Meantime: Reflections on trans exclusions from an ex-substitute teacher
Jan Lukas Buterman

What happens when a person is trans? In the context of Alberta public education, teachers should not expect discrimination on the basis of gender identity. However, the exclusion of people whose gender identity is different than the sex they were assigned at birth is a reality and it affects any and all connected to the school environment including legislators, administrators, and students. Engage in conversation with me to explore some of my unexpected moments of trans exclusion that I describe as the "Meantime."

PTSD: To the edge and back again
Ron Campbell

When I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, I thought my career was over and that everyone close to me would disassociate from me. I was keenly aware of the stigma and judgement attached to this disorder or any mental health issue for that matter. I felt ashamed and embarrassed in front of my work colleagues, and the fear that my career in policing was going to end, was palpable. Join me to gain insight into how an ordinary man has faced the judgement, stereotyping, stigma and prejudice typically associated with mental health.

Watch out! Did you see that? And, other sighted moments on a sightless journey
Stephanie Carvalho

Blindness has been an interesting lens to view situations and interactions through. My story is a series of anecdotes about how vision loss has shaped my experiences with education, family, society, and culture. We will explore various perceptions that I have experienced and it will be an open discussion to answer any questions readers may have.
In late 2010/early 2011, Tunisians took to the streets in a prolonged campaign of civil disobedience to demand political and economic reforms. Many protestors were killed or injured. However, the dramatic wave of protests, now known as the Tunisian Revolution and the first domino piece that started the Arab Spring, succeeded in ousting long-time dictator Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, and became an inspiration for similar movements in the region. I lived through it all. My story is about my participation in the Tunisian Revolution, witnessing the birth of a democratic process, and now, reflecting on it five years later.

On July 13, 2008 I fell off my mountain bike and broke my neck, leaving me with complete C6 quadriplegia. After 5 ½ months in hospital, I came home to a new reality. I had to figure out how to be a Mom, wife, and friend paralyzed, from a wheelchair. Initially devastated by my new reality, I have since faced depression head on and set my wheels in a forward motion. Join me and gain insight into my experience of injury and recovery and learn what it is like to be a soccer Mom, driving my children to and from school, volunteering at their school, and coaching their soccer teams, all from a wheelchair.

"Islamic Terrorist" was never a phrase I would have used to describe myself, but it seems to be the term used in western media to describe people that look like me. The prevalence of misplaced fear brought on by a group of a select few has had severe repercussions on Muslims around the world. This is the story of what it is like to face oppression on a daily basis, not from the scarf covering my hair, but from the stares and muffled voices of the public.
Reflecting on the Past, Changing the Future
Miranda Jimmy

I am a Cree woman still discovering my heritage. As a child of alcoholic parents and with a father fitting many of the common Aboriginal stereotypes, my mission is to educate and change people’s perceptions of what a “real” Aboriginal person is.

Echoes of Childhood Poverty
Elaine Laberge

I scrub my skin raw, but I can’t wash away the stain of poverty. It is deeply embedded in my self-identity. The shame was bearable until university—a place I believed was never meant for people like me. Now I live in fear of being outed, and ousted. These are words that I wrote for a scholarship application; these words caused me great pain for a long time. I struggled with growing up in abject poverty. I thought that attaining a university degree would cause a magical event to transpire: that the stain and shame of poverty would somehow soothingly vanish from my skin. Although this did not happen, I have come to understand that there are people and places that do not shame and silence. Join me in exploring how our unique biographies shape the lives we are composing in higher education.

My Surprising Journey to the World of Education
Terence Sakwe

I grew up in a small town in an African country where getting an education and a career depended on the family you come from. My journey to the world of education has been a surprise to my community and an inspiration to many. I have since travelled far and wide and I have settled in the comfort of a good place, but my journey has not ended. Join me and hear the story of how I discovered and realized my dreams and how I am facing the challenges of settling into my new home in Canada.
A Spiritual Journey
Derek Thunder
Thursday

It is a difficult road to feel proud of who you are when the outside world draws a dark picture of you. The road to who I am begins by understanding who I am as an Aboriginal person. The road improves as I discover the gifts of being Two Spirit. And the road continues as I brave the path of healing away alcohol.

How to find yourself when you’re scattered far & wide
Gianmarco Visconti
Wednesday AND Thursday 5:00 to 6:45 each day

Usually, once I’m done explaining my mixed Italian/Arab/Indian roots, the next question I often hear is: “How can you be gay and Muslim?” People like to assume that my fraught relationship with my faith has been on account of my sexuality but, once I realized I could decide for myself what being gay and being Muslim meant, reconciling these two aspects of my identity was actually pretty easy. Compared to dealing with the death of my sister when I was 16, being gay has never been a barrier to my sense of spiritual fulfillment. It’s true that existing between the margins of what people think is possible can be difficult, but I’ve grown quite good at holding all the different parts of me together, no matter how disparate they may seem.