



THE VOICE

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Daddy-Sitting
Finding Clarity in the Fog

The HALT and RIDE Act
A World Without Impaired Driving?

Building Community at AU
Finding Distance Connections

Plus:
Hellhounds on my Trail
Are we Mother Nature's Morons?
and much more!



CONTENTS

The Voice's interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

Features

Daddy-Sitting: *Finding Clarity in the Fog*..... 4

Articles

Editorial: *The Day of Dad*..... 3

The HALT and RIDE Act..... 5

Building Community at Athabasca University 7

Why Psychologists are Wrong About People Pleasing 8

The Importance of Embracing Nature 10

Behold the World of Crypto-scammery!..... 18

Using ChatGPT to Succeed Brilliantly with a Disability 22

Columns

Fly on the Wall: *Are we Mother Nature's Morons?* 11

[blue rare]: *Hellhounds on my Trail* 14

Beyond Literary Landscapes: *Fables from Origins to Modern*..... 15

Music Review: *Nervous Complaint* 17

Homemade is Better: *Taco Seasoning* 21

Dear Barb: *Attention Please* 27

News and Events

AU-thentic Events 12

Scholarship of the Week..... 16

Research Assistant Opportunity 16

Vintage Voice 26

AUSU Update 29

Comic

Poet Maeve: *Something Out There* 28



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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

The Day of Dad

Karl Low



It's convocation day! While at AU you can graduate on any day of the year, each year AU holds a celebration of those who've managed to complete their programs, with events held both in person and online, AU has a convocation ceremony that includes a brief bio of every student who crosses the stage, as well as speeches by various members of the AU community, including the annual honorary graduates, which this year include an Indigenous architect, Wanda Dalla Costa, and an academic and mental health advocate, Dr. Austin Mardon. As usual, AU's pick for the honorary degree recipients are very interesting, both in their histories and in what they're doing now. You can find out more about each of them at [the Hub](#). However, congratulations need to be conveyed to all of the graduates, as an AU degree isn't an easy accomplishment and comes with its own set of challenges beyond just the academic.

Meanwhile, Father's Day is right around the corner, and it seems to be hitting a chord with the Voice Writers this week, as our feature article is a look at how Alzheimer's has, counterintuitively, helped Barbara Lehtineimi get to know her

own father in our feature article, "Dadddy-sitting". It's definitely worth the read, and I'm fairly sure you'll enjoy it.

Also this week, in lieu of a student interview (and if you like reading the student interviews, have you considered being the subject of one? I'm assured the process is relatively painless and doing so we'll get you some fun Voice swag that you can use as a conversation starter, if nothing else. Contact mwm@voicemagazine.org if that sounds at all interesting to you!) we have Natalia Iwanek's look at some ways that you can overcome that feeling of isolation which comes with being a distance institution, and connect with fellow students and other members of the AU community. After all, just because we're at a distance doesn't mean we have to be alone these days.

Finally, we round out our three features with a look at HALT and RIDE legislation to combat impaired driving that's being developed in the United States, and the reasons why Alek Golijanin is suggesting we contact our own politicians to try to get similar legislation enacted here. Would you feel okay knowing your car may take control away from you if it feels you're driving erratically? While I'm a big booster of autonomous vehicles, I worry about such technologies being a little too assertive or buggy. After all, sometimes there's a reason we need to drive in an erratic fashion, usually to do with other drivers. Even though I'm in favor of cars that drive themselves and think it would be generally safer, the idea that a car might wrest control away from you when you're not expecting it makes me worry. But maybe I'm wrong with that fear, and Alek presents the case as to why.

Plus, of course, we have scholarships, events, reviews, recipes, pieces that make you think, advice, inspirational stories and be sure to check out both the article on crypto-scamming if you've ever wondered what the big deal about NFTs was, or the latest [blue rare] for an interesting take on what I can only assume is depression and negative self-actualization. Or maybe he's being literal. I never can quite tell.

At any rate, enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Daddy Sitting Finding clarity in the fog

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Dad and I sat in my parents' living room, with not much to talk about. Usually when I visited, Mom and I carried the conversation, but today Mom was at church. It would be just me and Dad for over an hour.

Dad's drift into the shifting fog of Alzheimer's had left him mostly functional, but with enough confusion that Mom didn't like to leave him at home alone. To enable her to leave the house to attend church each Sunday, I volunteered to keep Dad company. It reminded me of babysitting, so I called it "Daddy-sitting."

On the first Sunday I brought a book with me to read, but Dad was alert and ready for company. He was not a reader and had no hobbies to keep him occupied during my visit. My parents didn't have a television anymore, so I couldn't even resort to that old babysitting standby!

We would have to talk, but about what? Dad no longer read newspapers nor followed current events. He seldom went anywhere, and he wouldn't remember even if he had. He couldn't recall if any other family members had visited recently. That left the

weather, a topic we exhausted within the first few minutes of each visit.

One Sunday, Dad mentioned something that happened when he was a child. He was able to recall it with vivid detail. While recent events seemed to slip through his mind like sand from an hourglass, his early memories were set in concrete.

Now we had a bottomless well of conversation to draw from. I only had to mention Dad's two siblings, both of whom had passed away years earlier, and Dad would recall some of the hijinks he and his brother got up to when they were young (many of these involved pestering their older sister.)

I had always thought of my Dad as being reserved and, well, a bit boring. But he had a wealth of stories to tell, and, with some encouragement, he was pleased to share them.

Sunday after Sunday, I learned more about my Dad and his life before he became a husband and father. He told me of the foul-smelling coal furnace his family had in my grandparent's basement, and the chickens that scratched around their backyard. He related the many road trips he and his brother had taken, sometimes with their respective girlfriends of the moment.

Some stories he told over and over, forgetting he had already told me. I heard about one epic tale—an overnight drive he and a friend took to Montreal to visit attractive twin sisters they had met on another adventure—so many times, I could recite it from memory.





Unfiltered, Dad no longer had to worry about setting a good example for his adult children. He and I laughed over him scaling a fence to get into the local fall fair without paying admission, and sneaking into movies with second-hand ticket stubs. It turns out my Dad wasn't boring—he was mischievous and fun, and more like me than I ever suspected. (Although I never hopped the fence at the fall fair—I snuck through the gate.)

During all those Sundays I never did get any reading done. But I learned more about my Dad during a year of Daddy-sitting than I had in the previous forty years. And, Sunday after Sunday, we never ran out of things to talk about.

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



The HALT and RIDE Act A Future Without Impaired Driving

Alek Golijanin



If US policy makers were not busy making airwaves for slinging mud at one another, there are stories like the creation of a “first-of-its-kind” legislative policy that is being brought into law that should be on every news headline. But it is not because negativity gets people coverage. One of those positive policy changes comes in the form of the HALT and RIDE Act, legislation that looks toward the future and promises to do something about impaired driving. The way I discovered the HALT and RIDE Act was thanks to [MADD Canada’s Spring 2023 newsletter](#), and it might be one of the most interesting things I have read about in 2023. Best of all, it is getting traction here in Canada and Canadian legislators are being encouraged to replicate the HALT and RIDE Act and bring forth a Canadian version of the bill.

The HALT and RIDE Act

The HALT and RIDE Act are future-looking legislative bills that create a new safety standard for auto manufacturers, similar to the introduction of the car airbag, but with a focus on leveraging smart technology for impaired driving. The

basis of the bill focuses on a variety of impaired driving prevention technologies including driver monitoring which can detect signs of distracted, impaired, or fatigued driving. If these future smart cars become concerned about the way in which their driver is operating them, they could trigger safety mechanisms that reduce speed levels and even require that their driver pull over to the side of the road.

“I still see the headlights in my nightmares.”

In the summer of 1992 and less than a mile away from home, the 20-year-old future senator, Ben Ray Lujan, recalls seeing two headlights coming right at him and leaving him no time to react.

That drunk driver forever changed the life trajectory of the senator, and it makes the fight to end impaired driving something that is personal for him. At a [MADD virtual news conference](#) in 2021, Senator Lujan spoke to the advancements that would be made thanks to the HALT and RIDE Act and shared his story of being a survivor of an impaired crash. One of the things that is mentioned during the news conference is how Senator Lujan still relives that crash in his nightmares, and it is an ordeal that never leaves many of the people who are impacted by impaired driving.

Technology meets safety. Safety meets policy.

According to MADD, there are over one hundred current technologies that exist and even more that are being worked on. MADD also powerfully illustrates the importance behind the adoption of the new safety standard by contrasting how a physician would never withhold a medicine to treat a disease and how we should not hold back cars from being equipped with life-saving technologies.

Some of the technology that is already on newer vehicles would only require minor repurposing to allow for better safety prevention measures. The technology itself is mandated to be passive and not noticeable by drivers unless the vehicle detects unsafe driving. Passive technology includes repurposing lane assist technology, made possible by an exterior sensor that feeds information to the “car brain” and telling the driver if someone is in their blind spot or to get back in your lane center, but it could be expanded to sense if a car is driving erratically and it has the potential to inform the car that it is being operated unsafely. The only costs associated with repurposing existing hardware has to do with software, they are not significant, and some cars already have the capacity to implement these extra features but have not chosen to activate them yet.

Those that are against the HALT and RIDE Act argue that the technology that is required for this endeavor is non-existent, even though that could not be farther from the truth, and these types of claims must be labelled for what they are, “pro-impaired driving arguments” and positions we must never accept. These pro-impaired driving ‘activists’ also argue, despite being entirely wrong, that the mandates are unfair to car manufacturers because they will have to “devote a lot of time and money to developing these drunk driving detection features, and that it might come at the expense of the development of more effective, but unmandated, safety features.”, and that requiring cars to have cameras inside a car that monitor a driver and their performance has privacy implications. But there is no sensible argument to be made opposing these road safety measures that have the long-term potential to eliminate impaired and dangerous driving altogether, and those trying to argue against them lack the understanding of the power of existing technologies.

What matters most is that there appears to be quite a bit of traction here in Canada for these road safety measures and that matters because approximately 50% of all fatal traffic accidents and some 30% of traffic injuries are the result of impaired driving. If Canada was to introduce its own version of the HALT and RIDE Act, it would help reduce the 2500 lives that are lost every year as a result of impaired driving.

So, if you are like me and believe that we should do whatever we can to reduce the unnecessary loss of life, then please visit [MADD Canada](#) and sign the online call to bring the safety prevention measures to Canada.

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



Building Community at Athabasca University

Natalia Iwanek



At times, a sense of connection to fellow students—or the university itself—may feel like an impossibility in AU’s digital sphere. Although this style of asynchronous, accessible, flexible—and open—learning works well for many students’ busy and diverse lives, a sense of community is increasingly becoming sought after in today’s isolated world. Throughout my years at AU, I have slowly learned how to connect with fellow learners, tutors, and faculty in creative ways perhaps as a result of—not despite—this online space. If you permit me, I would like to share them with you.

- **Join Unofficial Athabasca University Social Media Groups** – These types of groups are great for networking and obtaining advice from fellow students on favourite courses, study tips, and more. At

times, you may see calls for in-person meet ups study groups, as well as online options for rural, remote, and Covid-conscious learners.

- **Get Involved in Writing for *The Voice Magazine*** – Our editor, Karl, is always looking for new writers to share their diverse views with fellow students. Perhaps you would like to contribute a one-time article, you have a great idea for a new weekly column, or you would just like to chat some ideas through. Please get in touch; no experience is required. Getting involved in the student paper is a great way to meet fellow learners and develop your writing skills. And if you are still not sure about penning that next feature article, please feel free to reach out to me anytime if you would like your story featured in an upcoming Minds We Meet interview—where *The Voice Magazine* features the AU journeys of readers like you.
- **Inquire about AU Research Opportunities** – AU “researchers often hire research assistants to help further their academic research.” Applying for an AU research position is a great way to get involved on the university level, connect with AU tutors and faculty, as well as build one’s resume for future career opportunities and graduate level courses.
- **Attend AU Events and Webinars** – Periodically, AU will offer various events, such as town halls, writing forums, and research presentations. AU’s The Hub is great way to keep up-to-date with the latest news and offerings.
- **Enter Competitions** – Events, such as research competitions on the national and international scale, are advertised on Athabasca University’s website and official social media channels. In addition, the Athabasca University Graduate Students’ Union (AUGSA) puts on a yearly graduate student research conference yearly, which is often also open to undergraduates.

- **Join the Undergraduate or Graduate Student Unions** - For those students who would like to advocate for fellow students, join committees, volunteer periodically, or attend events, the Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) and the Athabasca University Graduate Students' Union (AUGSA) are an option. (Full disclosure, this writer is a part of AUSU).
- **Connect with Nukskatowin** – Indigenous students at AU may be interested in connecting with Nukskahtowin, a centre for Indigenous learners, which lists programs, courses, resources, and faculty. There are also periodic events provided for students.
- **Check Out AU Press** – For students who would like to learn more about the latest available academic work, be sure to review what is being published by AU Press, a publisher “committed to making research and scholarship freely accessible through the publication of books and journals in open access.”
- **Visit Athabasca Campus** – Finally, for students in the region, visiting the AU campus to feel an increased connection to our institution is also a possibility. Many students will have this opportunity soon, during June convocation, although an accessible hybrid online option is also available.

How have you found community at AU?

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

Why Psychologists are Wrong About People Pleasing

Marie Well



What is a pleasing personality? I found an article that says a pleasing personality is encouraging, appreciative, non-judgmental, optimistic, sincere, dignified, generous, and so much more. In my mind, that encapsulates what it means to be a people pleaser.

But being a people pleaser has a bad rap in the psychological curriculum—wrongly so, in my opinion. I believe that the psychological curriculum contains many primitive models, from mental health therapy to marital therapy—to people pleasing.

For instance, the psychology courses I took were based on portraying people with mental health conditions as monstrosities, dehumanizing them, in my view. I believe that mental health therapy should be formulated instead on the "sports performance psychology" or the "peak performance" models—and not the "deviance" models. In other words, the resources should focus on bringing out top performance and wins, not fixing “issues.” As well, I think marital counseling should be based on selfless, unconditional love—and not self-focused love with conditions such as boundaries and

expectations of the other. Psychology's models may work in certain contexts, but they don't reach for the sky, in my view.

And I also believe that any issue can be modeled in infinitely unique ways. My Anglican-Catholic Mom once had a conversation with my atheist brother about religion. She then told me about how his anti-religious reasoning enlightened her. I told her that any topic can be looked at in infinite ways—and to be careful which way she chooses. For instance, many academic theories and movements are based on "victimization" and even "hatred toward an oppressor." I believe that the best academic views—the best ideas in the world—generate a universal love, a love for all. For instance, when I was in graduate studies, I longed to find a feminist approach that embraced women as unconditionally loving souls, and I found a theory that might've fit called "spiritual feminism," if I have the name correct, but it had been discontinued.

So, with that said, what's wrong with being a people pleaser? The consequences of people-pleasing are "strong feelings of resentment, anxiety, stress, and emotional depletion when they come at your expense." But this is just one model for people-pleasing. What about the flip side? What about people like me who are growing healthier, happier, and more successful due to a people-pleasing perspective? The model I follow emphasizes selfless, unconditional love and service to others. I'm on a quest to find spiritual enlightenment. It's surrendering to a universal love where we do all we can to please our loved ones—and, wherever possible, all others. And it's healing, not debilitating, when we please others with no expectation of validation. People pleasing, in my mind, is freedom.

So, are people-pleasing and codependency the same? Well, I think codependency is underrated, too. The psychological community models all the positives about codependency in a negative light. For instance, being self-sacrificial and unconditionally loving without expectations strikes me as ideal pursuits. But in Western psychology, anxiety is attached to it. Still, I watch near-death experience videos where temporarily deceased people report entering a heavenly realm.

One man reported that in heaven, he learned that one of the highest acts of service was laying down one's life for another. Another person said that service to others is one of the most essential means for realizing spiritual enlightenment. And any Buddhist Monk will agree that service to others—prioritizing others over self—is vital to realizing enlightenment.

Western psychology is mostly void of spirituality and instead emphasizes the ego or the self. And this is where the psychology curriculum is missing the point. In my view, no higher act of mental health exists than the giving of selfless, unconditional love. After all, I believe everyone in our lives, friend or foe, has given us infinite gifts, even if we don't recognize those gifts yet. And it's our role—at least my role—to give back.

Love is a higher purpose, and striving to please is a divine form of unconditional love. It all matters—every act of love. No act of love is wasted. The near-death experiencer, Mark Hodges, says, "When we love every soul in our heart, that's when we're free." And, from my view, pleasing others is a freeing act. Ask any spiritually enlightened person, and they'll agree—pleasing others is a higher calling. And that higher, enlightened state is what is missing in psychology's model on people-pleasing.

The Importance of Embracing Nature Why You Should Go Camping at Least Once

Xine Wang



Over the weekend I went on a camping trip in Canmore with my extended family and it was one of the most rewarding experiences I've had. Despite my initial skepticism at the idea of living in a tent and cooking outdoors, it was a unique experience that was both stimulating and relaxing.

In today's fast-paced and technology-driven world, it's easy to become disconnected from the natural world. I find even indoor greenery alluring, simply because many times of the day I am staring at a screen or working in the fluorescent lights at the office. However, taking the time to go camping, even just once, can offer profound benefits for our physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Reconnecting with Nature:

Camping provides an opportunity to escape the city and immerse ourselves in the beauty of the great outdoors. Around the campground there were some simple trails for my family to explore. I had some of my younger cousins with me and we enjoyed the time just breathing in the mountain air. There's also a number of wildlife species such as

chipmunks and robins that can be spotted near the campground. This reconnection with nature can foster a sense of awe, gratitude, and humility. It also reminds me of how insignificant our busy, bustling lives can be in the greater scheme of things.

Disconnecting from Technology:

Every day, we are constantly bombarded with screens, notifications, and the pressures of constant connectivity. Even at the campsite, I admit it was difficult to stop engaging with my phone. However, midway through the evening, I decided to turn off my phone completely. I realized that I wasn't fully taking in the abundance of nature when I had my phone on. Even without

internet, I would be fumbling through the gmail inbox or looking up old photos I took. Camping provides a much-needed respite from this digital overload. By leaving behind wifi and embracing a simpler way of life, we can experience a sense of freedom and liberation. Disconnecting from technology allowed me to be present in the moment, engage in meaningful conversations, and truly connect with my surroundings and the people I came camping with.

Restoring Physical and Mental Well-being:

For AU students who have busy schedules split between work, classes and personal responsibilities, camping can be restorative to the mind. I found that when I was able to step away, even for less than 48 hours, it really dawned on me just how tired my mind was: it was always racing and anxious before. When we're away from our regular schedules, the mind can fully slow down, allowing for better sleep quality and increased energy levels. Despite initially believing that I couldn't sleep outdoors, our air mattress was quite tolerable and, ironically, my sleep was better outdoors than it was indoors.





Bonding and Building Relationships:

Camping provides a unique environment for fostering deeper connections and building stronger relationships. I had not seen my extended family from Edmonton for almost half a year, and connecting with them was refreshing. Whether you're camping with family, friends, or even strangers, the shared experience of setting up camp, cooking meals together, and engaging in outdoor activities creates opportunities for bonding and creating lasting memories. Rarely do I get to hang out with my younger cousins and siblings. I found I had much more patience with my younger family members when I was away from the bustle of the city. I felt that I had all the time in the world to learn about their hobbies and interests.

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



Fly on the Wall Are We Mother Nature's Morons?




Jason Sullivan

Humans And Our Environment in Perspective

Are we as human beings essentially destructive forces *within* nature or are we exclusively destructive *to* nature? Nature's paradox appears whenever our feet alight on soil alive with life; crushing and maiming, even bare toes cause fronds to break and insects to cower. The metaphysics of humanity as unnatural occupant of our planet strains credulity yet every time we see a discarded Tim Hortons' cup we tend to think of ourselves as a species who sullies nature's beauty. Maybe our AU studies can answer this quandary as we learn to nurture our inborn intellectual curiosity.

To begin with we're not the only species whose existence has inevitable consequences for earthly neighbours. We'd have to include willow trees in the cadre of catastrophizing influences on nature. In my

orchard, a huge old willow tree utterly abnegates all vegetal comers to its leafy domain. Like creeping suburbia, the more it grows, the less life thrives in its vicinity. Beneath its boughs exists a blank footprint under which its root mass produces an apartheid realm of loam, soil belonging only to its stately willow self and whatever wee beasties it deigns to be to its benefit. The willow's domain is larger than the floorplan of a recently-demolished farmhouse a few metres away; nature itself is held at bay by the willow's towering fortitude and ability to repel intruders to its micro-climate.

Swamped by years of dry branch debris, the willow creates ecosystem barriers akin to when driveways are paved over a field or lawn turf  homogenizes a meadow. We humans can swing and cavort under the willow's branches, our feet never touching soil as the deep

thatched layer provides even greater protection to the offspring-less mother tree. But even if we removed the years of detritus that accumulate under the great willow the soil itself is poisoned, so to speak, by the leafy monolith's allelopathic chemicals produced and secreted at the behest of its inborn desire to abide unmolested by competition. No guard dog better protected the home of a paranoid family in their McMansion—allelopathy excludes unwanted newcomers greater than any herbicide or border wall. Even beyond the willow's pale a row of once-buxom lilac bushes has largely succumbed to the great leviathan's sovereignty—like semi-willing subjects to some new King, a vast area falls under the willow's swaying domain.

Given the autarky of a single tree, one might wonder why we as a culture tend to see humanity's actions (pavement, for instance) as inherently unnatural? Are we not doing what any tree would do to attain supremacy such that our existence may be assured? Yet, even as trees throughout the forest seem to grapple for dominance, with some attaining almost complete hegemony over their surroundings, the overall picture of nature differs from the technology of civilization because the latter, at the behest of biped movers and shakers, can in a moment legislate or develop great swathes of green out of existence in a manner only approached by elemental forces such as forest fire? Perhaps humans have attained a godly visage akin to flood, fire, and famine (not to mention plague)?

As we plant ourselves at our study desks, we students must overcome the tendency to cut corners in our studies. Just as plants grow to the sun, and some even are heliocentric and follow the sun through the day, the fact that we wouldn't choose to ask Alexa to write our essays for us, even if it were possible, shows that we know ourselves to be superior to the tools of our trade – superior and better served by our minds than our tools. As means to an end, typewriters differ from laptop keypads in style more than substance, and a case can be made that an internet sheared of superficial effluvia would serve scholars just fine. Where digital technology is concerned, however, we might note that reading and typing within the confines of our course work requires us to make some vital choices about our future. While AU is now using the digital cloud for research, the larger footprint of online culture and gaming,

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Library Chat

Tues, Jun 20, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT
Online
Hosted by AU Library
www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html
No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

Library Chat

Wed, Jun 21, 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

Faculty of Business Undergrad Program Orientation for New Students

Wed, Jun 21, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MDT
Online
Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabascau.ca/events/faculty-of-business-undergraduate-program-orientation-for-new-students-20230621/
RSVP through above link

Library Chat

Thur, Jun 22, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT
Online
Hosted by AU Library
www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html
No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

Write Site Writing Forum: Grammar

Thur, Jun 22, 12:30 to 1:30 pm MDT
Online
Hosted by AU Write Site
news.athabascau.ca/events/write-site-writing-forum-spring-sessions/
No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

social and otherwise, can easily swamp our brains and drain away nutrients needed for effective study and sturdy learning.

There's a parallel to technology in non-human nature too: the digital Cloud requires factories with their own cooling systems to keep the computers from overheating, akin to a mountainside dependent on groundwater runoff from annual snow melt. "Like a pasture, server farms are irrigated. In many data centers today, chilled water is piped through the latticework of server racks to more efficiently cool the facility, liquid being a superior convective agent than air." In a sense, the Cloud is an ecosystem in itself but, then, one might wonder how much of it really aids in our learning and how much is so much flotsam and jetsam in the surfable yet non-too-friable landscape of the webosphere. Toronto sociologist, Marshal McLuhan, famously claimed that technology *becomes* us, perhaps in the manner of nutrients becoming a tree and the fruit it creates. "The wheel is an extension of the foot, the book is an extension of the eye, clothing an extension of the skin, electric circuitry an extension of the central nervous system" (online). Soft boundaries abide between self and other, mind and textbook, and ideas and their germination.

Of course, good substantial growing conditions require us to read and write far more than to merely surf the web; it remains for us to define what connotes quality learning environments and outcomes for ourselves at AU and maybe, just maybe, what humanity's role vis a vis digital technology is in the natural world. What sort of ecosystem best benefits the distance student? After all, willow trees can live for centuries but when McLuhan wrote *The Medium is the Massage* a single computer humming away was the size of a house. Time is the great paradox of modernity; our technology seems to leap far ahead of our instincts and the non-human realm. Maybe it's brevity, that soul of wit, that allows our species to transcend nature while also becoming unmoored from the evolutionary mindset of living *within* a consistent and nurturing ecosystem where niches are found and kept and innovation takes a back seat to traditional knowledge about food, shelter and danger.

We certainly want to put our best foot forward here on earth, knowing that nothing we as a species create, not even computer programs, is as substantial as our essence. As McLuhan reminds us, "when this circuit learns your job, what are you going to do?" To allow computers to overcome us would be to break the one cardinal rule of nature: that each species protects, or at least creates, offspring of its own type, not of a different species. Digital technology, Turing tests notwithstanding, is something we can all agree is at best a helpful buddy and at worst a soul-destroying dalliance. So next time your studies seem maddeningly difficult you can at least remember that it's in our nature to learn and grow and that we're not simply programmed to dominate the world around us.

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--The above article is dedicated to my Father, whose career in zoology and forestry has inspired many of my social science inquiries at AU...Happy Father's Day to all!

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.



[blue rare]
Hellhounds on my Trail

Oliver Moorcraft-Sykes



*And the days keeps on worryin' me
There's a hellhound on my trail*
-Robert Johnson

Even the most stoic, blithe, and unflappable of ladies and gentlemen will sometimes find themselves lost in the shadows, with the black dogs at their heels. I can vouch for this from personal experience. Many times they have come to find me, snuffling at the bottom of my door like coyotes outside a henhouse. More times than I can recall, I have awakened in the middle of the night, roused by some unsettling dream of serpents or teacups, and looked out my bedroom window only to see their bright red eyes glowing in the darkness at the bottom of the garden. I have seen them holding court in my neighbour's treehouse, or floating slowly across the face of the moon.

What is one to do when the black dogs arrive?

I find that staying active can be the best medicine. As Brian Eno, the godfather of elevator music, once advised, "energy fools the magician." With this in mind, I will attempt calisthenics. Or I will draw up plans to learn ballroom dancing, or reconstruct Michelangelo's *The Last Judgement* using miniature marshmallows and cubic zirconia.

On the other hand, sometimes it's better to simply get the fuck out of dodge and put a little distance between yourself and the dogs. To this end, I've been known to take off to Edmonton or Babylon. Perhaps you will find me one day, ambling up the Boulevard Saint-Germain, silver-handled walking stick in hand, whistling "Oh, My Darling Clementine," or "I'm In the Money." Chances are, I will be pretending not to have a care in the world. But the truth is, I will secretly be checking all the reflections in shop windows, vigilant for any signs of them, of their foul stench, their bristling hair, their flashing teeth. Of course, I will always look upwards, too, watching the rooftops for jackals with parachutes, for wolves disguised as weathervanes or angels. I will be careful to stick to places like shopping malls or carnivals, and be sure to only walk streets that are bright with sunlight or with neon. I will carry an amulet fashioned from a silver bullet. I will never wander through the dark woods alone at night (although the baddest dogs have sometimes been known to bring the dark woods with them).

Some days, all one needs to keep the hounds at bay are the simplest of creature comforts. Perhaps a pineapple milkshake or a bottle of scotch; a few hours in a flotation tank, or a fine cigar. Nothing repulses the black dogs more than the smells of gratitude and contentment.

Perhaps, if you're feeling up to it, a still better approach is to invite the black dogs in. Have them over for poker night, for instance. They are better company than you might imagine, with their wry senses of humour, their raw-throated karaoke, their goofy bum dance, their lurid tales of true crime in the forest. Besides, they are often reckless, extravagant gamblers, especially when they've had too many tumblers full of moonlight, and the blood lust is upon them. If you play all your cards right, if you're very smart and very lucky, you may be able to take them for everything they've got. But, if not, hey at least you tried!



Beyond Literary Landscapes

Fables – Origins to Modernity

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’s week’s column brings to a close the three-part series that closely examined folk tales, fairy tales, and everything in-between, with a final focus on fables. The most well-known fables were written by Aesop, of the eponymous Aesop’s Fables.

In particular, [Aesop was](#) “the supposed author of a collection of Greek fables.” Various attempts have been made throughout history to determine if such a figure did truly exist, with various theories of his identity and various proposed centuries in which he may have lived.

However, it is important to note that fabulists have existed throughout history, across the globe, in addition to many new fabulists available in modern day. Some modern examples include Ivan Krylov, Helen Oyeyemi, Angela Carter, and George Orwell.

What

[A fable can be defined as a](#) “narrative form, usually featuring animals that behave and speak as human beings, told in order to highlight human follies and weaknesses.” Many of these types of tales contain a strong moral message or lesson.

In other words, [many of these works often](#) “feature anthropomorphized animals and natural elements as main characters.” And [the main characteristics of fables](#) include symbolism, anthropomorphization, a sense of humour, and life lessons.

Some examples of Aesop’s Fables include “The Tortoise and the Hare,” “The Boy Who Cried Wolf,” “The Ant and the Grasshopper,” and “The Dog and His Reflection.”

A more modern example can be Helen Oyeyemi’s *Mr. Fox*.

Where

These fables are set throughout Europe, as well as North America.

When

These works are set from the 1 to 5 century CE, as well as modern day.

Why

These works may be of interest to AU students who would like to learn more about the origins of various morals and lessons, as well as those who would like to learn more about the influence of notable fables on modern day writers.

How

AU’s wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to Fables are available in a variety of disciplines, including one’s that may fit into your Degree

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

AU students interested in this topic may consider enrolling in ENGL 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.” (Please note that this course requires several prerequisites, including ENGL 211: Prose Forms and ENGL 212: Poetry and Plays). Happy reading!

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

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: NUPGE Scholarships

Sponsored by: National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE)

Deadline: July 7, 2023, 5pm EDT

Potential payout: \$2500

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be embarking on their first year of full- or part-time studies at a Canadian public post-secondary institution, and must be a member, or have a parent, grandparent, or legal guardian who is a member, of a NUPGE Component or affiliated union.

What's required: An online application including contact and academic info, along with an essay on a given topic.

Tips: Read the FAQ page for additional information.

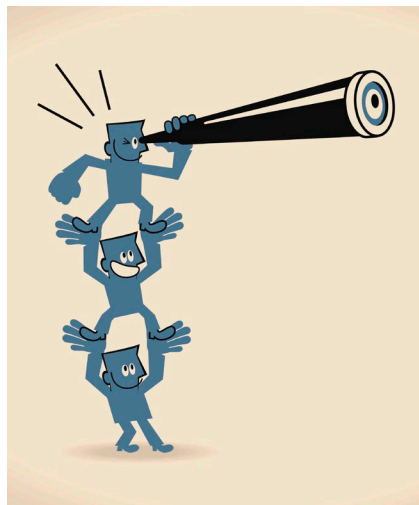
Where to get info: nupge.ca/scholarships/



Research Assistant Opportunities!

Head in the Clouds? Why Not Be The Cloud, The Tech Cloud That Is?

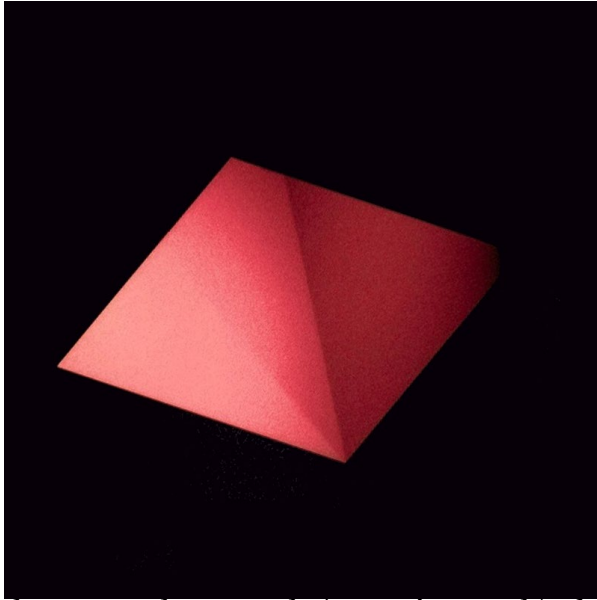
Jason Sullivan



This posting seeks someone who can learn and teach the usage of Cloud technology to the broader and emerging AU research community. The successful applicant will “support the creation of an openly licensed Toolkit (open educational resource--OER) to support planning, delivering, and mobilizing research data in cloud computing environments.” As you’d imagine, this job covers and requires aspects of a “digital literacy spectrum” leading to the Cloud’s unique value as a storage and organization system. The Cloud’s library-like “interactive decision matrix” here shall mix with the goals of researchers and facilitators—including maybe you! In total this job entails involvement in about fifteen research projects over the next year. For more information and to submit CV, cover letter, transcript and two references, please contact Dr. Paul Daniels at pdanjiels@athabascau.ca.

Music Review—Nervous Complaint

Jessica Young



Artist: Ex Ox

Album: *Nervous Complaint*

Canadian musician Andrew Dickenson (lead singer and guitarist of Tricky Woo) has released his first solo LP as Ex Ox. The LP is titled *Nervous Complaint* and is available for streaming anywhere you get your music. The accompanying visual album is available on [YouTube](#).

The album was inspired by Andrew surviving a horrific car crash that left him with physical and existential questions that seemingly had no answers. He “turned inward to his home studio in the woods of Quebec; inward to the workings of a brain inside a galaxy.”

According to Andrew, *Nervous Complaint* cannot be nailed down to one genre, but takes inspiration from the genre krautrock (experimental/subgenre of progressive rock that originated in Germany). *Nervous Complaint* is “a sonic, psychedelic contemplation on consciousness, mortality, internal and external struggle, and how we seek our place in the universe.”

Nervous Complaint has eight tracks: Nervous Complaint; It’s Your Fault the World is Ending; Moderate Reasonable Alienation; Dans L’obscurité Avec Les Loups; Telomere Crisis; Burnt Husk, Drawing of a Man; Doomed Glass Inverse; and Spraying Hubris (With Flesh Guns) into the Void.

There are no lyrics whatsoever throughout the album. It’s simply synth music that reminds me of the soundtrack for a Zelda game, or maybe an old sci-fi movie. To be completely honest, I didn’t get anything out of this album. The lack of lyrics and natural abrasiveness of the synth were just too much for me. The visual aspect of the album was certainly psychedelic—full of imagery of the galaxy, nature, and deities, as well as obscure, melting shapes in technicolour and shadows of dancing hands. In particular, the visual for the track “Doomed Glass Inverse” gave me motion sickness.

That being said, I can hear the different vibes and tones of the various songs—for instance “Dans L’obscurité Avec Les Loups” (In the Dark with the Wolves) had a scary, panicked feel, while “Moderate Reasonable Alienation” felt calm and floaty. It’s obvious that this album was deeply meaningful and cathartic for Andrew.

According to the academic paper *Art and Music Therapy for Trauma Survivors* by Amy Green, “Trauma survivors suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may be unable to verbally express the trauma that has happened to them (Malchiodi, 2008b); however, in order for healing to occur, these individuals must externalize their stories if their traumatic memories are to be reconstructed and positively transformed (Herman, 1997). Thus, the creative arts therapies may be particularly effective in the treatment of PTSD because they offer a sensory means for children and adults to express traumatic memories.”

So, while I didn’t personally find any connection with *Nervous Complaint*, I’m sure this album significantly helped Andrew in processing the trauma of the car accident. Good luck on the rest of your healing journey, Andrew. As for us, you can check out Ex Ox on [their website](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

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



Behold the World of Crypto-Scammetry!

Alek Golijanin



Does anyone miss the comedic days of the world's biggest influencers preaching about crypto and the digital world, and making suggestions like how it was possible for people to monetize everyday receipts by transforming them into “non-fungible tokens” or how people could create and sell their own “whatever”-coins? What about the ridiculousness of seeing the emergence of overnight experts, all of whom would have been perfectly suited to star in a modern remake of Monty Python?

Listening to all the noise, the only thing that never made sense to me was why the crypto community accepted the NFT acronym, somewhat lame, when all it meant was that it was a unique digital identifier for multimedia projects, and just how easy it became to carry out NFT “rug pull” scams.

Usually, these types of financial crimes never make it beyond one cycle, similar to the handling of Bernie Madoff, with new regulations getting introduced shortly after the conviction, but the world was quick to issue crypto's death certificate in 2018 and that is what led to the unfettered crypto rug pulls of the early

2020s.

To be clear, NFTs are some sort of digital item, whether that be a digital piece of art, music, perhaps digital clothing for an in-game character or virtual world avatar, a digital emoji, even things connecting to the real world like electronic movie tickets. Basically, anything you can make digital you could turn into an NFT backed piece. What the NFT added was the ability to essentially certify that you had the original piece. And you could then sell or give that original piece to someone else, at which point you wouldn't have it anymore, because the token itself, the “T” part of the NFT can not be copied. Of course, that did not stop internet wags from making copies of things that were NFT certified and showing that, for most things, nobody really cared if it had the token showing authenticity or not.

The second coming of all-things crypto took place around the time that COVID-19 reared its ugly face, and less than 5 years since the 2018 crash, after the implosions of crypto exchanges like Canada's QuadrigaCX, and many other crypto exchanges worldwide. The icing on the ridiculousness cake had to be the social media personalities who made it seem as though they got lucky by getting rare NFT drops and who had countless other rare NFTs, where the odds indicate that these individuals were more likely to win a billion dollars from the PowerBall lottery than they were to “pull” all those rare NFTs. However, when influencers started running away once crypto started to crash again in 2022, after they had taken part in duping people out of their money, and while crypto currency exchanges were also imploding, policing agencies were quick to swoop in and nab the culprits, and it made its mark on the world of “influencing”.

An NFT drop is when some creator, or company, decides to release a number of NFT items into the digital marketplace. Many did this as promotional schemes, some made them available for sale immediately, etc, and because of the nature of NFTs, these were the only times you could get legitimate copies of these digital items.

One specific drop that I recall being quite excited about was the Miss Universe NFT drop that turned out to be a rug pull, and possibly the craziest NFT rug pull of crazy NFT rug pulls. Simply

put, there was nothing ladylike about what transpired with Miss Universe's NFT drop in 2021 and here is more about that story.

The Miss Universe NFT Rug Pull

After Donald Trump bought the faltering brand of Miss Universe in 1996 and managed to turn it into a household staple, his later remarks essentially forced him to buy out the 50% ownership stake of his partner, NBC, after the brand had been damaged by his words. Subsequently, Trump would go on to sell the franchise, a few days later, to Hollywood titan Ari Emanuel's WME-IMG, who would also end up selling the franchise, declaring it a money-losing business, and struggle to find a buyer. However, it was during WME-IMG's ownership that the Miss Universe NFT rug pull would occur, carried out by a team of unassuming developers that were contracted to help create the NFT project.

Imagine offering NFT prizes that included partying and hanging out with Miss Universe contestants of past and present, monetary rewards for tens of thousands of dollars, getting special access to future Miss Universe competitions, and much more. Now, I think it might have been the greatest collection of rewards offered by any NFT project ever and it was one that I had intended to take part in, but thankfully I never got around to it because I would have maxed out my home equity line of credit just to have a chance at winning.

Like most large-scale heists, this crime was an inside job, carried out by unassuming developers that had worked on other prominent NFT projects, and who were contracted out to create the NFT project, since WME-IMG did not have in-house developers.

This team of developers would go on to write code that would help "shopping bots" know the exact moment to buy to win exclusive NFTs, thanks to algorithms that were able to detect "up next" moments. All of this was made possible thanks to their knowledge of the code that they had written for the generating of the NFTs and because of how transparent things like cryptocurrency and NFTs really are. What really made this NFT project special was that the drop was going to occur live, during the 2021 Miss Universe competition and before the winner was crowned, and there were prize implications depending on which NFTs you had.

And what should have been a "one-of-a-kind" drop, really turned out to be a 'one-of-a-kind' drop, because mouths started to drop once the scam became clear. All it took was 72 hours for Miss Universe to delete the dedicated social accounts for this NFT project including the Discord group.

Although some online personalities have speculated that WME-IMG may have been in on the rug pull, that is flat-out wrong. For starters, publicly traded multi-billion-dollar companies do not engage in single-digit million-dollar gains if it means cheating people out of their money and ruining their reputation, nor does it represent a significant sum of money in the grand scheme of things. Instead, the team of developers who were contracted to do the NFT turned out to be serial hustlers, and they did similar stuff with other big brands and their NFT projects. Simply put, the world of NFT was so new and so unfamiliar to so many people that this was bound to happen, and nobody realized that celebrities were rigging the odds in their favor by having specifically coded "shopping bots" helping them to get the rarest of NFTs.

These days, you can find people on Twitter offering their "rare" Miss Universe NFTs in exchange for gas money, while others are giving their NFTs away for free because of how much pain the NFT is causing them. One gentleman on Twitter even exposed himself, saying how he spent 15 Ethereum, back when 1 Ethereum was about \$3000, spending around \$45,000 without winning a single rare NFT. Had I bought into that NFT drop, maxing out my home equity line of credit, if I found out that it was rigged by some developers then I would have hunted all of those nerds

with a zest equivalent to MacGruber's zest for the license plate "KFBR392", and I suspect a phone conversation may have unfolded along the lines Liam Neeson's phone conversation in the 2008 film Taken.

After revisiting some of the promos for Miss Universe's NFT project, which included tweets, associations with Marc Cuban and Leverage, mainstream celebrities, and even former Miss Universe contestants, I came across a promo by the late Chelsie Kryst, the former contest turned TV personality and a lawyer by trade. Although Kryst's life came to a tragic end in 2022, her life is one that should be celebrated for the good that she managed to do while she was with us. This included leveraging her business-law background to offer pro bono services to low-level drug offenders and working with the Buried Alive Project, where she helped free a client that was sentenced to life imprisonment. To sum it up, Chelsie Kryst was special. Quite frankly, I could not help but think that this failed NFT project may have had a negative impact on her and resulted in her receiving threats, and if she had already been struggling with her wellbeing, as most people were during Covid-19, that it may have contributed to pushing her past her breaking point.

Why is everyone so quite about NFTs all the sudden?

For the purpose of this article, I reached out to Miss Universe to follow up on the status of the NFT scam, now under different ownership and with their head office in Thailand, but they did not respond back for comment. Additionally, when I tried tweeting at their Miss Universe account, my replies to their tweets were hidden and sent to the bottom of their tweet. I tried tweeting at them a few more times before Twitter informed me that I "broke some rules" and had to chill out.

From a techie gamer's perspective on all of the NFT "hustling-hacking", I would go as far as to say that I could guarantee that every single NFT drop had the potential for rigging. What I mean by that is that as long as one of the developers was familiar with the code behind the NFT drop, combined with the fact that there is nothing private about the generating of NFTs, it is entirely possible to create a "shopping bot" that new exact moment to buy to pull an ultra rare NFT.

Every single one of these crypto NFT scam projects could see the developers involved get identified with ease based on crypto wallets being publicly accessible, and once the money is withdrawn from a crypto exchange and transferred into a bank account, policing agencies can swoop in and demand access to those records. If a crypto exchange's executive team ever refused to cooperate with policing agencies, it would all but guarantee that the organizers would get charged with being accessories to the fact and complicit in the crime, but that almost never happens because nobody wants to go to jail if they can avoid it. I would also bet on all those celebrities providing policing agencies with the names of all the "crypto advisors" who promised them that they would get rare NFTs, and that is all it would take to get to the main circle.

The 2013 film Runner Runner has a storyline that is similar to what we have seen occur with NFTs, but the film focuses on the early days of online poker. The most important lesson from that movie is that when it comes to technology, there is always a back door to everything, and all founders have a "if shit hits the fan" exit strategy, which entails turning on each other if it means avoiding prison. In Runner Runner, that exit strategy revolved around a USB, which ended up sending Ben Affleck's character to prison. Now, should there be instances where "hustler-hackers" refuse to turn on one another, remember that what the colt revolver did to the bow and arrow is what policing agencies' quantum computers will do to hackers, somewhat of a modern-day Robo Cop.

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



Homemade is Better – Taco Seasoning

Chef Corey



In the movie Shrek, Donkey tells Shrek that everyone loves parfaits. That's how I feel about tacos. I cannot say for sure that I've ever met someone who doesn't like tacos. Tacos might be Mexico's most endeared food, not that every other food from them isn't loved, but I think the taco is probably the most famous.

I set out to find a taco seasoning that wasn't extremely spicy and one that my kids would enjoy. I thought that by making my own, I would know what goes in it and be able to adjust it. The bonus is that, because I already have the ingredients, it costs me nothing to

get more life out of these spices. Plus, this is an easy recipe that requires only a handful of ingredients that most of us already have.

Here is my taco seasoning recipe; I hope you enjoy it.

Taco seasoning

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp paprika
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 2 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1.5 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp oregano
- 1 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 tsp ground pepper

Directions:

- 1) Mix all the ingredients in a medium bowl.
- 2) Add to a shaker or container.
- 3) Use 1 – 2 tablespoons in tacos, with ½ cup of water.
- 4) Keep in an airtight container, and this recipe will keep for up to 3 months.



Using ChatGPT AI to Succeed Brilliantly with a Disability

Marie Well



I just bought ChatGPT after reading half of a Kindle e-book on how to query the tool. And I came across this neat feature where we can ask ChatGPT to tell a story about triumph over odds. So, I thought, "Why not ask ChatGPT for disability-related triumph stories relevant to The Voice Magazine and AU students?"

I'm on a three-day free trial of ChatGPT, which will turn into a \$7/week payment plan, although I had the option to buy lifetime access for about \$50. I purchased ChatGPT because I saw value after reading half the e-book and trying the tool. So far, it's impressive.

So, with that said, here are my queries and ChatGPT's responses:

First, as I love our fellow Voice writer's, Elisa's, spiritual articles, I asked, "In about 200 words, tell a story about a woman in a wheelchair who goes on to become a spiritually enlightened business tycoon and world

renown hero to all people who have paraplegia."

ChatGPT replied, "Once upon a time in the bustling city of New York, there lived a woman named Amelia. Amelia had been a wheelchair user since a tragic accident in her youth. Still, she never allowed her physical limitations to define her potential. As she grew older, she discovered a passion for spirituality and personal growth. She believed that her disability could not stop her from achieving greatness and embarked on a journey to prove her point.

"Amelia started by creating a business empire that provided accessible resources and opportunities for people with disabilities. She began with a small online store selling adaptive clothing and products designed to make life easier for those in similar situations. Her dedication to helping others and her keen business acumen quickly turned her venture into a thriving enterprise.

"As her empire grew, Amelia became a well-known figure in entrepreneurship. She leveraged her success to raise awareness for the unique challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Through her efforts, she improved their lives and inspired countless others to overcome their limitations.

"In her quest for spiritual enlightenment, Amelia traveled the world, learning from various cultures and religions. She incorporated her newfound wisdom into her business, imbuing her products and services with a sense of compassion and understanding. This holistic approach resonated with customers, making her brand synonymous with empowerment and self-improvement.

"Amelia's journey soon caught the attention of the global media, and she became a symbol of hope and perseverance for paraplegic individuals everywhere. Her story of triumph over adversity inspired millions, making her a hero in the eyes of many.

"Amelia's indomitable spirit and unwavering determination to make the world a better place for people with disabilities made her a spiritually enlightened business tycoon and a world-renowned hero for all people with paraplegia."

I then asked ChatGPT for 50 more words of details on how Amelia built her wealth. It said, "Amelia built her wealth by identifying a market gap for disability-focused products and services. She started with an online store selling adaptive clothing and expanded into accessible travel, home modifications, and assistive technologies. Her strong brand identity, business acumen, and commitment to empowering others led to a global enterprise and significant wealth."

So, inspired, I had to ask ChatGPT a question on a different topic: "Tell a 200-word story of a mother who helps her autistic son beat all odds and become an internationally renowned success."

ChatGPT replied, "Sarah had always known that her son, Jack, was special. From a young age, he struggled with social interactions and had difficulty communicating with others. When Jack was diagnosed with autism, Sarah was devastated. But she refused to let her son's diagnosis define him.

"Sarah knew that Jack was passionate about music, so she spent hours teaching him how to play the piano. At first, he struggled to understand the concepts, but eventually, he began to excel. Sarah encouraged Jack every step of the way, and soon he was composing his music.

"Despite the challenges that came with his autism, Jack's talent could not be denied. He began to perform at local concerts, and his music quickly gained a following. Sarah knew that her son had what it took to become a success, so she worked tirelessly to help him achieve his goals.

"With Sarah's help, Jack's music career took off. He released several successful albums and toured worldwide, playing for sold-out crowds. His music touched the hearts of millions and inspired countless others to pursue their dreams, no matter what obstacles they faced.

"Sarah beamed with pride as she watched her son perform on stage, knowing she had helped him beat all odds and become an internationally renowned success. She knew that Jack's journey had been difficult, but she was grateful for every moment they shared."

So, I asked, "What if Jack has no real talents but has severe autism? What are ten ways he can become wealthy and highly successful through his mom's support?"

ChatGPT replied: "If Jack has severe autism and no particular talents, there are still ways for him to become wealthy and successful with his mother's support. Here are ten potential options:

1. Starting a business: With his mother's guidance and support, Jack could explore starting a business that aligns with his interests and skills. This could include anything from a home-based craft business to a digital marketing agency. [I've seen documentaries on people with severe disabilities starting businesses with familial or community support.]
2. Investing: If Jack has financial resources, he could invest his money in stocks, real estate, or other assets. His mother could help him research investment options and make informed decisions. [This seemed a little out there for someone with severe autism, but anything is possible.]
3. Online freelancing: Jack could leverage his skills and interests by offering his services as a freelancer online. This could include anything from writing to graphic design to virtual assistance.
4. Social media influencing: With his mother's help, Jack could build a following on social media and become an influencer. This could lead to paid sponsorships, partnerships, and other opportunities. [This might be possible!]
5. Online tutoring: Jack could offer his tutoring skills to students online. This could include anything from math to music lessons. [This didn't seem like the most realistic suggestion for

someone with severe autism unless it's peer-to-peer or Jack's got a knack for some topic. But again, anything is possible!]

6. **Affiliate marketing:** Jack could earn a commission by promoting other people's products online. His mother could help him identify products that align with his interests and audience. [This is entirely possible.]

7. **E-commerce:** Jack could start an online store selling products he is passionate about. His mother could help him with product research, marketing, and sales. [This is quite possible, too!]

8. **Writing a book:** With his mother's support, Jack could write a book about his experiences with autism. This could serve as inspiration for others and lead to speaking engagements and other opportunities.

9. **Public speaking:** Jack could become a motivational speaker, sharing his experiences with autism and inspiring others to overcome their challenges. His mother could help him with speech preparation and booking speaking engagements.

10. **Volunteering:** Jack could volunteer his time and skills to organizations that align with his interests and passions. His mother could help him identify volunteer opportunities and connect with organizations."

I then asked a new question: "What are fifteen steps a woman with mental illness with a marketing degree could take to become a Chief Marketing Officer for an oil and gas company?"

ChatGPT replied, "Becoming a Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) for an oil and gas company can be a challenging and competitive goal, but with dedication and perseverance, it's certainly possible. Here are 15 steps a woman with a marketing degree and mental illness could take to achieve this goal:

1. **Research the industry:** Begin by researching the oil and gas industry, its marketing trends, and the companies within it.

2. **Build a strong network:** Developing a strong professional network can help open doors and provide valuable insights into the industry. Join professional organizations, attend networking events, and connect with industry professionals on LinkedIn.

3. **Gain experience:** Start by gaining experience in marketing and related fields. Consider internships, entry-level positions, or freelance work to build your skills and resume.

4. **Pursue advanced education:** Consider pursuing a master's degree in marketing or a related field to gain an edge in the job market.

5. **Identify target companies:** Research oil and gas companies with job openings for CMOs or related positions and make a list of target companies.

6. **Customize your resume:** Tailor your resume to highlight your experience and qualifications for the specific job you are applying for.

7. **Prepare for interviews:** Research the company and prepare for possible interview questions. Practice your responses and prepare examples of your accomplishments.

8. **Consider disclosing mental illness:** While not required, disclosing mental illness can help employers understand your needs and make accommodations if necessary. [From my view, please do not take this advice! If there is one piece of advice I wish to leave us with, it's not to disclose one's mental illness. From my experience, diversity hiring is not biased in favor of mental illnesses. Let our merits speak for themselves, as revealing a mental illness makes us targets.]

9. Focus on strengths: Focus on your strengths and skills. Emphasize your creativity, adaptability, and problem-solving skills.
10. Build a personal brand: Build a strong personal brand by developing a professional online presence, showcasing your work, and engaging with your professional network.
11. Be persistent: The job search process can be long and frustrating. Stay persistent and keep applying to job openings.
12. Consider alternative paths: If you are having difficulty finding a job as a CMO, consider other related positions that can help you gain experience and work your way up.
13. Seek therapy and support: Managing mental illness can be challenging; seeking treatment and support can help you manage your symptoms and cope with your job search and work stresses.
14. Advocate for mental health: Use your platform to advocate for mental health awareness, reduce stigma, and promote positive mental health practices in the workplace.
15. Celebrate small successes: Celebrate small successes, such as landing an interview or receiving positive feedback. This can help you stay motivated and focused on your long-term goal of becoming a CMO."

And lastly, I had to ask a follow-up question to an earlier query, "What are ten steps a Christian woman in a wheelchair can take to become a Chief Executive Officer of a large public company?"

ChatGPT responded, "Becoming a CEO of a large public company is a challenging goal for anyone, regardless of their background or circumstances. However, it is possible to achieve this goal with dedication and hard work. Here are ten steps a Christian woman in a wheelchair can take to become a CEO of a large public company:

1. Develop a strong foundation: Build a strong foundation of knowledge and skills essential for a CEO. This includes skills in leadership, communication, strategy, financial management, and decision-making.
2. Network: Build a strong network of contacts in your industry. Attend conferences, industry events, and other networking opportunities to meet people who can help you advance your career.
3. Build a strong resume: Build a strong resume that highlights your skills and accomplishments. This includes your education, work experience, and any other relevant experience or training.
4. Develop a strong personal brand: Develop a strong personal brand that communicates your strengths, values, and vision. This can include creating a personal website, writing a blog, or publishing articles related to your industry. [If we subscribe to the free newsletters from HARO (Help a Reporter Out), we can make pitches to be included in reporters' articles. This tactic is excellent for personal branding purposes. But here is a secret: pitch an article on one of the topics presented by "Authority Magazine." If they accept, the entire article, interview style, will be about you—perfect for personal branding.]
5. Set clear goals: Set clear goals for your career, and develop a plan for achieving them. This includes short-term and long-term goals and identifying the steps needed to achieve them.
6. Build a strong team: Building a solid team around you becomes increasingly important as you advance in your career. This includes hiring and developing talented individuals who can support you as CEO.

7. Embrace technology: As a woman in a wheelchair, embracing technology that can help you overcome physical barriers is essential. This includes tools and devices that can help you communicate, access information, and perform your job more efficiently.
8. Advocate for yourself: Don't be afraid to advocate for yourself and your needs in the workplace. This includes requesting accommodations and support when necessary and speaking up when your needs are unmet.
9. Build a support system: Build a support system of friends, family, and colleagues who can provide emotional support and encouragement as you pursue your goals.
10. Stay true to your faith: As a Christian woman, staying true to your faith and values as you pursue your career goals is essential. This includes seeking guidance and wisdom from God and using your talents and abilities to serve others."

These results seemed too similar to those about the woman with mental illness becoming a CMO. However, we can alter the wording of our ChatGPT query to gain new results. And we can redo queries as often as we like to generate different results--until we're happy. But there seems to be a limit to how many searches we can do on ChatGPT in one day. It said I reached the limit for ChatGPT 4 searches and switched to ChatGPT 3.5.

But, with all the above queries, I've come to enjoy the power of ChatGPT. It even lets us continue a thought, such as, "Please provide more detail about steps Amelia can take to earn over a million annually." ChatGPT automatically knows we're referencing the prior query results.

I also queried ChatGPT on how an economical book could be published and grown into a multi-million dollar empire. The results were so good they could be a section of a marketing strategy for a book proposal.

But what if everyone querying ChatGPT receives the same advice? And is it the case that a woman in a wheelchair would only gain wealth and fame through selling disability-related products? What about products utterly unrelated to disability but instead related to her passions? Those questions make for excellent follow-up queries to ChatGPT. And if we're in a rut, we can query ChatGPT, receive instant feedback, and quickly re-establish our goals. ChatGPT thinks as big as we do! And if we believe anything is possible, ChatGPT thinks so, too. So, let's map out our dreams and goals with an instant coach and get busy making our first million!



Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

Father's Day is coming up on Sunday, June 18. *The Voice's* writers past have dished up a plethora of father articles, and we chose these two to feature.

Getting to the heart of the matter. Then-editor Sandra Livingston challenges some outdated views on the roles of mommas and poppas. "Yes, pregnancy and labour are experiences that men can't have. But the kind of outdated thinking I encountered recently made me realize that modern

men are stuck firmly between that proverbial rock and a hard place." [Editorial – Father Bears](#), June 4, 2010.

Telling stories. Bill Pollett tries to reconcile his memories with the man as he is—and once was. "He seems like a child who has been sent to sit alone in the corner and ponder some mysterious offense he cannot begin to fathom. I sit there spellbound by the words that come from his mouth. I cannot take my eyes from his face." [Lost & Found – A Story of my Father](#), November 25, 2005.



Attention Please

Dear Barb:

I am a guy in my thirties, and I have recently been diagnosed with ADHD. I always knew there was something wrong. I have never been able to focus on anything for more than a few minutes. Even in school, my teachers called my parents because they couldn't manage me. My parents were told to put me on medication, but they chose not to after reading up on the long-term effects. Therefore, I struggled but managed to get almost through high school. The ADHD has been manageable at times, although as I'm getting older I find it more difficult to manage. I have been given medication, which helps for most of the day, but as soon as it wears off I am pretty frazzled and at times explosive. I am finding it difficult to maintain relationships as well. What advice would you give to someone in my situation? Thanks, Greg.

Hi Greg:

You are bringing up a very important topic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ADHD is defined as “one of the most common *neurodevelopmental* disorders of childhood. It is usually first diagnosed in childhood and often lasts into adulthood. Children with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors (may act without thinking about what the result

will be), or be overly active.”

Adults with ADHD (Adult Attention-Deficient/Hyperactivity Disorder) present challenges in all aspects of adult life, from relationships, work, finances, time management, and more. I am not going to focus on the causes and symptoms of ADHD, but rather include some strategies that will help to manage the condition.

Since you are already on medication that's a start, but you also must learn additional coping skills. For individuals with ADHD, the greatest challenge is maintaining focus. Initially when attending a meeting or lecture you are able to focus, but if the topic becomes boring, your mind loses interest and you become restless and find it hard to stay focused. Taking notes while at these meetings will help to keep your attention on what the speaker is saying. This will be a way to bring your mind back to the task rather than going off somewhere. If you are given instructions, repeat them back to the person, that will help you to make sure you clearly understand.

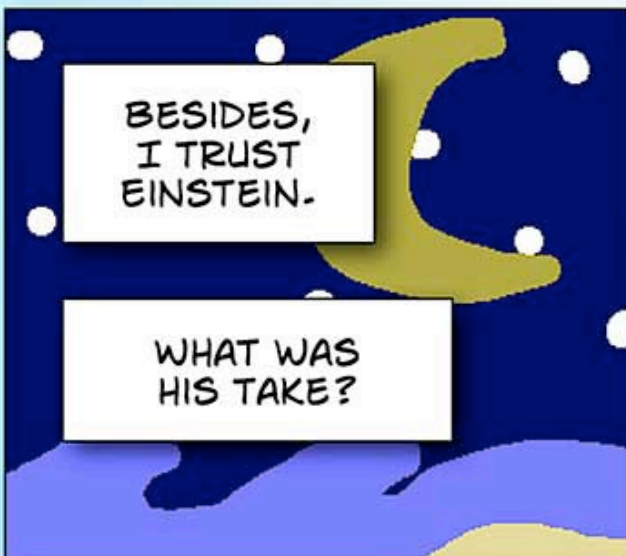
Also, when attending long meetings, feel free to move around, when given the opportunity. A stress ball will help to relieve some of the restlessness and will not bother those around you. Eating well, getting enough exercise, and having adequate sleep patterns will also help you manage your symptoms. Following a regular routine in your daily life will also enable you to focus on what you need to do. I don't know if you have tried meditation, but try short periods of meditation, to begin with, and lengthen the periods as you feel ready. Try some meditation apps on your smartphone. Implementing these changes will not magically make your ADHD disappear, but over time it will help you manage your symptoms and feel better about yourself and your life. Best of luck Greg, I hope this information has been helpful. There is a plenitude of information online about managing ADHD.

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
Something Out There

Wanda Waterman





Congratulations, AU graduates!

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



ausu@ausu.org

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

Follow us on social media!
We are @AUSStudentsUnion



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

THE VOICE

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