisible key is turned when we turn away from our studies such that opportunities, say for summer frolics in the great outdoors, are unlatched.

Crucially, whenever we say *I feel like* or *I don't feel like* we naturally experience a space, a gap, between ourselves and the desire of our longings. In this way our self is separate from the actions that illustrate our being. There's a hole in our agency and, paradoxically, that hole is the essence of ourselves! By this token, to procrastinate isn't to fall from grace—because we are always choosing our choices and being ourselves—it's the quality of these choices that are thrown into question.

Feelings about our agency allow us to intuit what our core self most desires. The very moment when we say the *I* we acquire a certain distance from our feelings and the actions that follow upon them. In other words, who we *are* is separate from even our most intimate predilections.

Our core, our inner we, is as timeless as a dandelion fluff on a summer breeze, if we remember that our choices are mere manifestations of our agency and not manifestations of the entirety of our being. In this sense freedom from absolute responsibility for our actions allows a lighter weight on our metaphysical shoulders when we don't live up to our own lofty expectations. Go easy, for the going is separate from the being. This way of thinking also reduces the problematic

nature of our agency. Remember, we can never be sure if decisions reflect ourselves or are simply pressed upon us by those pesky external forces. A good dose of reflection is needed if we are to establish priorities and in particular a sense of what our future self is likely to retroactively endorse as ideal choices.

Feeeeelings and the Unconscious

Feeling like choosing something other than studying implies that we tend to carry within us resistance to doing what may need to be done to please our future selves. Unconscious aversions to pleasing others includes our future selves; no one wants to be told what to do all the time, not even by themselves. Likewise, choosing from a panoply of actions in a given moment occurs against a cultural backdrop of ideologies that function as a blue screen against which our sense of reality is written. Our choices thus hinge on our interpretation not only of what our true self desires, over and against external forces, but also bearing countenance to unconscious trickery that leads us astray from the big picture.

Finally, we must come to terms with the coercive nature of socialization itself. Psychoanalytic theory approaches here are useful for its approaches to repression; that is, unconscious impulses made manifest by inner conflicts over decisions. A psychoanalytic therapist will “typically pursue and elaborate the resisted action” when it’s brought up in dialogue with a client. This is because “a central aim of psychoanalysis is to expand the area of consciousness, to include ideas and affects that have been repressed” (Vehvailanen, online).

Once we’re aware of resistance as an unconscious force taking the form of self-repression we can own and potentially tame these impulses—when we feel like doing so, that is. There’s no getting away from the hall of mirrors that makes agency problematic whenever we’re unsure of our future actions. Even when external reality seems to be the reason we don’t study enough, it’s down to our inner mind to evaluate reality and bring certainty to our choices.

It’s fair to say that our unconscious is pulling a few levers that mitigate our best of intentions and can leave us stymied when in pursuit of our academic goals. Whatever else our agency is, it certainly can be a contested terrain. Inner turmoil can, however, be useful in that new ruminations may lead to new and exciting ideas and interpretations of our course material and its relation to our lives. The personal is never more political, per se, than when we come to see our reality within the scope of an academic discipline.

In contrast to the inner world of unconscious inclinations are the very real societal pressures that impact our agency. Sociologically an understanding of the cultural realm is key to controlling its consequences in pursuit of our best interests. We’re in a social soup driven by mass media; this can, at the least, be distracting. “Portraying a social problem as complex, with multiple points of view and structural dimensions, may be what citizens in a democracy need to grasp to try to understand the world around them. But it doesn’t make for a tidy 3-minute news segment sandwiched between commercials for pharmaceuticals or financial consultants” (Eastern Oregon University, online). Despite limitations under the general rubric of *brevity is the soul of wit*, whereby simple answers ring truer and pat assertions sound authentic, it’s empowering to make

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

AU Library catalogue upgrade

Tues, Aug 23, 9 am to 3 pm MDT

Scheduled system outage

AU Library

There will be no access to the AU library catalogue, databases and subscription resources for about 6 hours from 9:00 MT, due to a system upgrade.

AUSU Chats With Accessibility Services

Wed, Aug 24, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MDT

Online via Zoom

Hosted by AUSU

www.ausu.org/event/ausu-chats-with-accessibility-services/

No pre-registration necessary

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

new sense out of old troubles; maybe personal growth in the area of critical thinking is one of those invisible merits of an AU education.

The challenge with distance education, like any task where one is simultaneously the task and the taskmaster, is that to stay on course we have to beware and be aware of conflicting motivations in any given moment. That is, hopefully, until we actually sit down and get immersed in the joys of our course readings and essay writings. At the very least, when we're done we'll have a better assessment of our motivational abilities, because, like any new project, the outset is one thing and the carrying-out quite another. So, let's grab our inner stirrup and pull ourselves forward to meet our goals. May our best inner impulses win!

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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.



Music Review

An Eeriness to Everything

Jessica Young



Artist: Observe the 93rd

Album: an eeriness to everything

Alt-Rock duo Observe the 93rd have released their new album, *an eeriness to everything*. The album is available for streaming anywhere you get your music.

Hailing from Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, the band is comprised of vocalist and guitarist, Derek Henry, and drummer, Dylan Zepp. According to the duo, the band's songs are guided by a feeling, an idea, or an experience. Failure, triumph, suffering, joy—any abstract internal entity that yearns to be externalized.

Of the album, Henry says, "'an eeriness to everything' is a title that came to me one morning in the middle of the pandemic. All of our routines and distractions were temporarily dissolved and a broader perspective displaying how strange reality itself is became more

clear and potent than usual. This is one of the main themes of the album. It appears most notably on the song 'awareness of death', in which I talk about how we all participate in this "masquerade of normalcy", when existence is really very abstract and mysterious. Other main themes on the album are trauma, unhealthy means of coping, depression, and longing. But, there's always a backdrop of hope behind these dark cathartic expressions, probably most evident in a song title like 'You Are Not Alone'. Sometimes that's all it takes to trudge forward, to know you are not alone in your struggles. That's often what I look for when listening to music myself, and certainly a comfort we hope we can give to someone else who may need it when releasing our own music into the world."

An Eeriness To Everything consists of 14 tracks: An Eeriness To Everything; Dopamine; Trl; Night Raid; Mantra; The Simulation; Archaic; Now Forever; Old School Summer; Where the Ocean Sleeps; Awareness of Death; You Are Not Alone; Begin; and Go Ahead.

Several of the songs, including “Old School Summer” and “Dopamine” have music videos on [YouTube](#).

It’s difficult to pin down the sound of Observe The 93rd because the songs on this album are all very different. The opening title track, “An Eeriness To Everything” is a minute-long instrumental that sounds like it’s straight out of the *Stranger Things* soundtrack—eerie, haunting, and powerful. “You Are Not Alone” and “Night Raid” are closer to heavy metal than anything, while “Trl” and “Old School Summer” are pop-punk. Meanwhile, “Go Ahead” is a techy, electronic ballad. What remains consistent, however, is Dereck Henry’s unique and powerful voice. He reminds me of Serj Tankian from System of A Down or Michael Poulsen from Volbeat. Furthermore, throughout the album, the lyrics are well thought out—fun, introspective, critical, or nostalgia-inducing depending on the track.

I found this album particularly interesting after completing the AU course PSYC356: Introduction to Personality Theories. One of the units of the course discussed the psychologist Rollo May and his ideas regarding the concept of existential psychology. Terror management theory is some of the more recent research that has come from May’s work—this theory states that human beings are plagued by the existential terror of our impending death, and that we use anxiety-buffers, such as the promise of literal or symbolic immortality (i.e., religion), to impart a sense that we are a person of value living in a meaningful world. This worldview mitigates our existential terror and allows us to live our lives.

The songs “Awareness of Death” and “The Simulation” really speak to terror management theory and existentialism, with lyrics like, “It’s a beautiful masquerade of normalcy [...] In the back of my mind at all times resides the awareness of death.” Thought-provoking stuff.

Overall, I really enjoyed *an eeriness to everything*. Check out Observe the 93rd on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

World Photography Day is every August 19. Smartphones have encouraged everyone to try their hand at taking more photos, and we’ve dug up some articles to inspire you.

The best time to begin is always now. Barbara Lehtiniemi describes how her photo-a-day project advanced her photo-taking skills. “The project has prompted me to become more observant. I am more aware of the rhythms of the seasons and life unfolding around me. I keep an eye out for the colourful, unusual, or whimsical shot. I stretch my imagination.” Seize the Day – One Photo at a Time, January 17, 2014.

Photo exposure. The Voice features three websites with interesting photos to inspire and intrigue. “In photography, perspective, distance, and angle are everything—and sometimes an unusual twist on the photographer’s or subject’s position can mean a bizarre-looking shot.” Click of the Wrist – Picture This, June 8, 2012.

Beyond Literary Landscapes

Classic Children's Literature

Natalia Iwanek



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

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

Who

This column serves as an introduction to Classic Children's Literature, a reminder of some of the genre's classics, and as an inspiration for further reading.

Classic Children's Literature can be defined as “the body of written works and accompanying illustrations produced in order to entertain or instruct young people.” Believed to have emerged during the late 18 century, it often includes “classics of world literature, picture books and easy-to-read stories written exclusively for children, and fairy tales, lullabies, fables, folk songs, and other primarily orally transmitted materials.”

Some examples of well-known authors who wrote Classic Children's Literature include Robert Munsch, Don Freeman, and Eric Carle.

Other popular authors include A. A. Milne, Roald Dahl, Beatrix Potter, and L. M. Montgomery.

What

Some well-known works include Robert Munsch's *Love You Forever* and *The Paper Bag Princess*, *Corduroy* by Don Freeman, and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle.

Other works include L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* and A.A Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*.

Where

Many of these works are set throughout the United States and the United Kingdom.

When

These works often take place during the 20 and 21-century.

Why

These novels may be of interest for readers who would like to reminisce on some childhood memories, learn about the childhood favourites of others, and perhaps, introduce loved ones to old and new classics.

How

AU's wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to Classic Children's Literature are available in a variety of disciplines, including one's that may fit

into your Degree Works. (Always check with an AU counsellor to see if these particular courses fulfill your personal graduation requirements!)

AU students interested in learning more about this topic may enroll in [ENGL 305: Literature for Children](#), a senior-level, three-credit course, which “introduces the student to children’s literature, its history and development, and its rich variety of forms and techniques.” Prerequisites include [ENGL 211: Prose Forms](#) and [ENGL 212: Poetry and Plays](#). (This course covers certain classic works featured in this column, including *Anne of Green Gables*, *The Paperbag Princess*, and *Winnie the Pooh*.)

Students may also be interested in [CMNS 420: Topics in Communication: Children and Media](#), a senior-level, three-credit course, which “focuses on how children up to the age of thirteen encounter and employ the media and genres of storytelling: from oral narrative and print, to the audio and visual mediation of narrative in picture books, radio and other audio forms, and screen technologies such as television, film, and video games.” No prerequisites are required, apart from several recommended 300-level courses. Happy reading!

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



Gratitude Clarifies Why Are We Here

Marie Well



I watched a near-death experience story a moment ago where a person died temporarily and reported seeing heaven. In that heavenly realm, she was granted wisdom. First, she asked, “Why are we here?” The answer was, “To learn.” And she then asked, “What is our purpose?” and the answer was, “To love.” It was so simple but profound.

There exists an expression of love that can help us to learn. It’s called gratitude. Gratitude is love. And we can be grateful for everything, both the good and the bad. That’s because there’s a lesson intended to make us more beautiful within every sunny day or dark night of the soul.

With that said, let’s look at *The Positive Trait Thesaurus*’ outline of how we can become more grateful, coupled with my interpretation. The cited text below is from the chapter called “Appreciative” within the *The Positive Trait Thesaurus*.

So, here are common traits of grateful people:

Grateful people “encourage others to let go of worries and negative emotions.” We never need to feel anger, jealousy,

fear, worry, and resentment. But I believe there is always a need to receive these emotions from others with love. By returning these emotions with nothing but love, we become love—and our authentic essence is awakened. To achieve this state, we must learn to control our minds to experience no worry or negativity. Moreover, I believe we must let nothing but happiness and love fill our every thought, deed, and word.

Grateful people are “non-judgemental.” Suppose all the mistakes made in the world are treasures embedded with life lessons intended for us to grow into more appreciative, loving people. In that

case, there is never a reason for judgment—only empathy and gratitude for everyone's role in this world.

Grateful people believe "every living thing has a purpose." No one's life is meaningless. That means everyone's life has value. Even a tiny bug's life is imbued with meaning. The person on the street who leads a hard criminal life may be on a quest to discover God (love). I believe the purpose of all life is to love. But sometimes, we may get derailed from this purpose as life has many trials, some of which may thwart our journey toward that love. But these stumbling points are meant to be met with compassion. I believe everything and everyone has an ultimate purpose: the overcoming of trials and tribulations through love.

Grateful people see "mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow." Even the most heinous errors are opportunities to learn and grow—and to become more inwardly beautiful. And every single being has made horrific errors. But it's possible to fully detach from one's past negatives to draw on the highest states: love and happiness. Simply let go of all hatred toward mistakes made by self or others. Favor instead pure love. After all, according to the near-death experience, we are all here to learn. And the end goal of that learning is to arrive at a place of love.

But how does gratitude help us learn? When we are grateful for the lessons in the traumas and the bliss—and thankful for our loved ones and adversaries—our inner world is filled with love. In other words, our inner world is safe, and we have more energy to devote to our goals in the external world. Better still, when we are grateful for everything that happens to us, we feel love. And remember, love is the purpose of our existence, according to the near-death experience. So, it can be assumed that gratitude toward everyone essentially fulfills our reason for existence.



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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



AthaU Facebook Group

Supplemental confusion. A student wonders why the grade for a completed course shows as finalized before a scheduled supplemental exam has been written. Responses assure this is normal, and the grade will be updated once the supplemental is written and marked.

Discord

You say to-mah-to. Now that the spat between AB and AU has chilled, students turn towards other weighty matters, like the spelling and usage of "practise" (or is it "practice"?).

reddit

Managing the load. A full-time student wonders how to fit 6-month courses into a 4-month semester schedule without exceeding the maximum course load at any given time. Others respond with advice on timing and other work-arounds.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Thank you, #AthabascaU students, alumni, team members and friends, for your passionate support of AU! Please see an update from @Peter_Scott on our commitment to working with the province and our stakeholders for the good of our learners and AU. #abpse t.co/CZktm0WMrt."



Spouse Spending

Dear Barb:

Hi, I am writing about my wife. I think she has a problem with spending money.

We are a middle-class family with two young children. My wife works part time and I work full time. While I make a decent living, we don't have much extra money.

Over the last few years, my wife has started to spend a lot of money on personal items, like getting her nails done every week, or her hair colored every six weeks. She buys expensive clothes and shoes. She never did this previously. It seems since she joined the gym she is spending more money on herself. There are activities the kids would like to join, like hockey and baseball, but we don't have the money because my wife is spending so much.

I have discussed this with her, but she seems to believe that she should be able to have her hair and nails done regularly like her friends do. Most of her friends are doctor's wives and other professionals. I'm afraid I just can't keep up with the Jones, but I really don't have a desire to do so, either. This is definitely causing major problems in our marriage, and I have no idea what to do. I don't want my marriage to end, but I don't feel I have any control over what will happen.

I was hoping you would have some advice for us.

Thanks, James.

Hey James:

Financial problems are one of the most significant problems you can have in a marriage and can lead to divorce if not managed early. It is important that you and your wife work together to find a solution.

Have you and your wife worked out a budget? If not, then perhaps she needs to see where the money is going, as she might not realize how much of the budget her activities are using up. Once she knows she might work on reducing her spending, or looking for ways to add to the household income as it is important to live within your means.

You said your wife's friends are in a different income bracket than you, therefore they can do many things that she cannot. Lifestyle jealousy can also lead to serious problems in a marriage. It is very difficult to be happy if you continue to compare your lifestyle to that of your friends, and that does seem to be what your wife is doing.

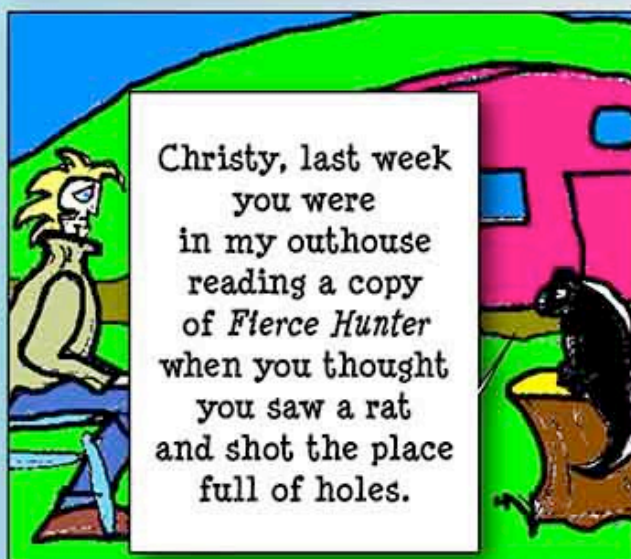
My suggestion is to look into seeing a counselor that is familiar with financial issues within a marriage. A google search for marriage counselors in your area that deal with financial issues should provide a list of names for you to contact. Hope this information is helpful. Best of luck James.

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



Poet Maeve
Invasive Search

Wanda Waterman



AU SU

UPDATE

COMMUNITY. RESOURCES . SERVICES

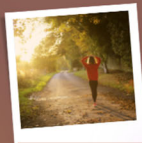
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COMMUNITIES



SEPT 14

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AND HEALTH



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SEPT 28

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SSHRC = CRSH

There are many complex and urgent problems facing rural Canada that require interdisciplinary, intersectoral, and diverse solutions. We invite you to be part of conversations on four key issues: rural housing, rural health and well-being, attracting immigrants to and building inclusive rural communities, and rural digital equity. Sessions will highlight what can be adapted to support rural communities through western Canada. Join AU Wednesdays from 10 – 11:30 a.m. throughout September.

[Register for one, or all of the September sessions.](#) Please distribute this invitation widely and help us fill all four slots!

Hosted by Athabasca University's [Communities in Transition](#) Project and the [Rural Development Network](#).

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