

OVER THE EDGE

UNBC'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER

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THURSDAY



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Rediscovering UNBC's Roots: A Chat with One of the First Graduates



STEVE BATHY

UNBC Kazoo Band's debut performance: playing Christmas tunes on a flatbed truck through downtown Prince George, spreading holiday cheer and candy to children.

AUTHOR: AHMAD JALIL

With the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) turning 30, I had the pleasure of sitting down with Margaret Bathy, one of the early graduates who was there from the very start. She was among the first to graduate from UNBC and was also part of the initial team at *Over the Edge*, the university's student newspaper.

We met by chance at a local DIY air filter workshop. Curious about her stories, I caught up with her later to chat about what UNBC was like in its early days.

The Story Behind "Over the Edge"

The name "Over the Edge" for the student newspaper has an interesting backstory. During the construction of University Way, there were incidents where earth from the hillside slid down onto the road. This led to jokes about how much of the hill would eventually come down, with some even quipping that the university might slide down to share the College of New Caledonia (CNC) campus.

The potential for the university to go "over the edge" of the embankment inspired the newspaper's name. It was chosen to suggest that the content might push boundaries, rather than literally referring to the university's location.

Starting a Newspaper from Scratch

Back in the early '90s, the campus scene was quite different. Classes were held at Le Cercle des Canadiens Français de Prince George on Fir St. at 17th Ave., adjacent to what is now called "Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park," because the main campus wasn't ready yet.

A small group of students contributed to the newspaper. Margaret remembers working closely with two in particular: the editor, Myron Gordon, and Heather Sapergia. All three were mature students who had been working and raising families before coming to UNBC.

"We were having fun," Margaret recalled, "mostly writing satire and whatever else we could come up with."

The first issue of *Over the Edge* was actually published in 1993, distributed to students attending classes at the temporary location. Vol 1 #2 followed on November 22, 1993.

However, when the Cranbrook Hill campus officially opened, the October 17, 1994 issue was labeled "Vol. 1 Issue 1," as if the earlier editions hadn't existed.

Recognizing the importance of preserving this history, Margaret took her early copies of "Over

the Edge" to the newspaper office beside the UNBC Winter Garden, ensuring that the current staff were aware of the paper's origins.

Tea with the Queen

One of Margaret's standout memories was attending a tea party with Queen Elizabeth II during UNBC's official opening ceremonies. Despite strict protocols, she and her fellow students managed to get a group photo with the Queen—a keepsake she cherishes.

UNBC's Evolution

When asked about how UNBC has evolved, Margaret mentioned the expansion of campus facilities, especially the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre. "It's made a big difference," she noted, pointing out how it's become a hub for both students and the local community.

University-Community Connection

Contrary to perceptions of a disconnect between the university and the town, Margaret sees strong connections. While she acknowledges that transportation can be challenging for students living in dorms without their own vehicles, she emphasizes the numerous ways students engage with the Prince George community and vice versa.

Students frequently venture off-campus for shopping, dining, and recreation. Many, including two of Margaret's grandchildren, live and work off-campus. Conversely, Prince George residents often visit UNBC for events at the Canfor Theatre, receptions, plant sales, to enjoy the David Douglas Society gardens, use the Northern Sport Centre facilities, or watch UNBC sports teams compete.

Looking Back and Ahead

Chatting with Margaret felt like stepping back in time. Her stories painted a picture of UNBC's early days, filled with enthusiasm, challenges, and a tight-knit community spirit. As the university celebrates its 30th anniversary, her experiences remind us of its roots and the people who helped build it.

UNBC has come a long way, but the pioneering spirit that marked its beginning is still alive and well. Here's to the next 30 years and beyond!

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NUGSS Says Hello: Your Undergraduate Student Society

AUTHOR: SAPAN DAVE

As a new or returning undergraduate student at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), you're automatically part of an important organization working to enhance your university experience: the Northern Undergraduate Student Society (NUGSS).

Who Is NUGSS?

NUGSS represents all undergraduate students at UNBC, both on the Prince George campus and at regional campuses.

Since 1994, they've been providing advocacy, representation, events, and services to make students' time at UNBC the best it can be.

Their mission statement, adopted in 1998, clearly outlines their purpose:

"NUGSS is an organization built by student leadership and focused on the needs of students. Our mission is to enhance the social and academic life of UNBC students by providing services that address the diversity of student needs in a responsible and inclusive manner."

What They Do

NUGSS offers a wide range of services and opportunities:

- U-PASS Program
- Health and Dental Plan
- Ombudsperson Services
- The Thirsty Moose Pub and Degrees Coffee Co.
- Emergency Financial Aid
- Food Bank Services
- Locker Rentals
- Management of the Northern University Student Centre

They also represent student interests on various university committees and liaise with UNBC administration, Senate, and the Board of Governors.

For a complete list of services and more detailed information, check out their website: www.nugss.ca or scan this QR code!



Student-Led Organizations (SLOs)

An important aspect of NUGSS's role is managing all the clubs at UNBC. Their SLO Policy provides guidelines for the organization, funding, and coordination of student-led organizations. This policy outlines the requirements for formal recognition by the NUGSS Board of Directors and provides guidelines for maintenance and fundraising. For more information, visit the Documents page on the NUGSS website to view the NUGSS Policy Manual.

Northern University Student Centre

NUGSS manages the Northern University Student Centre, which houses several important student organizations:

- CFUR Radio
- Over the Edge Newspaper (that's us!)
- Prince George Public Interest Research Group
- Northern Pride Centre
- Meet Your NUGSS Board

The NUGSS Board of Directors for 2023–2024 is a diverse group of passionate student leaders:

Syeda Emaan Iftikhar – President

A first-year Political Science major, Syeda brings an international perspective as a recent transplant from the United Arab Emirates. With a background in debate and student leadership, she's committed to fostering a vibrant academic community at UNBC.

Armaan Jamwal – Vice President

A second-year Bachelor of Commerce student majoring in Management Information Systems, Armaan balances academics with a love for basketball and a respect for diverse cultures. He's approachable and eager to learn, aiming to make a positive impact in his role.

Ayaan Punjani – Director at Large

An International Business and Accounting major, 20-year-old Ayaan brings energy and enthusiasm to NUGSS. A sports enthusiast and natural listener, he embraces life's challenges with a positive outlook and is always ready with a smile.

Adrien Zimmerman – Director at Large

A fourth-year Integrated Science student, Adrien is passionate about fostering inclusive communities. Growing up in Williams Lake instilled in her a love for nature, which she often explores on UNBC's nearby trails. She's committed to environmental stewardship and building a

united UNBC community.

Sapan Dave – Director at Large

A second-year Physics major, Sapan brings an international perspective as a recent immigrant from India. His passion for science and technology is matched by his commitment to student life at UNBC. With experience on the MAC committee, he understands the importance of financial decisions in supporting student organizations.

Staff Members

Doug Minaker – General Manager

Doug joined NUGSS in July 2019, bringing over 15 years of supervisory and management experience. With an extensive background in the hospitality industry, including hotels, restaurants, and conference centers, Doug offers valuable expertise in guest services and food and beverage management. As a part-time mature student himself, he brings a unique perspective to NUGSS and is dedicated to creating opportunities for students and improving their UNBC experience.

Susan Cai – Office Manager

Susan is an undergraduate student pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce in Human Resources Management at UNBC. She's been with NUGSS since March 2021, taking on various roles including WUSC Coordinator and Pub Supervisor. These experiences have honed her leadership skills and deepened her understanding of student needs. Susan is passionate about student engagement and looks forward to leveraging her HR background to enhance office operations and create a welcoming environment for the student body.

Stay Connected

Website: www.nugss.ca

Email: nugss-hello@unbc.ca

Phone: 250-960-6427

Office Location: 2nd floor of NUSC (Room 6-370)

Remember, NUGSS is your student society. They're here to make your UNBC experience rewarding both academically and socially. Get to know them, get involved, and make this year at UNBC unforgettable! Stay tuned for more content about NUGSS from the Board of Directors as they share their tips and tricks in future issues of Over the Edge Newspaper. Keep an eye out for upcoming OTE issues to learn more about NUGSS and undergraduate-related subjects!

Reclaim Your Mind: The Benefits of a Digital Detox for Students

AUTHOR: TIFFANY KUKU

In today's hyper-connected world, technology is deeply embedded in our lives, especially in education. While it's essential, our constant need to scroll has led to unhealthy habits affecting our mental health. As university students, we're particularly vulnerable to the overwhelming digital landscape, which can keep our minds in a perpetual state of chaos. Recognizing the impact of digital platforms is the first step toward implementing regular digital detoxes to cope with tech-induced stress.

The Overwhelming Digital Landscape

Studies show that the average college student spends up to seven hours a day on screens outside of educational activities. While digital platforms offer leisure and a break during stressful times, it's important to set limits to maintain a healthy relationship with technology. Overuse has become so normalized that avoiding it seems unusual, even when we notice negative effects.

Digital addiction is linked to issues like anxiety, depression, and burnout. There's a rise in mood disorders, impulse control problems, and body image concerns among adolescents due to digitalization. Social media platforms can lead to poor life satisfaction through constant comparisons. Addressing withdrawal symptoms is key to improvement.

What Is a Digital Detox?

A digital detox is a conscious decision to reduce your use of digital devices for a set period. This could mean cutting down daily screen time outside of work or studies or taking entire weekends offline to engage with yourself and your environment. Recognizing shifts in your mental well-being related to digital consumption allows you to regain control. The goal is to create space for reflection, relaxation, and real-world engagement.



UNBC COMMUNICATIONS

UNBC Students take some time to work outside without digital assistance.

Mental Health Benefits, Increased Self-Awareness

Stepping away from digital platforms offers an opportunity for mindfulness and self-reflection. Instead of consuming endless content—which still requires mental processing—we can focus on our own thoughts and learn more about ourselves without artificial influences.

This self-awareness helps prevent mental health issues and allows us to recognize our limits and triggers.

Enhanced Focus and Productivity

Digital detoxing can improve focus and productivity. The rise of short-form content has reduced our attention spans, making it harder to engage with longer, meaningful material—a challenge for students who need to digest complex information. Limiting digital media helps us concentrate better and stay accountable to our personal goals.

Reduced Anxiety and Stress

Unplugging frees us from the pressure to constantly respond to notifications and engage with

social media. It reduces stress from comparisons and the need to keep up with trends. Studies indicate that taking breaks from screens lowers cortisol levels—the stress hormone—leading to a more relaxed mind.

Better Sleep Quality

Excessive screen time, especially before bed, disrupts our natural sleep cycles. By unplugging, we establish healthier routines that align with our biological clocks, making it easier to fall asleep. Consistent, quality sleep enhances our overall well-being.

Tips for a Successful Digital Detox

Set Clear Goals: Understand why you want to unplug, whether to prevent issues or develop better habits. Clear goals provide focus and a sense of accomplishment.

Establish Boundaries: Customize your detox to fit your lifestyle. Some may cut out all non-essential screen time, while others might limit it to specific hours.

Engage in Offline Activities: Develop hobbies and skills that enrich your life without adding stress. This helps you learn more about yourself and fosters personal growth.

Conclusion

Our lives are dominated by screens and curated media. Recognizing changes in our mental state and taking steps to address them is a powerful act of self-care. As university students, prioritizing our well-being is essential for navigating life's challenges.

Embracing a digital detox allows us to reclaim our time, reduce stress, and build deeper connections with ourselves beyond technology's influence.

Why not give it a try? Unplug for a weekend and observe changes in your mood, sleep, stress levels, or focus. This experience can help you define what a digital detox looks like for you.

Your mind and mental health will thank you!

OVER THE EDGE
UNBC'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER

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northern undergraduat
student society



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PRESIDENT
BRUCE ✦



**ACTING EDITOR
IN CHIEF**
AHMAD ✦



**GRAPHIC
DESIGNER**
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DIRECTOR
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Why We Love Profs: A Student Perspective



AUTHOR: LINA MAKSYMOVA

The semester is in full swing, and with it comes the whirlwind of assignments, deadlines, and long study sessions.

Being a student isn't always easy—but honestly, it's not a walk in the park for our instructors either. Still, one thing that makes the whole experience a lot more enjoyable is the connection between students and professors. It's something that's become a lot more common these days, and I'm here for it.

I mean, think about it: professors bring their own personality, sense of humor, and energy into the classroom. It's refreshing! Whether it's a joke during a lecture, funny stories mixed into lessons, or even those inside jokes that pop up throughout the term, these little things make a difference. And beyond the laughs, they bring real-life experience and knowledge that you just can't find in textbooks.

Personally, I'm more than satisfied with my courses and instructors this semester. Each one has their own quirks and ways of teaching that make their classes stand out. It's amazing to see how they each bring their unique life perspectives into the classroom. I really believe that having a mental connection with your professor makes the academic journey a lot smoother. Plus, that connection can open doors—whether it's learning new things, getting a reference, or even finding a job down the line.

So, what do we, as students, appreciate most about our professors?

Your sense of humor: Those jokes during lectures really do make the time fly.

Your unique habits: Whether it's the way you scribble on the board or your favorite catchphrases, we notice—and we love it.

Being tough but fair: Yep, we actually like when you push us outside our comfort zones. It shows you care about our growth.

Constructive feedback: It means the world to hear your thoughts, especially when we're trying new things.

Passion for the Subject: When you get excited about the material, it's contagious. Your enthusiasm makes even the toughest topics feel interesting and worth learning about.

Real-World Examples: We appreciate when you bring in stories from your own experiences or current events that relate to what we're studying. It helps us see how the theory applies in the real world.

Signature Coffee Mugs: Whether it's a mug that says "World's Best Dad" or one with a witty science pun, we can always count on seeing that same mug during every class. It's like your unofficial trademark!

Catchphrases and Verbal Tics: Every class has that one phrase you always say—whether it's "To make a long story short" or "Now, here's the fun part." It's become part of the class's rhythm, and we even find ourselves anticipating it.

Creative Whiteboard Doodles: Some professors have a knack for drawing little diagrams, doodles, or funny illustrations during lectures. It might not always look like art, but it always makes us smile.

That One Lecture Accessory: Be it the

vibrant scarves, funky socks, or a hat they wear on Fridays—those little style quirks make you memorable. It's those small things that make us look forward to class!

Sitting on the Desk During Lectures: When you take a seat on the desk while reading the lecture, it creates a relaxed and safe environment for us. It feels less formal and more like a conversation.

Showing Us Movies: We love when you incorporate films into the curriculum! Whether it's a documentary that ties into our topic or a classic that sparks discussion, those movie days feel like a special treat.

When You Believe in Us: It means so much when you express your faith in our abilities. Your encouragement and belief that we can succeed inspire us to push ourselves further.

All in all, UNBC's instructors, professors, and staff are simply the best. They each play a part in making the university, the community, and our lives better.

We, as students, appreciate everything you do to make this place feel like home. Your dedication, strong values, and belief in our potential are what push us to be better.

Keep doing what you do, folks—you're making a difference!

President Answers

Getting the Answers You Crave: We Ask, the President Delivers!



Where do you get your go-to coffee, and what's your order?



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Curious About Research?

Come meet the UNBC Research Ambassadors!

AUTHOR: JULIAN STOKES

Are you interested in research but not sure where to start? Or maybe you've heard about some cool projects happening at UNBC and want to get involved? Well, we've got some great news for you!

The **Research Ambassadors Program** is here to help! We're a team of students who are passionate about research and eager to share what we've learned.

We come from all kinds of fields—from science and engineering to social sciences and humanities. Our job is to make research at UNBC more accessible and get students like you involved!

Who are the Research Ambassadors?

We're a group of undergrad and grad students who've been through the research process ourselves, so we know how exciting (and sometimes overwhelming) it can be. We work closely with the **Office of Research and Innovation** and are always happy to chat about our experiences—whether it's in a lab, the library, or out in the field. We also visit classes, take part in outreach activities, and

collaborate with the Student Recruitment team to help high school and new students see what research at UNBC is all about.

If you have any questions or just want to chat, you can always reach us at researchambassadors@unbc.ca or follow us on Instagram at [@unbc_researchambassadors](https://www.instagram.com/unbc_researchambassadors) to see what we're up to! This semester, we're hosting **drop-in tabling sessions** to make it easy for you to connect with us and ask any questions you have about getting into research.

Whether you're curious about how to start, looking for funding tips, or just want to hear about some cool projects, we're here for you.

We'll be set up in the Winter Garden (at **Table #14a**, near the Doug Little Lounge) on these **Thursdays from 2:30 to 4:00 pm**:

- October 31
- November 28
- December 12

Feel free to swing by, grab a snack, and have a casual chat with one of us!

We're a friendly bunch, and we love talking about

research, so don't hesitate to ask us anything. Whether you're in your first year or getting ready for grad school, we've got insights and advice that can help.

Here's who you might meet at the table:

- Ahmad Jalil – Faculty of Environment
- Annika Easton – Faculty of Science and Engineering
- Faten Elshal – Faculty of Science and Engineering
- Julian Stokes – Faculty of Human and Health Sciences
- Marleau Brown – Faculty of Human and Health Sciences
- Nusrat Panna – Faculty of Indigenous Studies, Social Sciences and Humanities

If you're curious about research or just want to know how to get started, the Research Ambassadors are your go-to team. Whether you're hoping to volunteer in a lab, apply for a research award, or simply learn more about the research process, we've got your back.

See you at one of our tabling sessions soon!



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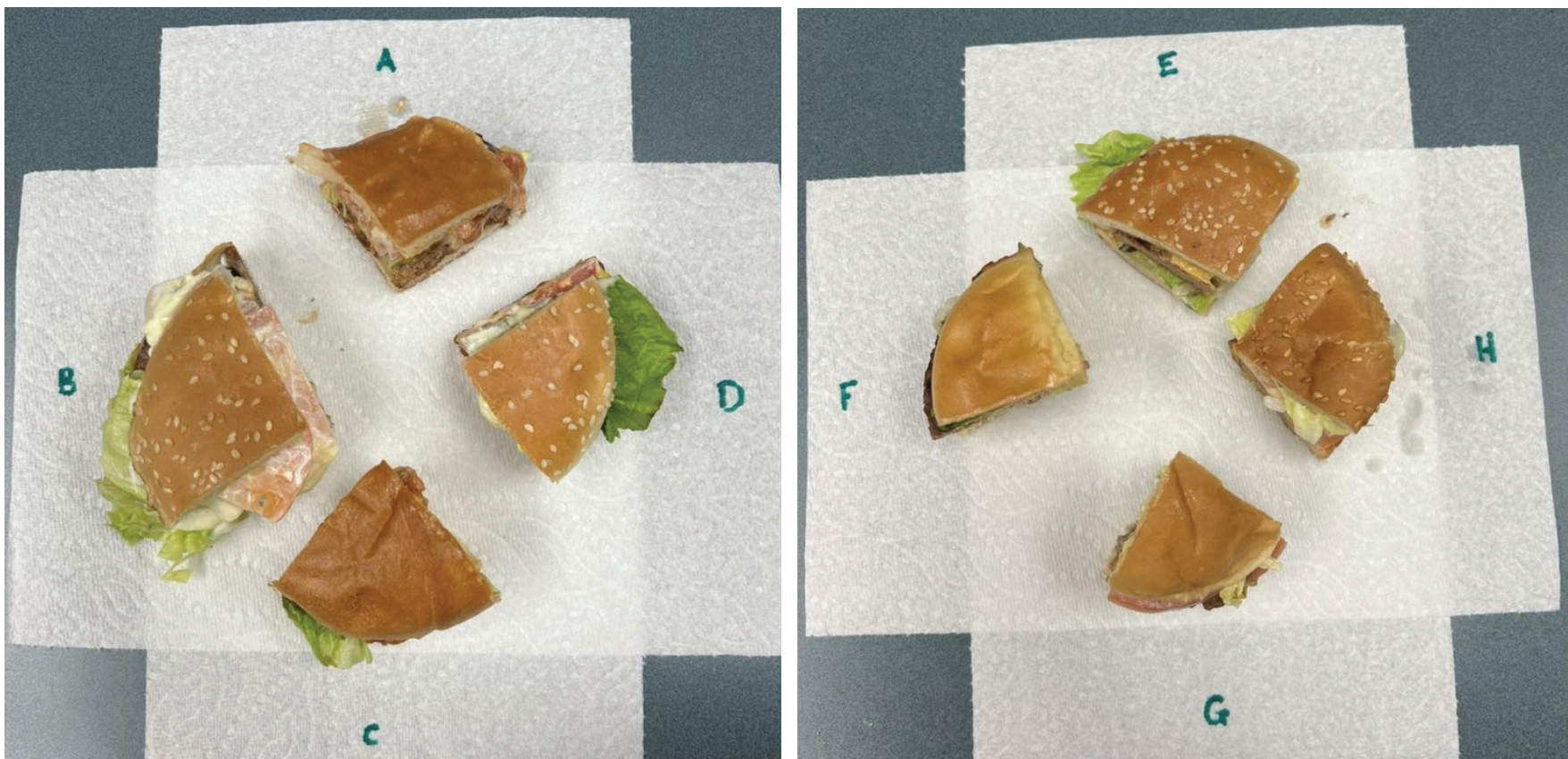
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The Great Burger Debate



AHMAD JALIL

Blind Taste Test Division: For the testing, burgers were divided into quarters and served without packaging or labels that would identify their source.

Blind taste test reveals top picks, best values

Burgers are a staple in the diet of many university students. Quick, filling, and satisfying, they're often the go-to meal when you're short on time and money.

But with so many fast food chains vying for your hard-earned cash, how do you know which one will give you the best bang for your buck?

Our team of intrepid student taste-testers set out to answer this question once and for all.

The Test

We gathered a group of ten diverse students, all self-proclaimed burger enthusiasts, for a quarter-pound burger showdown. The contenders: Wendy's Dave's Single, A&W's Teen Burger (no bacon), Triple O's Original with Cheese, Burger King's Whopper with cheese (no pickles), McDonald's Quarter Pound BLT (no bacon), Carl's Jr's Famous Star with Cheese, Dairy Queen's Cheese Grill Burger,

and Fatburger's Original Fatburger with Cheese.

To ensure an unbiased test, each burger was cut into quarters and served in unmarked wrappers by a neutral experimenter. Testers were unaware which chain each sample came from and rated the burgers on a scale from 1-10 based on taste, texture, and overall satisfaction.

The Results

When the scores were tallied, two burgers emerged as clear favorites. Wendy's Dave's Single clinched the top spot with an average score of 5.11, praised for its fresh taste and satisfying toppings. McDonald's Quarter Pound BLT (no bacon) followed closely with an average of 5.34 points, with testers appreciating its classic flavor profile.

On the other end of the spectrum, Burger King's Whopper with cheese (no pickles) and A&W's Teen Burger (no bacon) received the lowest scores, with

averages of 4.43 and 4.57 respectively. Testers found these burgers comparatively less impressive in terms of taste and overall experience.

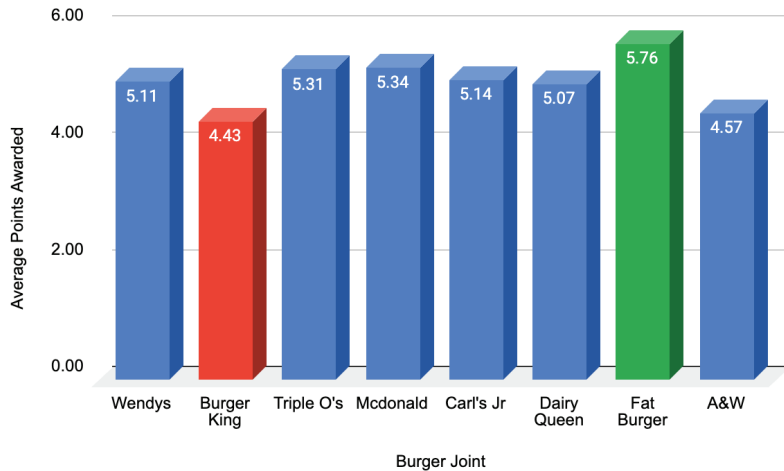
Value for Money

But taste is just one part of the equation. For students on a tight budget, the cost is often the deciding factor.

To determine which burger offers the best value, we calculated a "price per point" for each by dividing the cost by its average score.

Here, McDonald's Quarter Pound BLT (no bacon) took the lead, costing just \$1.17 per taste point. That's the lowest among all burgers tested, making it the most budget-friendly option. Wendy's Dave's Single wasn't far behind at \$1.23 per point, offering a great balance of taste and value.

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Fatburger's Original Fatburger with Cheese, while scoring high on taste with an average of 5.76 points, was the priciest at \$2.12 per point due to its \$12.18 price tag.

It might be worth the occasional splurge, but it's not the most economical choice for students.

The Local Burger Scene

While our test focused on national chains, we recognize that many students also frequent local burger joints.

Spots like The Thirsty Moose Pub and The Wall of Fame are popular choices, known for their unique creations and lively atmosphere.

In future tests, we plan to include these beloved local establishments to see how they stack up against the fast food giants.

Will their handcrafted patties and creative toppings outshine the standardized fare of the chains? Stay tuned to find out!

Conclusion

So, what's the verdict? For the best overall burger experience, Wendy's Dave's Single gets our vote for its combination of great taste and reasonable value.

But if you're looking to maximize your burger budget, McDonald's Quarter Pound BLT (no bacon) is your best bet.

Of course, taste is subjective and everyone has their personal favorites. The best way to find your ideal burger is to gather some friends, conduct your own taste test, and compare notes.

Whether you stick with the familiar fast food chains or venture out to local spots like The Thirsty Moose or The Wall of Fame, the perfect burger is out there waiting for you.

Methodology

Our test included ten blind taste testers who sampled quarter-pound portions of the specified burgers from eight national fast food chains. Burgers were scored on a scale of 1-10 based on taste, texture, and overall satisfaction.

Prices shown are per quarter-pound burger.

Happy burger hunting, fellow students!

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Flash From the Past: Downtown Revitalization

AUTHORS: AARON CUMMING AND LAURA MARTIN

From Over the Edge Vol. 1 Issue 2 Friday, November 4, 1994

Prince George is a growing city, and with its growth comes the development of many new buildings. Among these are the nearly-completed university, the courthouse, and the shopping center on Central.

Unfortunately, not all of Prince George is in a state of improvement.

Much of the downtown business district has been in poor shape for years. Recently, a plan was submitted to City Council to give downtown a much-needed facelift.

Point: Pro-Renovation

I feel that Prince George would really benefit from a revitalization scheme. With the recent opening of UNBC, many people, including staff and students, have moved into the city. As a native of Prince George, I believe we should do our best to make a good impression on visitors and new citizens by making our city as attractive as possible.

Counterpoint: Opposition to the Current Plan

I agree that downtown Prince George needs improvement, but not as proposed in the current plan. There are too many problems with it to justify spending over three million dollars.

Point: Provincial Government Grants

There are grants available from the Provincial Government specifically for city improvements like these. The merchants of Prince George would only need to cover 40% of the estimated costs, which comes to around \$1,600 per year for ten years. The rest would fall on taxpayers and the government. While \$16,000 per business over time seems like a large amount, the improvements would likely boost business and eventually prove profitable.

Counterpoint: Merchant Concerns

I understand your point, but it's somewhat circular reasoning. If downtown merchants want to make more money, they have to spend money. Many may not be able to afford the \$1,600 a year. Government grants, while available, are not always as generous as they seem.

Point: Crime and Urban Decay

Though the cost is an inconvenience, the benefits of improving downtown would outweigh it. A deteriorating city often becomes a breeding ground for

crime. If the city invests in its slum areas, residents will help protect them, keeping the city attractive and a source of pride, especially with the influx of people from the opening of UNBC.

Counterpoint: Gentrification Risks

If we improve slum areas, it might just create new ones elsewhere, often near the central business district. The lower property costs and ease of transportation would likely result in these areas becoming rundown again.

Point: Success Stories

Take George Street as an example. It was once one of the most rundown parts of Prince George. Since 1985, brickwork, new streetlights, and planters have transformed it. You can't argue that these changes have made the rest of downtown less attractive.

Counterpoint: Residential Areas

While commercial zones may improve, the area around Vancouver Street illustrates the problem. The businesses there are in good condition, but private homes across the street remain rundown. This shows that making businesses attractive doesn't necessarily uplift nearby residential areas.

Point: Pride in the City

I admit that residential areas also need improvement. But if downtown looks attractive, people will take pride in their city, and this pride could extend to how they care for their homes.

Counterpoint: Incentives for Property Owners

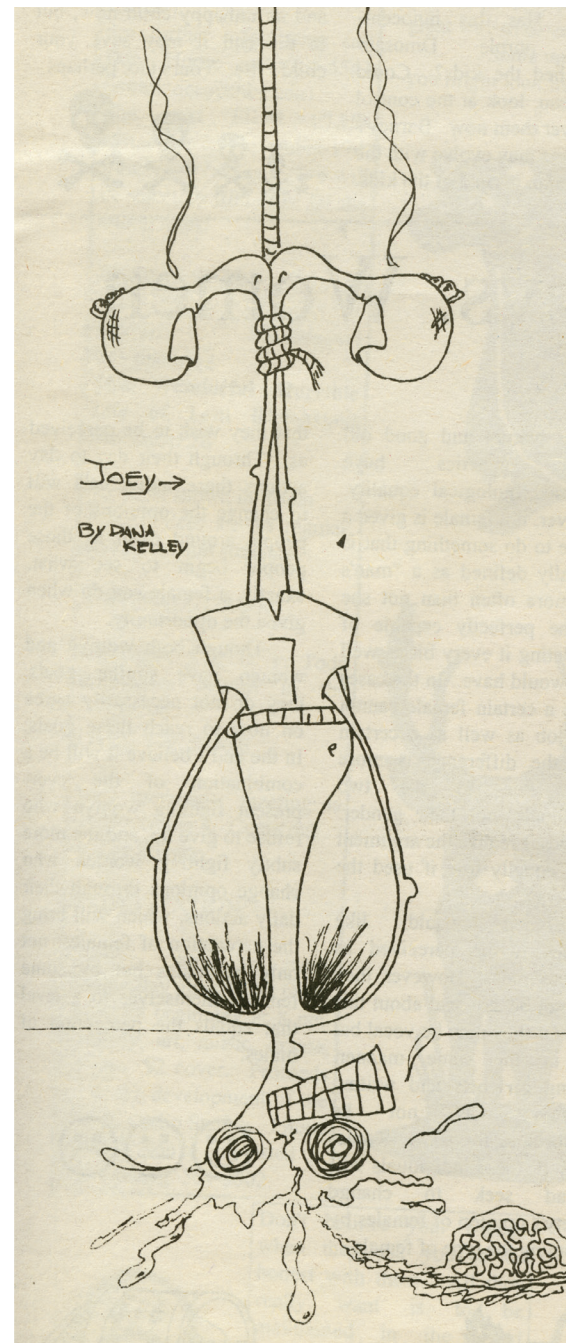
Many private property owners near business districts may prefer to wait for a lucrative offer from a business rather than spend money improving their homes. A business would likely pay the same amount for a home regardless of its condition.

Point: Voting and Funding

The plan was funded 40% by merchants and 60% by taxpayers. Taxpayers never get a say in how their money is spent, so I think merchants should also have a say. Downtown merchants were given until October 14 to vote on whether the revitalization should proceed, but the taxpayers, who also contribute, weren't included in the vote. If they had been, I believe the results might have been more favorable.

Counterpoint: Practical Concerns

The developers of this plan didn't account for Prince George's harsh winters. The proposed new canopies might not withstand the weather, and with reduced parking, people will have to walk long distances to businesses. In -30°C weather, many will likely choose the mall instead.



Point: Long-Term Vision

It's true that Prince George has harsh winters, and things may be inconvenient. However, I feel that we need to start somewhere in improving our city's appearance.

Counterpoint: Call for Revision

We both agree that downtown Prince George needs improvement, but a revised plan would be more beneficial.

Point: Seizing Opportunity

Perhaps a different plan would be better, but Prince George missed an opportunity. The city is growing, and steps need to be taken to ensure its successful future.

Cultural Identity and Mental Health

AUTHOR: TIFFANY KUKU

Every student is shaped by personal cultural experiences and traditional values, which influence how we navigate life's complexities, especially in a diverse university setting. From academic pressures to cross-cultural interactions and self-discovery, students from various backgrounds often face conflicts in making decisions within a fast-paced and sometimes isolating environment. Universities, resembling a "melting pot," raise questions about belonging, identity, mental health, and embracing cultural heritage—dynamics that empower some but challenge others.

The Impact of Culture on Mental Health

Mental health perceptions are deeply rooted in our cultural backgrounds, affecting how we recognize stress and whether we seek help. While blending different cultures can be enriching, international students may struggle to balance their own identities with the dominant university culture. This can lead to internal conflicts, especially when one's

culture views mental health discussions as taboo or a sign of weakness. Navigating a new environment doesn't erase these ingrained beliefs but challenges us to reconcile them with new perspectives.

A Personal Journey

As an international student, I found the experience both exciting and challenging. In my home country, mental health issues are often dismissed, making me hesitant to discuss my struggles. Upon arriving here, I faced homesickness, isolation, and academic pressure but avoided available resources due to internalized cultural narratives. Fortunately, open conversations with my family helped me navigate the dissonance between my identity and cultural expectations. My story reflects how cultural pressures can impact students' mental health and coping mechanisms.

The Pressure to Assimilate

While universities promote multiculturalism, there's often pressure to assimilate into the

dominant culture, creating tension as students reconcile their values with new expectations. This can fragment identities, leaving individuals feeling torn between traditions and new cultural influences. It's crucial to develop one's own identity without feeling forced to conform, as losing personal identity can significantly impact mental health.

Navigating Identity and Seeking Support

Identity exploration at university is a journey marked by self-discovery and growth. For students from diverse backgrounds, this involves balancing traditional expectations with a new environment's demands.

As universities diversify, support systems must also evolve to represent all cultures within the student body.

While institutional support is important, personal navigation aligned with individual needs is essential. With proper support and open dialogue, students can gain a deeper understanding of themselves and confidently face the world's complexities beyond academia.

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Cycling on the Edge

AUTHOR: CALEB MUELLER

Picture this. You are biking up a steep road in the rain, with a heavy backpack, and you're chugging along at 8 km/h. You didn't sleep great last night, had a breakfast of Froot Loops, and you're struggling to keep your bike steady. There's a vertical curb to the right, and you're trying to get around a storm drain in a lane the same width as your washing machine. Cars, trucks, and buses are passing you at over 100 km/h and are spraying you with a mix of gravel, dirt and water. Sound like a nightmare?

This is the reality for anyone who wants to bike up University Way in the designated bike lane. The average width of the paved section of the lane is around 85 to 90 cm, and this is reduced to 60 cm when you need to get around a storm drain. This lane, which should be a safe space for cyclists, is no more than an afterthought, wedged between fast-moving traffic and a vertical curb that makes any sudden swerve impossible. This lane is so thin, that in some places, the bike symbol is painted onto the curb and even the storm drain.

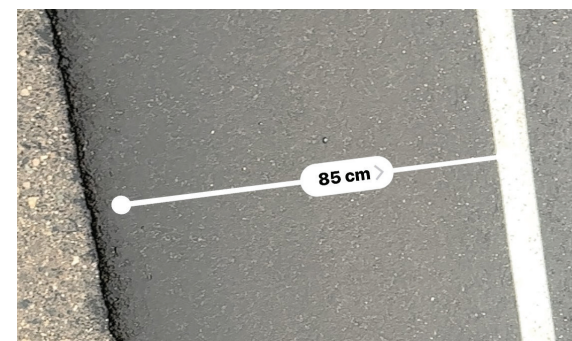
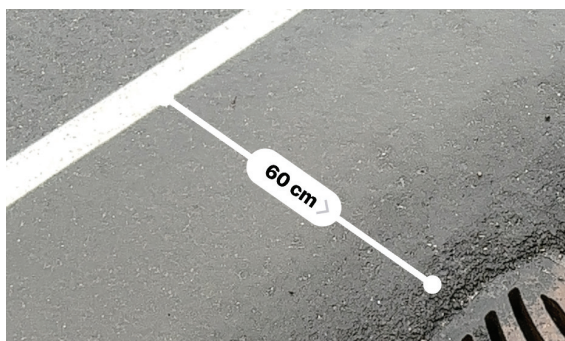
For anyone unfamiliar with cycling infrastructure standards, this might not immediately sound like a crisis. But according to BC's Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, a paved bike lane should be at least 1.5 meters wide (BC TAC 2019). The university bike lane falls far below that standard — sometimes by nearly a meter. If you treat University Way as a freeway and drive over 100 km/h (which many drivers do), the lane is almost 3 meters too thin in some spots. A lane below 90 cm in width doesn't just fail to meet the minimum: it's unsafe by design. It's hard enough to navigate in good conditions, but add in bad weather, poor visibility, or a distracted driver, and it becomes a death trap. Having two car lanes up the hill turns this road into a highway, with people driving above the speed limit on the right, and way above the limit on the left to pass. To top it all off, the two car lanes near the top merge into one, and I've seen cars failing to merge fast enough, forcing them into the bike lane to get enough room. Hearing all this, you might be thinking, "Why don't you just bike on the sidewalk?". Well, according to BC cycling laws, that's illegal.

Foothills Boulevard, from Moore's Meadow to University Way, is an example of a good (partial) bike lane. It is wide enough that you could almost be passed by another cyclist. Unfortunately, it's



CALEB MUELLER

Above left: A bike logo is painted onto the curb and storm drain. Above right: The bike lane from Moore's Meadow to the bottom of University Lane along Foothills Boulevard. Below left and right: Measurements of the width of the bike lane.



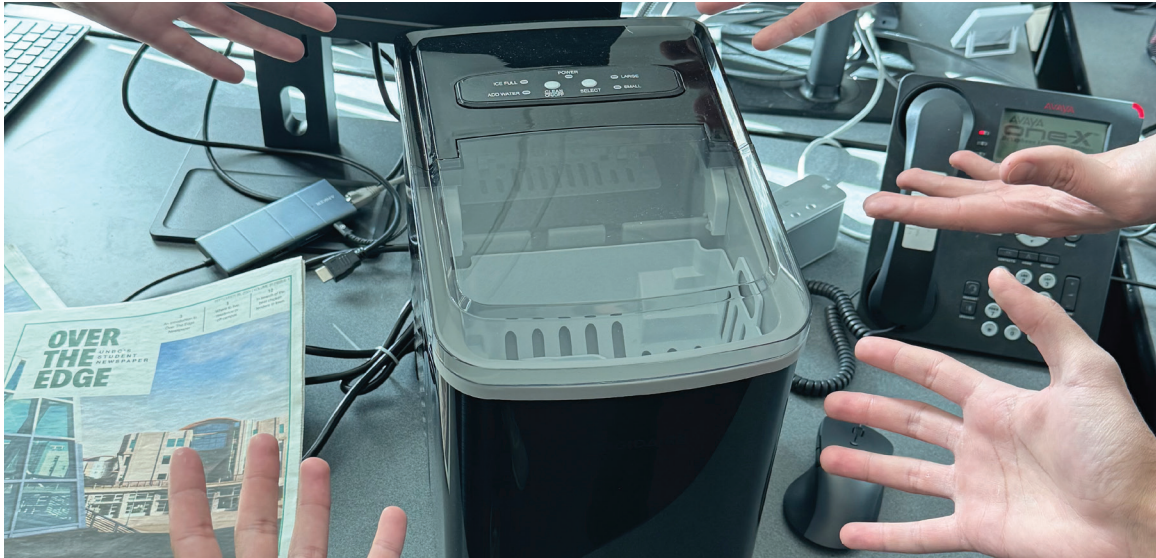
a half-hearted attempt. Past Moore's Meadow to Otway Road, the lane becomes the same width as the one up University Way. If you're going uphill from the River on Foothills, the lane almost disappears when going past Rolling Mix Concrete. Why is there a trend of bike lanes getting thinner when cyclists need to go slowly uphill?

I see only two solutions: either make the lane wider, add a barrier, and remove a car lane; or move the sidewalk and the curb inwards to free up space. The first option would be the easiest, and the road merges into one lane at the top anyway. But of course, I see this causing many complaints from the people who will lose a couple seconds of time, after they've spent 10 minutes in the Starbucks drive thru.

I doubt either of these solutions will even be considered unless a cyclist gets seriously injured or killed when using the lane. But why does it have to come to that? Why do we allow our most vulnerable road users to risk their safety daily just to get to school, work, or home?

This shouldn't be the price of choosing a sustainable and active mode of transportation. Cities have the power and responsibility to protect all road users, especially the most vulnerable. Until we recognize the value of cyclists and commit to proper infrastructure, the reality remains that choosing to bike to UNBC is often choosing to risk your life. It's time to make cycling safe for everyone, not just those willing to ride on the edge.

Cooling Down Chaos: Our Quest to Justify Buying an Ice Maker



AHMAD JALIL

The Over the Edge office now has an ice maker, but buying it wasn't as easy as a quick trip to the store.

AUTHOR: AHMAD JALIL

It was an unseasonably warm day at the University of Northern British Columbia when the idea first surfaced. Amidst stacks of papers and the hum of outdated computers, someone in our newly elected student society board room mused aloud, "Wouldn't iced coffee make these meetings so much better?" A moment of silence followed, then nods of agreement. And just like that, the seed was planted: we needed an ice maker.

The \$100 Question: Do We Really Need an Ice Maker?

Let's be honest—an ice maker isn't exactly a staple in the average student organization's office. But as the new board members who took over in March, we were eager to make our mark and improve our workspace. With little information transferred from the previous team, we were navigating uncharted waters, figuring things out as we went along. The prospect of crafting iced coffees and cooling down our drinks seemed like a small luxury that could boost morale and productivity. So, we took the plunge and purchased a \$100 ice maker from Costco.

Navigating the Nonprofit Iceberg

Here's where things get frosty. As a nonprofit

organization, every expense we make isn't just a swipe of a card; it's a line item that needs justification. We don't pay taxes, so there's no traditional "write-off," but transparency is key. How do we explain this purchase to our members and the university? More importantly, how do we ensure it aligns with our mission and financial policies?

We realized that this ice maker was more than a machine—it was a learning opportunity. It prompted us to delve deep into the intricacies of nonprofit financial governance. Could we argue that the ice maker enhances the well-being of our volunteers by providing them with cold beverages during long meetings? Was it a reasonable expense that contributed to the organization's operations?

From Lingerie to Ice Makers: The Importance of Transparency

Digging through past financial records, we stumbled upon some... interesting purchases made by previous boards—lingerie, for instance. If that could make it past scrutiny, surely our ice maker stood a chance. But we didn't want to repeat past mistakes. Transparency and accountability were our goals.

We decided to document every step of the purchase:

- **Justification:** Enhancing volunteer satisfaction and productivity.
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** A one-time \$100

expense could lead to happier, more efficient team members.

- **Alignment with Mission:** A supportive environment fosters better outcomes for the society's initiatives.

Turning a Cold Purchase into a Hot Topic

Rather than hiding the purchase, we chose to spotlight it. We penned this article not only to share a humorous anecdote but to shed light on the complexities of managing finances within a nonprofit student organization. Our ice maker became a symbol of the balancing act between practicality and responsibility.

Lessons Learned and Shared

This icy adventure taught us valuable lessons:

- **Financial Responsibility:** Every expense, no matter how small, should align with the organization's mission.
- **Transparency is Key:** Open communication about financial decisions builds trust with members and stakeholders.
- **Embrace the Learning Curve:** Mistakes and unconventional decisions are opportunities for growth.

Keeping It Cool Moving Forward

As we sip our iced coffees and reflect, we're grateful for the experience. The ice maker didn't just cool our drinks; it heated up conversations about governance, responsibility, and the quirks of student-run organizations. We hope our story encourages others to approach their roles with humor, diligence, and an openness to learn.

Final Thoughts

Navigating the responsibilities of handling real budgets in a nonprofit setting isn't always straightforward, especially for students new to governance. But with each decision—be it an ice maker or program funding—we're committed to serving our community transparently and effectively. And if we can enjoy a cold drink while doing it, well, that's just the icing on the cake.

Aurora Awakened: A Prince George Night to Remember

AUTHOR: SHIVI JUYAL

On the evening of Thursday, October 10, 2024, I had been locked in my room all day, exhausted from an intense CHEM-100 study session. After an evening nap, hoping to pull myself out of my groggy mood, I decided to head to Agora for dinner. There, I found my friends and joined them for some random table talk. A part of me felt impatient about the time slipping away.

While everyone spoke and I listened, swirling my spoon in hot mushroom soup, my thoughts nagged at me: “Go study; you have one whole chapter left to revise!”

The conversation among my friends ranged from the most amazing water rides to their experiences in Dubai. As I listened with intrigue and surprise, one of them said, “Oh! You guys know we have a Northern Lights forecast today, right?”

“But it’s quite cloudy!” another pointed out, a genuine concern. He tracked the visibility update using an app on his phone; it didn’t give us much hope.

I looked down at my empty bowl of soup and glanced at my watch—it was 9 o’clock. An hour had slipped by, and I was thinking about the chapter I had to finish. It was no joke; it was the horror of “Chemical Reactions and Stoichiometry”!

Apart from Alaska exploration episodes on National Geographic and some Instagram pages I follow, I had never really witnessed the Aurora Borealis, popularly called the Northern Lights. I had heard about it from my seniors and relatives and had even read about the scientific phenomenon behind it.

I looked at them and said, “Why don’t we just give it a try?”

I was glad when the group responded enthusiastically. In a few moments, we were out of Agora and set out to find the right spot to glimpse the Northern Lights. It was a chilly 3°C outside as we walked toward the David Douglas Botanical Garden.

One of us said, “Look up, guys!” pointing to the dark sky. All I could see was a long, grey-lined streak above us.

I was puzzled. Is that what it’s supposed to look like? I asked my friends, and one of them explained that the wavelength of the lights was too low for our eyes to capture (perks of having physics major friends). Meanwhile, they showed me the pictures they took while pointing their phones at the sky.

Yes, there were colors! No longer were they the



SHIVI JUYAL

The Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights, made a dazzling appearance above Prince George in October. lifeless grey streaks I saw above me. They were small, youthful traces of neon green. Witnessing traces of the Northern Lights, especially on a cloudy day, was a stroke of luck.

We quickly made our way toward the Shane Lake route behind the university residence. We didn’t go that far—just enough to find an area free from light pollution, total darkness. While we joked about saving ourselves from potential bear threats, I pulled out my phone and snapped a picture of the sky.

I looked at the pictures I had just taken. The guys were hyped up, and we showed the images to each other. By this time, I remember clearly staring up at the sky, smiling like a little child. It was an endearing moment. The neon green flashed more and more, mingling with a faint glint of violet, like a deliberate spill of colors over the endless black canvas. Tall, dark trees lifted their pale leaves against the chilly wind, spectating the strongest geomagnetic storm of the month along with the five of us.

After a few moments, it was gone. The streaks

vanished as if they had never existed. It felt like they had been there just for us. I stood there, wondering if it had been an illusion. While the group was content to have witnessed the lights and planned to head back to the dorms, I couldn’t get over the bounteous glimmer I had seen that night. How can something as scary as a solar storm manifest into the most stunning phenomenon a person can ever see? I was in love with the moment.

Well...yes, I did have a little difficulty with the revision for the next day. Yet, deep down, I have no regrets. Maybe because the moment I had witnessed and the feeling I had felt were much more significant than revising that last chapter. I got back home and called my parents and sister, 13,000 km away in India. They were pleased and overjoyed when I shared pictures with them.

Sometimes, it’s right to follow what your heart tells you. Let your instincts guide you. Maybe you can witness a memorable Northern Lights on a cloudy night as well!



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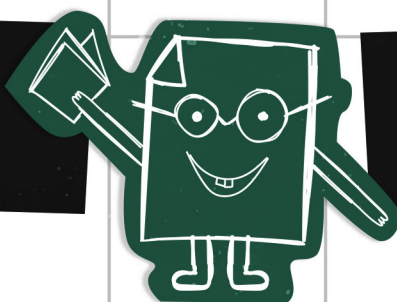
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