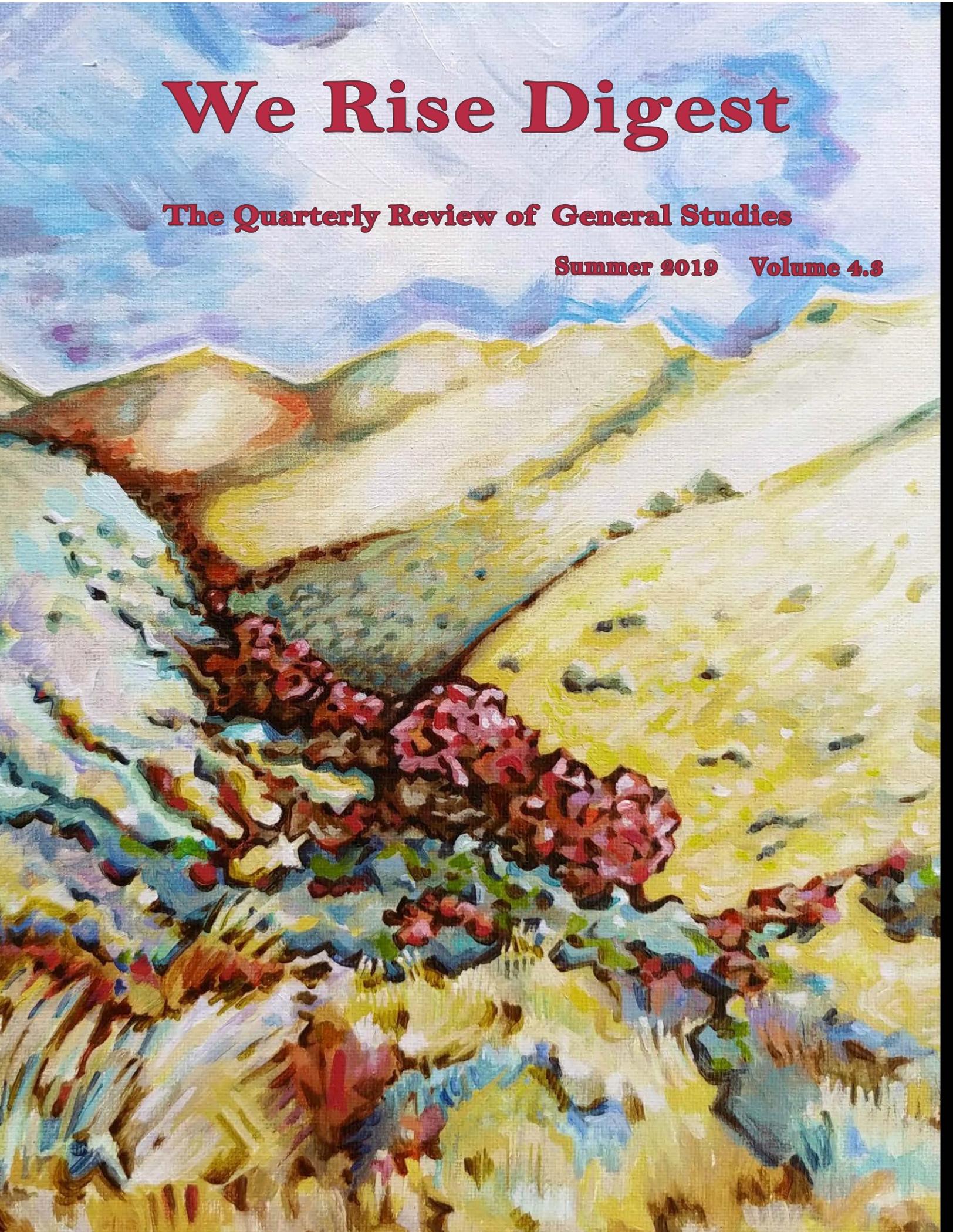


# **We Rise Digest**

**The Quarterly Review of General Studies**

**Summer 2019    Volume 4.3**



# We Rise Digest

The Quarterly Review of General Studies

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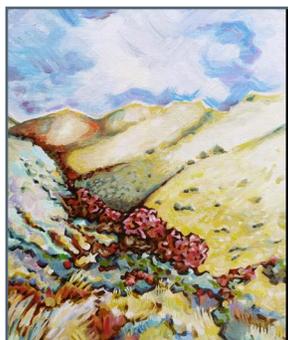
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### About the Front Cover

Brad Carroll has been painting for 17 years, specializing in oil or acrylic on canvas. He recently won Best Oil at the North Charleston Arts Fest and was one of four artists selected to receive the prestigious Purchase Prize. To see some more of his work, Visit [bradcarrollpaintings.com](http://bradcarrollpaintings.com)

### About the Back Cover

:Blooming Irises in Horikiri" by Utagawa Hiroshige, 1857. Hiroshige was a Japanese ukiyo-e artist best known for his horizontal-format landscape series The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō and for his vertical-format landscape series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*. To see more of his work, visit: [ukiyo-e.org/artist/utagawa-hiroshige](http://ukiyo-e.org/artist/utagawa-hiroshige)





Bookmark designed by Lauren St. John

## Bookmarks: A History

In this issue, we are introducing a new column called *Bookmark*, which will be featured each quarter in the Resources & Recognition section of the *Digest*. In it, we will feature a topic and provide an annotated guide to significant, interesting and/or useful sites around the internet that you may wish to add to your internet browser's bookmarks. No doubt, this latest version of the bookmark would seem baffling to prior generations of book readers, but the need to quickly access printed material dates back to the first century A.D., according to J.A. Szirmai in *The Archeology of Medieval Bookbinding*—the first of four references listed in the Wikipedia entry for "bookmark." The next giant leap came several centuries later with the attachment of a leather strap to the book to mark a page for future reference. Since then, improvements to the bookmark have been incidental, largely consisting of use of different materials and means of attachment. Not surprisingly, they have moved beyond their utilitarian origins and into the world of arts and collectibles. In 2018, Katiyo Primary School in Zimbabwe raised money by asking celebrities such as Emma Thompson and Patrick Stewart to donate their bookmarks for auction, that raised over £3000 for electricity for faculty housing. The auction is back this year and the prices are intentionally very affordable—ranging from £5 to £100. — ACWheatley

## Reference:

The Bookmark Project 2019. Retrieved from [https://www.jumblebee.co.uk/auction/detail/auction\\_id/3166](https://www.jumblebee.co.uk/auction/detail/auction_id/3166)

## We Rise Digest: The Quarterly Review of General Studies

**Executive Editorial Board:** Kristen McQuinn, Chris Jordan, Jenna Pavleck

**Editor-in-Chief:** Kristen McQuinn

**Managing Editor:** Cathy Smith

**Section Editors:** Brad Carroll \* Fran Pistorosi

**Contributors:** Nathan Coley \* Mallory Dunkley \* Denise Gilmore

Carrie Kendall \* Barbara Lombardi \* Erica Letourneau

Judy Levin \* April Newman \* Melissa Warren

**Art & Design Team:** Teri Moore-Hirlinger \* Melissa Warren \*

Anna Copeland Wheatley

**We Rise Digest email:** [Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu](mailto:Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu)

# Letter from the Executive Editorial Board

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**Kristen McQuinn**  
Faculty Development Chair



**Chris Jordan**  
Assistant Dean  
Operations & Faculty



**Jenna Pavleck**  
Faculty Development Chair

Welcome to the Summer 2019 edition of *We Rise Digest: The Quarterly Review of General Studies*, dear faculty! We are delighted to formally include Chris Jordan, Assistant Dean of Operations and Faculty, and Jenna Pavleck, Faculty Development Chair, as part of the executive editorial team. Both have long been involved with the Digest and we are thrilled to recognize more formally their role in making the Digest a vibrant publication.

We also have another, very special recognition to highlight in this issue. Brad Carroll, whose cover art for the *We Rise Digest* we have enjoyed since the redesign launched in Spring 2018, won Best Oil in the North Charleston Arts Fest 2019 for Uptown Social (see p.42). It was also one of four pieces that was honored with a City of Charleston Purchase Award. His painting will be added to the City of North Charleston's Permanent Public Art Collection, which is on display within City Hall throughout the year. Congratulations, Brad!

We hope the summer season is bringing many opportunities for you to enjoy spending time with your families and friends. The summer months, in traditional academia, are a time to slow down and relax, to regroup, and to get prepared for the coming semesters. These traditional semesters do not apply to our operating model, but we can still use the summer months to review our practices as faculty and hone our classroom management for an optimal student experience.

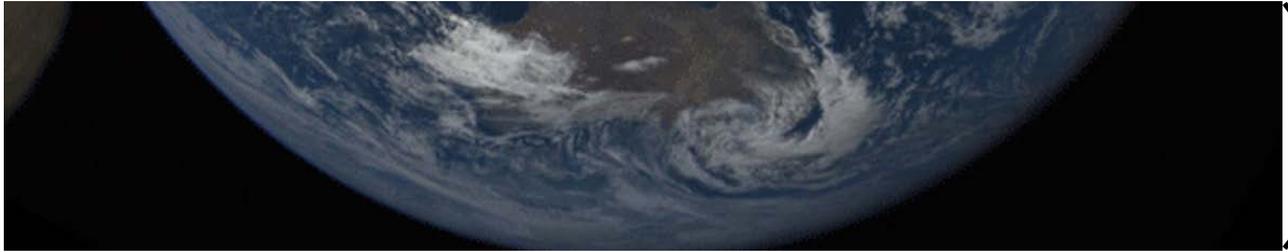
To that end, we encourage everyone to continue to embrace change, especially with

regard to the new Blackboard (BBU) platform. Updates and upgrades to the platform continue to be pushed out, so each start date could have a new feature different from previous dates. Although many of these updates to the platform are excellent, please do still make sure you are carefully checking all course materials before making them visible to students, particularly assignment due dates and times. The BBU classroom should now automatically set the assignment due dates and times to Day 7 at 11:59 AZ time, but there have been occurrences where that did not happen, which means these need to be manually set by the course facilitator. If your course does not automatically set the due dates and times correctly, you can use the [Due Date Conversion Tool](#) to help you ensure you set the dates and times correctly, based on your time zone.

Course materials you have used from previous versions of a course as well should be reviewed for outdated materials. This would be a good time to update your [Instructor's Policies](#) document to ensure it aligns with the new student participation requirements and BBU grading scale. There are some excellent resources available in the Faculty Resources Center on eCampus to help you update your materials and set up your BBU courses. The [checklist](#) is especially useful when getting started with your course set up.

As always, we thank you all for your hard work with your students and your continued patience as we all learn the new Blackboard platform.

## Saving Home



## from the Planet

Nathan Coley

One of the first lessons that I was ever taught in college, during a course on microeconomics, is that air and sunlight are infinite resources. This was in the context of a comparison to just about everything that we imagine as a commodity: cans of soda, tennis shoes, tortilla chips, etc.

Yet the truth of things is that air and sunlight, as “free” as they are to us, are not really free or infinite at all. There is, at any given time a finite number of plant life capable of converting sunlight to energy, and there is, at a given a time, a finite number of biological organisms that consume such plant life. The very sunlight that powers life as we know it is not thought to be an infinite resource, and as modern science has been quick to teach us: there is no guarantee that the ecosystem in which we live will continue in perpetuity.

As a child, I remember laughing at the central theme in the Mel Brooks comedy, *Spaceballs*, where the oxygen on one planet is looked at as something of supreme cosmic value. There’s a famous scene in which a giant robotic maid, wielding a vacuum cleaner, (perhaps the satirical analog of the “Death Star”) sucks up all of the trees on a defenseless planet.

In 2019, the idea that our ecosystem is so valuable does not seem so silly. This seems like a daunting truth for those of us that inhabit this third rock from the sun. After all, what is the average person, who lives in a home powered by hydrocarbons, and who drives to work in a combustion engine, to do? It is one thing to be aware of how limited resources are, but it is another to act on them in a way that will set a practical and ethical tone.

We should not be fooled into thinking that an individual person is going to save the world. We live in reality, not a *Superman* film. A single person is not going to take the world, hoist it up singlehandedly, and deliver it from impending doom. Comic books have their own value, but real life is made up of different kinds of heroes.

They are the heroes who, day by day, do the little things: They reuse tableware when they can. They wash rags instead of burning through loads of paper towels (and who would not want to see the impact of paper towels on a budget decrease?). They bike or walk when possible. They turn biological waste into compost. They realize that clean water is precious, and allot their time in the shower accordingly. They turn the lights off when not in use. They spread literature to their family and friends, take part in rallies, and write elected leaders in hopes that regulatory actions can play a role.

Such people are optimists. They look to take care of current resources, but they also look to the cosmos, and with trust in human innovation and the scientific method, they imagine life beyond earth, in plants and galaxies that could be formed for living. Even with our best efforts (which should not cease), our planet, with all its air and sunlight, is not infinite and never will be.

This season is not too soon a time to think of how we can be good stewards of what we have, and it is not too soon a time to think that other planets could inhabit life, and be places to spread our histories and values.

Our lives depend on it.

# A Galactic Perspective



## from the Moon

By Barbara Lombardi

On a recent trip to the Kennedy Space Center, my interests were piqued during a discussion regarding our government's effort to mine resources found on the moon. With climate change front and center in the news, the subject of helium-3 (He3) becomes of great interest not only to the United States but to other nations around the world.

Because of its current atmosphere (or lack thereof), the moon is uninhabitable. However, it is rich in resources. Helium-3 is a non-radioactive isotope in limited supply on Earth, but apparently there is an abundance to be found on the moon. There exists the possibility that future nuclear fusion plants can be fueled by helium-3 gas. Subsequently work to build equipment capable of extracting helium-3 and other volatiles from the moon's resource-rich soil is currently ongoing. In 2017, China announced its intention to mine helium-3 as a fuel supply from the moon, along with several other governments (Ioannou, 2017). This heightened interest just may trigger a future Space Race.

A concept called "in-situ resource utilization," or ISRU, plays a big role in the process of mining He3. ISRU identifies material from the moon's surface, extracts what is needed and then converts the raw material into something that can be used, such as, electricity, construction materials,

rocket fuel and even oxygen. In January 2019, China landed one of its rovers on the far side of the moon and as far as we can tell is actively pursuing their interest in He3. Lunar missions are also being actively monitored by numerous other countries.

So why is all this important? In its simplest form, there is a difference between nuclear fission reactors and nuclear fusion reactors. Currently, using nuclear fission reactors, heat is produced through a nuclear reaction releasing energy. The danger is that this process also releases radioactivity, whereby nuclear fuel is reclaimed into uranium, plutonium, and radioactive waste. These dangerous byproducts of the reaction must be safely stored for an indefinite amount of time.

For over four decades, scientists have studied ways to create power through nuclear fusion as opposed to nuclear fission. It is believed the reactors that can utilize helium-3 will provide an efficient and clean reaction, eliminating all forms of radiation and waste products. Wouldn't that be amazing!

In our current environment where climate change is on the minds of many, I think this technology sets the foundation for such exploration. This initiative may just become an integral part of America's quest for a cleaner environment.

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### Reference:

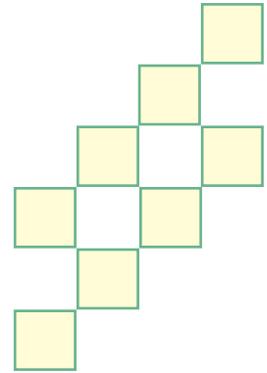
Ioannou, L. (2017). Billionaire closer to mining the moon for trillions of dollars in riches. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnn.com/2017/01/31/billionaire-closer-to-mining-moon-for-trillions-of-dollars-in-riches.html>

# BEST PRACTICE



# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

In every issue, *We Rise* recognizes and applauds the inspiring work of our faculty. In addition to innovation in the classroom, these faculty highlight excellence in their communities and in their professions. We encourage all faculty to let us know about their achievements. Achievements should be shared through the link on the faculty website. Faculty interested in being featured in Faculty Spotlight can contact *We Rise* at [Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu](mailto:Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu)



## Briana Houlihan: An Appreciation for Talent

By Kristen McQuinn

There are some executives who are busy, active, and involved in the everyday goings-on of their employees. And then there are executives like Briana Houlihan. The Dean of General Studies for the College of General Studies prides herself on taking an involved and supportive role to her employees. Her diverse background within the University has given her the skills to be able to do just that.

Houlihan began working at the University of Phoenix in October of 2002 as an academic counselor (AC). Since then, she has held multiple roles in nearly every department within the University, giving her a unique insight into how the structures of each college interact with one another to support student success. After her role as an academic counselor, Houlihan became one of the first AC managers to move over to Western International University (WIU) Online, which later became AXIA. In that role, she helped create many of the tools for the programs there, including how counselors interacted with and supported students. Of that role, Houlihan says, “I felt like I was starting something new and important. It tested my skills in a lot of great ways as well; I was able to wear many different hats, which was good for my career growth at that time.”



Houlihan held several leadership roles in Student Services, including Director of Student Services for the Midwest Region. In 2007, she became one of only a few leaders from the Online campus to become a local campus director, leading the Campus in Madison, WI, from where she also hails. In an aside, Houlihan is convinced she landed the job in Madison after she had dropped into the local campus there and met a few people, including the then-campus director, when she had been home visiting her mother. When she saw the job posting for that campus a few months later, Houlihan says, “I applied, and I’m convinced that they remembered me and I got the job because I took the time to make that human connection with them.” That role led to her becoming the Campus Academic

## "Let's not only make mistakes, let's celebrate them. We learn as much, or more, from mistakes as we can from successes where every single thing goes right."

Director in Indiana a few years later, which allowed her to work more directly with faculty and have a hand in their role.

All these previous positions have paved the way to Houlihan's current role as the Dean of General Studies. She says, "My current job is exciting for a number of reasons, but partly because it allows me more exposure to program management and curriculum, something I was not able to do much of in previous roles. Now I get to have a hand in that and see how that piece fits into the whole. It is allowing me to become more well-rounded, to grow and learn more."

That desire to grow and learn is an innate trait Houlihan radiates in her daily practice. She credits Vice Provost Doris Savron for being a mentor to her for much of her career, as they have worked together in the past. However, Houlihan has a natural desire to challenge herself, and always has. She says, "It is important to have a mentor, someone who can guide you and who has more experience than you do. But a vital addition to having a mentor is personal accountability." She explains that we must be willing to learn and put the time and effort it takes into the process of developing ourselves professionally. To that end, Houlihan says she always is reading at least one book for work alongside a book just for pleasure. She is also careful to budget her time to allow for reading those professional development books or taking courses through Lynda.com, an online learning platform which offers courses on business, software, technology, and creative skills for professional growth and development.

Houlihan uses her professional development to be an example to her team. She wants to show the people she works with that it is a good goal to have to want to grow, learn, and be better. She is also adamant that her team knows she is there to support them. She says, "Let's not only make mistakes, let's celebrate them. We learn as much, or more, from mistakes as we can from successes where every single thing goes right." She uses that philosophy to foster an environment of openness and authentic honesty on her team. "I never want anyone to

feel worried about coming to me with a problem or a mistake. We are a team, so we can figure out anything together." This ties into another aspect of Houlihan's leadership style. She is what she calls a servant leader, and she feels it is her role to help remove obstacles and help the people who work with her. She says, "I often find myself asking 'How can I help?' or 'What are you struggling with?' I want to do what I can to help my team." She tries to emulate some of the styles from her favorite leadership book, *The Servant: A Simple Story about the True Essence of Leadership* by James C. Hunter. This aspect of Houlihan's leadership pairs well with what she deems is her favorite part of her job. "It sounds cliché," she laughs, "but I love bragging about my team. I love celebrating successes with them! For example, Jim Bruno and his T-courses – just amazing work! And the awesome feedback we get from the review team about the Full-time Faculty. I especially love it when I can share awesome feedback or success stories with Doris or Dr. Woods."

Sharing the accomplishments of all our associate faculty is another goal Houlihan strives for. Scholarship and research are vital components of any higher education institution; she wants to make sure our associate faculty get recognized for the work they are contributing to their field. "Within scholarship, publications are the automatic default or assumption people make. However, there are other avenues available for scholarship and some faculty might not recognize them as scholarship. I think there is an opportunity for us to create an avenue for faculty to share with us more," she says. Also, Houlihan wants to remind faculty that, because scholarship does take time and takes away from other things, it must be something you are passionate about. "Don't do a scholarship project just because it is easy. Do it because it will challenge you and excite you and because it's your passion. The best people I've met, the experts in their fields, all have a burning passion for whatever it is they are researching."

One aspect of that research, from Houlihan's perspective,



Earlier this year, Australia's National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne showcased [Escher X nendo | Between Two Worlds](#) featuring the works of Dutch artist M.C. Escher in dialogue with the work of acclaimed Japanese design studio artist nendo. This stunning exhibit captures both the mystery of unknown doorways and the challenge of deciding which to choose first. In true Escher style, reading Kristen's interview with Brianna while thinking about the layout, I saw a perfect metaphor for Brianna's penchant for opening all kinds of doors to all kinds of conversations. Anna Copeland Wheatley

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is to figure out how to use technology to make courses more accessible to more students, and how to leverage technology to make content more engaging. She explains, "There is an interesting blend of students in our classes, and it brings a unique challenge. Many students have grown up never NOT having the internet. They have higher expectations of technology and content delivery. We also have students who have lower digital literacy. Threading basic digital literacy into all levels of all programs while also delivering to those who are already tech savvy is a difficult and exciting challenge." It is a good thing that someone as capable as Houlihan is a part of helping to figure out this challenge. We are learning so much everyday about how the digital world affects us, in terms of people's growth, emotional intelligence, screen time, and so on. It is literally the job of the humanities to figure out what humans need, then figure out how to give it to the humans using the technology we have, and then to see the impact upon the human condition doing so has wrought. Houlihan finds this to be a fascinating balance, as does the rest of her team, humanities nerds all.

Houlihan's exuberance is infectious. It is easy to try to operate at warp speed when she's around; she seems to bring enough energy with her to power any three people. However, she touts the benefits of a healthy work/life balance and practicing good self-care. She is an avid traveler and recently went with a group of her girlfriends to Bali where she got to go to Monkey Village and go on several adventures out in nature. She also says, "Stay connected with your friends and family. I talk to at least

one member of my family every single day, whether it's my mom, my sister, my brother. I also love to be active, go hiking, work out." Houlihan is also a dog lover, as all good people are, and says that dogs are perfect for keeping you in the moment. When she's walking her dog, it is impossible to worry or think too much about things at work. She can just unplug, enjoy nature, and clear her head, and usually get a laugh at whatever antics her pup is pulling. When she's not out playing with her dog or being a world traveler, Houlihan is an avid reader. When we met, she was reading *Jailbird* by Kurt Vonnegut and *The Last Days of Marilyn Monroe* by Donald H. Wolfe. She also thinks everyone should read the Bible, even if just for its historical value. As a person with literature degrees, I must agree; the multitude of allusions to the Bible made by Shakespeare, Milton, Bronte, Dostoevsky, Steinbeck, Stoker, Faulkner, Lewis, Tolkien, Rowling, Dickens, and Atwood, to name a tiny few, are an argument in favor of reading it. You can't even get past the first line of *Moby Dick* without an understanding of the Bible. Her taste in music is equally as eclectic as her reading habits. Her playlist ranges from a *capella* choir music to Christian rock to rap to old standards like Roberta Flack and Billie Holliday. "I don't really pay much attention to what the genre is," she says, "I just appreciate the voice and the talent." Which I think is an apt way to sum up Briana Houlihan – a woman of talent, who raises up and appreciates the talent she sees and strives to foster in others.

Check out [Briana's Favorites](#) playlist on Spotify!



## THE LADY'S GOT SOUL

### Spotlight: Louise Underdahl

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By Cathy Smith

As a lead faculty in the College of Doctoral Studies, Louise Underdahl inspires students and faculty through scholarship and through teaching. Recently, Underdahl was a lead instructor in the Blackboard Ultra (BBU) training sessions provided for faculty in preparation for the transition the University is making from the New Classroom to BBU. As one of Underdahl's trainees, it was easy to realize her leadership skills. Louise Underdahl is a Phoenix that understands that the "soul of work" lies in the lasting satisfaction generated by personal growth through motivating work.

Underdahl started her journey to success as a child. Her father's work ethic when he reflected upon the success and challenges from his job with Douglas Aircraft and her mother's dedication to family were positive influences on Underdahl's life ethics. She soon realized that not everyone embraced similar ethics. Contrary to her parents' dedication, she realized that others, in school and eventually work environments, expressed impatience and anxieties regarding work and time. Underdahl shares, "Co-workers anxiously watched the office clock, waiting for 'Mickey's hand straight up' as one associate described 5:00 p.m., and *escaped*."

After high school, Underdahl prepared herself for her library career by pursuing an undergraduate degree in liberal arts. She started her higher education training at Santa Monica College. Two years later, she earned a

BA in English Literature at UCLA. After earning her BA, Underdahl completed two Master's programs, one in Library Science and another in Public Administration. The next step in Underdahl's educational journey was earning her PhD in public administration.

While earning her doctorate, Underdahl was able to explore the reasons why some people relish life, while others wish their lives away. Underdahl shares that earning a doctorate allowed her to realize that "Research suggested transcendent work is a challenging, actualizing endeavor which gives life meaning and purpose, making it possible to enjoy work activities." She continues to share that "The ephemeral joy of amusement does not compare to the genuine fulfillment of meaningful, creative, and challenging work." After completing her doctoral dissertation, Underdahl used her research to publish her book, *The Soul of Work: A Quest for the Transcendent*.

In *The Soul of Work: A Quest for the Transcendent*, Underdahl provides readers with an in-depth look at the meaning of work in the past and in the present. She talks about the importance of work having purpose, where it embraces diversity, and how it allows people to have the opportunity for creativity and joy. This mindset connects to the University of Phoenix culture which puts students and their lives first. Dr John Woods emphasized that concept in the May 1, 2019 Leadership Broadcast, saying faculty must keep in mind that students need to understand the purpose

***Underdahl believes in paying it forward and that the University of Phoenix had provided her with the opportunity to help others achieve their goals as her professors helped her.***



of their education and how it can relate to their family, life, and work.

When reflecting on her own student experience, Underdahl shares, “My doctoral odyssey was made

possible by the willingness of Dean Martha Boaz to remind me to *never give up* and Emeritus Dean Henry Reining, who consistently paused from his daily activities to create solutions to my crises.” Underdahl believes in paying it forward and that the University of Phoenix had provided her with the opportunity to help others achieve their goals as her professors helped her. She believes that it is important to interact with faculty and students and believes in the power of one-on-one communication. She believes in the importance of family and in setting an example of the importance of creating a healthy balance between her work and her personal life.

Family life is important to Underdahl. Although she is from the Los Angeles area, Underdahl and her family own farmland close to Colby, Kansas. She is passionate about working with her husband and supporting her daughter with her future life goals and dreams. In a recent interview, I was able to speak to both her husband and her daughter while Underdahl was traveling through Kansas. Working with and supporting her family helps Underdahl to stay grounded. Her husband is a glider pilot and a motorcycle enthusiast. Even though Underdahl prefers to provide him with support

from the ground, she has gone up in the air with her husband and with her daughter as well. Other interests that Underdahl shares with her family are horses. Underdahl enjoyed horseback riding as a youth. Today, Underdahl loves taking pictures as her daughter rides.

Underdahl also loves books and music, which is a given since Underdahl has valued libraries throughout her life. Underdahl’s favorite book is *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* by Atul Gawande. *Being Mortal* is about living your fullest right up until the end. When asked about fictional books, Underdahl recommends a *Portrait of Jenny* by Robert Nathan and *An Old Captivity* by Nevil Shute. Not only does Underdahl love books, but she also loves moving stories set to music, which is why her favorite artist is George Strait. Underdahl shares that Strait’s songs tell stories and that his words are songs that you can sing along with. Her favorite song is “Wrapped.”

In 2018, Underdahl received the Award for Excellence because of her execution of SPEAR in her daily teaching and work with the College of Doctoral Studies. She talks about how she executed SPEAR in her 2018 blog titled [2018 Faculty Excellence Award: Executing SPEAR](#). Underdahl’s motto is “Persistence, Retention, and Completion.” This is the soul of her work and the soul of her life, and the reason why it is easy to see that this lady’s got soul!





## Because Learning Never Stops!

### Spotlight: Rosalind Raby

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By Brad Carroll

In reflecting upon the University of Phoenix’s long-time mission to provide open-access educational opportunities for the working student, one has to appreciate that someone like Rosalind Raby has been teaching here for 18 years. Get to know her a bit, and an immediate takeaway is going to be her passion for inclusive learning. Studying the anthropological influences that inform who and how we teach continues to leave an indelible mark on Rosalinda’s work, whether that’s publishing her research or promoting self-directed learning in the classroom.

Now a Lead Faculty Area Chair (LFAC) at the Southern California campus, Dr. Raby began teaching for our university in 2001. She had a friend on campus who shared the opportunity with her, one she found interesting. “What I did not expect,” she explains, “was how much I loved the students and the open-access mission of UOP.” The reality that many of our students are working adults complements Rosalind’s belief that experience informs learning, a traditional andragogical principle. “Making the course concepts relative helps them connect it to the future. Then it’s their voices, not mine. At the same time, I want to honor their past knowledge. It’s valid. It’s important that they know we respect and honor their current skillsets.”

Rosalind’s approach to instruction goes hand in hand with

her research. Peruse a list of her publications (see LinkedIn, for example), and you’ll come across some recurring topics and terminology: *international, open-access, community college, abroad...* to list a handful. Curious about the genesis of her interest in open education on a global scale, Rosalind explained that she always tried to take fun classes in college. When she found herself in an anthropology of education course, she knew she’d found her path. “That course sung to me,” she recounts. After earning both a BA and MA at UCLA, Rosalind went on to earn her PhD in Comparative and International Education. After wrapping up her tenure in Westwood, she found a job with the Los Angeles Community College District working in the international department. Through this experience, she developed an affinity for the open-access mission, and she determined that this would be the focus of her continued research. To Dr. Raby, the impact of massification, internationalization, and institutional rankings will be of extreme importance in the future of education. The goal of massification in particular is “to provide more higher ed opportunities to students who have traditionally been kept away from them. It’s almost at the core of democracy.” As more universities make this effort, options for students increase. Therefore, an institution’s reputation should have a greater impact on its

ability to enroll and graduate students. She notes that constantly revising our curriculum to stay relevant and meaningful goes a long way towards achieving this goal.

In addition to serving as an LFAC, Dr. Raby is the Director of California Colleges for International Education and the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education*, responsibilities that keep her well-busy. She's also a regular conference attendee and presenter. She explains, "In conferences you learn new material, fine-tune your own thinking, link with colleagues, and learn from new people." On behalf of faculty members who may be reluctant to conduct research to present at a conference, I asked if speaking in front of large audiences came naturally to her. She laughed, said it did not, and recounted a recent event in which she and a long-time presenter and friend spent a moment reminiscing on how nervous they were the first time they gave it a shot. "Unless you try," she says, "you're not going to know whether or not this is something that's positive for you on a personal level. You have to at least try. Kind of like the way we ask our students to experience new things with an open mind."

Speaking of tapping the initiative needed to take on a daunting challenge, have you ever crocheted a king-sized comforter? Rosalind has. I'm surprised any time for diversion is possible given her busy work schedule. Dr. Raby is also a wife, a mother to a daughter who also teaches at the University of Phoenix, and a dog-mom to two rescue pups, a beagle and beagle/lab mix. I can picture them in crocheted sweaters, though I can't confirm this ever being the case. After all, they do reside in LA.

When Rosalind notes that the most rewarding aspect of being a facilitator is "connecting with students and knowing that I am giving them the skills to do great things with their future," you can feel the sincerity in these words. This is an individual working tirelessly in her efforts to champion open-access education through her teaching and her research. Though still under development, keep an eye out for her current book project, *Mapping Theoretical Constructs for the Study of International Students*.

In closing, Rosalind shared with me her motto for teaching, one that not only reflects the passion and motivation fueling her professional efforts, but also reminds us of why we do what we do:

As she puts it: "Because learning never stops!"

**"Tell me  
and I  
forget.  
Teach  
me and I  
remember.  
Involve  
me and I  
learn."**

**~Benjamin Franklin**

# MAKER OF DREAMS

## Spotlight: Marvin Pershing

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By Cathy Smith

Randy Pausch (2008) states, “It’s a thrill to fulfill your own childhood dreams, but as you get older, you may find that enabling the dreams of others is even more fun” (p.116). Dr. Marvin Pershing started his career in the Air Force, where he worked as a meteorologist, an engineering manager, and a unit commander. After retiring from a successful 20 year career in the Air Force, Pershing went back to school, earned his PhD, and soon started working his dream job, where he was in a position to enable the dreams of others. Pershing, who teaches General Education and Humanities classes as part of the Phoenix Success Series, has a BA in Electrical Engineering, an MA in Curriculum and Instruction, and a PhD in Education Administration with an emphasis in Higher Education Administration and Distance Learning. Pershing is a model instructor who instills a sense of honor and integrity in his students, supports them through positive motivation, and emphasizes the importance of living a balanced lifestyle.

Pershing’s dissertation examined online distance learning. As an online instructor, one of Pershing’s primary interests is academic integrity. For those who were present for his April 11, 2019 Brown Bag presentation titled [“Using Mediation Techniques to Deal with Academic Integrity Problems/Issues”](#)

you discovered that in conjunction to serving in the military, Pershing also has 30 years’ experience as a certified mediator and has taught students about plagiarism and academic integrity for over 12 years. In his presentation, Pershing describes the difference between institutions that have traditional honor codes (which often include the use of student-run “Honor Courts” or councils) and institutions that have only institutional policies and rules that deal with academic integrity. He emphasizes the importance of providing students with accurate information about academic integrity and also provides mediation techniques that can help instructors approach the issues related to plagiarism and academic integrity.

When discussing the importance of using positive mediation techniques, Pershing advises, “We are not arguing with our students, or trying to break up fights (usually), but many of the same techniques used in dispute resolution can be applied to our communication with our students.” Pershing’s positive mediation techniques emphasize the importance of having mutual respect, being honest, and having integrity. Pershing actively models his mediation techniques in all his classes by ensuring that his students understand the respect he has for them by letting them know that he understands that each student brings their own

# "Help others achieve their dreams and you will achieve yours."

—Les Brown

values, diverse backgrounds, and experiences into the classrooms. Pershing recognizes the importance that skilled workers and craftsmen provide, and that this knowledge and background is just as important as the four year degrees that students are pursuing. He also understands that students have the desire to reach their goal of self-actualization because they are taking the steps to further their educations.

When it comes to coaching students on how to succeed throughout their academic journey, Pershing stresses the importance of creating a realistic schedule that balances school, work, and family. When asked about how he can help students create balanced schedules, Pershing shares:

I emphasize the need for a schedule that honors priorities, reminding students that because they are investing a lot of time, effort, and money in their education, it needs to have a high priority in that schedule. I also strongly recommend spending an hour or two each day working on class assignments in order to spread the work out and hopefully complete it by Friday so their weekends can be free. I really push the "habit" of studying idea.

Pershing also is open with students about his own career path. He follows examples set by his own instructors to be a positive role model himself. Pershing shares examples of a math teacher and a statistics professor who both made their classes fun and were able to show students how to apply the concepts they were teaching to the real world. It is because of Pershing's positive role models that he works hard to "use personal examples and common threads to

explain concepts and tie them to life in general."

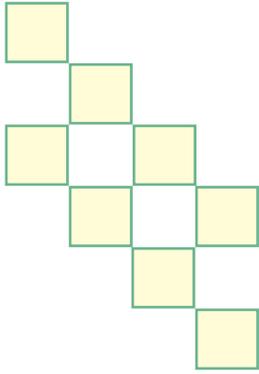
Pershing not only leads by example in the class, but he practices what he teaches with his own work/home balance. Pershing understands that students will have a variety of different schedules, so he spreads out his own work hours throughout the week. Pershing tends to work split days so that he is available to students during the day and in the evenings as well. This allows him to spend time with his wife over a leisurely lunch. In addition to lunch, Pershing also finds time to work on his wife's extensive "honey-do" list that often leads to projects that they work on together.

Pershing is a 60's music fan, and he especially likes the Beatles, the Eagles, and Billy Joel. As I envision Pershing teaching in the classroom or working side-by-side with his wife, the song "A Hard Day's Night" by the Beatles comes to mind because Pershing's dream job does allow him to work and play, both day and night. In the book, *The Last Lecture*, which Pershing recommends everyone read, Randy Pausch (2008) states, "Enabling the dreams of others can be done on different scales" (p. 126). Pershing's dream job also allows him to enable others to reach for the stars and make their own dreams come true. When thinking about how Pershing inspires others, by day or night, he is a maker of dreams and a perfect example of how we can be an inspiration, whether it is working with them individually or in a class size of more than 30 students.

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## MAKING IT WORK

The challenge for any faculty is to balance the sometimes conflicting needs of students, the university, fellow faculty, and, of course, having a life outside of teaching. In this section, We Rise reaches out to practitioners to see what tricks they have in creating their own best practices. If you would like to share some of your own ideas, you can contact *We Rise* at [Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu](mailto:Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu)

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# Violence and Grief in the Online Classroom Part II

By Melissa Warren and Melissa Wheeler

*This article is part two of a two part series on responding to urgent and emotionally sensitive private messages in the online classroom. Part I, published in the Spring Digest, explores practical steps instructors can take to respond quickly, kindly, and effectively to students in pain or dangerous situations. Part II focuses on the work Student Services does to support students in crisis. The article includes advice from academic advisors designed to help instructors utilize similar student support techniques in their own classrooms.*

### Academic and Emotional Support

After receiving a heartbreaking message from one of my students regarding the tragic shooting of her two-year-old nephew, I reached out to Melissa Wheeler, a member of the Core Counseling Faculty at UOPX to help me respond more effectively to students in crisis. The tips Wheeler shared with me, featured in Part I of this article, helped me sleep at night. Now when I answer students' urgent messages, I no longer feel as if I am doing it wrong or letting them down. Following the steps she shared helps me feel confident that I am starting a healthy dialogue with students. Responding

carefully and clearly makes it more likely that my students will receive both the academic and the emotional support they need and deserve. I can also answer these painful messages quickly and concisely, which means students get help faster, because I do not feel overwhelmed by their personal disclosures.

### Student Support Services

After working with Wheeler, I realized that I also wished to understand better our student support services. When students disclose sexual assault, suicidal thoughts,

or terminal illness, I know which university department to contact, but my classes are only five weeks long, and I rarely see the outcomes of those referrals. To learn more about the support offered by the Student Services department, I spoke with graduation coach, Jeremy Broadbent.

Broadbent shared with me that academic advisors often experience many of the same emotions that instructors feel when helping a student in crisis. He explains:

Many of our counselors also find these scenarios very challenging. I believe this is mostly because we are sometimes unsure what the best balance between coaching, listening, and empathizing may be or perhaps we even wonder if coaching is appropriate in these situations at all. My guidance to my staff in these situations is that our response should depend on the student's needs and that understanding the student is the best place to start.

Broadbent's words sparked a light bulb moment for me. As an instructor, I have been trained to lecture, present, and instruct. I was never trained to listen, and while I know how to be kind, I know very little about active listening. Broadbent presented several techniques trained counselors use when supporting a student in crisis. Wheeler then modified those techniques to help me apply them to a classroom situation.

## Sample Letter to a Student

Student,

As the mother of a three-year-old, words can't express how saddened I am to hear of your loss. I cannot image the pain you and your sister must be facing right now. I am so very sorry.

I will be happy to extend your week three assignment deadline, and I will ask your academic advisor to give you a call. I won't share these details with your advisor, but I do think you should share your struggles with him or her, so together you can make a plan for your next steps academically.

I know that you are working hard to be a supportive sister and a great student, but I wanted you to know that we are here to help you, too. I thought you might like to talk to a life coach or a counselor at the Life Resources Center. The link is below, and I think you will find the services that they provide helpful. Take care and thank you for reaching out for support.

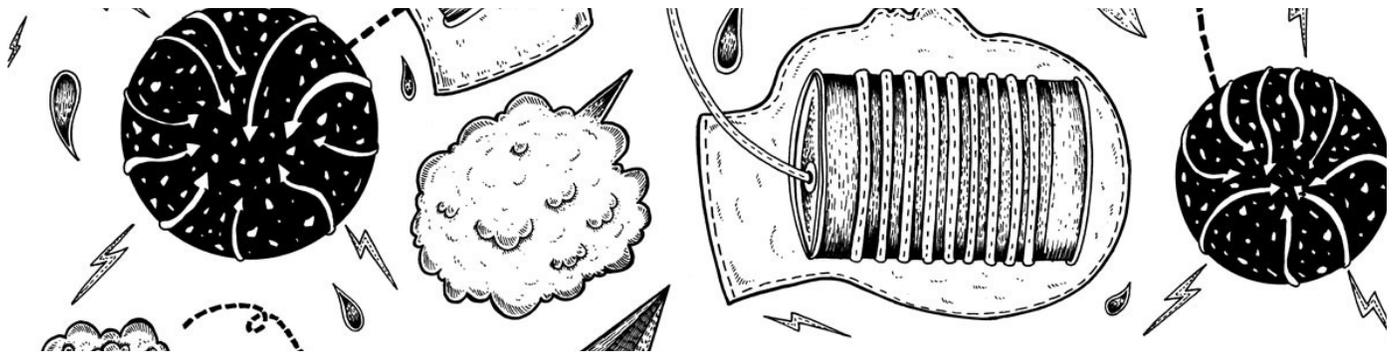
- Overview Life Resources: Students access the Life Resource Center from the Program tab on their student website.
- [Life Resource Center](#): Current students can get confidential clinical counseling and life coaching services 24/7 by calling 866.320.2817.

**Practice active listening** — Demonstrate authentic support while reserving judgment and help the student feel understood by using techniques such as reflecting. Do not interrupt the student even to express empathy; let the student fully express what they need to and then reflect back to them. For instance, “You shared that you lost your son due to an accident...”

**Empathize** — Show compassion to the student: “I am deeply sorry to hear about your loss.”

**Articulate and frame** — Articulate your role, share your intention, and mention context: “As your instructor, I want to support you in any way that I can and connect you with any university resources appropriate for you.”

**Assess needs** — Clarify a student's needs by asking appropriate questions. For instance, “I hear you are overwhelmed with balancing the demands of the course while giving attention to the needs of your family. Would it be all right with you if I contact your Academic Counselor?” You could also add, “I want to support you during this time. What might that support look like to you?”



## Early Alert

Wheeler also works closely with several of the academic counselors assigned to work with students in the counseling program. She recently spoke with one counselor, Melissa Borden, regarding her follow-up with students once an Early Alert has been sent from an instructor. Borden shared that the counselors take student concerns very seriously and make every effort to contact the student using multiple communication modes and attempts. Once an alert has been sent, the academic counselor sends the student an email to their university email account and their personal email if one is on file. They also attempt to contact students via phone if a student is not responsive. Once contact has been made with a student, the counselor discusses the concern, hears the student's perspective, and works to set an action plan with the student to ensure continued academic success. The counselor shares related university support and follows up with the student after a plan is made.

## Listening

Understanding these support services helps me confidently urge my students to utilize them and helps me get back to doing the important work of being their professional instructor, not their novice advisor. Talking with Broadbent and Wheeler also motivated me to learn more about listening. Broadbent said a good place to start this work is with the *International Journal of Listening*, a peer reviewed journal published by the International Listening Association.

In addition, Broadbent said I was not the only instructor struggling with my listening skills and shared an article by human communication professor, Harry Weger. The article explored active and empathic listening in a classroom environment, and stated listening was a "critical teaching skill" that created teacher immediacy and improved students' behavior in the classroom (Weger, 2018, p. 62). Reading more about listening and working with Wheeler and Broadbent showed me that my efforts to make students "feel better" were preventing me from listening to them to learn what they needed, which is why I was unable to support them effectively.

## Conclusion

Listening and responding to my students while setting and maintaining meaningful boundaries with them, empowers me to serve each student to the best of my ability. I work to connect them with the emotional, mental health, medical, or disability services they need and deserve. Together, we can help students thrive and rise.

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# The Butterfly Effect:

## Strategies for Reducing Writing Anxiety

By Mallory Dunkley

We all remember that sinking feeling in our stomachs at finals time. Research papers were due, exams loomed on the horizon, and we knew sleep would dissipate into the chaos of late-night study sessions. As seasoned students in the life-long journey of learning, faculty are well-acquainted with the emotional challenges involved in writing academic essays. Such inner turmoil often presents itself in the forms of anxiety and latent insecurities. Fortunately, there are a number of techniques instructors can employ to enable more self-confidence in novice students, whilst upholding pedagogical rigor.

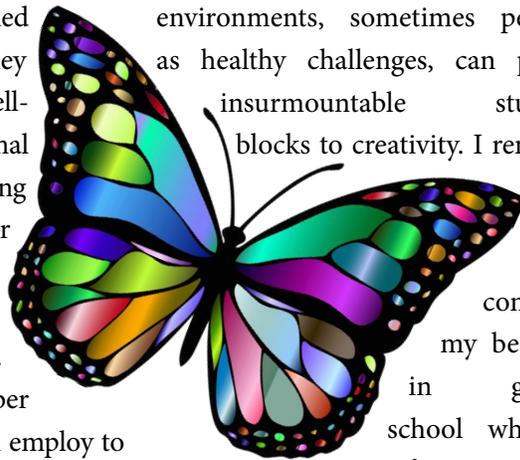
In order to minimize anxiety, it is paramount to examine the root causes. The lack of experience in navigating within the intricacies of scholarly writing can lead to frustration. Writer's block, or the struggle to produce ideas, can also inhibit skill development. Furthermore, students often shy away from curricula that is imbalanced.

Younas et al., explain that an “[a] bundance of writing assignments should be avoided so that the students may feel relaxed to complete writing tasks” (2014, para. 19). High stress environments, sometimes perceived as healthy challenges, can produce insurmountable stumbling blocks to creativity. I remember composing my best work in graduate school when my professors were nurturing, allowed ample time to tackle complex writing tasks, and provided feedback that helped to build, rather than tear down.

Teachers normally have few issues pinpointing writing anxiety in students, right? Wrong. It can be incredibly difficult to identify the symptoms, thus empowering its crippling impacts on the learning process. This is especially true as more students rely on social

media, rather than actual physical communication, to “let their hair down” and engage in personal expression. When interacting within academic settings, some learners shut down and perceive asking instructors for help as “weak” or “overly dependent” behaviors. As Stewart, Seifert, & Rolheiser state, “Anxiety is a particularly interesting construct for analysis, as it can be considered a consequence of low self-efficacy. In the absence of strong self-beliefs, uncertainty may creep in” (2015, p. 5). These uncertainties often manifest in behaviors indicative of anxiety.

What are the perceivable symptoms, you may ask? Learners will often avoid reaching out for assistance, thus instructors may witness a marked decrease in achievement of specific outcomes. Another telltale sign is submission of incomplete work, such as failing to meet the minimum length requirements or producing partial assignments. In my current ENG/100: Critical Reading and Composition classes, one of my students made a revealing comment concerning this paradigm. “What causes anxiety



sometimes is lack of confidence in myself, not pushing myself to do better or even give it my best try.” Inherent diffidence sometimes presents itself in reduced participation and writing performance.

How can teachers reduce the butterflies? Constructive, balanced feedback is instrumental to enhancing the overall learning experience and drawing students out of their comfort zones. Even the most skillful, adept authors need positive reinforcement that their work is smooth, captivates an audience, and is worth reading. Imagine the needs of emerging writers. Qashoa (2014) states that when alleviating anxiety, writing is viewed as “a creative act requiring planning, editing, drafting, working in groups, and getting feedback rather than setting students a writing topic and receiving it as a product for correction without any feedback or discussion during the writing process itself” (p. 63). Indeed, collaborative discourse during the development of complex writing tasks serves to build comradely

and a sense of moving in the right direction. When delivering evaluative commentary to learners, it is a best practice to utilize the sandwich method. Students should always know what they are doing well, coupled with points for improvement. Inserting viable resources for skill building directly within feedback reports is an additional method for promoting growth.

Retaining an open-door policy not only accentuates communication, but it also signifies that instructors value the concerns and thoughts of learners in the classroom. One of my students in ENG/100 stated this quite adeptly: “I think reminding the students that the faculty are there for help is a big thing. I feel hesitant to ‘bother’ someone for help. It is a step by step process.” By applying clever use of technique, educators may create a learning environment conducive to free written expression, with appropriate emphasis on citation and grammatical correctness. The end result can be a demographic of students openly embracing the art of composition.

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Butterfly image: Gordon Johnson from Pixabay

# The New Library Experience

By Louise Underdahl



UNIVERSITYLIBRARY

Home

Databases

Publications

Subjects

Help ▾

The rules are clear. Academic institutions must provide “the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries [emphasis added], performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution’s offerings)” (HLC, 2019a) and “promote continuous improvement” (HLC, 2019b). Yet research confirms “talk is cheap” (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014) since organizational leaders’ rhetoric often fails to align with actions. Operationalizing “continuous improvement” in the daily lives of faculty, students, staff, alumni, and research affiliates requires engaged leadership, educating end users and ensuring their proficiency, and monitoring performance (Haugen & Woodside, 2010).

August 28, 2018 Faculty Leadership Broadcast presented a clear and compelling vision for serving students and faculty: SPEAR, where “S” represents simple. On March 12, 2019, the Office of the Provost announced the University Library was launching a new look succinctly stating the University’s vision for putting research within reach. “We know research can be daunting, and trying to find quality, accurate information online even more so. That’s why we’ve streamlined the library experience to help students focus on what they need, when they need it. The clean and modern site design allows them to easily find the best content possible with fewer clicks and smoother navigation ensuring students are getting the most out of their time in the library” (Brock & Purchase, 2019).

## Something Borrowed, Something New

James D. Richardson, writing about archiving presidential communications, wrote: “Next to possession of knowledge itself is the ability to turn, at will, to where knowledge is to be found” (Robinson, 1908). The new University Library is here to fulfill both of these goals. The new site has been streamlined “to help you focus on what you need, when you need it.” There is a new and improved search tool, a refreshed site design allows users to easily find content with fewer clicks and smoother navigation. The new design also

features the most popular resources from the main page and provides easy access to reach a librarian for personalized assistance.

Days later, excitement in online classroom discussion forums was palpable. As one student weighted in: “Hello! The university library has changed. So, there is a new format once we arrive to the main page. There are several tabs above the research field that can take us to the intended place... Have you experienced the same change? Anyway, I think this exercise is fabulous particularly because we will use it in our future scholar endeavors!”

## But Is It Better?

Research supports occasional change for the sake of change (Vermeulen, Puranam, & Gulati, 2010), but many users expect change to make processes better, defined as simpler and faster. Nielsen targeted “overly long download times” (1996) as one of the top 10 mistakes of web design; while traditional human factors guidelines indicate 10 seconds as the maximum response time before users lose interest, designers routinely ignore this basic principle. Additional recommendations included using groups and subheadings to avoid “unstructured content” (Nielsen, 1999) and eliminating “bad search engines” (Nielsen, 2011).

## New University Library Highlights

According to PJ Purchase, Director of the University of Phoenix Library, the library staff includes six librarians and two paraprofessionals. That is a small but capable staff to provide one of the most used learning assets available through the student portal. The University Library includes over 220 licensed databases, more than 100,000 scholarly journals and periodicals, and over 200,000 general interest e-books accessible to all students and faculty. The University Library's collection of resources is continually updated and expanded to provide the most up-to-date and relevant information. Examples of resource types include:

- Articles
- Audio files
- Conference proceedings
- Dissertations
- Essays
- Financial data
- Images
- Industry reports
- Video files
- White papers
- E-books

The redesigned University Library site remediates such known issues and proactively enhances users' experience with additional features including

- ◆ Fast downloads
- ◆ New and improved search tools
- ◆ Streamlined navigation
- ◆ Fewer clicks
- ◆ Mobile-friendly
- ◆ Main page access to experienced librarians for personalized assistance
- ◆ Back-end upgrades to support data and analytic insights to empower continuous improvement

The University Library also offers the following services to assist users in the research process:

### Ask Us

We get it – research can be stressful, reach an experienced librarian for convenient, personalized one-on-one help.

### How Do I

Guides demystify terms like primary source and peer review and tools like RefWorks and Bookshelf so students can focus on their research.

Kudos to the University of Phoenix team that orchestrated this transformation! The one thing that has not changed is the amazing University library representatives that are always standing by to help locate anything, even electronic documents, even not in the collection, through the document delivery service. To empower continuous improvement, user experiences, recommendations, and views are welcome: Underdahl@email.phoenix.edu. Your thoughts count!

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# "Once in a blue moon realization is better than anticipation"

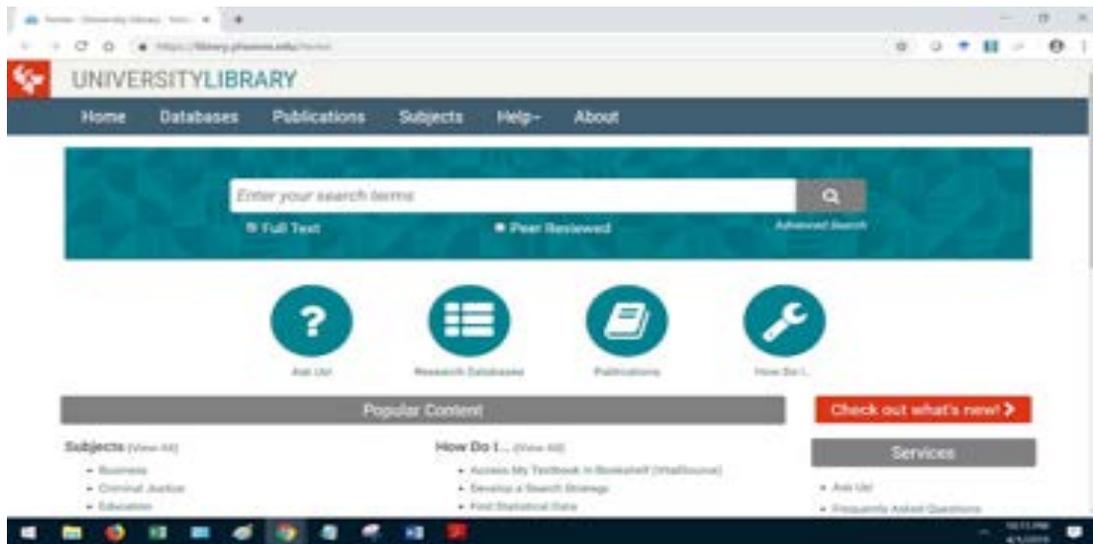
Jake Falstaff \*

## Show-Me

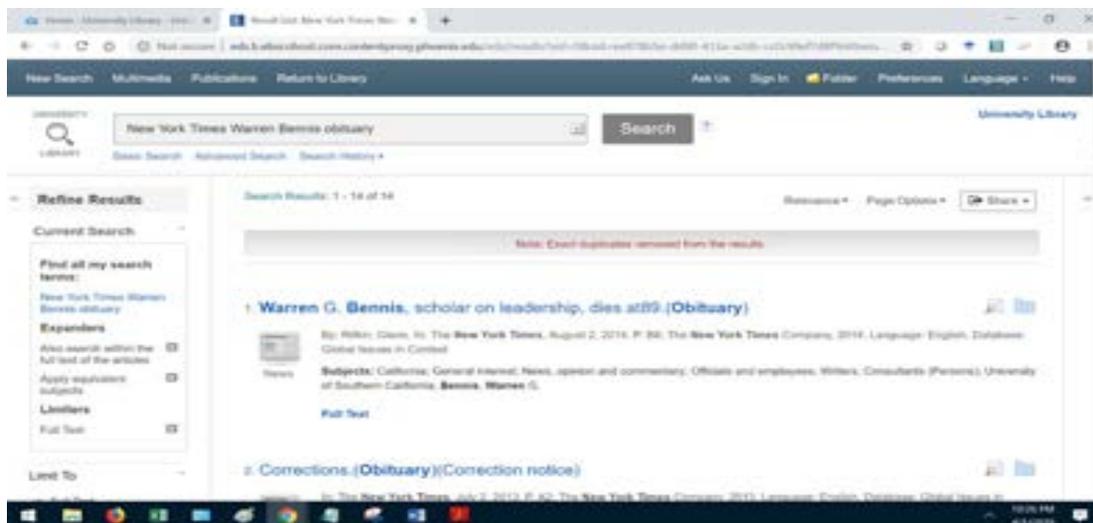
Missourians' "show-me" attitude is shared by many critical thinkers and necessitates empirical validation. The following research example demonstrate two-click retrieval in the new library experience:

Researching Warren Bennis's views on leadership led to the *The New York Times* August 1, 2014 obituary, retrieved in 2 clicks.

### Step One: Log into eCampus and click the University Library link



### Step Two: Enter "New York Times Warren Bennis obituary" into search tool and click



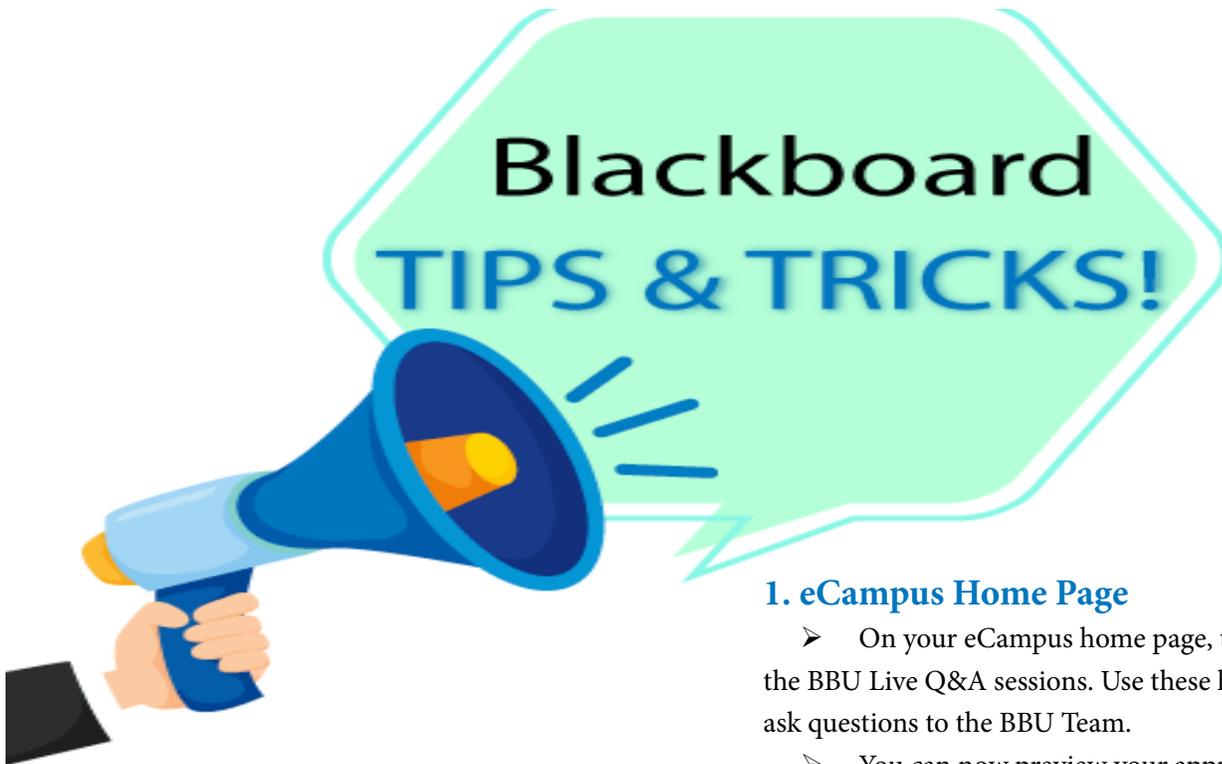
\*Jake Falstaff, no relation of Shakespeare's sheepish rough Sir John Falstaff, was the pen name of Herman Fetzer (1899 - 1935), a novelist, poet, and columnist for the *Cleveland Press* and *Akron Times*.

Reference:

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## BLACKBOARD ULTRA UPDATE

*Do you have questions or concerns regarding your Blackboard course and you can't find the answer? Pull up a chair!*



*Since we are all fairly new to using Blackboard Ultra, a tenacious few full-time faculty have compiled a list of useful tips and tricks including some Best Practices, issues, and resolutions that we wanted to make you aware of, to help make your transition from eCampus to Blackboard as smooth as possible.*

Many Thanks to the following contributors:

**Jenna Pavleck, Mary Cluff, Melissa Warren, Lisa White, Patricia Hoefler, Tracy Crawford, Jennifer Romano, Maggie Dominguez, Elizabeth Voss, William Stewart, and Kevin Phillips.**

### 1. eCampus Home Page

- On your eCampus home page, there is a link to the BBU Live Q&A sessions. Use these helpful sessions to ask questions to the BBU Team.
- You can now preview your approved courses in Blackboard through the Approved Courses link on eCampus.
- Make sure to go to the "Faculty Resources Center" page on eCampus every time you start a course to get the most up-to-date Blackboard Ultra Set-Up Checklist and Instructor Policies document. They continue to make updates to these documents.

### 2. Blackboard Home Page

- On your Blackboard home page, *check* the **star button** to keep your current courses at the top of the page. *Uncheck* the star when you are done with them. Use the down arrow to see more details about each section, including the unique UOPX group number and Blackboard Ultra group number (they are different).

**“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.”**

**~William Arthur Ward**

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### **3. Class Set Up**

- When setting up your classes, use the small typing box (*Description*) at the top of each weekly folder to add in your weekly overview, which only holds about two sentences.
- In the title of the DQs, instead of it just saying, "Due Thursday" consider changing the title to say "Initial Response Due by Thursday" to make it clearer.
- Inside the DQ in the instructions area, consider adding additional clarification such as "Due No Later Than Thursday, June 28th, 2019" or something like that, along with the word-count for their two replies.
- In the "*Meet Your Faculty and Peers*" thread that is built into the course, you need to delete the instructions and replace them with your own because students can see that text. Consider adding a note to let students know that those posts do not count for participation points.
- Need a class roster in a flash? Go to **Gradebook**. *Select Download Gradebook, select Column and Total. Select Tab (XLS) and My Device. Select Download* and you will have a tidy Excel file with your student's information.
- Keep your course "private" until Monday so the students can't access it while you are setting up your course; however, remember to go back and "open" it before your class starts.

### **4. Communication**

#### **Announcements**

- Be thoughtful about how you use the announcements area, with the understanding that these pop-up on the screen when a student enters the course. Use this for *important* information.
- You can schedule announcements for entire course. You can set a date and time for them to post.
- Do not over use announcements so that students stop reading them. Consider using sending messages to the whole class to allow for minimal announcements.

#### **Messages**

- You can send out "mass" messages to the entire class, which will be delivered individually to the student; however, the entire class would be able to see their reply to you.
- If you message an individual student, you can choose the option to have an email delivered to them as well. But let the student know that they cannot reply to that email, as you won't get it.
- You cannot create a draft of your message and come back later to edit. You will need to copy and paste it into a Word document and make changes there.
- Using the Faculty Messages Tips: When you begin teaching, you will get a message from the Faculty Engagement Team which includes an attachment titled "Faculty Messages Tips for Blackboard Ultra Students." These are messages that you can send to students with information on the classroom, complete with links to videos. For example, the second tip includes a link for a video on uploading assignments that can be sent to students who

## 5. Instructor Policies

- We can add things back in to our IP document such as additional details on participation, feedback time-line, and academic honesty.

## 6. Dates/DQs/Points

- If using the conditional availability option for DQs, leave the end date blank or set it for way after the end of the course. If you don't, students won't be able to see their feedback once the end date has passed.
- Post DQs (and make visible) BEFORE class starts.
- Blackboard is based on 1000 points, not 100. Adjust rubrics/scores accordingly.
- A script is now running that will auto populate your due dates and due times. Please double check to make sure they are correct when setting up your classes. Use the *Due Date Conversion Tool* to help, which you can find under *Books and Tools*.

## 7. Participation

- Even withdrawn students show up on list of students to grade for participation/assignments. (Just put in 0.)
- Each week will have 1 required DQ. They need to respond to the DQ and make two other posts to their classmates or other posts that the instructor makes over two separate days. Put this information and the word-count for the “reply” into the instructions.
- There is apparently a limit on the number of levels of reply in the discussions (3). You know you've reached the max when the “reply” option is not there.
- To check word-count of your student's posts, you can download either [Word Counter](#) or [Word Counter Plus](#) as a Chrome extension and highlight the post and it will tell you the word-count.
- In the drop-down menu at the top of the post, there is an option to add a heading to make your post stand-out.
- Make discussions available as needed rather than all at once. Consider using “conditional availability” to allow students to see the DQ but keeps them from responding to it until it is released.
- You can embed videos right into your posts if you'd like. However, make sure they are accessible with a transcript and closed caption.
- The following items do NOT count towards participation:
  - o formal assignments,
  - o posts that merely state agreement or reiterate a previous post,
  - o messages,
  - o notes sent to the facilitator's address

## 8. Attendance

- The following items do NOT count towards attendance:
  - o Posting private messages
  - o Participating in Blackboard Collaborate real-time sessions
  - o Completing assignments through third-party vendors (e.g. Connect, WileyPlus, MyEducator)

## 9. Grading Assignments

- Remind students of the grading rubric by making a folder under “*course resources*” and adding a pdf file of your weekly rubrics as grading guides to make sure that they know what they will be graded on to avoid questions such as “*what is the word-count?*”
- Make sure you have published a grade for every student and every assignment before attempting to submit final grades, even if it says “attempt” or “unopened.” *It needs at least a 0.* Otherwise, final grade calculations will not be accurate.
- The link to post final grades is in the *Resource folder*.
- Gradebook adjustment – rounding up.
  - Manually check a grade - To change a grade manually (for example, if you noticed a mathematical miscalculation by the system and/or you need to round it up, per policy) you have to open the Gradebook, then click on the “Total Points” link. In that screen, you can double click on a student’s point total and manually adjust it there if needed. Then when you go back to the “publish final grades” link, the final grade will show properly there OR
  - Update the Gradebook Setting by .5 – Go to the Gradebook and select the gear icon. Select “letter” where it says *Current Grading Scheme:Letter* and where you see the Grade Range, change to 94.5, 89.5, 86.5, 83.5, 79.5, 76.5, 73.5, 69.5, 66.5, 63.5, 59.5, and 0.
- When using a rubric and over-riding a grade (due to it being late), it appears they can’t view the comments in the box associated with the rubric. You will need to send them a private message giving them their comments including the late penalty.
- To remove attached feedback, click in the comment box and then hit backspace until it disappears.
- Consider downloading the gradebook into a MS Excel file. This will allow you to easily identify which students are missing assignments and need an outreach.
- Set up grading rubrics in BB and use them in combination with the in-line grading comments. Though it might initially seem time-consuming, in the long run this can save time while allowing a faculty member to provide more robust feedback to students. It also prevents multiple downloading/uploading of documents which helps streamline the grading process.
- Compile a list of resources to include in feedback when you see a student is struggling in a certain area. For example, instead of just telling the student that their grammar is incorrect, pop in a resource such as Grammar Girl and direct them to it.

## 11. Blackboard Help for Faculty

- [Blackboard.Feedback@phoenix.edu](mailto:Blackboard.Feedback@phoenix.edu).
- Blackboard Support Calls and Recordings for Faculty
- The Academic Help Desk at 602.713.9870 or [Academic.HelpDesk@phoenix.edu](mailto:Academic.HelpDesk@phoenix.edu)
- Tech Support: 800.800.3493, 602.713.9870 or PhoenixConnect Technical Assistance Center
- On-demand training and help is available via BlackboardTV on YouTube where there is a complete library of self-help video tutorials, guides, overviews and tips for both instructors and students.

## auto comments



## on STERIODS

**By Jolene Morris**

**A**s faculty, we have to manage life, work, and family in addition to our teaching role at University of Phoenix. As such, it is important to leverage all available resources in order to manage our limited time. Not only do all facilitators have to provide thorough grading and feedback, but online faculty also need to prepare quality participation posts. In addition, our on-campus faculty must prepare engaging lesson plans and handouts.

In order to prepare grading, feedback, participation, handouts, and lesson plans, we need to employ all the resources available to us. When preparing grades, we do have **Auto Comments**, but this resource is static. We cannot customize the Auto Comments for each student without expending more time than we save by using them. What we need are Auto Comments on steroids.

Online facilitators have no resource such as Auto Comments to help with participation posts. Many of us save our best posts

in Microsoft Word® or similar electronic tools. Then we locate the post we want to reuse, copy it, paste it into the classroom, and customize it for the current context. What we need are interactive comments that can be located, used quickly, and customized on the fly.

To meet the need for customizable comments, feedback, and posts, let's consider some of the software that fulfills this purpose. In the search for such software, we need it (1) to be easy to use; (2) to work on Windows®, Macintosh®, and mobile platforms; (3) to be free or cost very little; (4) to save comments in various formats such as straight text, formatted text, and HTML; and (5) to provide organization so comments can be located easily. However, perhaps the most important feature of feedback/commenting software is (6) its ability to be customized in real time – we need a powerful macro feature.

Such software should be able to take a brief template such

as below, customize it for individual students, and paste it into the discussion post or gradebook's text box. The sample template below is incomplete, but should convey the idea:

[Student Name], your score on the unit exam was [score], which is equivalent to [CALCULATE: points] grade points out of the 15 possible for this assignment. [IF score > 89 then] That is an excellent score. You demonstrated deep understanding of the week's concepts. [IF score < 90 and > 79 then] Your score equates to a letter grade of B, which shows very good understanding of this week's concepts. You should study the areas you missed, which were [OPEN INPUT BOX]. .....

A quality word processor such as Microsoft Word® offers many of the features described above (check out Word's AutoComplete). Unfortunately, we need to be a computer programmer to write VBA macros in Word. Without macros, we would be forced to create several different stock feedback paragraphs, select the one that is most applicable, and then edit it after pasting it in the appropriate place. Unfortunately, if we have several stock paragraphs for each assignment for each week and for each class that we teach, it may be difficult to locate the feedback or post we want. Moreover, it will take more time to customize it than we are saving.

Therefore, we need to expand our search of specialized software packages to make this process easier. Since many of us are teaching classes with large amounts of students in them, we need a system that is easy to use and will save us time. Out of the dozens of programs on the market, I can recommend two software packages. Both work equally well on Windows, Macintosh, and mobile devices.

**Text Expander** has almost all the features we need in feedback/posting technology. It has an ongoing cost of roughly \$4 per month, which adds up to \$48.00 each year or hundreds of dollars over the teaching lifetime of the average facilitator. Cost is the only major disadvantage I see to this

software. One other annoyance I found with this software is that if you quickly paste two text snippets back-to-back, the second one doesn't always work properly. In its favor, Text Expander does save huge amounts of time, is easy to use, and has good macro support.

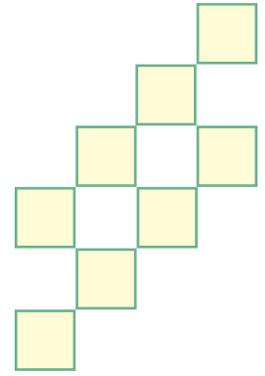
**Phrase Express** has all the features we need, plus more. I asked my family to buy Phrase Express for me many years ago for my birthday – I have never regretted it. Phrase Express is very feature rich and the macros are extremely powerful. The cost of Phrase Express is \$49.95 for one-time purchase – no additional cost or licensing. Phrase Express can import Text Expander, Word, and any existing feedback we have saved, and it can import highlighted posts from the Classroom. The only disadvantage to this software is that it is so powerful, it does have a bit of a learning curve. I have been using Phrase Express for years and have hundreds of prepared and customizable posts for each week of each class I teach. I am currently teaching a Math 220T class with 63 students. I can do weekly feedback for all 63 students in less than an hour using Phrase Express, but the best part is that each student's feedback is comprehensive yet customized to his/her performance.

In summary, there is quite a lot that we facilitators can do to maximize and organize our teaching time, freeing up time for other facets of our life. We should use all the tools and resources we can find. I have proposed that one of the best tools we can leverage is an automatic, customizable text creator. If we decide to start using one, we don't have to take a month's vacation to create text snippets for use in the classroom; we can import from feedback and posts that we create as we go.

We no longer manually multiply 3-digit numbers times 3-digit numbers – we use a calculator; we leverage the technology. We seldom write to our distant family members using snail mail – we use email; we leverage the technology. Perhaps it is time to consider creating text for the classroom using similar tools; we should leverage the technology. I encourage you to buy a text creation tool for yourself or ask your family to surprise you with this time and energy saver. Your family will appreciate the extra hours you save and devote to them.

## FACULTY BROWN BAG

The College of General Studies hosts a series of Brown Bag live presentations on various topics designed to promote academic content discussion and reflection. The Brown Bags provide faculty and staff with additional training and tools, as well as opportunities to present research and engage with colleagues. Anyone interested in presenting at a future Brown Bag is encouraged to submit ideas by completing the Brown Bag presentation application located at the **Brown Bag Application on the CGS website**.



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# Mediation Techniques to Deal with Academic Integrity Issues

By Carrie Kendall

**O**n April 11, 2019, Dr. Marvin Pershing, (also featured on p.16 in this issue) presented a Brown Bag entitled “Using Mediation Techniques to Deal with Academic Integrity Problems/ Issues.” In it, he discussed what schools are doing to improve academic integrity and the mediation techniques that may be applied.

To handle academic integrity, Dr. Pershing first discussed the use of the honor code, which is different from the Student Code of Academic Integrity, a university policy. As a policy, it has less success when dealing with issues of academic integrity because there is no participation from or ownership by the students. They have no investment in a university policy, but they do in an honor code. Traditional honor codes are managed by students, called the honor

committee. Students set and enforce the rules and educate the student body and faculty regarding the honor code.

Differing from traditional honor codes are modified honor systems, which still give authority to student honor committees to promote academic integrity and resolve allegations of dishonesty. Modified honor systems are effective in reducing incidents of cheating because students are involved in the system and in creating an honorable academic environment.

Dr. Pershing also touched on some reasons why cheating occurs in the academic environment. He stated that students often have different definitions of cheating. For example, millennials tend to view all information on the Internet as common knowledge because it can be accessed by anyone and therefore believe that it doesn’t need to be cited. He further

explained that cheating occurs because it isn't fully enforced. Students are often unwilling to turn in other students for cheating, and faculty members may ignore violations.

To combat those issues and further promote academic integrity, Dr. Pershing also discussed how to communicate effectively on issues of academic integrity. We are not arguing with the students. Rather, we want to use soft skills to communicate and resolve academic integrity issues with them. Therefore, we need to listen actively, pay attention, ask questions, give feedback, and remove emotion. Furthermore, we need to keep in mind that students are working towards achieving self-actualization and building self-esteem. Self-esteem is related to self-value, and self-value and self-respect are increased through honesty and integrity. Faculty can help students build self-esteem

by providing guidance and by creating an academic environment where academic integrity is explained and encouraged. Academic standards need to be clarified so that students know exactly what we expect. Essentially, we cannot expect them to act with academic integrity if they are unsure of what that means. Therefore, we must make them aware of the guidelines through our communication and enforcement of them.

As faculty, we want our students to act with academic integrity. As Dr. Pershing's presentation explained, by implementing an honor code or system and by clarifying academic integrity and communicating our expectations clearly, we can help students achieve and maintain academic integrity and reduce the incidences of cheating in our classrooms.

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## CHECK OUT MORE BROWN BAGS ON THE CGS WEBSITE!

To chat about Brown Bags, see our [Brown Bag Discussions forum](#).

Anyone interested in presenting at a future Brown Bag is encouraged to submit ideas by completing the [Brown Bag presentation application](#).

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## SAVE THE DATE!

**Date: 7-23-2019**

Time: 10:00 am AZ time

Instructor Policies: A little Document With a Lot of Power

Presenter: Julie Alexandrin

# INNOVATION



Color Analysis by Kho, Nak Beom, Japan, 1999, one of 21 artists selected by the Korean Artist Project. The Korean Artist Project is a global online website which aims to promote Korean contemporary artists hosted by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of Korea and organized by the Korean Art Museum Association. Image courtesy of Google Arts & Culture at <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/color-analysis/YAESiQvvQCRZVA>

# Rethinking Sustainability: From Recycling to Reducing

By Erica Letourneau

Since the early 1990s, I have dutifully dropped yogurt containers, soda bottles, and milk jugs into the recycling bin without considering where the materials went after workers emptied my bin on collection day. I was doing my part to help the environment; every flattened cereal box and rinsed shampoo bottle was a pat on my back, proof of my environmental bona fides. The ubiquitous recycling symbol, three arrows forever chasing each other, reminds consumers to reduce, reuse, and recycle. I was so good at the last arrow, who cared about those first two? Over the years, a handful of acquaintances have refused to recycle, claiming cities and towns would often send recyclables to the landfill if they did not get a good price on the market. One man worked at a transfer station and was particularly credible. Still, I held fast in my recycling belief. Surely, the others were cynical and even if my small city's waste contractor treated a batch of recycling as trash from time to time, my actions mattered in the end. My willed ignorance ended earlier this year as I learned more about China's 2017 "National Sword" policy and began rethinking my unbalanced approach to sustainability.

For decades, the United States was one of many countries sending recycling to China where manufacturers used it to create goods the country then exported. A growing focus on environmental issues lead China to rethink its role in the global recycling network (Mak, 2018). In its notification to the World Trade Organization (2017), China shared its intent to limit the types of imported recyclables it would accept, stating:

Large amounts of dirty wastes or even hazardous

wastes are mixed in the solid waste that can be used as raw materials. This polluted China's environment seriously. To protect China's environmental interests and people's health, we urgently adjust the imported solid wastes list, and forbid the import of solid wastes that are highly polluted. (para. 7)

In short, China was "essentially saying the country would no longer act as the world's trash dump" (Margolis, 2018, para. 4). Though small and large companies involved in international recycling trade felt the National Sword policy's effects immediately, it was not until this past spring that the story spread widely through U.S. publications. A host of worried headlines appeared in my newsfeed: "Is This the End of Recycling?" asked *The Atlantic*; "Hundreds of US cities are killing or scaling back their recycling programs," warned Vox; "As Costs Skyrocket, More U.S. Cities Stop Recycling" reported *The New York Times*.

Though municipalities throughout the country have changed or eliminated their curbside recycling programs (Semuels, 2019; Corkery, 2019), my city, Concord, N.H., has a contract with Cassella Waste Systems through 2024. Bob Cappadona, vice president of Casella's Recycling arm, claims, "anything in Concord in a Casella truck for recycling is being recycled. . .every one of the commodities is going to a reused or recycled market" (as cited in Brooks, 2019, para. 5). While this is good news for my community, it does not solve the much larger issue of an industry in crisis. What happens when Concord's contract expires in 2024? In researching National Sword, one quote in particular stood out to me: "Reducing the amount of waste we generate in the first place is the most important thing we can do" (Klug,



as cited in Katz, 2019, para. 26). It is time to end my reliance on recycling; I must rethink my approach as a consumer so I produce less waste—recyclable or not.

Much of my family's waste comes from convenience items such as single-serve snacks for kids' lunches, disposable plates for information gatherings, disposable coffee cups when running errands. On evenings when we feel too rushed to cook and order take out, our choices are often handed over in plastic clamshells. When the dogs slobber their water, we grab a wad of paper towels to dry the floor. After evaluating our habits, my spouse and I have entered the "reduce" lane by making some key changes. One of the first areas we tackled were kid lunches. We invested in some sturdy reusable plastic containers (which we hope to use for years) for packaging things like crackers, vegetables, and fruit. We also swapped out disposable, plastic utensils for a few sets of inexpensive cutlery. I readily admit real cutlery in a school lunch would not have been an option even two years ago, when our youngest was still in elementary school. Any fork or spoon we packed would have likely ended up in the lunchroom trash!

We focused on paper towels next. We purchased dishcloths to keep on the counter in a decorative basket (the basket was already there—now it serves a purpose). When there is a spill too large for the sponge to handle, we grab one of the dishcloths. However, we are not ready to give up paper towels altogether. The thought of using a reusable cloth to clean up messes such as pet accidents makes both my spouse and I uncomfortable. Similarly, we do not foresee swapping out disposable tissues for old-fashioned handkerchiefs.

Though we have many reusable grocery bags, our use has been sporadic; we recommitted to making them a priority. This means if we realize, as we approach the checkout lane, that we forgot our bags, we set the cart aside and run back to the car to grab them. Another lapsed area of sustainability for us was composting. Our old, cedar compost bin had fallen apart after nearly twenty years of use, yet we never made time to shop for a new one and began lazily to throw our non-meat food scraps into the garbage. (Living within the city limits with pets, an uncontained compost pile is not a good option for us.) We invested in a new, closed tumbler model and I cannot wait to add some organic “black gold” to my flowerbeds next spring.

Much of the work around reducing waste is mental. Am I willing to put in the planning and footwork to limit and eliminate my desire for convenience items? Stories of zero-waste families and individuals like Bea Johnson and Lauren Singer both make me feel defeated (I have so far to go!) and hopeful (If they can do it, so can I!). Though I am no longer ignorant about the world’s recycling problem, I retain some of my earlier optimism. My family of four is an infinitesimal percentage of the world’s population, but our small changes matter in the end.

If you have ideas about reducing household waste, We Rise would love to hear them. Join us in the College of General Studies Digest Discussion forum or send a message to *We Rise*, [Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu](mailto:Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu)

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# Voluntourism: Bringing Cheer or Does It Interfere?

By Fran Pistoresi

Helen Keller once said, “The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves.” This is certainly a sentiment that we faculty and staff at University of Phoenix understand and live daily in our work to help students expand their career opportunities through education. There is a growing trend for people to help others in need during their vacation time. This marriage between volunteering and tourism is termed “voluntourism,” and numerous non-profits, government agencies, and destination marketers provide opportunities for people to travel abroad to develop this sense of happiness through service. From building houses to conservation work to teaching, there are a plethora of voluntourism experiences to fit all different abilities and desires.

While helping those in need can be a noble cause, some specific voluntourism attitudes and experiences have given it a bad name. There have been volunteer experiences in which tourists’ work eliminates potential jobs for locals, creates dependence on outside organizations, and even, perhaps the worst-case scenario, leads to a greater problem than what was there in the first place. For example, in Siem Reap, Cambodia orphanages were exposed for housing children that had living and capable parents. Stupart (2011) explains, “It was cost effective for orphanage-pimps to rent them off their parents for the day so that they could play or perform for gullible tourists for a healthy profit in donations.” Well-meaning medical students have shown up to places like Nepal to help, but have, ultimately, achieved just the opposite. Bauer explains, “With an existing local health system where locals’ skills were improving and confidence in the system growing, unsolicited ‘help’ was undermining all previous achievements” (2017).

Of course, there are volunteer experiences abroad that do

help local communities and provide positive meaning and fulfillment to the volunteers themselves. There is nothing wrong with feeling good about helping others. However, as Gordon B. Hinckley, former President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints said, “One of the great ironies of life is this: He or she who serves almost always benefits more than he or she who is served” (2001). Perhaps the first important step in being a thoughtful voluntourist is to recognize that the volunteer is getting just as much, if not more, out of the experience as those that they served.

The second step in participating in a thoughtful voluntourism opportunity is to thoroughly research potential organizations. Questions to consider include: is this organization well-regarded and widely seen as credible? Is it providing a service that is a real need that cannot be provided by the local community? Is the organization employing locals in the community? How is the organization working to ensure that their volunteers are not perpetuating dependence on outsiders? What is the breakdown of where the money from the cost of the experience is going? It is important to be confident that the any organization’s work is truly improving a situation rather than simply making volunteers feel good about themselves or making money for the organization itself.

A third step for any potential voluntourist is to clearly define parameters for the experience. Where do you want to go? What sort of work do you want to do? When can you go? How much money do you have to spend? What is included in the cost of the experience? What abilities can you contribute?

Chief Executive Officer of Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia, Corinne O’Connell, went on a personal volunteer opportunity to Nicaragua through Habitat Global Village in January 2016. She remarked that Habitat made

the process incredibly easy by taking care of all of the “nuts and bolts” of the experience. A volunteer can go online and select a location, date, and volunteer experience that fits her parameters. Prices for the trip were around \$2000, and Habitat Global Village even has a fundraising toolkit with a crowdsourcing function to post on social media sites like Facebook. Meals, food, transportation, and a day of tourist activities are all included in the price with the rest of the total going to support the project. From there, volunteers simply need to purchase a round trip ticket to the location.

O’Connell’s crew of eight volunteers worked on a week-long project to build a 350 square foot, concrete, single-family home. There were four volunteer crews in total working on building homes in the same village that week. Working alongside members of the family whose home it would become, and local masons and supervisors hired by Habitat, each crew poured a cement floor and erected the four walls of the home. The Habitat employees completed the house by adding a roof, an eco-friendly toilet, and, perhaps of greatest impact, a clean-water well. Prior to the installation of the well, women were walked once a day three miles to and from a fresh water source with a five-gallon bucket to last the family for the day.

Working with the local family and community members

was a real highlight of the experience, O’Connell reported. The last evening of the trip was the home dedication ceremony where volunteers and local families and friends gathered together to celebrate the achievements gained through working together. Food, conversation, and local entertainment capped off a hard, yet rewarding, week of building. O’Connell explains, “I gained a real appreciation for the connectedness of humankind from my week in Nicaragua. The people in the community where I worked exhibited both resilience and grit. It was clear that they worked hard to give their best to their children –what every parent wants.”

While Habitat Global Village’s experience is hard to beat in that it is a trusted non-profit organization with a range of volunteer experiences with hassle-free planning and execution, there are other organizations that provide thoughtful voluntourism experiences as well. As Teju Cole, a skeptic of voluntourism, argues, “If we are going to interfere in the lives of others, a little due diligence is a minimum requirement” (2012). Remember to be clear in your motivations and parameters as you research a voluntourism opportunity that works best for you. Perhaps Helen Keller had it a little bit wrong; bringing cheer to others does not have to be entirely selfless endeavor to make our lives happier.

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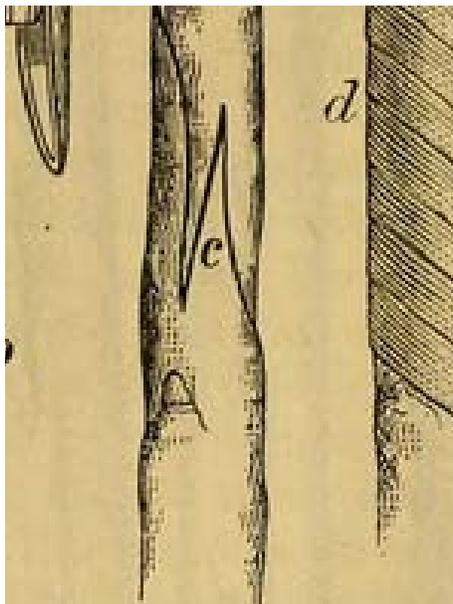
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## Communities and the Environment: A Lifetime Commitment

Cathy Smith with Kevin Steffy Prior

With the end of spring and the beginning of summer, Mother Nature is in full swing, providing her children with the first rewards of their winter dreams. Summer is the time when the fruits of our labor come into full bloom and we can begin to enjoy the benefits of nature's natural recycling and regeneration. In the Pacific Northwest (PNW), the [Agrarian Sharing Network](#) (ASN) plays a star role in paying it forward when it comes to taking care of our planet and the communities that call our planet home.

The ASN started out as a small propagation fair and small seed sharing event in Lane County, Oregon. Nick Routledge (2016) describes that in 2017, after eight years, the Lane County Propagation Fair “morphed the teensy Eugene Permaculture Guild spring seed swap into the Lane County Propagation Fair. This free, 100% volunteer-driven initiative has since grown into the largest organics-focused propagation fair in the country” (para. 1, section “Farewell Lane County...”). Today, the propagation fair has grown from one fair, in one community, to multiple fairs throughout the PNW. The [ASN's Facebook group](#) is a public group with 514 members. They also have a YouTube channel, [Agrarian](#)



[Sharing Network](#), that provides communities with video information related to their mission. And, they have multiple websites\* for the main organization and a few of the different community organizations throughout the PNW. The ASN discusses and promotes planting, growing, and sharing, so they can bring together community members as stewards for the land and the environment.

So, what is a propagation fair?

A propagation fair is a place where community can come together for seed sharing and plant sharing. With the seed sharing, people can bring their extra seeds from previous years and share them with each other. With the plant sharing, people can come to get free scion (new branch cuttings) for hundreds of varieties of fruit trees, including many heirloom and newly developed varieties not available commercially. The ASN also provides people with rootstock at cost if people need a tree to graft their scion onto. If people do not know how to graft, then there are grafters present who will teach people how, and will graft the scion onto the rootstock. In conjunction with this there are guest presentations about many different topics related to propagation, growing, permaculture, and sharing.

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*Kevin Steffy Prior is a member of the core group of organizers of the [Agrarian Sharing Network](#) Propagation fairs held throughout the Pacific Northwest. According to [Suburban Homecraft](#) (2019), Prior has “a doctoral dissertation in neurophysiology and extensive entomology training. His biology research focused on neurological changes during insect metamorphosis, central nervous system processing of sound in the locust, and foraging behavior in the honey bee” (para. 1). Prior also teaches Suburban Homecraft in several of the community centers in the Eugene area. Some of the classes in his Urban Homesteading workshops include soap making, sourdough bread, preserving, fermenting, bee keeping, foraging, gardening, grafting, and much more.*



Although sharing seeds and scion is an important part of the ASN mission and the propagation fairs, the group and the fairs are much more than just preparing spring crops for summer and fall harvests. The ASN and the propagation fairs are about community and how community can come together for each other and for the environment. When talking about a propagation fair, Routledge (2016) states:

It is this human dimension – the nurturing of relations between and among communities – which was feeling lost to us and with it, of course, the accompanying awareness of the requirements and responsibilities of assuring such efforts are not only socially but ecologically sustainable (para. 3, section “Farewell Lane County...”).

When one volunteers to be a part of the planning, one experiences what Routledge describes. All the work before, during, and after each fair is done by volunteers. Before the fairs, individuals come together to gather seeds and scion. All the scion is checked to ensure that it is healthy.

It is labeled and stored so that it can be transported to all the different fairs in the PNW. People not only prepare the scion, but they also volunteer their time and money to create and distribute the communications needed for community awareness. Volunteers also do small jobs like bucket washings to house the scion during the fairs. The clean buckets are important for the health of the scion. Fairs must be set up and then closed down at the end of the event. Extra scion and rootstock must be stored properly and cared for between fairs. In addition to working throughout the propagation fair season, the ASN also provides tutorials and information via their website and their Facebook page. This information helps community members and ASN members continue with their mission to be stewards of the land. It is important to remember that caring for community and the environment is not just a one season project, but a life-long commitment to the planet and to future generations of people.

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## Online Resources

[ASN’s Facebook group](#)

[Agrarian Sharing Network](#)

[Agrarian Sharing Network: Collaboratively Supporting Neighborhood Propagation Fairs Across the PNW](#)

[Agrarian Sharing Network \(Scion Exchange\)](#)

[Neighborhood Anarchist Collective](#)

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Routledge, N. (2016). Farewell Lane County Propagation Fair. Welcome the Agrarian Sharing Network!. Agrarian Sharing Network: Collaboratively Supporting Neighborhood Propagation Fairs Across the PNW. Retrieved on June 14, 2019 from <https://springpropagationfair.com/>



## *It Isn't Fun to Care*

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## *Do It Anyway*

By Kristen McQuinn

In my personal life, I tend to practice Stoicism. I recognize that there are many things—most things, in fact—that I cannot control or change. I let go of those things and focus instead on what I can control or change, which mainly centers around my own reaction to a thing. I can't control traffic, but I can choose not to get mad about it and enjoy listening to my audiobook instead, for example. I can't control that it feels like living on the sun in Arizona, but I can either accept that it's hot here, or move. Recently, though, I went to a talk given by Paul Nicklen, biologist, photojournalist, and arctic explorer, and my Stoicism crumbled and flew out the window.

Nicklen showed us a video he had taken of a polar bear who was starving to death. It is one of the most devastating things I have ever seen. The poor creature, who should have weighed close to 1,000 pounds or more, clocked in at roughly 200 pounds and was too weak to do more than stagger towards Nicklen, who had waited for several hours nearby, observing. The bear eventually came over to some garbage cans the film crew laid out to check desperately if there was food inside. Nicklen's post on Instagram stated that the bear was in such a condition that he certainly would have died shortly after filming the video. Attempting to be apolitical, he was careful not to connect the effects of climate change to the bear's situation (he is thankfully more vocal and scientific on his website), while at the same time making sure to be clear that it was precisely because of climate change that the bear had no sea ice to live on and it was the destruction of its

habitat that had caused its starvation conditions.

Nicklen discussed, too, the effects of the use of drift nets upon ocean populations. Drift nets, used by the fishing industry, are nets up to a mile long and 300-400 feet deep that are opened and then set loose in the ocean. The fishing boats then come along to collect the nets to see what they caught. Often, they catch dolphins, whales, sharks, rays, seals, and other non-food sea life. Many of these are endangered animals; many are highly intelligent and sensitive. Some are caught intentionally, such as sharks for shark fin soup. We had the dubious honor of seeing footage of a shark getting its fins cut off, while still alive, for exactly that purpose, while flailing helplessly. Coming right after the video of the polar bear, I couldn't blink, because blinking would have made my face leak and possibly made sounds come out my mouth.

Nicklen's talk was not all about the wanton death and destruction of the oceans and the arctic regions. The majority of it was awe-inspiring and filled with breathtaking images he's taken over the years. He showed us many images of what a polar bear is supposed to look like in all its huge glory. They can be silly creatures as well, for as huge and deadly as they are. One enormous male Nicklen documented made himself a giant snowball, put it on top of his head (he was supremely proud of himself, judging from the expression on his furry face), and then snuggled up with it in his arms and fell asleep. He showed us what a happy seal looks like, fat and sleek, her pup a butterball of soft white fur, so full of milk it can't stuff its tongue back in its mouth. When elephant seals are weaned,

they get really lonely. If you lay down in the surf near them, they will come and want to be close to you and will lay on your lap, even though they weigh around 500 pounds. The oft-maligned leopard seal, frequently described as violent or aggressive, provided another glimpse into arctic animal life. Nicklen got in the water with a female leopard seal moments after she'd killed a penguin to eat. She charged him, nothing but gaping jaws and teeth, but he shut his eyes and curled up and after a few minutes, she settled down, confused. Then she swam off and came back a few moments later with another penguin, which she tried to give to Nicklen. The penguin got away and she retrieved it, prodding it toward him again. He did not take the penguin for fear the power dynamic would change him into a competing predator to the seal. Instead, she kept bringing him penguins, each one more wounded or weakened, until finally she brought him a dead one and literally put it on his head. During his last swim with this female seal, she turned on her back and made a sound at him that is usually reserved for their pups. Maybe she thought he was a particularly inept pup and was trying to help him. These encounters, too, were captured by Nicklen or one of his crew.

Nicklen's purpose is to show that animals are often misunderstood and that many instances of "animal aggression" are simply humans panicking or imposing upon the animals and stressing them out. When the animals are allowed to dictate the encounter, and humans use a modicum of common sense, of course, it is far less likely that anyone will be harmed. Not to anthropomorphize animals too much, but they have personalities and feelings. Human carelessness has an impact on the environment and the creatures that live in it, ranging from annoying a single animal to ravaging the habitats of an entire animal population.

I shouldn't think this would need explaining, but there are still people who deny that humans have an impact on climate change, or who deny that we can change anything. I simply cannot fathom or condone that kind of short-sightedness. We rush to insure our homes if there is even a 1% chance that



it will burn down or come to harm. Why wouldn't we take similar precautions with our one true home, the earth? It is exhausting to care about something so much, but Nicklen made a comment that really struck me during his talk. "It isn't fun to care," he said. No, it isn't. But we should do it anyway.

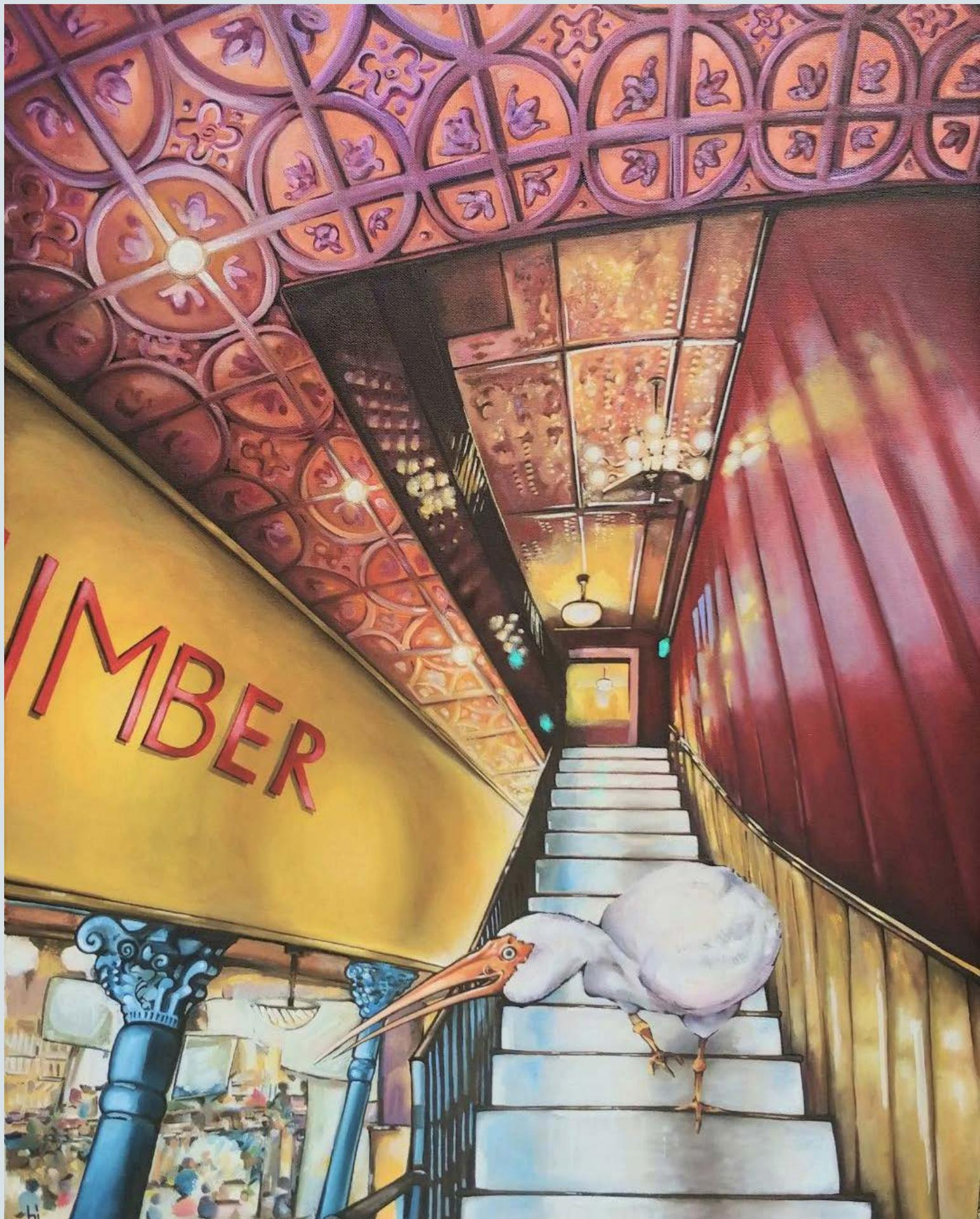
I realized after the talk that I can still be Stoic about this. I may not be able to control or change climate change deniers or their views. I can't force the climate to revert to pre-Industrial clean standards with a wave of my hand. But I can do my part not to use things that are harmful to the land or oceans. I can help lobby to ban things like drift nets, trophy hunting, and the market for shark fins. I can drive a car that doesn't contribute to greenhouse emissions so I don't help make the atmosphere hotter, melting the sea ice so the polar bears don't have anywhere to live. There are things we can do, even if they are a little inconvenient. What's inconvenience in the balance of a healthy ecosystem? We can do better, if not for ourselves then for our children and grandchildren. It isn't fun to care, but do it anyway.

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### Reference

Nicklen, P. [@paulnicklen]. (2018, September 3). Perhaps more than any other species, polar bears have played a pivotal role in my photography. [Instagram photo]. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BnRQu-YAAAm/>

# TRANSFORMATION



Brad Carroll, *Uptown Social* (Oil on Canvas 18" x 24)

Winner of the North Charleston Arts Fest for Best Oil and one of four recipients of the prestigious Purchase Award (see p.5 for more details).

# A Brief Look at Naïve Art

By Brad Carroll

Naïve art is produced by self-taught artists who lack formal training but are often obsessively committed to making art” (Atkins, 1993, p. 142). I appreciate this definition calling to mind ideas of obsession and commitment, while still making it plainly clear that a naïve artist is called so because he or she lacks training. I am a self-taught painter. I took classes in high school, but never at a higher level, nor was I mentored in any way. So, the naïve style by circumstance makes me curious. Can I join your gang?

In western art, the naïve style began to garner attention in the late 19th century. However, far from being a localized style of painting, with no traditional barrier to entry, naïve art can be - and has been - produced across the globe. Stylistically, naïve art tends to be flat, with a heavy emphasis placed on the use of patterns. Perspective is rudimentary, with no decrease in the precision of detail as the images fall back into the distance (Atkins, 1993).

In assessing my own style of painting, I recognize that I don’t necessarily adhere to the aesthetic principles that have been assigned to the naïve style by those with influence. But what I’m learning is that these principles are far more malleable than those associated with other styles of painting. With no academic training used as a means to pass along technique and tradition, the resulting work will always be driven by the instinctive and creative qualities of the individual artist. So, I have something to work with. What about content?

In exploring naïve art, one will likely encounter a point of emphasis placed upon the separation between this style of art and basic folk art. “Naïve art is a product of individual psyches rather than communal history, and it tends to be decorative and nonfunctional” (Atkins, 1993, p. 144). There is no barefaced cultural context; the agenda is a purely personal one. The naivety noted in the title refers to training for the

most part, or lack thereof, and not to the subject matter.

The most widely recognized naïve painter is probably Henri Rousseau, and he very well understood how his reputation was besmirched by his uncultivated background. Critics called him Le Douanier (the customs officer) because he was a toll collector by occupation. “He was stigmatized as a naïve, untrained amateur who could only paint part time after finishing his dreary day job” (Graham-Dixon, 2008). He was an artist who also placed a great deal of emphasis on painting ideas not physically in front of him. He would tell people that he traveled a lot, but that wasn’t really true. He painted wild animals and jungle scenes, ideas inspired by nothing more than books, images, and visits to the Paris Zoo. *Sleeping Gypsy* is a renowned example of such a piece.

Some critics still say Rousseau painted in a “child-like” manner. But I think that’s a crude way to describe his approach. Show me a child who draws like Rousseau paints, please. And then you can show me a child who flies a helicopter, hits an NBA three-pointer, and cooks up a nice Coq au Vin (with the mushrooms on the side, preferably in the trash). Call it unrestricted by artistic tradition or free of technical quality. But I suggest we leave the hyperbolic description “child-like” behind.

I can relate to Rousseau in a few ways. Many of my paintings are inspired by images taken in far off places (some taken myself, some not). My style is a personally developed one. And I mostly paint when I’ve finished up my “day job.” So perhaps there is hope for me in joining the gang. But ultimately, when exploring naïve artists and the paintings they make, I realize that there is no particular benefit in doing so. What is the value of a label exactly? At the end of the (work) day, my artistic production is based entirely on my individual obsession and commitment. Call that naïve if you like. I won’t argue.

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- Atkins, R. (1993). *Art spoke*. New York, NY: Abbeville Press.
- Graham-Dixon, A. (2008, December 11). A short film about Henri Rousseau [Video file]. Retrieved from Youtube website:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MneHoFGclg>

## *Doubling Dose*

### **Part Two**

By Nathan Coley

*The following story is the second installment of a collaborative work of serial fiction.*

*Look for Part Three in the Fall issue of We Rise!*

**M**y dream was always the same and had been since the radiation curled like a den of snakes, out and over the island, through the hundreds of government workers sealed like packaged fish in plastic suits, past the homes and trees and playgrounds that had melted and boiled under the heat of the disaster. The reactor had failed, and the wings of Icarus had finally come too close to the sun.

In the dream there was always two men, standing tall, the apocalyptic landscape spread beyond them in tones of blacks and greys and piles of rubble, and they were far larger than ordinary men and with heads far bigger and rounder than ordinary heads, and this was the first thing that told me that I was dreaming—that people were tall, but not this tall, and that their limbs should not have been long and misshapen, like the arms of bendable action figures stuffed with corn syrup. They moved slowly, muttering a sound to each other that was more like a dull, deeply toned whale call than human speech. Between them a cloud of smoke, thick and green, with a soft glow and hints of flickering lightning inside. It swirled between the men, like a long, toxic noodle going through the holes of a spaghetti strainer.

The men each had a gloved hand gripped around a rectangular device, a radiation counter of some kind I thought, or knew. It was my dream, so of course I was sure what it was. I am always certain of everything in my dreams. Remembering it upon waking up that was the hard part, where all of the thoughts and visions of my slumber, more real than anything I'd felt in waking hours, would slip away and dissolve.

In the middle of the radiation counter sat a screen, and the screen blinked from black to white to grey, and then black again, and froze with a solid green bar going across the screen. A caption read all clear, followed by three successive chirps. One man nodded, and then the other, and they motioned to take off their helmets.

The toxic cloud passed through them still, and thickened and darkened. The lightning bolts inside multiplied, and I, standing helpless, opened my mouth as if to scream, to warn them, to tell them that there

counter was wrong and that the radiation was there, passing through them, past them and beyond the zones they had outlined with chain link fences and orange flags.

But instead of a sound my mouth opened wider and wider, and out of it came a cloud of gas, another stream of the green death. It passed through my lips and came out of my nostrils, particulate toxins stuck to my teeth and tongue, and I could feel burning there and in my throat, and I saw my cloud, mixing with the river of gas between the two men, and as my stream joined the larger river of gas, it widened and became more tumultuous—tiny little curls of green gas rose from the top, one by one, until hundreds of gnarled, gaseous fingers grasped at the air, and then, in a moment, drew back in unison, beckoning me to step forward.

I did not want to step forward but I did, because one thing I know about dreams is that my body and thoughts and words are not under my control, and as I stepped forward the men in the suits fully removed their helmets, and they smiled as the gas stuck to their skin and transformed into something hot and gelatinous, like poisonous gobs of warm, green butter. It sizzled on their cheeks, and their skin melted and dripped from their skulls. Smoke rose from the burns and the men smiled still, saying nothing but looking at me, and soon there was no skin left, but skull and spine. The men collapsed into the cloud of smoke and the lights inside it flared up for a moment, like aerosol in a fire, and they were gone.

And suddenly, as often happens in a dream, I was somewhere else, sitting at a table, in a dark room with a faint light overhead. At the other end of the table sat Brian's Six-20, and from this view it seemed to not be a camera at all, but a box with things that weren't eyes, but something worse, that could see like eyes, but further. And there were more of them—more than should have been on that camera. I looked, speechless, and the camera made a loud click. I blinked. The camera clicked, and I blinked again, and that's when the photographs fell like a rain of confetti overhead. I flung my hands upward, with the aimless motion of a child trying to catch snow, and pulled one down, and then another, and another.

The first picture was me, visibly pregnant and glowing, holding Brian next to me, tight and firm, and in the second picture I was alone, on my back, on a makeshift cot, my face coated in sweat, and my hair looking stringy and worn. My legs were spread and I knew that the baby was coming, and in the next picture I snatched I was standing, a pool of blood and placenta at my feet, holding a baby in a blanket, though the next picture showed that it was not a baby at all, but a kitten, and the photo after that as a close up of the kitten's face. The animal had no eyes at all, but sockets filled with puss, a mixture of green and brown and black that bubbled and popped. The cat's face was mostly bone, with patches of singed fur and skin, and it had no teeth at all, but a thick tongue that seemed to go all the way around its mouth. The mouth opened and the cat made a noise, not a hiss, but something much worse. God, much worse. The sound was nonsense and I felt like I understood it.



I woke up, at my kitchen table, where'd I'd fallen asleep. My face ached from the position I'd fallen in. My neck had a crescent red mark from a soup spoon, and my right cheek dripped with maple syrup. I stood up, glanced at the cold remains of my breakfast, and wiped my face. The clock above the stove read 10 AM, though I knew that it was not quite there yet. The clock was one of James' toys—a mechanical piece of junk that lost at least a minute a day and probably more. Still, I was somewhat grounded in what time it was.

The Six-20 sat on the kitchen table. I was sure I had, after much arguing, given Brian permission to take it in for a show and tell, though he had either forgot or didn't feel like dragging around that black, antique box all day. Maybe he didn't really feel like it was his. I don't know.

I looked at the camera. I had told Brian to take it with him, hadn't I? Then I realized that I had no memory of him getting on the bus, or waving goodbye, but I knew he had got on the bus and must be at school. A mother knows these things even when she doesn't know them. I was tired, so tired. Pregnancy was never this hard.

I don't know what got into me, but I looked at the camera and I swear, it seemed to be talking. No, I didn't hear anything or imagine voices, but I had the feeling that I was being spoken to. When Brian begs for a new toy or asks for a piece of candy, or when James is angry and his words are worse—it was that kind of feeling, like a deliberate message was coming right at me and hitting me in the mouth. But there wasn't a message at all, just a feeling.

Minutes later the camera was in a canvas bag, and I was taking a stroll into the town commons. It was a cute walk through a cute street, lined with quaint shops and perfectly maintained flowerbeds, like the kind

of street you might see in the imagination of Frank Capra or Norman Rockwell. I strolled past a barbershop and an empty bandstand and a hardware store that had the smell of fresh sawdust, rounded a bend, and stopped. A faded sign above a door read Antiques, though a sign indicated the store was closed. I sighed, clutched the canvas bag tightly, and turned around.

That's when I heard a creak, and a bell, followed by the voice of the old man. Nobody knew what he wanted to be called. Everyone only knew of the man, a short, frail looking person, with a perfectly bald head, a scrawny neck, and coke bottle glasses, had always asked to be called "Mister," and nothing else.

"Can I help you?" he croaked. "I was just about to open up. Apologies. These old bones don't do so well anymore."

"Oh, hi. Sorry, I. What was your name? I'm Linda, and—"

"Mister, is fine. That's all I've ever been called."

"Mister? Ok. I was wondering--," I stammered, lugging the camera up the stoop, past the man, and into the doorway, "—if you could develop old film, can you do that?"

"A Six-20? Oh my. Have pictures been taken recently?"

"I think so. Probably so. What do you think?"

"Hard to say, I don't know that I've ever seen one that works, but nobody comes my way much anymore." He paused and looked around at his inventory, a hodgepodge of old tools, jars, toys, and bicycle parts. A bear rug sat in the center of the dark shop. It was missing one of its glass eyes. The room smelled like a layer cake of dust.

"Could I leave this? Maybe for a day or two? Let me know what you can do."

"Sure, but I have to," he coughed, "I have to ask. What is this to you? Personally?"

"I'm not sure. I just have a feeling. You ever get that? A feeling you just can't shove away?"

He smiled. "All the time, Ms. Linda. All the time. Leave the camera, and your phone number, and I will get on this right away."

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If I had stayed around the shop a little longer, I would have seen a car pull up and stop in front of it. I would have known that it was a Thunderbird. It would have been a dark color, and then would have been a man in it, and I would have seen him enter the shop. Maybe I would have thought something of it, and maybe not.

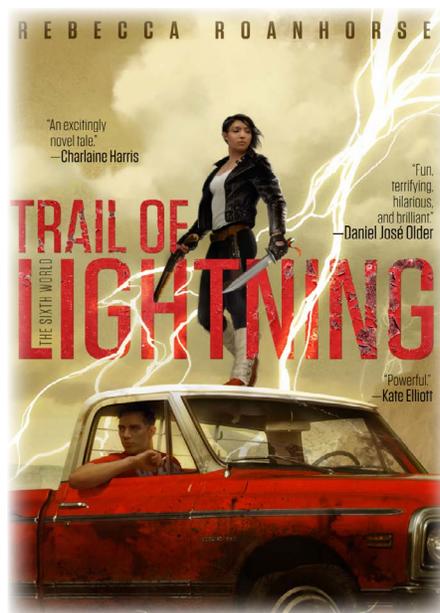
Aside from the fallout zone, which seemed to near too us, I was just another mom, on a lovely street, taking care of an errand and that was all. If I would have gone inside, and if I had followed the man, I would have known why my phone was going to ring so very early the next morning.

*to be continued*

## CGS Book Club

# Trail of Lightning by Rebecca Roanhorse

By Cathy Smith & Kristen McQuinn



In *Trail of Lightning* by Rebecca Roanhorse, readers are taken into a futurist action/adventure journey set in an era that was changed by today's current events. Roanhorse does an excellent job weaving together legend and history to help her readers experience Maggie Hoskie's journey in a Dystopian society created by the negligence of a greedy society that did not care about the land or the resources needed for the existence of a future generation. As a supernatural monster hunter, Maggie is hired to go after the monster that kills a young girl, and it is on this journey that we learn about Maggie's past, her present, and are eventually left wondering about her future.

During the May 17 College of General Studies (CGS) Book Club meeting, attendees were able to talk about Maggie, her culture, and the characters that helped tell Maggie's story. The group agreed that Maggie was a complex, dynamic character. Jenna Pavleck felt that there

were some good layers to Maggie. The conversation then went into a discussion about how we really do not know what demons people are facing. Nathan Coley shared, "It's easy to judge her [Maggie] for being a killer, but she did see her grandmother get burnt to death." We then talked about how we do not want to judge people by what they present to the outside world.

Roanhorse did a great job developing a story set in the futuristic lands of the Diné [Navajo]. Lanova Yazzie, shared that she thought it was very cool to read about the different towns that are real places. Yazzie explained that Lakchuki is close to Black Mesa where her own family is from. Yazzie also shared that Peabody coal mines are at Black Mesa, and they send their coal to Los Angeles and other places, and the Diné are not compensated for it. Yazzie says that the Diné worry about the environment and have concerns about the fact that we cannot live without water. Kristen McQuinn suggests

that the land did play a huge role in the story, and that it became its own character. Tina Poenisch agreed that the environment played a huge role in the story and added how the environment in Roanhorse's future world was impactful for her.

The conversation also focused on how Roanhorse wove the creation myths of the Diné into the everyday lives of

this Dystopian culture. This device was an interesting way to learn more about these myths since they play such an important role in Maggie's journey. The group shared that they found the creation myths interesting and enjoyed how Roanhorse was able to weave the myths into the story to help develop the many other supporting characters that helped readers understand the message in her story.

**If you have any book recommendations for future book club meetings, please send your emails to [Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu](mailto:Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu).**

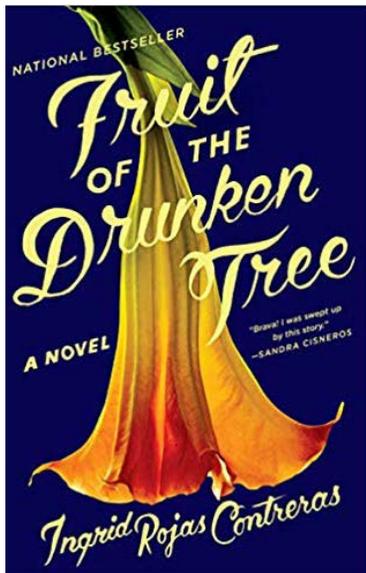
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## **Mark Your Calendars!**

### **Digest Book Club**

### **August 23, 2019**

### **10 am AZT**

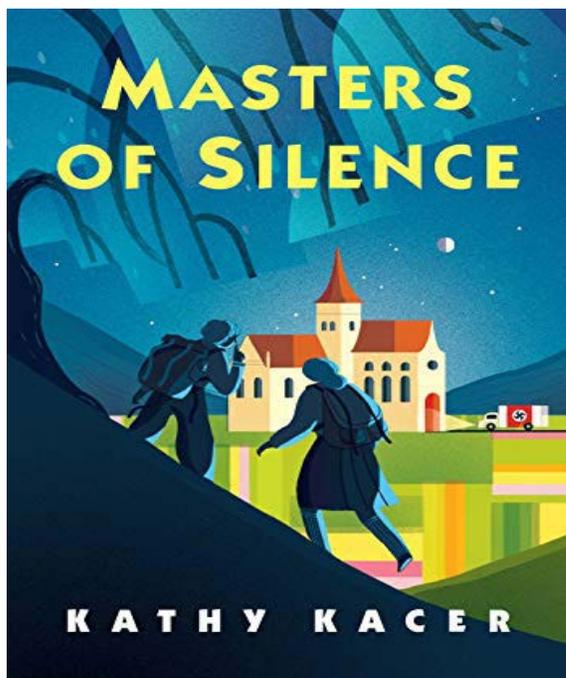


*A mesmerizing debut set in Colombia at the height Pablo Escobar's violent reign about a sheltered young girl and a teenage maid who strike an unlikely friendship that threatens to undo them both.*

*Seven-year-old Chula and her older sister Cassandra enjoy carefree lives thanks to their gated community in Bogotá, but the threat of kidnappings, car bombs, and assassinations hover just outside the neighborhood walls, where the godlike drug lord Pablo Escobar continues to elude authorities and capture the attention of the nation.*

*When their mother hires Petrona, a live-in-maid from the city's guerrilla-occupied slum, Chula makes it her mission to understand Petrona's mysterious ways. But Petrona's unusual behavior belies more than shyness. She is a young woman crumbling under the burden of providing for her family as the rip tide of first love pulls her in the opposite direction. As both girls' families scramble to maintain stability amidst the rapidly escalating conflict, Petrona and Chula find themselves entangled in a web of secrecy that will force them both to choose between sacrifice and betrayal.*

*Inspired by the author's own life, and told through the alternating perspectives of the willful Chula and the achingly hopeful Petrona, Fruit of the Drunken Tree contrasts two very different, but inextricable coming-of-age stories. In lush prose, Rojas Contreras sheds light on the impossible choices women are often forced to make in the face of violence and the unexpected connections that can blossom out of desperation.*



## Masters of Silence (The Heroes Quartet)

Written by Kathy Kacer

Reviewed by Melissa Warren

Henry longs to ride his bike again, as his sister Helen desperately tries to remember the features of her father's face. Thoughts like these haunt the Rosenthal children after the terrible events of Kristallnacht in 1938. Their father, along with 30,000 other Jewish men, was arrested and then disappeared on the night of broken glass. As the children long for his safe return, their mother makes the difficult choice to trek from Germany to France to hide Henry and Helen in a convent.

*Masters of Silence*, the second book in Kacer's Heroes Quartet series, follows Henry, ten, and Helen, fourteen, as they hide from the Nazis in southern France. Desperate to see their parents again, and confused by the rules and rituals of the foreign nuns, Helen and Henry fight to remain hopeful, but an encounter with a group of Nazi soldiers threatens to break their spirits. The nuns, while terrified themselves, work to boost the morale of the over sixty Jewish children hiding in their convent with a visit from "the clown." The clown visits the convent regularly and entertains the children with his vivid yet silent performances. As the children watch him tame an invisible lion, they do not know that along with lifting their spirits, the clown, Marcel Marceau, will also save their lives.

This novel explores the transformative powers of empathy, gratitude, and selflessness. As their world is torn apart by hatred and violence, the children in the convent work to create a new one built on imagination and kindness. While the story deals honestly with terrifying events, Kacer crafts a narrative that is both appropriate and inspiring for young audiences, ages ten and older. I highly recommend it.



**Marcel Marceau**, original name Marcel Mangel, (born March 22, 1923, Strasbourg, France—died September 22, 2007, Cahors), preeminent 20th-century French mime whose silent portrayals were executed with eloquence, deceptive simplicity, and balletic grace. His most-celebrated characterization was Bip—a character half-Pierrot, half-Charlie Chaplin's Little Tramp—first presented by Marceau in 1947.

He was born into a Jewish family, and during World War II he changed his surname to Marceau and became active in the Resistance. He later studied at the School of Dramatic Art of the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre in Paris and with pantomimist Étienne Decroux. After his first success—the role of Arlequin in *Baptiste*, a pantomime—he concentrated completely on pantomime and formed a mime troupe. (Source: *Encyclopedia Britannica*)

# Goodbye Jesus: An Evangelical Preacher's Journey Beyond Faith

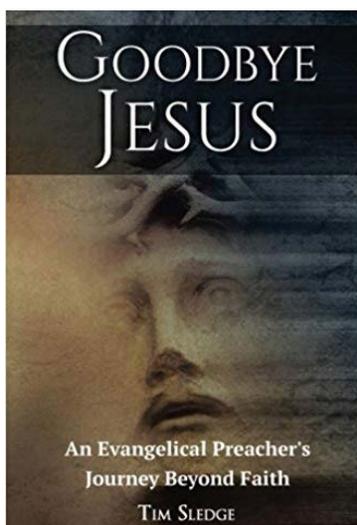
Written by Tim Sledge

Reviewed By Nathan Coley

It's no secret that those who identify with a particular religion are on the decline. According to *National Geographic*, "There have long been predictions that religion would fade from relevancy as the world modernizes, but all the recent surveys are finding that it's happening startlingly fast. France will have a majority secular population soon. So will the Netherlands and New Zealand. The United Kingdom and Australia will soon lose Christian majorities" (Bullard, 2016, para. 5). The number of outright atheists and agnostics seems to be on the rise as well. According to

Michael Shermer, (publisher of *Skeptic* magazine) researchers at the *Journal Social Psychological and Personality Science* have estimated, "with 93 percent certainty, that somewhere between 17 and 35 percent of Americans are atheists, with a most 'credible indirect estimate' of 26 percent" (2018, para. 6).

Those who leave behind the faith of their childhood are generally not in the position where a change in faith is going to have a catastrophic effect on their careers. Someone who makes a career change from plumbing to computer programmer does not have to disavow the benefits of having a hot water tank or a sewer line. What, however, happens when a minister reaches a point where faith no longer seems tenable? To explore this problem, zoologist Richard Dawkins (widely viewed as one of the signature members of the "New Atheists,"), and Dan Barker spearheaded the *Clergy*



*Project*, a support group of sorts for clergy who had either abandoned their positions or performed their duties in the midst of skepticism. In connection with this project, philosopher Daniel Dennett and researcher Linda LaScola published the work *Caught in the Pulpit: Leaving Faith Behind*. As this study reported, becoming an apostate doesn't make for a smooth career transition for clergy.

It's in this context, a world of growing skepticism and increased attention to former clergy, that one finds Tim Sledge and his recent autobiography, *Goodbye Jesus: An Evangelical Preacher's Journey Beyond Faith*. Sledge sets

the scene with a qualification that his other partners in skepticism, such as Richard Dawkins or the late Christopher Hitchens, cannot bring the table: a near lifelong involvement and commitment to his faith. As he says, "Over a period of 50 years, I was shaped significantly by the Christian faith. I read the Bible from cover to cover at age nine, was called to be a minister at 16, and eventually become a leader within my denomination" (2018, Location No. 69).

The vast majority of Sledge's text is designed to unpack these autobiographical credentials. The reader learns a good deal of his childhood, with a particular focus on his father's alcoholism, all the way through his college romance, his initial preaching assignments, and his ascent up the Southern Baptist evangelical ladder. Along the way, Sledge introduces his readers to a wide variety of characters (all of whom are given fake names), and he provides a glimpse into

the politics of different congregations of different sizes.

As if to provide a warning of what's to come, Sledge opens with a deeply tragic and heartbreaking story in which he, as a practicing preacher, is charged with officiating a funeral. The complication? The funeral was for a supposed pillar of the church and community, a teacher who had committed suicide under accusations of having sexually abused a young girl. As he frequently does throughout the text, he files such instances under what he calls an "exception to the rule of faith," or an event in which a member of the church behaves in ways contrary to the teachings and moral statues of the church. A full summary of his exceptions isn't necessary for this review (and indeed, it may not have been necessary for the text either, which often feels to be more exhaustive than illustrative). If one could spot a particular climatic moment in the text, it would likely be when he, as head pastor of his own megachurch, is ousted by the leaders in his own congregation (a coup that likely had its roots in theological differences over his preaching style). What follows can, without giving too much away, be characterized by a crisis of faith, infidelity, divorce, and alienation from community support systems.

He collects quite a few "exceptions to the rule" over the course of his journey, though his presentation is often tender, nostalgic, and fair. He criticizes behavior, as it seems to him, and is not beyond praising those who

seem deserving of praise. Readers looking for criticisms of Christianity that go beyond the behavior of some of its members, however, do have to read through about 70 percent of the text before they see the criticism branch in other directions: discussions of the Bible, for example, along with its reliability as a document of history and faith, are shelved until the book is nearly at its conclusion. Sledge seems to anticipate that some of his readers may tire of the extensive biography and focus on church happenings and politics, so he provides an optional reading schedule in the preface (for my part, I would not recommend skipping the bio, even for readers who would be more interested in later challenges to Christian apologetics).

To an extent, voices in modern atheism have often been criticized as arrogant and condescending. To cite one example, Salon.com published a 2015 article titled "New Atheism's Fatal Arrogance: The Glaring Intellectual Laziness of Bill Maher and Richard Dawkins." Presuming, for the sake of argument, that this characterization is accurate, Sledge's text would not be one that justifies it. It's an intimate, confessional read, and he does not seem slow to point out his faults, highlight his regrets, or offer kind words to those with whom he no longer worships. *Goodbye Jesus* is, at the very least, an honest read about a unique problem, and time well spent for believers and nonbelievers alike.

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Bullard, G. (2016). "The world's newest major religion: No religion." *National Geographic*. Retrieved from: <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/04/160422-atheism-agnostic-secular-nones-rising-religion/>

Schermer, M. (2018). "The number of Americans with no religious affiliation is rising." *Scientific American*. Retrieved from: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-number-of-americans-with-no-religious-affiliation-is-rising/?redirect=1>

Sledge, T. (2018). *Goodbye Jesus: An evangelical preacher's journey beyond faith* [Kindle version]. Retrieved from [www](http://www).

# Diversify Your Reading: The Armchair Traveler, Part Two

By Kristen McQuinn

As I had mentioned in my last article on this topic, literature is a fantastic way to get to know a new culture and to travel a bit without leaving the comfort of your own home. If you can't travel for whatever reason – health, safety concerns, finances, etc. – literature can provide a means of escape without actually going anywhere. Through literature, we can learn about new cultures' food and cuisine and then make an adventure for ourselves by trying to track down those cuisines in our own locations. Because of my own armchair tourism, I have discovered restaurants (ranging in definition from actual sit-down establishments to hole-in-the-wall joints that barely have room for a folding table and a couple plastic chairs to sit at while waiting for our food to be prepared in a mysterious and highly suspicious back room) which serve traditional Hawaiian, Ethiopian, Vietnamese, Szechuan, and Middle Eastern dishes. I had to do a bit of research and driving to get to some of them, but the experience was worth it, and helped bring to life some of the books I've read which referenced specific dishes.

Continuing with my armchair tourism for physical locations is, I find, easier even than with food. Living in Arizona, there are only so many places I can go physically that are nearby that even remotely resemble the locations I read about in books. We don't have jungles in Arizona. It doesn't look like England or Ghana, and certainly not anywhere Arctic. The culture is entirely different from any of those places. Giving up on physically taking myself to experience some of the

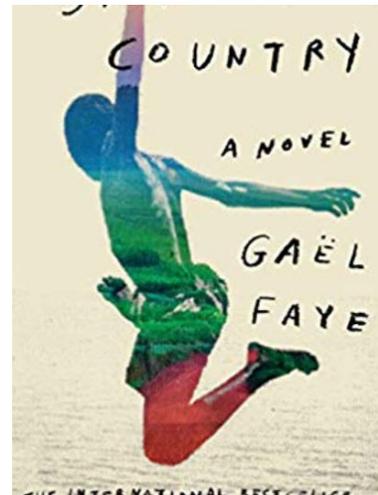


places I read about, rather than stymieing me, frees me to read liberally from around the world. I know it is unlikely I will ever get to go to Beirut, Jerusalem, Dubai, Tehran, Istanbul (maybe I'll get to go there one day), Petra, Morocco, Egypt, the Congo, the Amazon, so I take it as a challenge to read as much as I can about the places and cultures there now. Oh, the places I've gone...

I've traveled to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and witnessed how one person learns to handle being simultaneously young, female, while living in a place where there are religious police. Such is the story of Zarin Wadia in *A Girl Like That* by Tanaz Bhathena. Zarin moves from her home in Mumbai to Jeddah after the death of her parents. She deals with bullying at school, an abusive aunt at home, and an uncle who won't defend her. Until I read this book, I had never known where Jeddah was exactly, though I knew it was a major stop on the route to Mecca for devout Muslims making their hajj. I had never heard of the languages of Gujarati or Avestan. I had never known about the minority of Zoroastrians living in Saudi Arabia. This book helped me see those places, feel the coastal breeze coming off the Red Sea, and feel the hot, spice-laden air. Not that I ever need an excuse to eat Middle Eastern food, but while I was reading this book, I'm pretty sure I ate my weight in take-away dolmas, manakeesh, and shawarma from my favorite local hummus spot. Also, I cried my eyes out because of this book. It was an utterly beautifully devastating book.



*All This I Will Give to You* by Dolores Redondo took me to Spain. In this book, author Manuel Ortigosa's husband Alvaro dies in a car crash, and Manuel learns that Alvaro has kept secret the fact that he is Spanish aristocracy. This novel, set in the Galicia region of Spain, is redolent with the scent of gardenias, vineyards, and lush greenery. The rolling hills tumbling down to the sea, the air carrying the sound of the bells from the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela, all mingle into a miasma of history and intrigue throughout this novel, carefully crafted by Redondo and faithfully translated by Michael Meigs. The cathedral at Compostela has long been a destination for pilgrimages and remains a source of interest for medieval scholars for its importance during the Crusades in particular. When reading this book, I sampled a few local Spanish restaurants, discovering in the process that I love tomato jam but, surprisingly, do not love paella, even though it looks an awful lot like risotto.



*Small Country* by Gaël Faye took me to 1992, Burundi, and showed me the genocide from the perspective of a child. Gabriel, living with his friends in a wealthy neighborhood for ex-pats, is sheltered by his French father from politics and is entirely ignorant of the instability and poverty the rest of the country is subject to. He never understands that he is more protected than many others around him, including their own household staff, some of whom disappear and are never seen again. Throughout this novel, amid the bougainvillea and plantain, the damp air hangs heavy with blood, sharp with gunpowder. The traditional foods of red kidney beans, onion, chili powder, and plantains cooked in palm oil waft across the page, ubiquitous and soothing amidst the turmoil of a lost childhood. I tried [this recipe from Global Table Adventure](#) and it was delicious.

I've also been to Saigon and Hanoi, Vietnam, with Mai, a girl from California whose Vietnamese grandmother is going back to her home village after receiving word that her husband, long thought to have been killed when they had escaped the country during the Vietnam War, may still be alive. Mai does not want to go, doesn't care about her heritage, and doesn't want to play caretaker to her

grandmother for the summer, and yet she gradually falls in love with the culture, people, and location. As with many other kinds of cuisine, I really don't need an excuse to eat Vietnamese food, and I feasted on pho, which is just about as perfect a comfort food as I can imagine, while reading this charming little book.

Pairing food with literature is certainly nothing new. As mentioned earlier, food and travel writing remain popular genres in publishing. My love for these kinds of literature stems entirely from their ability to teach me about new kinds of food to try, because it is through food and shared meals that so many people learn to become friends, sometimes even against their own desires. We learn about

new places, values, and cultures and, through them, we learn greater empathy. After all, "The shared meal elevates eating from a mechanical process of fueling the body to a ritual of family and community, from the mere animal biology to an act of culture" (Pollan, 2008, p.192). Whether the meal is shared literally, with people at the same table as you, or metaphorically in the pages of a book while you eat the same food the characters are eating, food is a unifying force the world over.

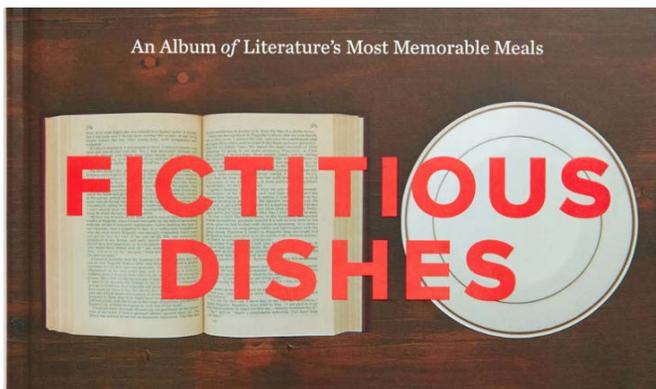
Have you been inspired to try new foods based on books you have read? Please share the experiences (and the recipes, if you have them!) with us. You can contact us at *We Rise*, [Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu](mailto:Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu)

## Reference

Pollan, M. (2008). *In defense of food: An eater's manifesto*. New York, NY: Penguin.

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## In the Meantime . . . .



Food and literature have long been paired to great effect. But nowhere so much as a new book entitled *Fictitious Dishes: An Album of Literature's Most Memorable Meals* by Dinah Fried. The author describes herself as is "a designer, art director, and amateur table-setter." The book includes fifty photographs of meals from celebrated literature—ranging from *The Secret Garden* to *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*.



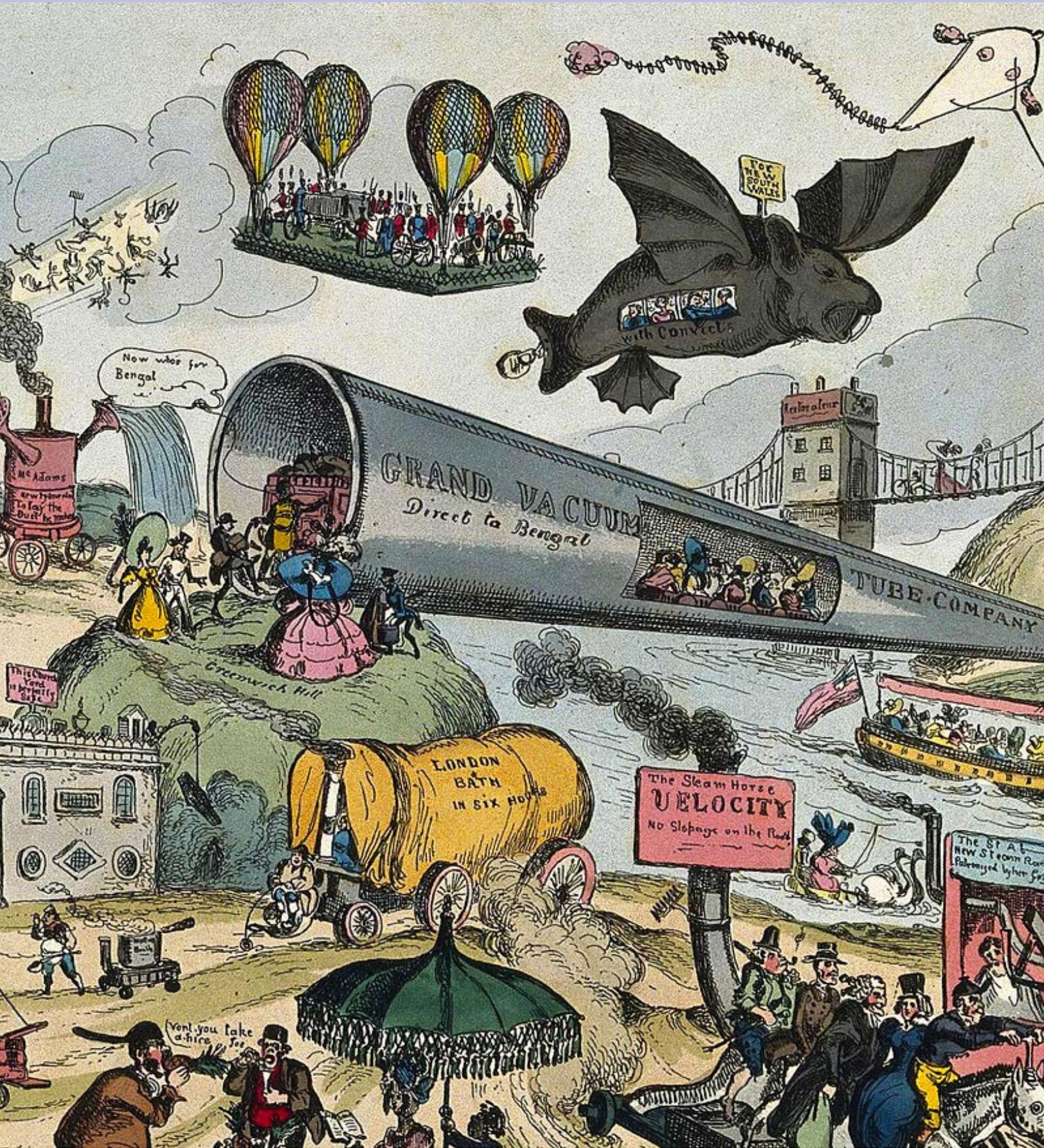
"Gracious alive, Cal, what's all this?" He was staring at his breakfast plate.

Calpurnia said, "Tom Robinson's daddy sent you along this chicken this morning. I fixed it."

"You tell him I'm proud to get it—bet they don't have chicken for breakfast at the White House."

*To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

# RESOURCES & RECOGNITIONS



Detail from *March of Intellect* (ca. 1828), a satirical cartoon by William Heath, featuring fanciful future applications of contemporary technology, but including the present vacuum tube for travel. Across the top of the print (cropped out here) it reads “Lord how this world improves as we grow older”

Source: <https://publicdomainreview.org/2019/06/27/h-g-wells-and-the-uncertainties-of-progress/>

# Summer 2019

## Recommended Reading List

By Fran Pistoresi

The article entitled "Assessment for Learning: A Catalyst for Student Self-Regulation" in *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* by Eleanor Hawe & Helen Dixon explores the results of an experiment in which students were expected to take responsibility for their learning. The authors concluded that a number of course elements helped this process including goals, exemplars, and dialogic interactions.

Zi Yan & Gavin T.L. Brown's article "A Cyclical Self-Assessment Process: Towards a Model of How Students Engage in Self-Assessment" also found in *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* discusses the results of interviews with 17 undergraduate teachers on how students self-assess and offers suggestions on how to help students with this process.

The next article is found in *College Teaching* and is entitled "Questioning Points and Percentages: Standards-Based Grading (SBG) in Higher Education" by Tom Buckmiller, Randal Peters, and Jerrid Kruse. The authors examine student attitudes and experiences with standards-based grading.

In his article "Where Do We Go from Here? Toward a Critical Race English Education" found in *Research in the Teaching of English*, Lamar L. Johnson argues that Critical Race English Education (CREE) theory can be used in English classrooms to combat racism.

The article "Critical Service Learning Across Two Required Marketing Classes" in the *Journal of Education for Business* by Tammy Neal Crutchfield examines an example of a service learning project that helped students learn and apply business theory as well as make a positive impact on a community.

Robert Hellyer's article "Marrying Content and Practice: Raising Undergraduate Awareness of 'Job Skill' Acquisition in a History Survey Course" found in *History Teacher* explains how to ensure students understand the job skills they acquire through the study of history.

"The Promise of Differentiated Instruction for Enhancing the Mathematical Understandings of College Students" by Michelle Chamberlin and Robert Powers found in *Teaching Mathematics and its Applications* explains the results of a study of differentiating instruction in undergraduate mathematics courses and suggestions for incorporating methods of differentiation.

Quentin Bellard, Kimberly S. McCoy, and Richard Varner's article "3 Cool Tech Tools to Consider for the Digital Classroom" found in *Faculty Focus* looks at the benefits of using Adobe Spark, Quizlet, and Remind in the digital classroom.

In her article entitled "The False Promise of Elite Education" in *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jennifer M. Morton argues that diversity in educational experiences is important for representative elites in a democracy.

## Bookmark: The Red Summer of 1919

By Anna Copeland Wheatley

*Today's Black Lives Matter activists fit seamlessly into this centuries-long pattern of black militant resistance to white supremacy — as they mobilize against the violent policies and militarized police that threaten their neighborhoods, as they challenge corporate media's habit of framing victims of white racist violence as the authors of their own destruction, as they demand we confront the damage white supremacy has wrought. Our students deserve the opportunity to identify this through line of black agency, rebellion, and resistance. It is a powerful call to action for all of us: Red Summer is now.* —Ursula Wolfe-Rocca, *Teen Vogue*, [The Red Summer of 1919, explained](#)



The Red Summer of 1919 seems in danger of slipping into the footnotes of history, even at a time when it should be a rallying cry against racist division in this nation. Nearly half a million black American men fought during World War I to assure the freedom of democracy in Europe. They returned home to what would become an unprecedented racist-fueled backlash. The following is an excerpt from a report by the Equal Justice Initiative published in 2016 entitled [Lynching in America: Targeting Black Veterans](#).

### Excerpt from *Lynching in America: Targeting Black Veterans*

African American veterans returned home from World War I eager to continue the fight for freedom at home. Many black soldiers returned from the war with a newfound determination to bring freedom to their own shores. As W.E.B. Du Bois proclaimed in his 1919 *Crisis* editorial, Returning Soldiers, “We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting.” Before World War I, the NAACP had just 9000 African American veterans returned home from World War I eager to continue the fight for freedom at home. Many black soldiers returned from the war with a newfound determination to bring freedom to their own shores. Before World War I, the NAACP had just 9000 World War I, the NAACP had just 9000 members nationwide and only 300 in the South, but by the early 1920s, national membership had risen to 100,000, with Southern chapters constituting a slight majority.

African Americans had returned home from the war with new and contagious confidence and assertiveness. Red Summer refers to a series of approximately 25 “anti-black

riots” that erupted in major cities throughout the nation in 1919, including Houston, Texas; East St. Louis and Chicago, Illinois; Washington, D.C.; Omaha, Nebraska; Elaine, Arkansas; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Charleston, South Carolina.

In Elaine, Arkansas, whites attacked a meeting of black sharecroppers who were organizing to demand fairer treatment in the cotton market. After a white person was shot, federal troops were called in to “quell” the violence, but instead they joined white mobs in hunting black residents for several days. As many as 200 black men, women, and children were killed.

.....

After World War I, an estimated 100,000 black veterans moved North, where they still encountered segregation, racism, and inequality. One of the first victims of Red Summer violence in Washington, D.C., was a 22-year-old black veteran named Randall Neal. In Chicago, the “presence and inspiration of black veterans, particularly those of the 370th Infantry Regiment” was critical to black Chicagoans forced to “defend

**Langston Hughes**  
**Beaumont to Detroit: 1943**

After World War I, an estimated 100,000 black veterans moved North, where they still encountered segregation, racism, and inequality. One of the first victims of Red Summer violence in Washington, D.C., was a 22-year-old black veteran named Randall Neal. In Chicago, the “presence and inspiration of black veterans, particularly those of the 370th Infantry Regiment” was critical to black Chicagoans forced to “defend themselves from white aggression.”

In the fall of 1919, Dr. George Edmund Haynes completed a report on the causes and scope of Red Summer. He reported that “the persistence of unpunished lynching” contributed to the mob mentality among white men and fueled a new commitment to self-defense among black men who had been emboldened by war service. “In such a state of public mind,” Dr. Haynes wrote, “a trivial incident can precipitate a riot.”

.....

In Congress, the fear that returning soldiers posed a threat to racial hierarchy in the South was a matter of public record. On August 16, 1917, Senator James K. Vardaman of Mississippi, speaking on the Senate floor, warned that the reintroduction of black servicemen to the South would “inevitably lead to disaster.” For Senator Vardaman and others like him, black soldiers’ patriotism was a threat, not a virtue. “Impress the negro with the fact that he is defending the flag, inflate his untutored soul with military airs, teach him that it is his duty to keep the emblem of the Nation flying triumphantly in the air,” and, the senator cautioned, “it is but a short step to the conclusion that his political rights must be respected.”

White Americans also feared that meeting black veterans’ demands for respect would lead to post-war economic demands for better working conditions and higher wages and would encourage other African Americans to resist Jim Crow segregation and racially oppressive social customs. Veterans’ experience with firearms and combat exacerbated fears of outright rebellion. In addition, the prevalent stereotype of black men as chronic rapists of white women — frequently used to justify lynchings — was amplified by accounts of wartime liaisons between black troops and white French women. Such acceptance by French women, it was claimed, would give black veterans the idea that they had sexual access to white Southern women. So as black soldiers returned home to enjoy peace, many Southern whites literally “prepared for war.”

Looky here, America  
What you done done —  
Let things drift  
Until the riots come.

Now your policemen  
Let your mobs run free.  
I reckon you don't care  
Nothing about me.

You tell me that hitler  
Is a mighty bad man.  
I guess he took lessons  
From the ku klux klan.

You tell me mussolini's  
Got an evil heart.  
Well, it mus-a been in Beaumont  
That he had his start —

Cause everything that hitler  
And mussolini do,  
Negroes get the same  
Treatment from you.

You jim crowed me  
Before hitler rose to power —  
And you're STILL jim crowing me  
Right now, this very hour.

Yet you say we're fighting  
For democracy.  
Then why don't democracy  
Include me?

I ask you this question  
Cause I want to know  
How long I got to fight  
BOTH HITLER — AND JIM CROW.





## Anniversaries

### 5 Years

Chen-Han Lee  
Annette Nealy  
Daniel Noia  
Diana M. Pohle  
Sonya Walker

### 10 Years

Diane K. Agena  
Amber Anaya  
Danyel S. Anderson  
Marcus S. Anderson, Jr.  
Jennifer M. Arntson  
Teresa D. Baker  
Adrienne L. Baron  
Tina M. Bernard  
Bethany L. Bigler  
Pamela H. Boronkay  
Melissa A. Bramm  
Matthew C. Buisker  
Alondo C. Campbell  
Rachel N. Carr  
Rick De Soiza  
Elizabeth O. Dietz  
Mallory A. Dunkley  
Julie A. Dwyer  
Melanie Eggers  
Carrie A. Elmore  
Susan M. Gaston  
Kathryn Grant  
Aaron J. James  
Yvette James  
Ronda C. Jantz  
Fred D. Johnston  
Christopher L. Jordan  
Deanna N. Kimbrel  
Trent Koide  
Elizabeth Kraske  
Todd Lapore  
Amy M. Lisk

### 10 Years *cont.*

Renee C. Look  
Sherry G. Markle  
Sandra Marshall  
Christa N. Menninger  
Carolyn Miller  
Jill D. Mountain  
Rebecca E. Myers  
Frank Nainoa  
Patricia Nereim  
Jackie Newbold  
James Newman  
Loretta N. Nicolella  
Norma B. Nikutowski  
James O'Briant  
Kimberly A. Paggett  
Willis  
Leigh Pethe  
Michael Pringle  
Don E. Rainwater  
Roy C. Rehberg  
Karen Reinsch  
Catherine E. Reyes  
Crystal L. Sears  
Nancy E. Sipple-Pierson  
Ethel C. Smith  
Sherri Stiles  
Brian Stamey  
Heiko P. Sweeney  
Michelle L. Terashima  
Demetrica Todd  
Pertricee N. Traylor  
Claudia Voges  
Mark Volanksy  
John A. Warnshuis  
Deborah Watson  
Debra D. Wenzel  
Diana Wilkerson  
Robert W. Willoughby  
Wei Xiong

### 15 Years

Richard S. Cammarota  
Joseph V. Capebianco  
Mary M. Carrington  
Gary D. Christiansen  
Nora C. Clarke  
Gregory R. Denlea  
Susan G. Gainer  
Tamue L. Gibson  
Amy L. Hennings  
Myrna Karp  
Eric J. Kuns  
Lisa A. Langland  
Joanne N. MacEachran  
Michael G. Melkonian  
Larry Myers  
Edward P. Paluch  
Stephen L. Rogers  
Michael Rohrer  
Gregory J. Underwood  
Gary L. Tandy  
James M. Triplett  
Merrill C. Waterhouse  
Daria G. Woodside

### 20 Years

Deborah L. Conrad  
Joseph J. Ferrado  
Stephen K. Shepard

### 25 Years

Suchitra Abel  
Gayle K. Dudziak  
Abbas Khajeaian  
Robert L. Watson

# Call for Submissions

Hello, future *We Rise Digest* contributors! We want to encourage all of you to contribute to the Digest, a scholarly publication representing the wide variety of ideas and insights that reflect our mission in general studies and the humanities. Your published work in the Digest can be even be logged on to your faculty profile in eCampus as scholarship. So, review our sections below that are based on Boyer's Model and send us articles, reviews, creative work, and news!

## Best Practices

This section features Faculty Spotlights and round-up coverage of Brown Bags and/or other similar professional development activities.

N.B.: The spotlight articles are all written by the *Digest* staff; however, we welcome suggestions for faculty we can use as a spotlight. If you have someone in mind who you think would be a good candidate for a spotlight feature, please let us know at [Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu](mailto:Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu)

## Innovation

This section features articles that explore the larger impact of what we do in higher education. How do we take what we know or learn and use that knowledge to address issues that impact our profession and society at large?

## Transformation

This section features creative responses that transforms our thoughts into a more physical expression. Art, photography, poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, short-form drama. This section also includes reviews of books, film, museum exhibits, and other experiences that transform or provide a new way of seeing or thinking about a subject. Other forms of creative expression are also welcome.

## Resources & Recognitions

This section provides practical resources for managing our work as faculty including life/work balance issues and celebrates faculty via time line recognitions.

We are looking for quality content that fits these general categories. Topics we are particularly interested in for the *Digest* include, but are in no way limited to:

Timely topics • Opposing viewpoints • Higher education • Opinion pieces

Submit articles, creative works, art, and photos for potential publication. Also, if you have an article you think would be a good fit for the *Digest*, feel free to submit it for consideration. We would love more contributions from our amazing associate faculty!

## Now **Eye** See

By Cathy Smith



As we move into summer, many of us will be spending time outdoors. This means sunny weather and, in some places, windy or dry conditions. When we enjoy the summer season, we take precautions to protect our skin from the rays of the sun and the elements of the season, but what do we do to protect our eyes? Eye conditions have been around for thousands of years. Healing cures for eye conditions caused by the sun and dry weather can be traced back to the Ebers Papyrus, a collection of Egyptian herbal remedies. According to Anderson (as cited in Abelson and Lafond, 2014) “eye pastes with exotic elemental ingredients such as antimony, copper or manganese were referenced throughout the document as anti-infectives, sunscreens or cosmetics” (para. 1). Today, an eye condition caused by dry weather and the sun is called Pinguicula/Pterygium. Another type of

eye condition besides Pinguicula/Pterygium is Dry Eye Disease (DED). DED is also known as keratoconjunctivitis sicca or keratitis sicca. Nebbioso et al (2017) claim that “The most common symptoms of the disease are burning, foreign body sensation, photophobia, itching, stinging, irritation, redness, blepharospasm, difficulty in opening eyelids on awakening, and, in severe cases, pain and blurred vision” (p. 1). Although it is important to think about ultraviolet rays from the sun and dry weather in regards to eye care, it is equally important to consider other environmental factors that affect the eyes when we are indoors as well. In today’s technological world, keeping eyes healthy is important because unhealthy eyes can lead to additional physical, emotional, and psychological disorders.

Digital devices have become a major concern in

## **In today's technological world, keeping eyes healthy is important because unhealthy eyes can lead to additional physical, emotional, and psychological disorders.**

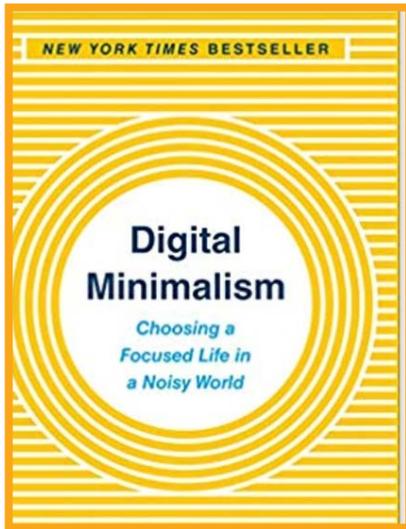
regard to vision problems and eye care. Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) is associated with the use of computers and visual display terminals (VDTs) and has symptoms of eyestrain, headaches, DED, diplopia, and asthenopia (Ranasinghe et al (2016), and Rosenfield (2011) as cited in Lurati, 2018). The American Optometric Association (2019) states, "The average American worker spends seven hours a day on the computer either in the office or working from home" (para. 2). This does not account for the time that is possibly spent on phones, tablets, or other electronic devices. This overuse of digital devices is harmful. Other factors that may heighten the negative effects of using digital devices are poor lighting, computer glare, viewing distance, posture, and uncorrected vision problems. The American Optometric Association (2019) states, "Uncorrected vision problems like farsightedness and astigmatism, inadequate eye focusing or eye coordination abilities, and aging changes of the eyes, such as presbyopia, can all contribute to the development of visual symptoms" (para. 6). When people realize they have vision problems, it is important to evaluate their daily routine and the symptoms they may be experiencing.

Things to consider when thinking about indoor eye care are the environmental influences that may be affecting the eyes as well as one's psychological and physiological health. It is important to think about health conditions like diabetes, allergies,

depression, insomnia, addiction, and stress just to name a few. Other things to consider are pregnancy, menopause, and aging. When looking at an indoor daily routine, people should take note as to how much time they spend engaged in certain activities and the environment where the activities are taking place.

Those who work indoors on a computer for long periods could experience DED or CVS as well as things like insomnia, stress, addiction, or depression. Working and playing in a digital world can create many more issues of which people must be cognizant. Recognizing eye problems is just the beginning. Han, Yang, Hyan, and Wee (2017) state that, "DED is a multifactorial disease and is often associated with various psychological or neurological conditions" (p. 7). Although studies did not show a causal relationship, they did show the "close alignment between DED and various psychiatric or neurological disorders suggests the presence of shared pathophysiological mechanisms or reciprocal influence" (p. 7). These studies alone should encourage people to explore how good eye health can be the window to avoid other disorders and conditions.

One of the first recommendations that an optometrist or ophthalmologist may recommend for healthy eye care is the use of artificial tears. There are three types of over-the-counter artificial tears. There are aqueous-based that are more watery, lipid-based that are more oily, and gel drops that have



**Cal Newport** has published a number of works in addition to *Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World*. In his own words, here is a synopsis of other recent works:

#### **The Deep Work Hypothesis**

The ability to concentrate without distraction on a demanding task (what I call “deep work”) is becoming more rare at the same time that it’s becoming more valuable in the knowledge sector. As a result, those individuals and organizations who put in the hard work to cultivate this skill will thrive.

#### **Attention Capital Theory**

In modern knowledge work, the primary capital resource is human brains; or, more specifically, these brains’ ability to create new value through sustained attention. At the moment, most individuals and organizations are terrible at optimizing this resource, prioritizing instead the convenience and flexibility of persistent, unstructured messaging (e.g., email and IM). I predict that as this sector evolves, we’ll get better at optimizing attention capital, and accordingly leave behind our current culture of communication overload.

He is currently writing a book with the working title: “*A World Without Email*.”

more viscosity than the other two (Morrison, 2018). The type of artificial tears recommended depends on the severity of the eye condition. The aqueous-based are usually recommended for the less severe conditions, whereas the lipid-based and gel drops are used for moderate to severe eye issues. Morrison (2018) also discussed the use of nighttime ointments for people who may sleep with their eyes slightly opened when they sleep.

Although a recommended type of eye drop is beneficial in lubricating the eyes, this is only a start with DED and CVS. When it comes to indoor eye care, we must also consider how we can regulate and change our digital habits so that we have healthier eyes and a healthier lifestyle. As a person who has Pinguicula/Pterygium and DED, my current ophthalmologist has recommended that I use lipid-based artificial tears throughout the day. She also recommended that I drink plenty of water, limit my coffee intake, apply warm compresses to my eyes, and do lid massages on a regular basis. She also recommended that I evaluate my use of digital devices throughout the day.

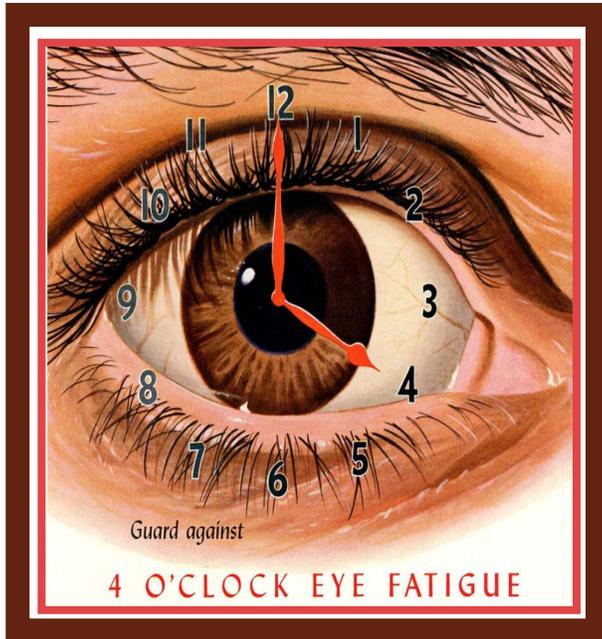
In his book, *Digital Minimalism*, Cal Newport (2019) argues that digital minimalists believe that “the key to thriving in our high-tech world ... is to spend much less time using technology” (p. xiv). When it relates to the eyes, and a person’s overall health, it is important to evaluate how much, and when technology is used daily. Newport (2019) also argues that the Silicon Valley is not so much programming apps for digital technology, but they are creating apps that program people. The ABC News Team (2019) in the ABC special, *Screen Time: Diane Sawyer Reporting*, supports Newport’s argument that screen time is addictive. Moschos (2014) shares that...vision disorders are a major public health problem, because they cause disability, suffering, and loss of productivity. It has been acknowledged for long that vision loss may generate various degrees of psychic suffering, undoubtedly greater than the distress resulting from other forms of sensory impairment. (p. 1)

If screen time and digital technology are as addictive as reported by Newport and the ABC News Team, and if vision disorders are a major public health issue as Moschos states, then one must wonder if and how we can minimize technology use so that we can maintain healthy eye care as well as healthy physical, emotional, and psychological health.

#### **The Challenge**

Over the next few months, **SEE** how you are using your eyes. How are you using technology on a daily basis? How do you **SEE** technology affecting your health? What are some changes you can make so that you can start to **SEE** clearly? Keep us posted! Share your personal reflections for the Fall issue of *We Rise*. Submit your reflections to [Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu](mailto:Digest-BrownBags@phoenix.edu) by Monday, September 10, 2019..

## Eye Strain?



### Reference Note:

All information including quotes for this story were obtained from the Optical Heritage Museum website at <http://www.opticalheritagemuseum.com>

The information regarding the Sotheby auction of the Rockwell illustration was verified by Southerby's at <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.64.html/2014/american-art-n09148>

## There's a museum for that!

The Optical Heritage Museum, located in Southbridge, MA, officially opened in 1983 to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of American Optical, an optical empire that dates back to the early 19th century and has a long history developing and selling eyewear to the military as well as civilians. The company and museum proudly note that the "Original Pilot Sunglass was honored to be the first ever sunglass to land on the moon worn by Commander Neil Armstrong and the crew of Apollo 11 in 1969. It now resides on permanent display in the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C." Traveling further back in time, the company recognized a new strain on the eyes as "the labor force shifted from agriculture to indoor employment, American Optical developed vision technologies to address "four o'clock eye fatigue." The company's Tillyer lenses used advanced mathematics to optimize vision in all parts of the lens in order to accommodate to office-based eyestrain. To promote its new product, they hired Norman Rockwell and commissioned six works, one of which sold at Sotheby's for \$1.3 million in 2014.

Anna Copeland Wheatley

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Blooming Irises in Horikiri, Utagawa Hiroshige, 1857

