

# Long-distance plans are costly



ELIZABETH  
MCMILLAN

**“Nothing puts a damper on great chemistry like an expiry date. Even the most promising relationships can be thrown into ‘until further notice’ status with the advent of a new semester. The best job in the world can have a severe price. ‘If we are ever in the same place again,’ is an all too familiar refrain.”**

For many university students, high school was the last time they actually dated—in the conventional sense at least. For others, university offered the transformation to adulthood. The people I thought least likely to settle down, let alone outlive their grade eleven reputation, are now wearing engagement rings.

Rings are great, if you can touch the hand that’s wearing it. But as we all grow older and disperse into different parts of the world, the ties that bind us are harder to maintain. At the risk of waxing Carrie Bradshaw-esque, relationships have become dependent on proximity. *Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda* isn’t just about timing, but location, location, location. Time zones, continents and contracts start to call the shots.

Back in high school things were much easier. Meeting the parents occurred at soccer practice or band rehearsals without any pomp or circumstance. There was a comfort gained in knowing someone’s scholastic, romantic and familial history. And commitment wasn’t really an issue, because school corridors and dances didn’t leave much to the imagination.

Fast-forward to the much-anticipated real world. We’ve been jaded by a staggering divorce rate. We go for investments with a solid return, but

we also like instant gratification. Why read a book when you could watch a movie? Why spend months getting to know someone when you could just pick them up at the bar?

After weeks of exam-induced anxiety, holidays offered an illusion of stability. For those of us who returned to our hometowns, we remembered what it’s like to know a grocer by name, to converse with grandparents and to eat four food groups at once. When we fall back with familiar faces, we begin to imagine whom we will be celebrating with once our university days are behind us. There’s nothing like a mutual past to conjure up images of a shared future.

But there’s a gap, because at the end of the holiday someone packs up their car or steps onto an airplane and months of unsatisfying conversations loom. Before long, here and now is more satisfying than the limits geography allows. The second we leave our parents’ houses we find families of friends and build new relationships. Our social networks aren’t permanent—at least, not in the mortgage payment sort of way. We adapt, make do and take it as it comes.

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status with the advent of a new semester. The best career move in the world can come with a hefty price. “If we are ever in the same place again,” is an all too familiar refrain.

The success of any relationship depends on a couple’s willingness to make changes—even geographic changes—for each other. Often, we just aren’t secure enough in our shared future to put that on the line. Why should we be? We have our own plans: careers to construct, places to travel, life goals to accomplish. We’re mobile and ready to take life as it comes. Starting over is all part of the plan, and we sure as hell don’t want to wait around for someone else to make life happen.

The flip side is the expectation that eventually we’ll get it all together. Degrees in hand, we’ll find that elusive salaried, suburban self we can’t quite imagine right now. The globe-trotting adventures will subside, and we’ll find a postal code to call our own. Conveniently, that other person will be there too: the timing will finally work.

So until further notice, my permanent address will be Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. No one else is dictating my five-year plan, but at this rate, there will be a former, truncated “love of my life” on whatever continent I end up.

## Guarantors no sure thing

Who’s to say a plumber couldn’t do the same job?



MARIA  
KOTOVYCH

If there’s one thing that I hate, it’s filling out forms. Last name first. First name last. Mother’s maiden name. But the fun doesn’t end there on a passport application: another poor, unsuspecting individual gets to take part in the process.

This individual is a guarantor—a person who signs the back of your photo, fills out some information on the form and basically confirms that you are who you say you are. The person must be a Canadian citizen, and have known you for at least two years. Lastly, that person must fall into one of 15 occupational categories, including lawyer, notary public, engineer or the like.

I understand the requirement for being a Canadian citizen and for having known the applicant for two years. But what is the purpose of the occupational requirement for a guarantor? Cannot an administrative assistant, a housewife or a plumber (who meet the other two requirements) verify my identity just as effectively? It’s not exactly rocket science to look at a picture and say, “Yes, that’s Maria.” A friend who has known me since I was three years old and been there through thick and thin: what a perfect candidate to verify any statement I could ever fill out on any form!

However, that person is not necessarily “qualified” to vouch for my non-smiling face in the passport mug shot.

Occupations play a huge role in determining our identity. The list of acceptable professions for guarantors only allows people in “traditional” professions to fulfill this role. This leaves out many respected individuals who don’t fall into these traditional fields. Psychologists. Social workers. Speech therapists. *Journalists*.

We like to think that all members in Canadian society are equal. But every so often, I’ll come across a very clear example that exposes society’s true valuing of different social groups. One such example is the asinine list of acceptable professions for guarantors. An elitist occupational hierarchy, along with a corresponding class structure, still exists in Canada. It’s a vestige of the “old boys’ clubs” of yore. If certain occupations are viewed with more status and prestige than others, does it mean that certain individuals are of greater value simply because of how they choose to earn a living? So much for equality.

The Canadian government not only recognizes the occupational hierarchy, but blatantly approves of those social boundaries by deciding who is “worthy” of being a guarantor. In doing so, the government illuminates its belief about whose opinion really matters. And that makes me wonder: if the government doesn’t consider many people valuable or trustworthy enough to be guarantors, does it view their voices similarly in other contexts?

But what do I really know about all this, I’m just a student journalist.

## THE BURLAP SACK

First, he terrorized Rabbit. Then, in 2004, he was tried for sexually assaulting a 13-year-old girl. Now he’s back under the gun, this time for assaulting a 14-year-old boy. Despite this, he continues to influence children with his film and literary performances across North America. Clearly, the carrot-eating menace known as Tigger must be stopped.

The seemingly joyous cartoon tiger could be fighting Johnny Law once again after a father accused the costumed cat of punching his son—the act was caught on camera this past Friday at Disney World in Florida.

Amidst a friendly family photo, Tigger, showcasing his heavily documented energetic personality and incredible speed, put the unsuspecting youth in an arm bar, then delivered a haymaker straight to his face. Apparently, unprovoked battery and inappropriate contact with minors is what Tiggers do best. Christopher Robin must have some serious suppressed memories.

The public mustn’t tolerate such behaviour from this rogue, who ironically moonlights as “The Masked Offender.” Now, he’s a repeat child offender. We must act now to ensure that the denizens of Hundred Acre Wood and children everywhere can live in peace once again. He must be put behind bars. But not before we can get that orange-striped, child-smacking asshole into the sack ourselves for a taste of his own tail-bouncing medicine.

JOHN KMECH

## GOLDEN BEARS & PANDAS



U of A Basketball

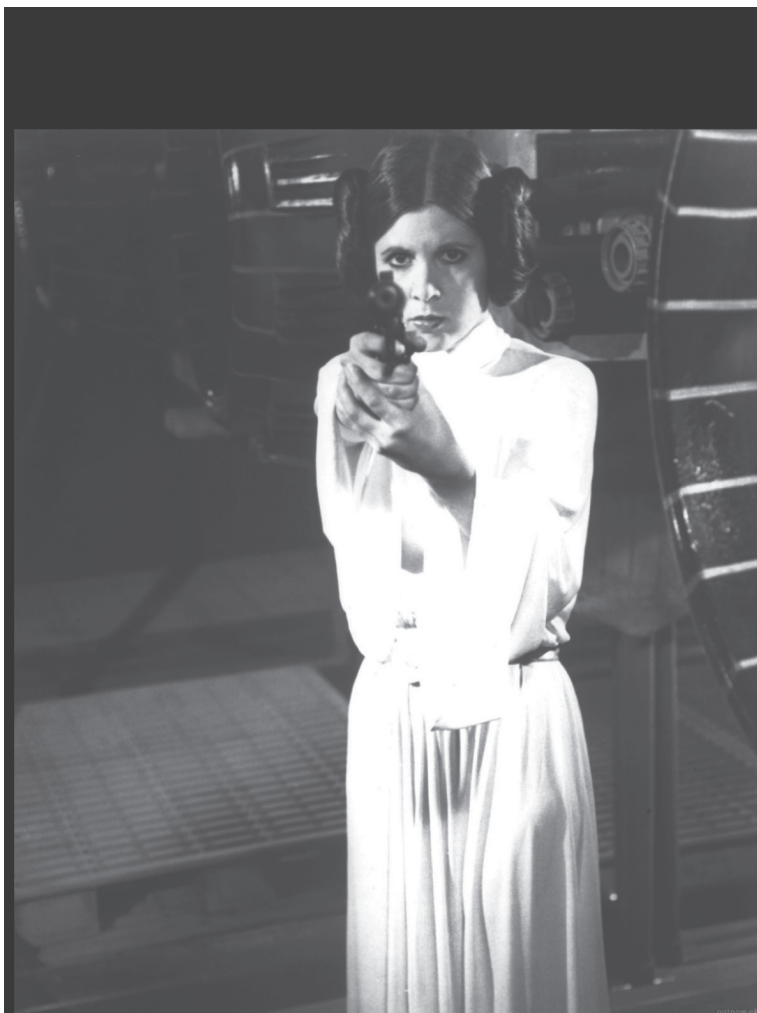
Friday, January 12 vs Winnipeg

Saturday, January 13 vs Manitoba

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## GATEWAY OPINION

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