Community College Moment

The Diversity Issue

Front Cover
"Hope"
by Monique Janssen-Belitz

Community College Moment
Spring 2005

The *Community College Moment* is a faculty-led journal committed to offering a forum for high quality progressive articles of interest to community college instructors, administrators, and staff that reflect a new vision of scholarship at the intersection of academic, activist, and community interests.

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Community College Moment

Volume Five
Spring 2005

Works in Progress

Diverse Reflections

Welcome to the Diversity Issue

It's made up of curiosity and wonder, creating and releasing pressure. It's a comprehensive responsibility, somewhere a law, somewhere a choice. It's the second of six Core Values in Lane's Strategic Plan, not an independent activity. It's a small taste of what could happen, our first poem together, nuestra primer poema juntas, a flower petal that can only be examined for eight minutes before it disintegrates.

It's all framing and plaster, walls ripped apart exposing stuff you didn't know was there. It's looking contradictions in the eye, a ride on the bus, painting classes, emotional, physical and cognitive challenges. It's learning to tie your shoes, an improbably gentle hand laid upon your forehead. It's professional growth and personal transformation, an awareness of uncomfortable reactions. It's a lot of work.

It's more than sixteen types of accented English spoken by white Americans alone. It's the terms and rhythms of incremental change. It's seldom a matter of money, always a matter of will. It's jazz, rain, and students from China down the hall. Mennonites, horse hair, the distant call of a small bird. It seeks to transform monolithic centers of power into democratic constellations. It's the Confederacy Museum, Clowns of Enchantment, Scary Larry and the Ananda MargaYoga Society.

It's handmade Valentines, strawberries and tomatoes, a lot of messes, a lot of homes, the bubble man with the diamond ring. It's wading and fishing in Twelve Pole Creek, a problem which has fascinated mathematicians for over 300 years.

Diversity is what happens when you put all this together. Questions invited but not required.

—Tracy Henninger & Steve McQuiddy

Diversity (noun)

1. The fact or quality of being diverse; difference.

2. A point or respect in which things differ.

3. Variety or multiformity: "Charles Darwin saw in the diversity of species the principles of evolution that operated to generate the species: variation, competition and selection" (*Scientific American*).

—*The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language Fourth Edition*

Alise Lamoreaux began her career at Lane Community College in 1976 as an instructional aid making $3.10 per hour. She subsequently moved into her current faculty position when the "night" teacher quit to move to Texas and get married, effective immediately. She literally became faculty overnight. She became educationally prepared for her teaching position through degrees pursued at Lane and the University of Oregon. She enjoys teaching at Lane in the ABSE (Adult Basic and Secondary Education) program because of the enthusiasm of the students who come to the program.

New Beginnings

Alise Lamoreaux

The classroom door swings open
What will be inside?
The act of passing through
Creates pressure
There have been few rules
Up until now
Four legs good, two legs bad

Long neck, tight wrinkles, eyes moving
Curiosity and wonder
Defenses active
To sense the energy

The student calls out
Looking for a friend to answer
A cohort for security
What will the school bring?

Wide-eyed the student meets the teacher
A gentle, firm individual
Skilled in the art of the moment
Communicating in a language
Yet to be learned
Creating and releasing pressure
Modeling behavior
Matching energy
Guiding direction
Solving problems
Asking and giving respect,
For all involved

There will be no failures at this school
Unplanned learning
Perhaps?
New beginnings,
Definitely.

The Shaping of the American Community College Mission

Jerry A. Somerville

George B. Vaughn (2000) summarized the mission of the community college as a series of commitments which included providing open access to all segments of society with equal and fair treatment to all students, offering a comprehensive education, serving the local community, teaching, and providing opportunities for lifelong learning. Bailey and Morest (2003) further explain that the missions of today's community colleges go well beyond the core functions of transfer and vocational-technical degrees.

Activities now include developmental education, adult basic education, English as a second language, education and training for welfare recipients and others facing barriers to employment, customized training for specific companies, preparation of students per industry certification exams, noncredit instruction in the bewildering plethora of areas including purely avocational interests, small business development and even economic forecasting. (p. 1)

How did we get to this point of having such a comprehensive responsibility, with so many missions and functions? The purpose of this paper is to look back over the past 180 years or so, and trace the path the community college took to arrive where it is now. To do this, significant events, prominent people and changing demographics will be identified as contributing factors in the development of the current mission of the American community college.

The Incubation Years: Prior to 1900

As far back as the early 1800s there was the notion that education should be more functional. In 1826, Francis Wayland, president of Brown University, proposed the idea of a certificate plan for students who did not need a bachelors degree and that would be focused more on meeting the needs of merchants, farmers and manufactures (Herhold, 2000).

Beginning in the 1850s and for the remainder of the nineteenth century, there were proposals and discussions around the concept of the universities shedding their collegiate instruction (the Freshman and Sophomore years) and concentrating on the instruction of the "higher level." In 1851, Henry P. Tappan, president of the University of Michigan, suggested that the lower level instruction of the university be taken on by the high school. This idea was reinforced in 1859 by William Mitchell, a University of Georgia trustee (Cohen and Brawer, 2003) and later in 1869, by William Watts Folwell , president of the University of Minnesota (Tunnell, 1987).

In the 1880s Henry S. Frieze of the University of Michigan favored a university system which recognized the Freshman and Sophomore years as secondary in character to the Junior and Senior levels, and thus he formally divided the lower and upper division work at the university. James B. Angell, who succeeded Frieze, pushed for high schools to offer post-graduate instruction, and, as a result, the Bay City and Saginaw high schools in the Ann Arbor area offered collegiate work, using the same texts as were used in the Freshman courses at the University of Michigan (Tunnell, 1987).

During the 1890s and on into the first few years of the twentieth century, William Rainey Harper, president of the University of Chicago, provided leadership that eventually resulted in establishing Joliet College in 1901. In 1891 he proposed an affiliation plan where under university supervision the secondary schools would add post high school courses equal to the lower level courses at the university. In 1892, Harper separated the University of Chicago academic college from the university college, and in 1896 he renamed the academic college to the junior college. Then, in 1901, to distinguish between the work of the junior college and the university (senior) college, Harper initiated the awarding of Associate of Arts degree for students completing the junior college curriculum (Tunnell, 1987).

While Harper was restructuring the University of Chicago, out West Alexis F. Lange, a University of California professor and member of the State Board of Education, also a graduate of the University of Michigan, was reorganizing the University of California. In 1892, he "established a junior certificate for admissions to the upper division" (Tunnell, 1987, p. 3).

The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 provided the catalyst to establish publicly supported universities and colleges in every state. Until this time many universities were private and linked to religion. The 1862 Act, often referred to as the Land Grant Act, emphasized instruction for agriculture, mechanical arts and teacher preparation. It "expanded access to public higher education, teaching both courses and students previously excluded from higher education" (Cohen and Brawer, 2003, p. 2). The second Morrill Act of 1890, "withheld funds from any state that refused admission to the land grant colleges based on race unless the states provided separate institutions for minorities" (American Association of Community Colleges, 2003b).

The Developmental Years: 1900 to 1970

J. Stanley Brown, superintendent of schools at Joliet, Illinois, associated with William Rainey Harper at various Baptist church conventions and education conferences. In 1901 through a cooperative effort of these two men, "the Joliet system added grades thirteen and fourteen, and the graduates from these grades were admitted to the University of Chicago with advanced standing" (Tunnell, 1987, p. 4). There were other "junior colleges" established prior

to this; one in Goshen, Indiana; and another, Lasell Junior College, in Massachusetts, but "Joliet is the oldest extant junior college" (p. 4).

About this time two Californians began to figure prominently in the junior college concept. David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University, believed that American education ought to help man adjust to his environment and that "Preparation for an occupation is essential for individual effectiveness" (as cited in Tunnell, 1987, pp. 4-5). In that same year Jordan proposed dropping the thirteenth and fourteenth grades at Stanford. Alexis F. Lange, a professor at the University of California, was not only interested in combating special privileges, but also was eager to protect and extend the traditional American principle of "Equality of Opportunity." To Lange, the curriculum needed to be expanded "to accommodate the diversity in the interests, abilities, and needs of the students" (Tunnell, 1987, pp. 4-5) within the local area. This included general education as well as vocational training.

In 1907, the California state legislature passed the Caminetti Act, permitting the board of trustees of any city district, union, joint union or county high school to prescribe post-graduate courses of study for its graduates. Later in 1917, the legislature approved the Ballard Act, which provided for state and county support for independent junior college districts (American Association of Community Colleges, 2003b; Tunnell, 1987). In California the junior college was now a separate institution, and in 1910 Fresno Junior College, the first such school in California opened it doors with twenty students and three instructors (Fresno City College, 2002), and plans for instruction in agriculture and pedagogy. In 1917, Arkansas, Kansas and Michigan passed legislation permitting the local organization of junior colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Pederson, 2001).

In addition to state legislation, the federal government passed the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. This was the first vocational education act for secondary education and required each state to establish a state board for vocational education. This act promoted a separate curriculum from academic courses, for agriculture, homemaking, and trade and industrial education (Roberts, 2001). Socioeconomic changes also fostered the expansion of the junior college curriculum. During the early years of the twentieth century American technology was changing rapidly. "Jobs requiring little or no preparation in the past were now being replaced by positions requiring extensive preparation" (Tunnell, 1987, p. 5).

In 1920, P. P. Claxton, U.S. Commissioner of Education, called a meeting, to discuss the idea of a national junior college organization. In 1921, the American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC) adopted its name and constitution, and in 1922, the AAJC defined a junior college as "an institution offering two years of instruction of a strictly collegiate grade" (as cited in Cohen and Brawer, 2003, p. 3). But in 1925, AAJC modified the definition:

> The junior college may and is likely to, develop a different type of curriculum suited to the larger and ever changing civic, social, religious, and vocational needs

> of the entire community in which the college is located. It is understood that in this case, also, the work offered shall be on a level appropriate for high-school graduates. (as cited in Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 4)

During the 1920s and 1930s, most California junior colleges had organized as appendages of the local secondary schools, some as junior-college departments of state colleges, and a few were organized as separate junior college districts. As in California, Arizona's colleges were organized as additions to local school districts. In Mississippi, they were an outgrowth of county agricultural high schools. In other states such as Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and South Carolina, colleges were organized by public universities wanting to expand their feeder institutions. And a few colleges were established as a result of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in 1934, which made federal funds available to states to establish Freshman or "community" colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

The western states, particularly California, seemed more receptive to the public-supported community college concept. Some reasons may have been that there was less of a religious connection to education in the West than there was in other states, and that "many of the ideas of democracy first took form in the Western states, where women's suffrage and other major reforms in the electoral process were first seen" (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 18).

By 1910 there were twenty-five junior colleges and twelve years later, in 1922, they had increased to 207 institutions. By 1930 "there were 440 junior colleges, found in all but five states. Total enrollment was around 70,000, an average of about 160 students per institution. California had one-fifth of the public institutions and one-third of the students" (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 14).

Several factors may have contributed to the rapid growth of junior colleges in the first few decades of this century. These include an increase of students attending and graduating from high school, a demand for a skilled workforce, support by business of the work force being educated at public expense, and a source of community prestige (Cohen and Brawer, 2003).

Other contributing factors during the 1930s and 1940s included widespread unemployment during the Depression years that brought a call for training beyond high school, cooperative relationships developing between education and industry, a desire by many to move from one social class to another, and increased mobility of the population (Tunnell, 1987).

In 1944, as World War II drew to a close, Congress passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act. Known as the GI Bill, it provided financial assistance for veterans of World War II who wished to pursue higher education. It reduced economic and social barriers to allow millions of Americans to attend college, including women and minority groups (American Association of Community Colleges, 2003b).

In 1947 came the publication of *Higher Education for American Democracy* by the President's Commission on Higher Education. Popularly know as The Truman Commission Report, it

called for the development of a network of public- supported community-based colleges "that would charge little or no tuition, serve as cultural centers, be comprehensive in their program offerings with emphasis on civic responsibilities, and would serve the area in which they were located" (American Association of Community Colleges, 2003b, p. 2). In addition to the transfer and occupational education functions, this report added five additional functions for the junior (community) colleges: general education, adult and continuing education, developmental and remedial education, student personnel services, and community services (Tunnell, 1987).

The number of colleges grew at a steady and rapid rate; by 1939 there were 575 colleges, and by 1961 there were 678. In the twelve years between 1961 and 1973 the number of colleges nearly doubled to 1141, to accommodate the baby boomers who began reaching college age in the mid 1960s (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

During this time colleges began adopting the name "community college" in place of junior college because it better described their broader mission, and in 1972 the American Association of Junior Colleges changed its name to the "American Association of Community and Junior Colleges to reflect the broadening terminology used by institutions" (Vaughan, 2000, p. 35). In 1992 the association dropped the term "junior" from the title and became the American Association of Community Colleges (American Association of Community Colleges, 2003a).

There was a breakdown of basic academic education in secondary schools that became apparent in the 1960s, and as the total number of students increased at the community colleges from the mid 1960s and through the 1970s, so did the number of students needing remedial work. "This brought developmental education to the fore" (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 23).

The concepts of universal access to higher education were demonstrated during the 1960s in the form of public policy and federal financial aid legislation. Under the leadership of Clark Kerr, the first comprehensive state master plan for higher education in the nation was created. The plan identified the California junior colleges as full partners along with the University of California and California State University. It also established the principle of universal access to public higher education, requiring junior colleges in California to remain tuition-free (Center for Community College Policy, 2003). The enactment of the Higher Education Act of 1965 made federal financial aid available to needy students. This came in the form of grants, loans, and work-study.

The Mature Years: 1970 to the Present

Cohen and Brawer (2003) state that more than any single factor access to higher education depends on proximity. In a 1972 study, Cohen (Cohen & Brawer, 2003) determined that when 90 to 95 percent of a state's population lived within approximately twenty-five miles of a college or university, that state had a mature system. Cohen concluded that by "the early 1970s

seven states had mature systems: California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Michigan, and Washington"(p.17).

Overall enrollments in public two-year colleges doubled during the 1970s as a result of baby boomers reaching college age. The number of eighteen-year-olds in the American population peaked in 1979, declined steadily throughout the 1980s, and was 23 percent lower in 1992, when it began increasing again. During the 1980s community colleges saw a 15 percent increase in numbers even with a decline in the total number of eighteen-year-olds. This increase is attributed to colleges being challenged to attract older students. This was reflected by an increase in the number of students attending part-time, those combining work and study, and in the number of women attending college (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

During the 1980s and 1990s higher education was criticized for not making education more relevant to the work place and that it needed to resolve the low college success rates of African-Americans, Hispanics and those with disabilities. (Lerman & Schmidt, 1999, p. 5). The Wingspread Group on Higher Education is quoted as saying a "dangerous mismatch exists between what a society needs of higher education and what it is receiving" (as cited in Copa & Ammentorp, 1998, p. 26). The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report of 1992 challenged American schools "to reinvent themselves to make school curricula and teaching methods more relevant to the modern workplace" (Thomson Learning, 2000, p. 1).

From the 1960s to the present, various federal legislations were enacted to either provide access to higher education or to provide workforce development for a wide range of groups. These included Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Acts, Workforce Investment Act, Higher Education Acts, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Vocational Rehabilitation Act and Adult Education and the Family Literacy Act. The vehicle for the delivery of the services identified in these pieces of legislation was most often the community college.

Even with the funds provided through various legislation, community colleges still feel the financial squeeze. "Budgetary pressures at the federal, state, and local levels often made it difficult for community colleges to keep up with rapidly changing and expensive technology" (Kasper, 2003, p. 8) and "public appropriations for higher education are on an accelerating decline" (Copa & Ammentorp, 1998, Chp. 10).

Bailey and Morest (2003) postulate that, because of the limited resources available to community colleges, administrators are constantly searching for new sources of revenue. Activities outside the core functions generate new enrollments and revenue over which the college has considerable discretion, and these activities address the interests of influential constituencies. Discontinuing programs risks alienating constituencies and reducing the overall resources available to the institution. Thus, community colleges continue to take on new activities and are reluctant to give up their historical functions.

Summary and Conclusions

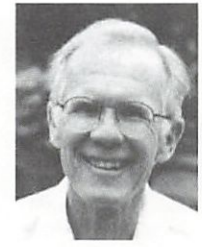
The purpose of this article was to answer the question: How did the American community college get to the point of having such a comprehensive responsibility, with so many missions and functions? To answer this question, significant events, prominent people and changing demographics were identified as contributing factors in the development of the current mission of the American community college.

In earlier centuries the family, the workplace, and various social institutions accultured and trained the young. But the publicly supported schools became an article of American faith, first in the nineteenth century, and by the twentieth, schools were expected to solve society's ills (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Many educational leaders and policy makers viewed the community college as being in the best position to deliver programs and services that would address these ills.

It seems that community colleges have become a collector of missions over the years and have been either unable or unwilling to relinquish some of their functions. Our first mission was conceived by influential university leaders of the nineteenth century, who suggested that the university shed its collegiate instruction (Freshman and Sophomore years). From that point we have became a repository for missions that address society's needs. Vocational-technical education became a core function as a result of first the Morrill Acts, then the Smith–Hughes Act, and finally societal demands for a skilled workforce, fueled by the industrial revolution. As early as the 1920s the American Association of Junior Colleges defined the role of the community college as broader than just these two core functions, and by 1947, with the Truman Commission Report, added the functions of general education, adult and continuing education, developmental and remedial education, student personnel services, and community services to the community college mission. Beginning with the GI Bill of 1944, later the Higher Education Act of 1965, and finally the California Master Plan for Higher Education, the financial barriers to higher education were reduced. Various legislation that followed from the 1970s until the present has increased access to higher education for a variety of needy populations. The community college has most often been the vehicle for the delivery of the services identified in these pieces of legislation.

In recent years community colleges have experienced a gradual decrease in financial resources and an increase in criticism as to the relevance of the education they provide. Are community colleges trying to do too much with too little? Is it time for American community colleges to re-think their core functions and redesign their mission?

Notes on Page 150



Jerry Somerville
is the Articulation Officer and the Student Learning Outcomes Specialist at Napa Valley College in Napa, California. He has been at Napa Valley College for 34 years, two as a student and 32 as an employee. In his tenure with the college he has served as a teacher, intercollegiate tennis coach, Satellite Campus Administrator, Financial Aid Director, counselor and Counseling Division Chair. He holds two masters degrees; one in Psychology from California State University, Chico and one in Physical Education from San Francisco State University. He is currently a doctoral student in the Community College Leadership Program at Oregon State University.

Claudia Chaves and Sandy Jensen toast friendship between people and nations.

***Claudia Chaves** is originally from Buenos Aires, Argentina. She lived for fourteen years in Israel before she and Sandy met at Glen Ivy, an intentional community, in the 1980s. She holds an M.S. in Marriage and Family Counseling, practices psychotherapy and is a freelance translator.*

First Poem

Claudia Chaves and Sandy Jensen

This is my first poem in your language
because it is not enough to love you from afar.
What is it that draws one self
out of the mountainous dark of the north
to reach out to the red arrow of the south?
What moves my heart to extend and embrace
the complex, vehement sweetness of South America?
I don't know.
But I know with a slow and singular flame I love its jungles,
its Pampas, Andes, those legendary cities,
and people of gold.
Pulsing with the exactitude
of nature's casual perfections,
steeped in music and wine,
ripped by clearcuts of land and soul,
washed in blood of trees and people,
blood both green and red, yet
do you set the feather to my heart.

As I walk the rough streets of Los Angeles,
gazes of the southerly lands meet mine as if
we had always known each other.
I rush to speak to you,
but we have no common tongue.
"But I am your sister!" is my soulcry;
grieved, I see your eyes turned away from mine,
having no faith in the primary fire
of first recognition.
I believe in that fire
like I believe in the sounds of dreams
or a sudden bell.

I will learn your language;
will you learn mine?
Border guards roam the pockmarked face
of the disputed land,
but let them not trespass
in the pristine cartographies of the heart.
A united heart without boundaries
calls us beyond ourselves—let this be
our first poem together.

Primer Poema

Sandy Jensen y Claudia Chaves

Este es mi primer poema en tu lengua,
porque no es suficiente amarte desde lejos.
¿Qué es lo que nos impele, desde la
penumbra montañosa
del norte, a extender la mano
hacia la flecha roja del sur?
¿Qué insta a mi corazón a estirarse y abrazar
la compleja y vehemente dulzura
de América del Sur?
No lo sé.
Pero sé que con una llama lenta y singular
amo sus junglas,
sus pampas, sus Andes,
aquellas cuidades legendarias
y pueblos de un oro inderretible.
Pulsando con la relajada exactitud
de perfecciones naturales,
empapada de música y de vino,
bañada por sangre verde y roja: de árboles y gentes,
hendida por el talado de sus bosques
y violaciones a su espíritu auténtico...
con todo,
me enciendes el alma.

Caminando por las calles inclementes de Los Angeles
miradas de tierras sureñas se cruzan con la mía,
como si nos conociéramos
desde siempre.
Apresuro el paso para hablarte
pero no hablamos e mismo idioma.
"¡Soy tu hermana!" grita mi alma;
y me entristezco
al ver que tu mirada me rehuye ,
por no tener fé en la esencia candente
del primer reconocimiento.

Yo creo en ese fuego como creo
en el sonido de los sueños o de una campana
repentina.
Aprenderé tu idioma;
¿aprenderás tú el mío ?
Guardias fronterizos deambulan por la faz
llagada de tierras en disputa...
¡que no invadan
las prístinas cartografías del corazón!
Una voz unida nos llama más allá de
nosotros:
que sea éste nuestro primer poema
juntas.

Claudia Chaves and Sandy Jensen clown around in an Ashland, Oregon second-hand store, Halloween, 2004.

Sandy Jensen *comes from a five-generational Northwest family. She studied Spanish and traveled extensively south of the border before meeting and becoming fast friends with Claudia Chaves at Glen Ivy. She is a freelance writer and college teacher in Eugene, Oregon.*

Zark the Shark

Rich Ross

There once was a fish whose demeanor was dark,
A bad awful ickthy named Zark the Shark.
Zark was a "great white" and white you'd expect,
But his teeth were green from teeth-brushing neglect.
And he was mean, as mean as the muck
That covered his teeth in yuckulent yuck.
Why was he so awful and what did it mean
To the fishes of Rawder who once were serene?
They say a "bad apple" turns up now and then,
But Zark's "apples" equaled nine hundred and ten.
The Region of Rawder was Zark's ocean home
Where he would lurk, maraud and roam.
He had no charm. He was not sweet.
To put it blunt, he was a cheat,
Prowling and scowling and stealing to eat.
The Ruthless Rulers of Rawder soon found
That Zark was more ruthless than any around.
So Zark was appointed their Chief Exec
After they did a secret kid check
To see if he stole candy from kids
[You bet he did, and soda from squids].

As the Exec, he was nasty and mean,
But this was the meanest that Rawder had seen:
Under the rulers, hygiene had flourished,
Under the Shark, check-ups discouraged.
Brushing was banned, floss was uncool.
If found with toothpaste, you went to school
Where you would learn not to be clean,
Unlearn all that dental hygiene.
So teeth got green, and greener, and greenest.
Never had Rawder seen such so-much-meanness.
And that's how it was with dentists off-limit,
I guess they learned how to just bear and grin-it.

Meanwhile...

Zark's authority became so commanding,
He argued his power needed expanding.
They mulled it about to dispel any doubt,
Then the Rulers declared him Execu-Full-Out.
And what he did next was dispose of them all,
It just goes to show, Rulers can fall.
And that's how it was living under the Shark,
The fish had no say, Zark's power was stark.
They begged to be free, then they fought and they lost,
And the Shark was boss and their teeth still weren't flossed.
And the fish had to sing this song every day:

"We no longer resist, we no longer stray.
We don't brush our teeth, we're no longer that way.
Cause it's dangerous being a fish with the dream
Of brushing his teeth after eating ice cream."

One day a stranger appeared on the scene
With no history, no past, no sign where he'd been.
Larabee the Luminarian luminesced like a dream
And floated on down from the Gulf Stream.
His body was frapped like clear saran wrap,
Saran wrap and jelly, a quivery chap,
With no real form, but boy what a zap.
And that was his secret, this zap and his trap.
He lit up like neon in fluorescent flashes
And here and there were sparkles and splashes.
Up from behind the frowning fish came
Singing their frightened frowning refrain.

"You have just entered Zark's dark domain
And these are the reasons you can't remain.
We can't clean our teeth, he's mean," the fish screeched.
"Do not be seen. Leave now," they beseeched.

"You look quite preened, clean and content.
No, that's not what we mean, that's not what we meant.
You're happy and snappy and even carefree,
Something not usually seen in this sea.
You'd better watch out," they sang out of key.

"A smile's a frown just turned upside down,
And down here there's lots of frowns to be found.
We do it to hide our teeth yellow green.
We do it so they cannot be seen.
Flee or you'll see that Zark has the means,
He has the power to devour your dreams."

Well, this was new
To Larabee who
Had always been free
To wander the sea.
So Larabee thought, "I've not had lunch.
This Rawder's a mess and I've a bad hunch
The Shark's hungry too and I look like brunch."

Before Larabee could do much more than think,
Something halitoshious from the deep ocean ink
Zoomed into view with a bad awful stink.
Bearing down on his body, a body so frail,
Was a whitewater trail and Zark's giant tail.

Larabee thought, I don't want to be flailed.
And he thought this quite Technicolor detailed.
But he kept his cool, he did not do any screaming,
As terrible teeth in need of steam cleaning
Flashed in his face, up close, and careening.
Zark's teeth were rusted. And yellow. And green.
His breathe was so bad, it could curdle cream.
Odd were his thoughts, "the Shark, it does seem,
Does not use floss nor brush in between.
Perhaps it's the green that makes him so mean."

Said Larabee, whose teeth were glossy like snow,
"You're bossy, you know, and what a frosty hello.
You can't go raining on everyone's parade,
So I'll give you a Larabee scarabee tirade."

"Brushing's like—Hey!, it's done thrice a day.
If not, you know what, the germs get their way.
And flossing's like music, like a bow on a cello,

It helps to get rid of the green and the yellow.
If not, you know what, decay has its day
And then it's the dentures, they're here to stay.
Known as false teeth, they'll never have plaque.
They'll always be white with a pearly shellac.
And at night, while you sleep, they'll smile right back,"
Larabee scolded the Shark who was shocked,
Shocked to have his Zark attack blocked.

"Now listen, your teeth are a terrible fright.
Some teeth are missing and it looks like it might
Be spoiling your smile and affecting your bite.
So it must be the pain you're feeling so terribly
From gums bruised and strained that it makes you unbearably
Terribly awful," continued Larabee.
"But your heart must be hard
Cause you attack me off-guard.
So I'll zap you with voltage, you'll do no more harming,
My ten zillion zoltage can be quite alarming.
You'll quiver like jelly, like spam in a can.
In my very own belly you'll be sacked in saran
And put out like trash for some garbage man."

Recovered from shock and unafraid of a zap,
And unimpressed with Larabee's scarabee rap,
Zark zoomed in for jellyfish juicy.
"This will be easy," he said, "just like sushi."
But Larabee lit up like the Fourth of Julide.
And yes, he did do just what he described.
He wrapped Zark up like some fish in a stew
And delivered a jolt that shook the Shark through.

Zark's smile turned from sharkish to sheepish
And he came to conclude in a logic of leapish
That perhaps his rude act had been crudeish and creepish.
Larabee loved light and hated the dark.
So to help Zark's heart soften and spark,
He tossed the Shark fish-flavored floss
And tuna toothpaste in fishtail sauce.
Larabee said to the shark who was frantic,

"Your breathe is so bad, it could raise the Gigantic,
A boat once afloat on the icy Atlantic.
But unlike that old boat, all is not lost,
Your teeth can be cleaned with the tools you've been tossed."

It was time to move on, his job was finito.
He preferred parts unknown, preferred incognito.
[Which means to imply that Larabee was shy,
And would vanish like that, without a goodbye.]

Larabee's feat defied belief,
Too good to be true, but what a relief.
So a party was thrown, a Rawder fish fest,
With Larabee the honored Rawder fest guest.
But Larabee the Luminarian had disappeared like a ghost.
"Who was that mysterian," asked the victory host,
"Who's not stuck around for the victory toast?"

To the fishes of Rawder it never was known
Just who could be Larabee and where he called home.
But the good that he's sown
Allowed fish small and full-grown
To be cavity-free with teeth shiny, like snow.
And healthy and happy, their smiles seemed to glow.
A smile's a rainbow just turned upside down
And down here there's now lots to go 'round.

As for Zark...
He rose like a Fee-Nix from his trash can defeat
And changed his name to Uncle Ashton McNeat.
He started in brushing the green and the yellow,
But it was too late, his gums were like jello.
And without healthy gums to hold his teeth in,
His teeth all fell out and so did his grin.
But it's a wonder what's done with dentures and paste,
Cause that's how his smile's glued back in his face.
So Zark's gums had softened, but so did his heart,
And that's what gave Zark his spanking-new start.
He no longer lurked nor did any harming.
In fact, he'd become cheerfully charming.

As for his teeth...
They set up a place for young fish to see 'em,
In the Zark the Shark Bad Teeth Museum.
It was horrible, it was scary!
They were moldy, they were hairy.
And at the end of the line Zark served boysenberry
To the fish who had come to see this display,
And that is how Zark now earned his pay.
Now his dentures have found a pretty good place
In the shape of a smile that's placed in his face.
He'd take them out and spin them about
To the delight of small frye who'd gather and shout,
"Uncle Ashton, please tell us about Zark the Shark.
Was he really so mean, was he really so dark?"

Zark would think back with a soft, gentle smile,
He really had changed, both his heart.....and lifestyle.

Rich Ross

Lighty-Lite said to Tree-Tree as they set on to the distant void, "Life is a moment in time in which there is no time. Don't forget to set your clock ahead to Star Light time."

"I hear of a child adrift in the Vapors of Black Planetary Pitch. We've got to save this child of fortune. Recognize his name. It is Rich!"

And that is how I was retrieved from the edge of the Moment. And this is a partial account of what I saw.

Insolitus Pigmentum: A Tale

Rosanna West Walker

In memory of Georgie May West and her son, Earl West, d. October 6, 1955 at Medicine Bow Peak in an air crash along with over seventy other people.

"So I said to myself—I'll paint what I see—what the flower is to me but I'll paint it big and they will be surprised into taking time to look at it." —Georgia O'Keefe

Two airplanes circled above the summit searching for pieces of wreckage in the gray granite. It was difficult to tell the torn chunks of the DC 4 from shadows in the rock. The weather, typical of the Wyoming mountains in early fall, was mild and sunny in the afternoon with a few snowflakes blowing here and there by evening.

On the third day of the search, one of the pilots saw a huge figure eight carved in the ground. The valley, surrounded by cliffs, seemed to have human-made terraces, and from the air it was possible to see lines and shadows similar to ancient crop markings. Something glittered and glinted with the rhythm of the sun playing through the scattered clouds, and they decided to try and find a place to land.

"Only a chopper could land there," the co-pilot pointed out. In order to document the strange scene and to make their case for a helicopter, they took some photographs from the air. News of the discovery exploded. Out of the one hundred and fifty residents of nearby Centennial, all who could talk were jamming the party lines. At first they had been too busy feeding the rescue teams returned from searching for signs of life from the crash to pay attention to newly-landed pilots. Everyone from Laramie to Centennial had heard the rumor of the lost valley of Millefleur; it was a legend they grew up with. No one could remember why it was called Millefleur, and until now, no one believed there really could be such a place.

"But they have pictures," Bonnie Bundy said to Cindy Lawrence.

"It'll be a cold day in hell before you'll get me to climb a twelve-thousand foot mountain two weeks before winter sets in. Besides, it's probably just more Indian ruins," Cindy retorted.

When the last of the sixty-six body bags had been carried down and the somber faces of the workers began to fade from memory, the curious organized an expedition. The curious among them, that is. About thirty were going, including the two pilots who had prepared maps. Bonnie Bundy, whose yard bordered the Lawrences' tried to talk her friend into going.

"I'm not going to hike all day just to see old bones and stuff," Cindy said, with a clothespin in her mouth. She peered over the line of white sheets. "I'll drive you to where the pass starts—I can fit a few more besides you in the car."

The next day, anxious to show off her husband's new red 1955 Studebaker, Cindy drove several of her friends as far as the road went. There they met the rest of the expedition party, as well as a team from the radio station at Rock Springs, some scientists from the University of Wyoming, and a few people coming up the side road from the small community at Mirror Lake.

"Word travels fast," someone muttered. But they joined together and continued down the dirt path, past tumbleweeds and boulders. Tall poles were stuck in the sides of the road to guide next spring's snowplows.

From the outskirts of Centennial, the road winds higher and higher over the only pass through the towering Snowy Mountain Range. There is always snow on the tips of the highest peaks, even in the middle of summer. In early October the days are crystal clear with only a few cloud feathers floating randomly over the mountains. Winter arrives quickly and by the end of the month the pass is unapproachable.

Centennial is already up in the mountains; the pilots knew it would only take about four hours to get to the valley. By the time they reached the second hill, several of the group were breathing heavily. They paused at the top of a ridge to look down on a small meadow. Lookout Lake was off to the right, sparkling in the bright morning sunlight.

"You can taste the heavy snow coming," Dan Potter said to Vern Blake. "Yessiree it won't be long—next month the lake'll be frozen over."

They stopped to rest now every twenty to thirty feet. "Should be soon," said one of the pilots.

The jutting ends of the granite rocks stuck out on both sides of the climbers as they hiked into a saddle-shaped pass. They paused, looking up at the spires of the tall peaks, at the sheer cliffs and the shadows of the cliffs which seemed to go on and on. Their voices echoed.

Finally, at the base of a cliff, they rounded a small point of rock and the lost valley appeared, sandwiched between the sheer south face of Medicine Bow Peak and the rugged boulder walls to the north.

Silently, the people filed into the valley. What they found has never adequately been described though it has been recorded for posterity in the clearest way possible considering the limitations of human language.

It was a garden. The items the pilots had observed glimmering from the air were flowers; a species completely unknown. To walk through the garden was like looking in hundreds of mirrors because each flower reflected bits of light, casting thousands of prisms everywhere. But there was more. The flowers were a color never before seen. Though impossible to

describe, the people never gave up trying, as if their lives depended on naming the color (the flower was later called *Insolitus pigmentum* by botanists).

"It had the deep vibrancy of blood red, but of course it wasn't red but strange and rather flamey," said Bonnie Bundy.

"It was a large flower, light and airy—violet but not violet—kind of like an iris," Dan Potter said.

Rather than trying to decipher the confusing comments made about the flowers, sociologists developed an entire science (socio-pigmentology) based on the way the color caused people to react.

To begin with, those who entered were at first tongue-tied. As they wandered, they became tearful, then they openly wept. "Everyone who enters the garden weeps," confirmed Dr. Krow, the foremost East African socio-pigmentologist.

There is evidence that while in the presence of the flowers at Millefleur humans actually spoke another language. All who had been there agreed that they knew the name of the color while in the garden; that there was a feeling among all of being one organism rather than separate individuals; that there was a curious sense of finding peace in confusion, of (this is inexplicable) beauty in sadness to the point where (one woman said) sadness could even be enjoyed; in short it seemed to all who entered that they had spoken a tongue with unsuspected melodies and rhythms and a new set of symbols which allowed them to communicate experience normally too intimate to be shared. Some people attempting to write about it later produced, in the words of Dr. Krow, "nonsensical gibberish," as evidenced by this stanza of a poem by Bonnie Bundy:

> Time blatantly scribbles this enormous tendril;
> Sky ordinates this ultimate fragment,
> Communes purposely a mysterious helix.
> The multiverse bleeds a filmy flower. *[1]

A close analysis of the esters in the fragrance allow us to discount the once prevalent theory that the individuals were simply, in the words of a famous journalist, "higher than a kite." We cannot completely ignore the hypnotic quality, however.

Scientists had to sleep there because a fallen petal could only be examined for eight minutes before it completely disintegrated. A news reporter asked the well-known botanist, Dr. O'Keefe, what she saw through her microscope. The normally articulate doctor replied, "Because of the unique way the flower's cells reflected light, special diffusing equipment was necessary. It is my considered opinion that the structure reveals a sort of—intense—uh—micro-clarity of childhood love—um—no, I mean—let's see, the pigments

in the circulating chloroplast-like bodies were, um, kaleidoscopic. I mean there was a new band on the rainbow—it trembled." She trailed off, smiling like a simpleton. Needless to say, not one lab report could be deciphered.

Nor can we explain away the permanent effect being in the garden had on those who were able to visit there. It is a well-known fact that Joanne Ock went home and wrote the now famous contrapuntal achievement, *Missa Gloria Terra*, after one morning in the garden; prior to that day, "Amazing Grace" was the only song she could play.

The flowers bloomed for two weeks. Highway 130 was jammed with cars heading west from Laramie to Medicine Bow, the holiest spot in the known universe, according to every person who journeyed there. They came until the wind howled, hurling snow like powder in every direction and the pass iced over.

Every summer for years after the flowers died, people could be found on their knees in the tangled weeds of what had been the garden, poking the dirt in vague awe. There was one important thing the scientists did find out about the flowers. Unlike any other species on earth they are millennial, that is, they bloom once every thousand years. Just enough time for the legend to take root, grow, and almost die.[2]

So, once again in the year 2955, a strange new fragrance will drift over the hills of the Snowy Mountains, and in the perfect almost Alpine air the flowers will burst, beam, and die one by one for two weeks in October. Then, when the last lap of summer wind has licked clean the face of Medicine Bow Peak, the ancient cathedral-shadowed valley will lay buried and forgotten as the snow drifts and heaps and the deafening silence denies humanity was ever there.

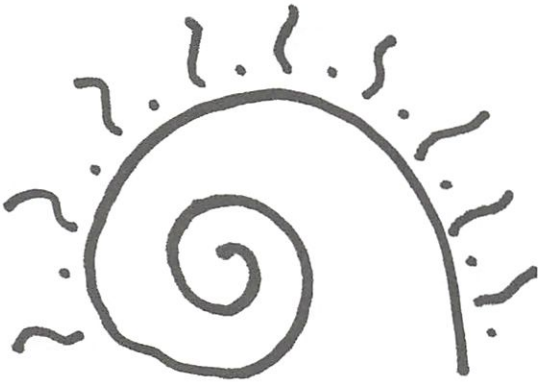
Notes

[1]The publication of Mrs. Bundy's poetry (*Poems From Paradise)*, Intermountain Press, 1956) continued until the last living person to see the garden passed away. No one else could understand it.

[2]There was a church formulated on Dr. Krow's famous thesis which states: "While in the garden people manifested deep awareness of their unity; it may prove to be that our present individualistic view of ourselves may be entirely illusory—that is to say—we are one organism—the planet earth, which in the words of the late Dr. Watts, " 'peoples' (a verb) like an apple tree apples." See *The Compartmentalization of the Self*, E. Krow, Citadel, 1962.

Rosanna West Walker *teaches at Lane Community College and the University of Oregon. This story is a tribute to Rosanna's grandmother, who died in the air crash in 1955. She can be reached at:*

Rosanna West Walker
Department of English
University of Oregon
Eugene OR 97403



Diversity at Lane Community College (noun phrase)

1. Create a diverse and inclusive learning college: develop institutional capacity to respond effectively and respectfully to students, staff, and community members of all cultures, languages, classes, races, genders, ethnic backgrounds, religions, sexual orientations, and abilities.
   —Lane Community College, Strategic Direction 4

2. Lane is the only community college in the state with the positions of Diversity Coordinator and Coordinator of Ethnic Studies and is one of the few colleges in Oregon with a Diversity Team to oversee institutional diversity efforts.
   —Lane Community College Website
   (http://www.lanecc.edu/afirmact/diversity.htm)

The Ten-Week Certainty Test

Bob Welch

Editors' Note: *Eugene* Register-Guard *columnist Bob Welch enrolled in a ten-week ethnic studies class during Fall 2004 at Lane Community College. His columns reprinted here appeared in the* Register-Guard *from October to December 2004.*

Week 1: Ethnic Studies Begins

Sometime between buying my $65.00 textbook—*used*, no less!— and worrying about finding time to write a paper by Monday, I thought to myself: Why, again, did I decide to do this?

"This" is ES 101: Introduction to Ethnic Studies 1 at Lane Community College, a ten-week course that I began Monday.

I feel like a 28th-year freshman, having last slid into one of those still-awkward desks in the spring of 1976, back when my professors' lectures were often drowned out by the cracking and groaning of the nearby Ice Age.

It started last summer over spicy chicken at the PhoYi Shen Vietnamese restaurant. I was having lunch with Michael Sámano, head of Lane's Ethnic Studies program, after he'd e-mailed me about a column I'd written on ex-Eugene police officer Roger Magaña. We talked about race relations. About his teaching. About my aging pickup. About his becoming a father soon.

Then I thought: Why not take a class from this guy? In the Eugene-Springfield area, race-related issues seem to crash ashore with the consistency of wave-pool breakers. MLK. Alleged race profiling. They come. They go. But do any of us ever learn anything from them?

I don't think education is the only answer to people understanding one another better; head knowledge is useless without the hearts to manifest it into our lives. But it's an important start.

So, why Sámano's class? Because the guy seems to have one foot firmly planted in academia and the other in the real world. Because I want to relate what I'm learning to Lane County and he knows this area, having graduated from Willamette High School in 1982. He is 40, Mexican-American and has two master's degrees and is working on a Ph.D.

My three dozen classmates are—with few exceptions—young, young and young. They are fairly reflective of Lane County, which is 87 percent white. Me? At 50, I feel like old growth among seedlings—well-pierced seedlings. Plus I think I am the only male who tucks in his shirt.

We meet twice a week—two hours a session—in your basic desks-in-row classroom. It is a well-orchestrated class, partly because Sámano is organized and partly because we're just down the hall from the music department, from which songs float regularly.

Day One brings back those pit-in-the-stomach-back-to-school feelings that I haven't missed. There will be reading. Tests. And in-class discussions that, unlike, say, algebra, will gently force us to filter what we learn through our personal experiences, presuppositions and biases.

That can be scary. Other than black history and black literature at the University of Oregon in the '70s, I have never taken a course with an ethnic bent. But on the first day I'm already intrigued at being challenged to look at the world differently.

A handout asks us true-false questions: "I grew up in such a nondiverse area that I think Eugene is very diverse." "I grew up with the belief that I should treat others just as I wanted to be treated." "I have thought about ... how my privilege benefits me in society."

On Day Two, we talk about the discipline of ethnic studies. Sámano tells us about four stages of understanding, the last being students actually changing their behavior because of what they've learned. "For example, before you might have laughed at something you hear, but afterward you don't."

This is what most interests me: beyond the broader concepts of race and ethnicity, the idea that learning leads to personal change. That I'll be different come December—even if my shirt is still tucked in and I remain blessedly unpierced.

Week 3: Reflections on Racism

In the wake of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968, the third-grade teacher in all-white Riceville, Iowa, decided to teach her students a lesson. She wanted the children to understand racism, the very thing King worked so hard against.

Jane Elliott divided the class into two groups: the Brown Eyes and the Blue Eyes. She told them that brown-eyed people, who were smart and energetic, were superior to blue-eyed people, who were stupid and lazy.

To the Blue Eyes, she passed out strips of cloth that fastened around their necks so they would stand out. Brown Eyes, she announced, would get extra recess; Blue Eyes couldn't drink from the water fountain or have "seconds" at lunch. You get the idea.

What Elliott did that day—captured in a PBS documentary that we saw in class Wednesday—was proof that you can create racism.

It's amazing to see on film. In one day, the members of each group become what they are told they are: one group privileged, the other downtrodden. The Brown Eyes grow arrogant, ugly, domineering. The Blue Eyes become frightened, defensive, wounded. The next day, when roles are reversed, a fight breaks out between two boys when one calls the other a "Brown-Eye."

A few people in our class of thirty-eight students laughed at some of the reactions. I found them flat-out frightening, a microcosm too true to the larger world. I kept wondering what the young man to my left was thinking. He's black.

In three weeks of class, I've learned how easily I see things only from my limited perspective. We were asked to fill out twenty-question forms to see where we landed on the "awareness spectrum" when it comes to diversity. For example, do I (rarely, sometimes, usually, often) "refuse to tell jokes that are derogatory to any group, culture or gender?"

When my points were totaled, I landed in the middle of the scale—not "naive" or a "perpetuator," but not a "diversity change agent" or "fighter." I was smack in the middle of the "avoider" section.

Thus far, the class has consisted mainly of lectures and videos, the only real discussion coming when Michael Sámano had us fill out a sheet about what we thought to be true about him: age, ethnic background, religious affiliation, father's education, partner's sexual orientation, etc.

It was uncomfortable. The idea was to get us thinking about positive and negative stereotypes. But the secondary lesson was how easily we can miscast people.

Sámano is Mexican-American, but more than half thought he was "Native American/Pacific islander." That made me realize how I never think twice about people understanding my physical identity: I'm a white man. And how frustrating it must be for people whose race isn't as clear-cut.

Thinking about such stuff is good, Sámano tells us, because we get in trouble when we pretend we're all the same. "You've seen those 'Love Sees No Color' bumper stickers," he says. "That's crap."

Six classes into the twenty-class term, I'm intrigued, sometimes confused and often overwhelmed. The other night, I wanted to watch the replay (again) of the Ducks' football game but couldn't. Too much homework.

I feel like the "before" part of a home improvement project. I'm all framing and plaster, my walls ripped apart and exposing all sorts of stuff I hadn't known was there—and, frankly, wished I hadn't. At the moment, I'm too tired to even envision what the remodel will look like. But I'm hoping it'll be better.

As the third-grade teacher, Elliott, said about the flip side to creating racism in a day: "As with anything, if you can create it, you can destroy it."

Week 5: No One Has All the Answers

Halfway through my ten-week ethnic studies class—with midterms due Monday I'm, like, totally stressed—I find myself intrigued by two things:

First, Merton's four typologies of prejudice and discrimination and, second, the possibility of my trying out for Lane's baseball team.

Think I'll stick with Merton, who suggests that understanding race and ethnicity is far more complex than I ever imagined, though easier than fielding hot-hit grounders.

Sociologist Robert Merton theorizes that, despite the fact that many people think they are totally unbiased and everyone else is a raving bigot, people fall into four categories: "all-weather liberals," "reluctant liberals," "timid bigots" and "all-weather bigots."

I question his labels—is the inference that conservatives must be funneled into the "bigot" category?—but I like how he shows there's diversity even in our response to diversity:

- The "all-weather liberal" believes in equality and practices it. However, Merton suggests, that could be because she is far removed from any real competition with subordinate groups. What's more, such people can be so sure of their unbiased nature that they do little to change whatever biases they might have.
- The "reluctant liberal" may be unprejudiced but isn't committed to equality among groups. Example: As a supervisor, he fears that were he to promote a minority to a supervisory role, he might lose employees.
- The "timid bigot" doesn't believe in equal treatment for racial and ethnic groups, but won't discriminate if doing so costs money or reduces profits—or if he is pressured not to by peers or the government.
- The "all-weather bigot" is flat-out prejudiced and acts on that prejudice.

Lane County is well represented in all categories, I believe. But we're heavy with people so certain of their own "color-blindness" that they only add to the problem.

When I kicked off this series and asked more than 100 *Register-Guard* readers what color they imagined people to be in two incidents I described, I was surprised at how many went out of their way to point out "I see no color. I just see human beings. We are all one."

Cece Jackson, a black woman who used to live in Eugene, says she can deal with flat-out bigotry. "What concerns me is people so self-righteous that they think there's no way they could possibly be prejudiced because, well, 'some of my best friends are black.'"

Earlier this month at a City Club luncheon, it was encouraging to hear the "let's-face-ourselves" response from the audience when Michael McCormick, who teaches people to combat racism through study groups, asked how race is typically discussed in Eugene.

"What do you mean, *discussed*?" came a rhetorical question. Other responses: "Tip-toeing around the problem." "Abstractly." "In an accusatory manner." "Following a crisis." And "formally acknowledging the problem, then doing nothing about it."

The City Club plans to use study groups to get the community talking about race relations. Good for it. Because what I'm learning is that understanding one another isn't as simple as I'd imagined.

You can, for example, chide the young man in my class who, during a discussion of Native Americans, asked, "What's a powwow?" Or you can applaud him for at least admitting his ignorance—and showing a willingness to learn.

At first, I mentally shook my head. Not now. Asking questions, I'm realizing, is far better than assuming you have all the answers.

Week 7: Look Contradictions in the Eye

Imagine you are a third-generation American. As it is now, your country is at war. The phone rings.

You must leave, you're told. Now. Not because of some threat aimed at you. No.

You are the threat.

You are to be incarcerated in a camp far from your home. You can take only what you can carry.

But my family heirlooms. Now.

But the family business will die. Now.

But I'd willingly give my life to defend this country. Now.

And so it was in 1942 when, with the United States at war with Japan, that 120,000 Japanese-Americans were forced onto trains and taken to relocation camps—including Eugene area people ordered to be processed at a "civic control station" at what is now the Hult Center.

Taking an ethnic studies class means sometimes hating parts of a country that you love.

I've read books about the internment camps, written columns about them, talked to people whose families endured them. But studying them—and other flagrant examples of discrimination—intensifies realities you'd like to ignore.

It's like sitting in a courtroom while a loved one, charged with some heinous crime, sweats on the witness stand. But the evidence is mounting that your loved one is guilty.

Thus far, I've written a lot about individual discrimination. Lately, in class, we've been talking about an America that I've always known about but didn't want to know about, and so would conveniently shove the accusations to some read-only file in my brain, lest I feel guilty and compelled to actually do something about them.

American history is a study in contradictions. During the California Gold Rush, white settlers—through murder and arson—drove out Chinese immigrants. We passed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

But when the agricultural industry needed another group of laborers to do menial work at low wages, the Japanese were encouraged to come. And were treated much the same way.

The contradictions continued: Shortly before World War II, U.S. medical schools had a quota on the number of Jewish students they would accept. It's ironic that the majority of doctors saving American lives in some World War II field hospitals were Jewish.

No more ironic, of course, than black soldiers being relegated to noncombat jobs. In a letter to *Yank* magazine, a black soldier described how a Texas railroad depot had made black GIs go around back to the kitchen but happily served two dozen German POWs out front.

A country fighting the bigotry of Adolf Hitler was endorsing bigotry of its own.

We react to such history one of three ways:

Some, I believe, deny any wrongdoing so they can continue believing the myth of American perfection; what mother, with her son on the witness stand, wants to believe him guilty?

Others, I believe, become so incensed at the wrongdoings that they lose all faith in their country; better to abandon that pathetic soul on the witness stand than have him linked to my high ideals.

Finally, we can accept our moral obligation to love this country despite its flaws, forever believing in that son, but vowing to help him overcome the errors of his ways.

It is too late to right the wrongs; in 1990, the first of some 82,000 checks for $20,000 were sent to surviving internees of the Japanese-American relocation camps. Too little, too late.

But it's not too late to face the reality that we are a flawed country and flawed people. Only then can we avoid this historical repetition of racism.

Uncomfortable? You bet. But hardly the equal of, say, being forced to leave your home, belongings and family—simply because of your race.

Week 9: The Friction Between Us

The bulk of my Ethnic Studies 101 class recently has been about ethnic and racial friction around the world. Wanting to keep my column focus more local, I'm offering, instead, some response I've gotten from readers:

> ***From a woman regarding a piece on the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II:*** "Your entire column—and probably your professor at LCC as well—missed a most important point about all the inequities which have been perpetrated on various ethnic groups throughout the history of the U.S.: We have changed our ways and the flaws you point out are not official policy of government in the U.S. today."
>
> ***Comment:*** I agree our government has made strides in racial equality. But the moment we believe we have somehow "arrived," as governments or individuals, is the moment we're doomed. The idea that we can somehow ship history off to a historic disposal site—and be rid of it forever—is appealing, but unrealistic. And, in the end, unwise.

From a man regarding the same issue: "In Anthropology 101 you learn pretty quickly that judging someone's actions by your own culture may give some perceptions of a problem (ethnocentrism). In this instance judging us older folks and our scared reactions to the Japanese ... against the modern thinking that now prevails ... may require a footnote to be inserted in these stories about the mistreatment of Japanese American people. All this is not to say that we were correct. We were scared to death and reacted that way—wrongly (as it appears now) or not."

Comment: You're right. It's far easier, from the safety of decades removed, to wag fingers at the actions of others. And yet history repeats: the sudden backlash against Middle Easterners in America following 9/11 echoed the backlash against Japanese Americans following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. That we didn't send all Middle Easterners to internment camps suggests maybe we're learning something.

From a Springfield man: "The majority here simply don't care about race issues, since they see no significant infringement on their way of life from the low percentage of the area's minority population. (They) would become more resistant to the topic of race and to the diversity issues (if) the minority population swells and especially if they foresee some infringement upon their comfort zone."

Comment: Agreed. Much of this area's subtle self-righteousness when it comes to race is based on that exact reality: that there's little opportunity for people's prejudices to be tested. But that is changing and will change more: the Hispanic population in Oregon has grown 144 percent in the past ten years. In 2000, the white, non-Hispanic population comprised 70 percent of the nation; in 2050, that demographic is expected to be only 53 percent. What then?

From a Eugene woman who, last month, found anti-black and anti-Hispanic leaflets wrapped in plastic bags, weighted down with rocks and left in her driveway: "Inside, the vilest, most hate-filled racist 'jokes' imaginable. I remain calm, until the police dispatcher asks me to read the flyer to her, and then I break down and my husband takes over. You see, my children are beautiful and brown and we've walked this neighborhood since they were toddlers, and we've always felt safe. Until now."

Comment: Never underestimate the cowardliness of hate. Sometimes it's in-your-face bigotry, in this case offered by The Tualatin Valley Skins, whose swastika-studded Web site is listed on the fliers (www.nukeisrael.com). Sometimes

it's subtle, disguised as something political or economic or religious. But overcoming it begins with the realization that it's there. And it will only get worse if we pretend it's not.

Final Week: Lessons for All

You know you're living life in two generational worlds when, at Lane Community College, you turn in your final exam, thrust your arms in the air and then think: Now all I have to do is survive next week's colonoscopy.

It's over. At age 50, I've finished my ten-week Ethnic Studies 101 class at Lane. And am as glad that I did it as I am that it's over.

Having last been to college in 1976, I'd forgotten the pit in your stomach when the professor says the word "test." The ominous cloud that hangs over a weekend when you wait until Sunday night to do your due-Monday paper. The sense of dread when you look at a question on a final exam and think: We studied *this?*

But taking Mike Sámano's class was a deeply valuable experience. I would have liked more class discussions—hard to do with nearly forty students—but it was still possible to build a few bridges, especially in small groups.

The most interesting interaction I had with another student came after Sámano gave us our take-home midterm exams, with the clear admonition to do our own work. "Hey," a young man said, "wanna trade phone numbers? We can help each other out."

I was, at the same time, aghast that he had so quickly dismissed Sámano's clear-cut warning and flattered that he had thought I might know enough to help him.

In the end, the most valuable lesson I learned in class is how little I know about people of different races and ethnicities.

And, in the absence of knowledge, how easy it is—even with a complete absence of malice—to assume stereotypes. The roots of prejudice are rooted in such.

In many ways, we are what we know. Our textbook, *Racial and Ethnic Groups* by Richard Schaefer, pointed out that more Latinos won Medals of Honor in World War II than any other ethnic group. I've long held in high regard those who fought for my freedom as an American. But when imagining those WWII soldiers, I've never once imagined a Latino giving his life for me.

Until now. And in some small way, knowing that changes me. So does understanding life through the eyes of someone whose skin color is different from mine.

The most troubling response to my six columns hasn't been from those who disagree with a point I've made; I can deal with that. It's from those who simply refuse to believe that they, or a community at large, could possibly be prejudiced—and are angered that I suggest otherwise.

Bob Welch is a general columnist at The Register-Guard *in Eugene. His book,* American Nightingale: The Story of Frances Slanger, Forgotten Heroine of Normandy *(Atria Books, 2004), about a Polish Jewish immigrant who became the first nurse to die after the WW II landings at Normandy, has been featured on ABC's "Good Morning America" and in* Los Angeles Times Magazine. *Welch is the only columnist in America to have been honored four consecutive years by the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. His articles have appeared in* Los Angeles Times Magazine, Reader's Digest, Runner's World and Sports Illustrated. *More info: www.bobwelch.net.*

True, prejudice goes beyond simply learning. Ostensibly, the chair of a college sociology department would be above racist remarks but, on a recent trip, Sámano and three other Latino professors were talking to a receptionist when in walked the department head.

"Uh, oh," he said, "looks like trouble." That came only shortly after a restaurant waiter had called Sámano "chief."

Read a book such as *My First White Friend* by Patricia Rayborn to understand growing up black. Watch a movie such as "What's Cookin'" about four diverse families celebrating Thanksgiving. Take a class. Join one of the City Club's study circles on racism. Interact with someone of a different race or ethnicity. But dare to put your certainty to the test; what you learn may humble you, as it did me.

Above all, as our community wrestles with such issues as racial profiling, let's keep the dialogue going. This is an open-book, ongoing test, which reminds me: Wanna trade phone numbers? We can help each other out.

Everywhere I Go, I'm White: Facing the Responsibility of Privilege

Ruth Wren

Being white means never having to have to think about it.[1]

Privilege is the flip side of racism. Yet, the concept of privilege is elusive because it's so difficult to step back from a subjective viewpoint to see the larger context of life. Likewise, understanding racism can be perplexing for white people because we[2] usually don't experience it personally, unless we see it through the eyes of someone we care about. This essay is an account of my personal, ongoing struggle to come to terms with my identity as a white American.

Several years ago, I had a friend who was willing to talk with me about what life was like for him, a black man, living in Eugene and taking classes at Lane Community College. There was often frustration in his voice as he tried to explain how living here was different for him than for me. Although I tried to stay open, sometimes I was defensive. Although he made an effort to stay calm, his anger was deep, honest and legitimate. As I learned more about my friend, racism became less abstract. I heard about the many ways that he has to deal with it every day of his life. I saw how exhausting and discouraging it is for him.

Still, something wasn't getting through to me. It was as though we were seeing each other from opposite sides of a wide canyon, and try as we might, could not really understand each other. Now I know that I can't fully grasp what life is like for people of color because my whiteness shields me from their experience. Nevertheless, I am greatly indebted to my friend for his candor, patience and generosity. The connection we had was the catalyst that motivated me to push past my comfort zone and broaden the scope of my questioning.

> ***By doing our homework we can transform a pretend conversation that seeks to simplify the impact of race in America, into a full scale dialogue that reveals the utter complexity, variability and adaptability of racism.***[3]

My friend recommended that I read *Beyond the Whiteness of Whiteness*, by Jane LaZarre. As I read this memoir by a white woman married to a black man and raising their sons, their situation became clearer to me. When the boys were small, she and her husband could protect them from the harshness of racism. But as they grew into men, their parents could no longer shelter them. Society ascribed significance to the various shades of their skin, and forced each one to examine the difference in the ways they were treated. As they struggled together, the family found ways to come to terms with their individual identities within the larger context of a racialized society, but it is a story filled with pain as well as joy and love. Her honesty helped me face my ignorance.

> *The whiteness of whiteness is... being oblivious, out of ignorance or callousness or bigotry or fear, to the legacy of American slavery; to the generations of racial oppression continuing; to the repeated indignities experienced by Black Americans every single day; to the African cultural heritage which influences every single American; to the highly racialized society that this country remains...by being too timid to face the role whites and whiteness have played and continue to play in the world.*[4]

In her groundbreaking essay, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,"[5] Peggy McIntosh provides everyday examples of privilege that most white people take for granted. For instance: "If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford; and I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me." Also, "I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed; and whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability." McIntosh asserts that these are benefits of white privilege, and reminds us that these privileges are not available to all people.

> *Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they've done or failed to do.*[6]

As I read more and talked with more people, I realized that I had stumbled into a highly charged, contradictory, elusive territory. I longed for clarity, for reliable sources of information. I asked Mike Sámano, head of Lane's Ethnic Studies program, for guidance. He gave me a copy of Allan Johnson's book, *Power, Privilege and Difference*. This book is written in a conversational tone, with a firm but compassionate approach to these issues. I read it slowly and purposefully. One evening, about halfway through the book, something inside of me broke open. It was like a conversion experience, but a strange and painful one. This time the words got past my intellectual shield, and I began to really *feel* what my whiteness and privilege have done for me and to me. It was an intense shift in perspective that drastically changed how I experience the world and my place in it.

> *Race trouble for whites shows up in all the things white people do and think to get around the fact that the enormous suffering caused by racism has something to do with the social status of being white, no matter how whites see themselves as individuals.*[7]

I finally grasped how deeply I'm embedded in white America's hypocrisy. We declare our love of democracy, equality and justice while at the same time our hierarchy of privilege systematically maldistributes power and wealth. This means that education, financial security, health care, housing,

access to goods and services, and safety are unavailable to millions of people of color. Democracy means including everyone in the decision-making processes that affect our lives. Yet, most people of color still do not have access to full participation in political processes including voting, holding public office and fair treatment in the criminal justice system. If some groups dominate the process while others are left out, we do not have the democracy that we claim to have.

When it hit me that I am enmeshed in this system of dominance—not in some abstract way, but in a very personal way—waves of grief shook me. For several months, I wrestled with this acute grief. There were many awkward moments at work, in the grocery store, at home, or anywhere, when I found myself weeping and unable to put it into words. I'm convinced it was this grieving process that opened the space in me to face the contradictions within me and throughout white American culture. Of course, these contradictions, which struck me as such a revelation, are painfully obvious to people of color since they live with them constantly.

> ***I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group; never in invisible systems conferring racial dominance on my group from birth.***[8]

It is an enormous, horrifying reality to face. As if my skin glowed like neon, as if I was naked, I became acutely aware of myself as a WHITE person. For a while, I couldn't even look into the eyes of a person of color without feeling ashamed. I felt immobilized by the magnitude of the problem and my own connection to it.

> ***The trouble we're in ... creates a yawning divide in levels of income, wealth, dignity, safety, health, and quality of life. It promotes fear, suspicion, discrimination, harassment, and violence... It weaves the insidious and corroding effects of oppression into the daily lives of tens of millions... It shows up everywhere and touches every life...There is no escape, however thick the denial.***[9]

Because these are intensely emotional issues, working with racism and privilege contains many of the elements of working with abuse, addiction, grief and trauma. There are phases of denial, minimizing, shock, immobilization, acknowledgement, anger, breakthroughs, healing and hope. It is an immense, lifelong task, and I can't do it alone. Fortunately, I've found that many others are also struggling with these issues, and many are working toward healing and social justice.

Sometimes I get together with other white people to have frank, private discussions. This is not meant to be exclusionary, but rather to create an environment where we can speak freely without feeling self-conscious. It may also be easier to admit to our lingering prejudices, fear, anger, and confusion. Perhaps this is why people of color also need support groups just for members of their own group. Talking about it breaks the awful silence, interrupts the fear and isolation, and opens the possibility

of dismantling racism and becoming allies. Examining ourselves in relation to systems of power can be a daunting task, but it is easier when we do it together.

I also learn a great deal by talking with people of color, especially in diverse groups where each person is committed to sharing their truth and working together to build community based on social justice. While it's important to express my views, it's even more important for me to be quiet and really listen to others, especially when the information is difficult to hear.

> ***Rarely do we whites sit back and listen to people of color without interrupting, without being defensive, without trying to regain attention to ourselves, without criticizing or judging.***[10]

I realize now that when a person of color looks at me, they cannot help but see me as "white" before they see anything else. It's not their fault. It's not my fault. It's just the way the world is right now. I can't expect them to welcome me as an individual unless I first acknowledge the institutionalized racism that affects us all. Whenever we interact, the consequences of our differences are part of the experience. *Everywhere I go, I'm white.* It means that I carry advantages with me everyday, all the time, just because I am a white person living in a white-dominated, white-centered, white-identified culture.[11] Conversely, people of color carry their color everywhere. They always face the disadvantages that white society imposes upon them because of it.

> ***We don't have to be special or even feel special in order to have access to privilege, because privilege doesn't derive from who we are or what we've done...The paradoxical experience of* being *privileged without* feeling *privileged is a consequence of the fact that privilege is more about social categories than who people are.***[12]

I came from a working class family and until recent years, I have always struggled just to get by. I identified as a "have-not" rather than a "have." My life as a single mom didn't feel easy, but nevertheless, my whiteness offset the negative impact of my economic status.

When I moved to Eugene, things fell into place for me over time. I found housing, got a job, attended school, and made new friends. I wonder, though, would it have been as easy if I had been a black woman? How would my teenaged son have fared? After listening to the experiences of many people of color in our community, I am certain that we, too, would have encountered racism in many forms, from subtle slights, to police profiling, to outright bigotry.

I struggle with the contradiction that this city that is so warm and welcoming to me is not that way for everyone. How can I embrace my own good experiences here, and simultaneously grasp the reality that so many people of color feel the opposite? My good fortune and their bad fortune are two sides of the same coin. When confronting this reality I feel too many emotions: sad, angry, embarrassed, anxious, confused, tired, ashamed and overwhelmed. I want to do something about it, but I often feel tentative, unqualified and uncertain. Yet, now there is no turning back. Ready or not, I have to speak out about it.

> *What's needed is some reason to feel committed to change that's powerful enough to win out against all the reasons dominant groups have to turn away and leave it to someone else: the anger, fear, resentment, detachment, inattention, ignorance and the luxury of obliviousness. The personal stake in issues of privilege runs deeper than that, to the realization that everyone is connected to a great deal of suffering in the world, and anyone who allows awareness of that to enter their consciousness is bound to feel something about it.*[13]

As I studied further, I learned that most of our common assumptions about race are wrong. First of all, *race doesn't exist!* Differences between people and between populations exist, yes, but the concept of race is a social construction. That is, categories of physical appearance have no significance outside of the systems of privilege and oppression that created them.[14]

> *Race has no genetic basis. Not one characteristic, trait, or even gene distinguishes all the members of one so-called race from all the members of another so-called race.*[15]

People do not fall into distinct biological groups. Although there are a variety of theories, it is generally agreed that modern humans emerged in Africa approximately 150,000 to 200,000 years ago, and began migrating out of Africa about 70,000 years ago. Since then, we have continuously migrated and intermingled with each other all over the planet—for some by choice and for others by force. Consequently, the human species is too young and intermixed to have evolved into separate races or subspecies.[16]

Most of our traits are influenced by separate genes and are inherited independently from each other. That means that having one trait doesn't indicate having any other trait. The genes for skin color have nothing to do with genes for hair type, musical talent, athletic ability or intelligence. This fact challenges many of our lingering stereotypes such as "Asians are good at math." Furthermore, humans are one of the most genetically similar of all species—85 percent of all genetic variations can be found within any local population, no matter how many so-called races live there.[17]

Likewise, there is no genetic basis for the concept of whiteness. It is also a socially constructed category with a constantly shifting boundary, an invention that has evolved over time. Many immigrants to the United States were not considered white when they first arrived, but gradually became redefined as white. In the last century, Irish, Italians, Russians, Jews, Finns, Syrians, Mexicans, Greeks, Portuguese, and Chinese have sometimes been considered white, and sometimes not, depending on their circumstances and the courts and customs of their time.[18]

White culture is also very hard to define. Those of us who think of ourselves as white often have trouble articulating exactly what that means, except in comparison to those who are considered "not white." Try writing a list of characteristics of whiteness and you'll probably notice how strangely

difficult it is. You may find yourself reverting to stereotypical characteristics of specific European cultures found in Germany, Sweden and Great Britain. Or perhaps you think of superficial images of "American culture" such as baseball, hot dogs and apple pie. But these attempts are incomplete and far from accurate.

So, race is not a biological reality, and yet race-*ism* is very real and has powerful consequences for millions of people. How can this be? Where did racism come from, and why? To answer these questions, we first need a working definition of racism.

> ***Racism is prejudice plus power…To be prejudiced means to have opinions without knowing the facts and to hold onto those opinions, even after contrary facts are known. Racism goes beyond prejudice…It is the power to enforce one's prejudices.***[19]

The concept of race—and racism—is only a few hundred years old, and is entangled with the development of the United States.[20] The Founders fought for independence from England in order to create a new and better social system. However, their conception of equality as written in the U.S. Constitution included only white, male property owners. Historian Robin D.G. Kelley explains that the founding fathers sought to reconcile their stated values of liberty, freedom and democracy on the one hand, with a system of imperial conquest, slavery and exploitation on the other.

> ***To justify … imperialism and oppression, whites developed the idea of whiteness to define a privileged social category elevated above everyone who wasn't included in it…If whiteness defined what it meant to be human, then it was seen as less of an offense against the Constitution (not to mention God) to dominate and oppress those who happened to fall outside that definition as the United States marched onward toward what was popularly perceived as its Manifest Destiny.***[21]

In this way, race was used to justify social inequalities as the natural order of things. For some, it explained away the genocide and displacement of indigenous people, the enslavement of Africans, the theft of land and resources from this and other continents, and the exploitation of immigrant workers.

The history that I was taught in grade school, high school and most college courses largely excluded the viewpoints of people of color. The historians who wrote the textbooks were themselves trained in a white-biased society, and were probably unaware of how their subjective viewpoints shaded their interpretation of history.

> ***Through the luxury of ignorance, Whites have for centuries maintained a view of reality that "makes sense" to us...Whites have had the power and the privilege to write our own versions of history. We have been able to determine the structure and content of schooling and in this way have institutionalized our ignorance in the name of education.***[22]

It is beyond the scope of this essay to undertake a detailed discussion of U.S. history. For an interpretation of history from the point of view of Indians and slaves, Mexicans, immigrants, women and workers, I recommend Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*, (NewYork: HarperCollins, 1999), and two books by Ronald Takaki, which challenge the master narrative of American history. They are: *A Larger Memory:A History of Our Diversity with Voices*, (Boston: Little Brown & Co, 1998) and *A Different Mirror:A History of Multicultural America* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1993). Reading the stories of those whose experience is very different from our own can expand our understanding of the "other" sides of history and help us gain a broader perspective.

Many people argue that the injustices of the past are over because the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s "ended racism." It is true that civil rights laws ended some forms of segregation and paved the way for more people of color to attend college, become professionals, hold public office and earn higher salaries. However, they are still a long way from full equality. White people continue to enjoy special benefits through the racialized nature of America's institutions, laws and policies. For example, a Federal Reserve study done in 1991 of 6.4 million home mortgage applications analyzed by race and income revealed that banks rejected black applicants at least twice as often as white applicants.[23] The banks' argument that the discrepancy was attributable to financial considerations such as credit-worthiness was proven false.

> ***Today, the net worth of the average Black family is about 1/8 that of the average white family. Much of that difference derives from the value of the family's residence. Houses in predominantly white areas sell for much more than those in Black, Hispanic, or integrated neighborhoods, and so power, wealth and advantage—or the lack of it—are passed down from parent to child. Wealth isn't just luxury or profit; it's the starting point for the next generation.***[24]

When families cannot establish a secure financial base through home ownership, it becomes almost impossible to raise their overall standard of living. Home ownership can increase family income through appreciation and through the equity that makes it possible to get affordable loans for education and a reliable car to drive to work. Home ownership creates a buffer in case of hard times and a nest egg for retirement.

Although the standard of living has improved for some black families, overall, black people still earn only about 55 percent of white incomes. The unemployment rates for black people are more than twice those of white people. About one in three black people live in poverty, while less than one out of ten white people do.[25]

> ***The status of black America today can be characterized as a glass that is half full—if measured by progress since 1939—or a glass that is half empty—if measured by the persisting disparities between black and white Americans.***[26]

Ruth Wren received a B.S. in Psychology from the University of Oregon. She has been employed as an Administrative Support Specialist in the Social Science department at Lane Community College since 1995. She conducts workshops and classroom presentations on undoing racism and privilege. She is also working with Lane Diversity Coordinator Jim Garcia to develop Diversity Study Groups at Lane, including a White Privilege Study Group and an Allies Study Group.

Please contact Ruth (541) 463-5066 or Jim Garcia (541) 463-5852 if you are interested in participating in any of these groups.

Ruth can also be reached by email: wrenr@lanecc.edu or visiting: http://teach.lanecc.edu/wrenr.

The notion of race has been used as an excuse to benefit some at the expense of others. I don't deny that reality, but I don't want to become immobilized by guilt, either. Although whiteness is a confusing, socially constructed identity, I cannot escape it. What I can do is accept that I am part of the problem and work toward solutions. I choose to use whatever power whiteness affords me to help dismantle the system that grants me that unfair advantage. In this way, I am learning to become an ally to people of color rather than an agent of oppression. This is an ongoing, lifelong process.

Becoming an ally means taking responsibility for learning about my own heritage and history, as well as that of others. It means really listening to the experiences of people of color, respecting their points of view and leadership. It means being willing to be confronted about my own behavior and attitudes, making mistakes and learning from them. Becoming an ally means understanding the connections between all forms of oppression and privilege and how they are manifested in our institutions and personal lives. It means understanding that whiteness forms the center of power in our society, and as long as it does, we cannot have a just society centered on multiracial values. [27] Becoming an ally means being outspoken and taking a stand for social justice every way that I can.

> ***We are not responsible for having been born white, but we are accountable for how we respond to racism and dominance in our schools and communities today.*** [28]

The Core Values of Lane Community College include a commitment to "welcome, value and promote diversity among staff, students and our community; to cultivate a respectful, inclusive and accessible working and learning environment; and to develop our capacity to understand issues of difference, power and privilege." This is an extremely important step. Actually achieving these goals, though, is an extensive, long-term challenge. We have the opportunity to work together across differences toward healing and social justice. To do this, we have to face the fact that privilege and racism are not just a part of our history. They are part of our lives every day. Only when we acknowledge privilege and racism in ourselves and in our social status, can we begin to address them.

The legacy of privilege is one aspect of my identity, but it does not fully define me. Rather than reject my whiteness, I have learned that there are "different ways of being white." [29] I appreciate the wide variety and beauty of cultures of European ancestry, and I identify with those white people throughout history all over the world who have fought against racism and worked for social justice. I understand that the problem is not my white skin. The problem is a social system based on dominance, racism and ignorance. It's a rather strange position to be in, to be both benefiting from privilege as well as opposing it. Yet there is also a sense of relief and hope, as I reinvent myself and connect with people from other groups who share this vision.

Notes on Page 151

Welcome and Thriving at Lane

Monique Janssen-Belitz

Psychiatrist's Waiting Room

Monique Janssen-Belitz

has been an art instructor at Lane Community College since 2002. Before that she taught in a variety of settings and has had her artwork displayed in Group and Solo Exhibitions since 1981. She was recently honored with a Faculty Recognition Award from Lane.

Each Her Own Misery

The Lane of Opportunity

Linda Marina

Editors' Note: *This piece was written to accompany the artwork by Monique Belitz on the preceding pages. Monique wanted to share with the college community an aspect of diversity that often gets left out and that encompasses mental and physical disabilities. The following piece is a first for the* Moment *in that it is written by the parent of a student. We often leave out parents in the higher education "teaching equation," and Linda gives voice to those parents who continue to be teachers to their children as well as assistants in the classroom.*

Like others who came before us, my son and I left everything and everybody and headed West in search of a better life. We were delighted and presently surprised by what we found: A rugged and untamed Pacific Coast, mountains that kissed the stars and enchanting forests. The air seemed cleaner, the tap water drinkable and the grass greener. Along with all of this natural beauty and resources was another gem—an answer to a prayer, really.

You see, my son is at the high end of autism. In as much as we are grateful for everything that our home state of New Jersey provided—early intervention and parent training at a great school for the autistic—after high school, opportunities were limited and not readily accessible for someone who was learning life skills as well as skills that would enrich his life. So we put together our own plan of selling our house and living in an apartment in New Jersey, taking English and math classes at a community college and voice and acting lessons in New York City. After 9/11 we reevaluated everything and decided to go West. Our piecemeal post secondary plan of going here, there and everywhere found peace in one place—and that one place was Lane Community College.

If "people make the world go round," well then, the people at LCC makes the world go 'round for a lot of people. It doesn't matter who you are or where you live or where you're from. It doesn't matter if you're homeless or jobless or in a bad relationship. It doesn't matter if you are a challenged physically or emotionally or mentally. If you want to improve yourself or your life, there's a place for you at Lane. The people of LCC welcome you—once you get over that daunting hill on 30th Avenue!

The bus service provided by Lane Transit District (LTD) makes LCC accessible to those who can't or won't drive to the 30th Avenue campus. The drivers are for the most part friendly, courteous and accommodating to all. When we first came out here from the East Coast, my mobility was limited by a recent surgery and the full leg brace I wore twenty-four hours a day. Yet, I had heard about LCC and wanted to go check it out for my son. How would I get there when I wasn't able to drive? Thank goodness for the LTD buses that run regularly

to LCC! Not only do they run regularly, they kneel—making it accessible for people using wheelchairs, walkers and crutches.

Once we found our way to the 30th Avenue campus, we connected with Jerry Serois, a recently retired counselor who, was originally from the East Coast and who also happened to physically challenged. Jerry showed a genuine interest in my son and his goals. He shared information about the Performing Arts Department and the excellent programs offered there. Jerry also told us about the reading, writing and math classes and the required placement testing and support available at LCC. Jerry also said there's no real time line about finishing at Lane and that essentially everyone learns at their own pace and that's more than OK—there are classes for everyone. I couldn't believe it—the arts and academics all under one roof!

Jerry provided information about some of the many programs and support services offered at Lane. Core College Connection (CCC), for example, is a program that helps students increase their reading, writing and math skills for college placement tests. He also told us about the TRIO Learning Center—a federally-funded program that provides eligible students with an array of support services such as counseling, workshops and tutoring. We also learned about Disability Services—a department which helps eligible LCC students with classroom learning accommodation, among other things, and advises faculty and staff about disability issues. Later on my son would discover the free "drop-in" tutoring that's also available in many subject areas. The support services at Lane help keep students on track. Moreover, it's the people in those departments and the genuine care and concern that they have for the students that makes Lane a great college.

My son started off taking classes in the CORE studies program (which is now CCC) and I was his shadow. Being there was probably more reassuring for me than it was for him! In any case, instead of hanging out, I decided to take a basic design class in the Art Department.

I loved the class so much I enrolled in a drawing and painting class. Then I took another design class. By this time my son began taking voice and and his first college-level writing class! Then we spent our evenings making flower bouquets in Lane's floral design program. We even did a related internship at the Grass Roots Garden. Then I encouraged my son to take a painting class, and now he's encouraging me to take voice. This is what Lane does—it puts the spark back in learning!

After taking classes at Lane, both my son and I realized that the faculty and staff at Lane not only love what they do, they are also supportive and caring. They share their passion for their subject matter with "all" of their students: young and middle-aged, empty nesters and folks without a nest, students who have emotional, physical or cognitive challenges, and artists wanting to learn accounting or singers who want to learn how to paint—all kinds of people doing all kinds of things. If a student goes into a class to learn and has reasonable expecta-

tions about their abilities in the subject matter, the instructors often have enough passion and patience to make learning happen.

In my mind, Lane Community College represents an ideal about what a community college is—services for the entire community. It is inclusive, accessible and supportive. Everyone who wants to learn and who can finance their education is welcome at Lane. For someone who has struggled all their life in trying to adapt to the main cultural thrust of society, Lane welcomes them. For someone who may be a single parent with three kids, Lane welcomes them. For someone who lives out of their car, Lane welcomes them. Indeed, we were among the many fortunate who found the "Lane of Opportunity." Thank you Oregon!

Linda Marina *is a student of art at Lane Community College and a frequent guest and volunteer in Monique Belitz's classroom. Her interests are in the arts and humanities and in serving her community.*

Rethinking Diversity: Is Our Concept of Diversity Sufficiently Diverse?

Jeffrey Borrowdale

When most people think about diversity, they think about race, cultural heritage, language, gender or sexual orientation. Although some people regard these attributes as an important part of who they are, they rarely encompass or describe the whole individual, and focusing on them may predispose us to engage in easy labeling or stereotyping. Moreover, an inordinate focus on these differences, many of which are superficial in nature, may draw attention away from our common humanity and the values we share as rational and caring beings. This article is a critique of the concept of diversity as currently understood in higher education and suggests an alternative model more in keeping with the goals of the academy.

The concept of diversity brings together several pre-existing educational and public policy trends, including Affirmative Action, Multiculturalism, Cultural Competency and Social Justice. Diversity is presented first and foremost as the goal of having a racially and culturally, mixed and gender-balanced group of faculty, staff, administration and students. Sometimes this is presented as a self-evident intrinsic good. At other times it is presented as a means to some other good; for example, giving students a broader educational experience, fostering tolerance for those of other races or cultures, or furthering social justice. Once diversity is established as a goal, it is used to justify preferential treatment and special programs for members of historically disadvantaged groups, because, it is argued, without these programs members of such groups would not exist in sufficient numbers in the institution. It is even suggested that there is a "critical mass" necessary for diversity to have its full social and educational impact on the institution, requiring extra effort to attain a "threshold level" of minority representation. It should be noted that offices, programs and initiatives created to achieve diversity are separate from those created to meet pre-existing federal mandates for Affirmative Action or legal requirements set down by the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission.

Secondly, diversity is a concept which is applied to college programs, especially academic curricula, and extra-curricular student activities. Before the late 1960s, there was little attempt in academia to either understand other cultures on their own terms or include non-Western ideas or the contributions of women and minorities in any significant way in academic curricula. Clearly, this was wrong, not only from a moral point of view, but from the standpoint of scholarship and pedagogy. Efforts at multicultural inclusion and infusion ought long ago to have been the natural outgrowth of academic disciplines such as Anthropology and Sociology, which show us that there are many different ways of being human, and that a variety of social arrangements abound, different from, though not necessarily worse

(or better) than, our own. Academia was slow to recognize and abandon its ethnocentric biases in favor of a broader view of the world.

Unfortunately, whereas before the academy viewed the world through rose-colored glasses of a Western tint, today it views everything through the myopic prism of race, class and gender. Race, class and gender, not as aspects of the human experience to be explored, but as part of a neo-Marxist interpretive framework permeate every aspect of academic life, from curriculum, to professional development, to academic conferences, to scholarly work, to library acquisitions to hiring. Life is portrayed as a vast struggle revolving around issues of "privilege, power and difference"[1] and students are called upon to be activists in bringing about "social justice", typically cashed out in terms of special group rights, economic redistribution and pacifism. What began as an inclusive attempt to broaden discourse was transformed into a new dogma, mandating the vilification of Western culture and irrelevant "dead white males" and replacing them with more politically fashionable material. Now certainly there is nothing wrong with exploring the dark side of Western civilization, with all wars of conquest and empire building, stratified class structures, religious persecution, subjugation of women, and so on. And students ought to be aware of the fact that the Founding Fathers and those who followed in their footsteps often did not live up to the ideals they set forth in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." Genocidal campaigns against Native American tribes and the practice of chattel slavery, though obviously shameful episodes in our nation's history, deserve study. However, if we fixate solely on the shortcomings of our nation's founders, we lose sight the ideals of equality and freedom to which, however imperfectly, they aspired.[2] It is one thing to show the face of Western civilization, warts and all; it is another to excise the warts and begin examining them under a microscope, forgetting the face from which they were cut.

In practice, "diversity" seems to mean celebrating every other culture and heritage except distinctively American traditions, and every heritage except that of Western Europe. Those who point out this hostility towards Western culture or the lopsided view presented to students are, in keeping with the neo-Marxist framework, labeled as "reactionary" and as merely attempting to protect the status quo because they have a vested interest in perpetuating it and in keeping alive fields such as Philosophy or the Western Humanities. Of course this an example of what is known of as the *ad hominem* fallacy, a classification first published by Aristotle, who probably wrote the first systematic treatise on logic, and who is an excellent example of what dead white males have to offer us.

Diversity is the second of six core values of Lane Community College's Strategic Plan and our Five-Year Diversity Plan calls for funding of over $1.2 million. This is money which will not be spent on keeping tuition low, meeting student demands for classes in academic

or professional-technical areas, or providing more much-needed classroom space. However, any reasoned opposition to the continued growth and expansion of diversity programs, even during times of budget crises, is typically viewed as intolerant, narrow-minded or bigoted. Office space is dedicated and staff hired for diversity offices, multicultural centers, women's centers, and centers for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered students, often while traditional academic programs are scaled back. The function of these offices is often as much ideological and political as educational, but given the documented leftward leanings of college faculty[1], few complain. Administrators look for any opportunity to leap on the diversity bandwagon, because such opportunities represent sterling résumé enhancement, offering a boost up to the next rung of the managerial ladder. Once diversity gets written into the college's mission statement, core values or targeted goals, it becomes a measure of the worthiness and success of new programs and becomes totally infused into the life of the college, including all-important funding mechanisms.

Diversity interview questions function as a troubling political litmus test for new hires. Candidates must either give the expected answer or not only possibly suffer the loss of enough points to sink their candidacy, but ensure a hostile treatment of their application in deliberations in case of a tie. Expected answers include the legitimacy of preferential treatment on the basis of race, the concept that there are deep and enduring differences between people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds and the belief that teaching methods must be tailored to these differences. Typical answers simply describe experiences working with diverse populations and gush over how much the candidate loves diversity, eliciting information of questionable relevance or value to teaching. One also wonders about the degree to which faculty can or should tailor their curriculum to diverse audiences. Examples of this kind of tailoring are rare in interviews and those in the diversity literature seem trite and condescending. Might not time spent looking for ways to serve diverse groups be better spent focusing on general pedagogical techniques, particularly those based on sound psychological research, on scholarship in one's field of expertise, or on finding ways to meet *individual* student needs?

Textbooks now strain to include the most minor contributions of women and minorities for the sake of "balance" in a bean-counter, quota mentality. I remember reviewing an introductory Philosophy textbook, which, in order to include the contributions of African Americans, tacked on a chapter featuring African proverbs, as if the authors of those proverbs were doing the same thing as Plato or David Hume or Nietzsche. It was more of a question of commensurability than merit; the proverbs of Solomon would have been equally out of place.

Such editorial and curricular decisions seem to stem from a need to atone for past sins by looking diverse, to overemphasize contributions which were underemphasized or ignored in the past. But the past cannot be changed, and individuals cannot atone for what other individuals have done, nor do any of us bear the blame for what our ancestors may or may not have done. Seen in this light, diversity appears to be a kind of super-Affirmative Action, for both personnel and programs. But does diversity, in this sense, serve the academy? Pulitzer Prize winning columnist Paul Greenberg perceptively comments:

> By capital-D Diversity, of course, I don't mean a diversity of ideas, talents, aptitudes or experiences, but only a cosmetic, quota-derived Diversity. The kind that has succeeded Marxism on American campuses as the ideology du jour... The capital-D variety is a caricature of any real diversity, for its only diversity is one of appearance. Its object is to fashion an American elite that looks different but thinks alike. All these offensive (and officious) quotas, preferences and Affirmative Actions are designed to produce an America that may look like the rainbow but thinks like NPR.[4]

As Greenberg notes, the model of diversity most appropriate to an educational institution is that of *intellectual* diversity, that is, diversity of beliefs, values, opinions, theoretical approaches, talents, abilities, backgrounds, and so on. The educational experience depends upon students being exposed to a *variety* of viewpoints. However, diversity in its current incarnation gives us the same point of view, particularly on pressing moral, social, cultural and political issues, albeit from a rainbow of representatives.

Crucial to the educational experience is fostering a climate where students may engage in open dialogue, and where the negative effects of ego-involvement (fear of judgment, self-consciousness, hostile confrontations, defensiveness, rationalization) are minimized. But the current racial-ethnic-gender identity model of diversity encourages this very sort of thing, leading individuals to closely identify with their race, culture or gender, along with an associated orthodoxy of historical, social and political beliefs, which they are taught to see as a fundamental part of who they are. Consequently, students are likely to view any challenge to their beliefs to be a form of persecution—the attacks of victimizers or haters.

It is as if no one thought to ask whether a race-conscious approach which highlights past and present discrimination would actually produce tolerance and understanding or whether it would promote division and alienation. The present sad state of race relations and my own experience lead me to believe that emphasis on group identity, coupled with a focus on past and present injustices against these groups creates hostility, resentment, alienation and a "victim mentality" which serves neither the "victim" nor the group identified as "victimizer." It is this balkanizing influence which is one of the present diversity model's most destructive

influences, its separating people into competing interest groups vying for special entitlements and status. Minority groups are told over and over again that their "people" were victimized in the past and that even today they will be the perpetual targets of racists and bigots. It would be surprising if many *didn't* develop paranoia, hopelessness, lack of ambition, anxiety and hostility towards the white majority. And is it so surprising that the white majority, who are told over and over again that they are "privileged" and the recipients of unfair advantages often feel resentment at being held liable for the sins of their ancestors, knowing that they, themselves, worked hard to be where they are? Those from modest backgrounds may bristle at the suggestion that they benefit from any privilege of being white, especially when they see so many programs geared towards helping minority students, which exclude them. And of course the notion of labeling anyone with a light complexion as "white" is itself a form of stereotyping, ignoring the diversity of cultures from which they may come. Light-skinned immigrants of Italian, Polish, Irish and Jewish decent all faced rampant discrimination themselves at the hands of the English immigrants who preceded them, when they first hit American shores.

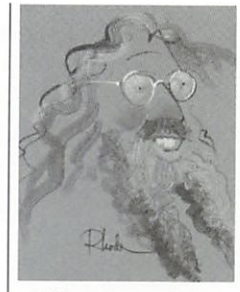
Some California colleges have even taken the step of having separate graduation ceremonies for Hispanic students. This again shows the balkanizing influence of diversity. When you encourage people to think in terms of group identity and group interests, people will gravitate towards the groups with which they most identify and seek their company, to the exclusion of others. Before, we had segregation by law, through the force of government. Today we have segregation by choice, in special "spaces" and programs designed for women and minorities. But these are "choices" borne of social conditioning which say you are Black or Hispanic or a woman *first*, a human being *second*. Ought not we to be encouraging *integration* and breaking down racial and gender barriers which separate us?

This is the real damage that the diversity ideology does. It emphasizes surface characteristics, such as the color of one's skin, while insisting on ideological orthodoxy amongst faculty and students on important social, economic, political and religious issues. It treats people as the passive recipients of genetics and cultural heritage as opposed to rational beings with the powers of reason and choice, who bear personal responsibility for their actions. Diversity asks us to focus on group identity instead of individual merit. It celebrates victimhood and encourages class envy, rather than celebrating personal virtue and achievement. It recognizes disparate cultural forms, while failing to see something called "the human condition" which underlies them all. Great works of art and literature can speak to us about the human condition equally. A Socrates can speak to an African-American female student just as surely as a Gandhi or an Ayn Rand can speak to a white male student.

Martin Luther King once said he looked forward to a day when human beings were judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin. The Buddha voiced a

similar sentiment when he said, "No one is a member of the priestly caste by birth; no one is a member of the servant caste by birth. A priest is such by his deeds; a servant is such by his deeds." I think both would have been gratified to see the American Anthropological Association's Statement on Race, which says that race does not exist, except in our minds, being the product of a small group of genes controlling a few overly noticeable surface characteristics, having very little to do with who we truly are as human beings. Until and unless we stop making judgments based on such characteristics, King's dream of a color-blind society will never be realized.

Notes on page 153



Caricature by Rhoda Grossman www.digitalpainting.com

Jeffrey Borrowdale *is enjoying his fourth year as a full-time Philosophy and Religion instructor at Lane Community College. Before coming to Lane, Jeff was a part-time lecturer at a variety of institutions on the central coast of California including Allan Hancock College, Cuesta College, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo and University of California, Santa Barbara. His many academic interests include the foundations of ethics, epistemology, philosophy of religion, political philosophy and online pedagogy. You may see him in the afternoons teaching one of his classes on LANE-TV (Comcast Ch. 23/Charter Ch. 9), broadcast in the greater Eugene area.*

Analogy of a Tutor Session

Liz Coleman

Do you ever wonder what happens when a student visits one of the tutors working in the free centers on the 30th Avenue campus? Each session is as unique as the two individuals involved, but tutors are instructed to guide the student to self-discovery rather than to show or tell the simple answer. Perhaps I can make it clearer by comparing it to a scenario that most parents can relate to: "Mommy, tie my shoes!"

I know I should show you so you could learn to tie them yourself, but we are running late and I want a good, solid bow so you don't trip and fall at the park.

After many repetitions of hurried moments like this, we have some spare time, and I demonstrate for you how to tie your shoes. Carefully, I break down the steps. I move my fingers slowly so you can watch. I talk about the process, explaining each step so you can understand. You try a time or two, but mastery is still far away.

The next time we are heading out the door you shout "Mommy, tie my shoes!" Sometimes I tie them for you and we get on our way. Other times, I remind you that we worked on that and it's your turn to do it yourself. I watch you concentrate as your fat, little, clumsy fingers cross the laces, then make bows that are inevitably too big or too small, before they fall back out again. I feel for you as I see your face melt into anger and frustration.

In parenting, it is the adult's job to make the time to teach, show, and provide many relaxed moments for practice, practice, practice. The parent must use good judgment introducing the new skill at a time when the child is ready for it. The fingers must be capable of the fine motor control required to tie shoes. There must be motivation on the child's part to want to learn it. Finally, it is the parent's job not to be in such a hurry when heading out the door each day. The child needs lots of time to s-l-o-w-l-y tie her shoes, gaining speed and accuracy later.

As community college professionals, we must remember that each of our students is learning a host of new skills in every one of the classes we teach. As instructors we don't know if the student has the readiness for the subject we are offering. Can the student read fast enough to get through the material? Are the student's writing or math skills what he or she will need to complete the course and fulfill the objectives we have outlined? We don't know if there is great motivation to learn it, or it is simply a requirement to be endured. Certainly we don't have the luxury to provide a leisurely pace for the student to practice as much as is necessary. All we can do is teach clearly, trying to be sensitive to each student, share our passion and enthusiasm for the subject, and have confidence that the student is capable of learning and will try. We can also recommend our students visit the tutor centers,

where they will be encouraged to demonstrate their current knowledge and practice new skills.

Any parent will tell you that it is easier and quicker to just tie the shoes. Likewise, when a student comes into a tutor center and asks one of the trained tutors how to do something, the easy thing to do would be simply to tell the student the answer. Tutors are trained to resist this and to instead respond to questions with more questions. We try not to tie the shoes for the student, but to ask, "What do you remember your instructor saying about how to tie shoes?" "Let's look in your book and find the diagram, or maybe directions that talk about tying shoes. Can you show me where that is?" "Can you remember the first step? Show me that." "Let's look at your class notes." "Read them out loud to me." This could lead to a discussion about note-taking, or reading the text or sometimes even the importance of attending class.

Often, when the student is in a hurry—"But my assignment is due in thirty minutes!"—she doesn't want us to pose these questions. She just asks the tutor to tie her shoes, so she can get to class. She might respond with anger or frustration. She might roll her eyes and storm off mumbling something about how we aren't any help. She might even complain to her instructor that the tutors are worthless. The tutor doesn't want to upset the student, but fully understands that the student will never really learn the skill until she has had adequate time to process and practice it. Most students won't do problems that are not absolutely required by the instructor, but the tutors know that the act of completing more problems will cement the knowledge in the brain of the student. The tutors recommend practice strategies. Some students are receptive, others not. When a student comes in without the basic skill to tie a shoe, she may leave able to make the first tie. That in itself is a success and is celebrated. Tutors know that every student will not be able to perform the new skill perfectly after one, two or even three sessions with a tutor. Tutors work with the current level of the student. This sometimes confuses instructors, when imperfect work is turned in, even after the student ran it by a tutor. Tutors don't "correct" a student's work, but try to help the student with the process of more thorough learning and assimilating the material. This sometimes frustrates the student.

Like a parent who may have difficulty finding the time to allow the child practice opportunities, most students don't take the required time to learn, apply and absorb the new material. Many students are in a panic, fearing failure or criticism. Many students have procrastinated too long and are afraid. Some students are attached to the old stigma that branded kids who visit tutoring as "dumb." Others who frequent tutor centers are those "A" seeking students, who willingly access every resource available to get the most out of the education offered. There are many types who fall in between these extremes.

Liz Coleman
has been involved in tutoring since 1983 when she began as a volunteer tutor for English as a Second Language students. She believes that tutoring provides the perfect opportunity to empower others and enhance learning for all involved. She is a lover of dance, relationship, learning, nature and life.

She is currently Tutoring Services Coordinator at Lane Community College.

One never knows how the tutor-student session will go. As with a child practicing tying her shoes again and again, tutors provide students the opportunity to practice new skills, introduced by instructors. Unlike shoe-tying, this practice comes in many forms. Tutors are trained to help students identify personal learning preferences and to use those styles to better remember and absorb the material. Tutors may ask students to make associations, attaching new information to something already in the student's long-term memory. Tutors will sometimes ask the student to read the problem (or paper) out loud. Amazingly enough, there are times when just hearing the words makes it clear to the student and the "Aha!" moment occurs instantly. The student is grateful for "all the help," and the tutor feels happy because the student figured it out all by herself and will most likely feel more confident next time. Tutors always praise the student for something done right.

When we consider the valuable job that the peer tutors do with students, remember how hard it is *not* to tie the shoes of an anxious child. And how rewarding it is to hear the excitement and glory in that child's voice as she yells, "I tied my own shoes, Mommy!" before she runs across the park.

The Fiction of Whiteness: Towards a New Notion of Diversity

Michael B. McDonald

"You know, I've always been happy I was born white. Yeah, I'm proud to be white."

"Well, Sis, since having a Jewish grandmother would have qualified us for extermination, had we been living under the Nazis at the time, I've always wondered just how white we really are."

My family had gathered for what was supposed to be a carefree and happy reunion; I still remember the shocked and sullen silence that fell after I responded to my sister this way. The next day, as my mother and I were ambling along the hazily lambent South Carolina shore, she suddenly stopped and said, "You know, Son, I never want to hear you say anything like that again. Your father spent his whole life getting away from that sort of thing. He would have been mortified to hear you say that."

My father did indeed spend his life in silence about his Jewish ancestry. I do know that he remained Jewish through his early teen years, repudiating his ethnicity and religion alike shortly after his *bar mitzvah*. But I don't know what happened to precipitate this act of repudiation and subsequent silence, and probably never will.

He's no longer around to discuss the matter, but I have to assume that my father's silence had a lot to do with his corporate aspirations. Starting at the bottom of the corporate ladder, he eventually became a prominent executive at an enormous (20,000-plus employees) General Electric plant and, shortly before his death, a vice-president at RCA. I have to assume that my father assumed that, had he discussed his Jewish background, he might have hindered his chances for promotion and advancement, in a 1950s and 1960s corporate milieu still marked by strong undertones of anti-Semitism.

I only know that I still miss the family history, the stories he might have told, had he not chosen to remain silent about his background. As a very small child, I did get to meet my great-grandfather, a rabbi originally from Vilnius, in Lithuania. Vilnius was famous as a center of Hasidic thought and culture, but I don't know whether this had anything to do with my great-grandfather's identity. I just remember an improbably gentle hand, laid upon my forehead in blessing, and a gently smiling face framed by improbably white, and long, hair and a beard. That's the sum of my Jewish legacy: no stories, but a face and manner from another time and place and, many years later, the shock of seeing his family name, Ferber, among the first names to appear on the screen during the movie *Schindler's List*.

I wanted to share all of this because it seems to me that, if we really want to get serious about diversity, we need to get serious about stories, all sorts of stories from all sorts of different people. If there's one thing that my African-American, Latino, Asian-American and Native American friends, colleagues and acquaintances have in common, it's their stories. Stories that are fully lived with, and freely shared. Rich stories, troubling stories, sad stories, stories like Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, that have the power to make you laugh and cry at the same time.

Since my dad was silent about his own past and heritage, because he chose not to share his own story with his children, at least one of my siblings was able to grow up not knowing that she even had Jewish ancestry. Thus her sense that she was white, in a simple and non-problematic way.

I should say at this point that I hold with the scientific view that race is a fiction. But I'm more fascinated by the role played by this fiction in history, and in the development of certain ideologies. So far as I know, Europeans were more aware of their differences than their common "whiteness" until they came here. The ideologies of race, and the supreme fiction of whiteness, are part of America's troubling gift to the world. European immigrants, upon arriving in America, largely gave up their stories, their very sense of being different from other Europeans. In learning to pass by emphasizing their shared whiteness, they learned to become largely silent with respect to ethnic and cultural identity. The cost of admission to white privilege, American style, was largely an effect of silence.

In my experience, very few "whites" can tell the story of their ancestors' emigration to America, even though that journey may have occurred within the past two or three generations, almost in living memory. (Perhaps many whites *are* able to tell such stories, but like my father choose to keep those stories to themselves. Admission to the privilege of whiteness is gained by agreeing, however tacitly, not to make too much of one's background.)

If diversity is to become anything more than an occasionally intoned, self-congratulatory shibboleth, it seems to me that we will need to do more than ensure that under-represented and oppressed peoples gain access to, and fair treatment in, American institutions. To be sure, those goals are profoundly worthy and important, and I salute any and all efforts to achieve them.

But gaining something like what the word diversity was intended to suggest, before it became just another term of bureaucratic jargon, will mean necessarily to lose, to abandon, the fiction of whiteness.[1] Since whiteness is predicated on silence, on the tacit agreement to be no one in particular so that one can be *the* white man or woman, writ generally and large, a fully diverse society would be one where we hear, and indeed welcome, all sorts of stories from all sorts of people, particularly stories of origin and ancestry. For as we listen to stories

of origin and ancestry, generalities tend to recede, and humanity in all its rich confusion and variety comes to the fore.

And thus, a story: It's the Spring Conference at Lane Community College, a gathering of administrators, faculty and staff aimed at providing some time to reflect on what we do, as educators, and on ways to make our experience richer, more productive for ourselves and students alike. The guest speaker, Allan Johnson, has just given a long yet inspiring talk on the dynamics and inner workings of white privilege. It's now time for group discussion, and folks at each table have been directed to discuss ways in which we might not only recruit, but retain, faculty and staff of color. We have been given about thirty minutes to complete this activity. This means that at my table, where everyone appears to be white, we haven't gotten past stories of alleged "reverse racism" when our time is up.

As the nominal facilitator at my table, I got pretty frustrated about this, but in retrospect I wonder at my own frustration. Since I maintain that diversity means not just getting to hear, but really listening to all sorts of stories from all sorts of people, I would now argue that it was perfectly natural for my colleagues to try to get at the issues we were supposed to discuss by telling the stories of their own frustration with issues associated with the word diversity. I believe that, had we had more time, we could have heard, just from the folks sitting at our table, stories demonstrating the realization that, whatever frustration whites experience, those frustrations pale in comparison to the storied suffering and humiliation suffered by people of color in our society. It may well be that once whites have the opportunity to voice their stories of "reverse racism" they will be better able to place those stories in a context that will temper and ameliorate their perceived hurts. Sitting at that table, I intuited that it would have been a mistake to tell my colleagues that their stories were inappropriate; I sensed then, and believe now, that we simply had to work through *those* stories in order to establish the ground for addressing the issues we had been charged to address.

The upshot of all this is that this process requires time and, above all, careful listening. Challenging the fiction of whiteness, the lie that probably remains bedrock truth for a majority of Americans, requires extraordinary patience and the willingness to hear all the stories that must be given voice, and be heard, in order to lay the groundwork for a world in which we won't have to talk about diversity anymore.

Do we want an occasionally invoked diversity that is essentially window-dressing on white supremacy? That's all we will get if we aren't willing to take the time to hear all the stories we need to hear in order to explode the fiction of whiteness, and especially the supremely odious fiction that privilege is only for some, and can only be gained through the acquiescence of silence.

Notes for this article on page 154

Michael B. McDonald *has a Ph.D. in English from the University of Oregon (*James Joyce and the Aesthetics of Dissonance, *1991) and has been teaching at Lane Community College since 1998. If his life were like the silken tent in Frost's poem, some of the cords loosely tethering it to earth would include his darling family, Kris, Clare and David, and, in no particular order, the work of Coltrane, Shankar, Shakespeare, Jesus, Buddha, Lao-Tzu, Woolf, and Morrison. A devoted amateur musician, he's been spending considerable time, of late, tuning and meditating on the sound of his new* surbahar.

The Core of Diversity

A conversation with Lane Diversity Coordinator Jim Garcia on Core Values, *-isms*, and Lane's Diversity Plan

As Diversity Team Chair, Jim Garcia assumed the leadership of updating the 1995 Diversity Plan in collaboration with the Diversity Team, Lane staff and students, and community members. He spoke with Moment Co-editor Steve McQuiddy in November 2004.

I. Diversity as a Core Value

Community College Moment: What is diversity and what does it mean at Lane Community College?

Jim Garcia: When I did my research regarding diversity plans at colleges and universities, I noticed it was assumed that people knew what diversity was. But people have different perceptions of what diversity is all about. So, after attending several national seminars on strategic planning and campus diversity, I decided to pursue diversity from two perspectives. One is that diversity must be an inclusive process. Many times people feel that diversity is for people of color, for women, or perhaps disabled populations. But I think we need to take an attitude that diversity includes everyone, it should reflect everyone's experience, and also that everyone has a role and responsibility for diversity.

Another thing I learned is that most campuses pursue a vision of diversity that celebrates differences—

CCM: Yes, the first definition of diversity in the dictionary means "different"—

Garcia: —And this is all right; we need to have an awareness of cultural celebrations and cultures. But what is missing with that framework is that we need to explore those *-isms* [racism, sexism, et al.] that are creating unfair advantages for promotion, retention and recruiting of diverse populations to this campus. And the way to do that is to pursue a social justice perspective.

I made an effort to spell out a vision for diversity at Lane Community College, and it's in the introduction of the Diversity Plan [an 80-page document first drafted in 1995]. We have four statements listed under the Core Values. One is "Welcome, value and promote diversity among staff, students and our community." It's very good language. But what does *welcome* mean? What does *value* mean? People have an assumption about what values are, but is it the same as how other people see values?

Another statement is "Cultivate a respectful, inclusive and accessible working and learning environment." The key words are *respectful*, *inclusive* and *accessible*. So what do those words mean? How have I been raised to see what *accessible* is, and from whose perspective? Am I an able-bodied person? Or an English speaker in an English-dominated institution or culture? Is that accessibility? So, we have unique conversations about what respectful, inclusive and accessible working environments are. In the diversity trainings that I design, we always go back to this language—whether it be diversity training or ally training, understanding diversity, or racism-free zone training, we always come back to the Core Values. Because it's important to have that sense that we're always referring to something like the Core Values, that diversity is not an independent activity from the institution.

The next statement is really important, because it used to say "To work with diverse populations." Well, anyone can work with diverse populations. So, we spell it out: "Work effectively in different cultural contexts to serve the educational and linguistic needs of a diverse community." That's very important language. We not only want to work with a diverse community, but we want to work effectively.

We also need to be able to respond in different cultural contexts—because one of the statements that I hear often is. "We should serve all students the same; we should serve all the diverse populations the same." But not all diverse populations *are* the same. We all bring different cultural contexts, different cultural assumptions; we all value things differently. So, as staff at Lane, we need to be aware of what value we're interacting with, and what cultures we're interacting with.

CCM: It sounds like a lot of work!

Garcia: [Laughs] Diversity is an ongoing journey. We have really good Core Values statements. I know this because most folks who participate in diversity training have come with the feeling that they'd just go to a workshop, learn what they need to know and go on with their business, but they leave our workshops with a sense of how complex this aspect of diversity is. I think there's a sense that people recognize that "I need more," that this was just a small taste of what could happen.

My experience here at Lane is that staff are genuinely concerned about serving all students. I don't see resistance to diversity, but I think there is a lot of opportunity here for staff to engage in their own learning. So I'm trying to find multiple ways for them to do that. Some people are crunched for time, so I try to provide a learning opportunity that will respect people's time commitment.

Diversity efforts must be a strategic effort; it's not something you can do just potpourri, or throw together a collection. There must be a common theme, and our thread is the Core

Values, the vision that's spelled out in the Diversity Plan—and also a connection to our college vision, "Transforming lives through learning." That's what diversity is all about.

CCM: When I think of diversity training, I think of changing the way people think. But you don't say *changing*; you say *transforming*.
Garcia: Exactly. That's part of the clarification of language. *Changing* to most people would imply that they have to give up something. But *transforming* is a word that I like, because it talks about personal transformation; at least that's the way I perceive it.

CCM: How about some concrete examples? How exactly is diversity training at Lane transforming lives?
Garcia: Let me give you two examples. One deals with creativity: the Rights of Passage program, started by Greg Evans [Student Life and Leadership Development Instructor]. It's a really innovative program that serves students of color in the surrounding high schools. It's a four-to-five week summer program, with community members serving as elders, teachers, and Lane staff participating. We invite community members to share their life stories. We teach students in a way that is appropriate to their culture, so it's not dependent on the traditional paradigm of teaching. We may have a text book, or we may have whatever. If there are artists or writers in the community, they will come in and share their work, and also the story of how they came to be a writer or painter. They make a very personal connection with the students, and the students get a chance to learn for the first time about their history, their literature, and about leadership development.

CCM: Do they make connections beyond this? Have you heard of an elder becoming more of a mentor, or long-time friend?
Garcia: I think by sharing their personal stories they make the connection right there, because these students are used to seeing professionals who have no cultural connection to them. Most of us who participate in the Rights of Passage program project the message or spirit that "We're here because of you. You're our next generation. We have a responsibility as elders, and we're very fortunate to have this opportunity to teach you what we need to teach you."

And it's not a curriculum that's determined by someone outside of the culture. We tell folks, "Okay, you design the curriculum. We'll provide the facilities, the funding for staff and so forth. But you know what's best for your community. You tell us what we need to do."

When I mention this program to folks at other conferences their mind set is, "Oh, this is a state grant, or this is a federal grant, this is one of those grants that helps people of color in high school or higher education." We say no, this is funded by Lane Community College; this is part of our Core Values. They are really impressed with that.

CCM: And what's the other example you mentioned?
Garcia: In terms of assisting folks here with attitudes, perceptions, biases or assumptions, we have a training called *Winning Balance II*.

CCM: So there was a *Winning Balance I...?*
Garcia: This is a significantly revised edition, improved through what people told me in the first training. Its goal is to create a respectful work environment. The activities provide options for staff to look at the world in different ways. I address their assumptions and biases, and give some guidelines as to how one can become a diversity change agent. We make a self-assessment. Are we perpetuators of *-isms?* Are we naive, and we don't think things are happening?

I think it's been really effective, because people have left there thinking, "I have never thought about that..." And it gives me a chance as diversity coordinator to actually have conversations with these folks, to clarify what diversity is all about. I make a reference to the Diversity Plan, the college mission and Core Values. I'm making the connection that my work as Diversity Coordinator is really what this college is all about. It's not a separate entity, and it shouldn't be seen as something we can do when we have time, or when we have money.

II. Addressing the -isms

CCM: Tell me about some of these *-isms,* and the social justice perspective you mentioned earlier.
Garcia: A social justice perspective is when we look at a difference and what inequities are associated with that difference. For example, some of the *-isms* we've listed in the Diversity Plan are ableism, racism, and heterosexism. There are a number of *-isms* that somehow are backed by power and privilege. In my diversity trainings, people will have an understanding of privilege from different areas, whether it be based on race, ability, or several concepts. I provide opportunities for people to engage in their own learning about what privilege is from multiple levels. Also, I've begun a diversity resource library, and many of the materials reflect a social justice perspective. In other words, while they include the aspects of sexism and heterosexism, they also include aspects of ableism and ageism. All of these *-isms*. So sure, I order books that will give foundational information for folks exploring diversity. But I'm also providing information that will allow folks to do some reflection in learning about issues of the privilege-power difference.

What we really need to promote to folks who read this is that they have the power, in many cases the privilege, to engage in diversity efforts. In the context of white privilege, it won't be people of color who are going to make the changes; it will be the people with the privilege of

power to make those changes. Same with male privilege. If males have the power, they need to share that power to engage in change. Able-bodied folks can use their privilege and power to help those who are not able-bodied. English speakers need to help those folks who do not have English as a first language. We have that privilege and power to initiate change.

I think it's really important for all the staff to say that they have not only the responsibility—I hate to say that because it seems like it's more of an obligation—but they have the *opportunity* to engage in a learning environment, as opposed to encountering difference and not knowing what to do. They should see diversity as a resource that's going to help them do their job better and minimize those uncomfortable interactions. I'm hoping that people see they are all included — it's spelled out in our college vision—and that they have resources here on campus. Not only myself, but there are plenty of allies to assist with their journey in participating in diversity.

CCM: I'm guessing we can meet some of these allies through the diversity training workshops.
Garcia: I try to use the term *diversity learning*. Because training implies—and this had been brought to my attention by participants—you have an idea of a circus or some animal trainer. It's not about that. The term I fall back on is *diversity learning*, because that's what it is.

CCM: These words often seem to fall into a category of catch phrases. And I think sometimes we need to confirm their meaning, give people context. What exactly do you mean by *diversity learning?*
Garcia: Well, learning in a sense that we're learning new information. Learning in a sense of becoming more aware of our own biases and assumptions. Learning new connections to the word *diversity* —words such as *skills*, words such as *capacity building*. Expanding our vocabulary list that usually applies to diversity. Because my experience in working with folks is that people assume diversity is attached to Affirmative Action. Or diversity is saying, "Oh, we have so many number of these people in the community, so we must have a number of these people on staff." Well, it's not about mirroring demographics, as much as it is asking if we are capable as an institution to respond to changes in the demographics in the surrounding areas. So words like *capacity building* are very important.

CCM: And what then is *capacity building?*
Garcia: Building our capacity to serve diverse populations in culturally appropriate ways. Asking ourselves if we are imposing our own culture on folks who are different than our culture, and asking if that is really enhancing our learning. And not only on the part of people who we want to serve, but our *own* learning.

Diversity learning is not only an institutional activity or effort; it's also personal. Personal growth *and* professional growth. It really is a win/win situation if you look at diversity learning that way. I don't subscribe to the framework of forced diversity training.

CCM: You mean like someone being ordered to go to diversity training?
Garcia: Yes. That's a big debate among diversity folks—whether you should force all the employees of an organization to attend diversity workshops. I don't believe in that, because I've been in workshops—not here at Lane, but in the community and elsewhere—where people really didn't want to be there and they were told to be there, so they caused more of a disruption. That really impacts the whole environment.

CCM: What's your approach, then?
Garcia: My approach is to create a spirit of wanting to participate in diversity learning—and I think that's the spirit we have here at Lane. A number of folks here on campus are creating a spirit of diversity. And that's good for us personally, it's good for the students, it's good for learning. We're connecting the word diversity to our Core Values, to our strategic direction, to our mission statement, the vision statement. They're all connected to diversity.

People who have attended diversity training here didn't know it was going to be—how would I say—a transformational change in the way they look at things. They came in with some assumptions of what diversity is about, thinking they would go to a training, get some skills, then go back to their office and apply it to their work. But they have an emotional response to the training, and that's exactly what we want to be able to create for them. Because you need to do some reflection about how you always thought the world was, and that there might be other ways of looking at the world, and how you don't want to be responsible for imposing your world on others in a way that may create an unwelcome environment.

CCM: So you *are* talking about changing—or transforming—the way people think.
Garcia: That's very important. But it's also important that I not say that what you think is wrong, that I'm not negating how you were raised and the way you look at the world. The goal of diversity is not for everyone to think the same. The goal is to create an environment where people's differences, approaches and outlooks are able to be at the same table with equal standing. The goal of diversity is not to say, "You're wrong." The goal is to say, "What you believe in—your assumptions, the way you look at life—is perfectly valid, but you need to be aware that not everyone thinks that way. So if you find someone else approaching it differently or saying things differently than what you're accustomed to, approach that difference as an opportunity to learn, rather than an opportunity to defend yourself." No one should feel attacked or excluded from a diversity effort.

CCM: What do you say to people who do feel attacked?
Garcia: I've been at trainings where the trainer has used language that would create that kind of personal dynamic. I'm very careful about my language, particularly when I say words like *diversity* or *skill sets*. My experience is that validating a person's viewpoint is best. They may be off the mark with a lot of stuff, but at least they're validated. Some people need more time than others to make that connection, and that's how I respond. I don't expect folks to come to diversity training for two or three hours and expect to make that connection.

CCM: To walk out transformed—
Garcia: Yeah. Some are transformed during the training; others may take some time, a couple weeks maybe. And they usually contact me and say, "You know what, I've been thinking about this, it's staying with me, and I experienced this in the community, or I had this interaction with a student in the classroom, and I made the connection about what you were saying and what you presented..." So the connection will happen sometime.

My goal as a trainer is not make sure everyone leaves transformed, but at least I want to create a framework or a foundation for people to start looking at things differently. *When* they make that connection is their own personal transformation. I come with the understanding that I don't expect to make a connection with 100 percent of the people who come to the training. If I have forty people and I connect with at least five, to me, personally and professionally as a trainer, that's good.

One of the things we state to the participants in our diversity training is that they need to be proactive, they need to be allies for diversity. One of the things I say to them is, "Look, if you felt that this experience was really worthwhile for you both personally and professionally, talk to your colleagues, because I don't have the connection with your colleagues that you do every day in the workplace. So you should talk to your colleagues and say, 'You know what, you should sign up for this diversity training, I had a really good experience'—rather than me sending these flyers to departments, with no connection between me and the person looking at these flyers." These might be small steps—and if someone takes a big step, fine. There are different steps people can take to be allies to diversity.

All I'm asking is that you look at different ways of approaching this, because other people will. And if we allow a workplace that allows people to feel free to share their ideas, even though they might not be the dominant campus culture, that increases our creativity.

That's what diversity is, too—it's connected to creativity. Because if we have changes in demographics of the outside community, and we don't have an environment here that welcomes creativity or welcomes new ideas, an attitude of, "Let's try it even though we've never

tried it before," then we're never going to have the capacity to effectively serve these populations.

III. PUTTING LANE'S DIVERSITY PLAN TO WORK

CCM: "Capacity to effectively serve populations." It sounds almost like a business plan. Is diversity an economic element of the college?
Garcia: Diversity is partly an economic element; it's not solely an economic element. If we have a diverse population and we're wanting to increase our enrollment here, and we don't have the capacity or strategic plan to reach out to the diverse populations, we're losing money right there. And sure, diversity efforts can be seen as an investment.

Let's look at the cost benefits of diversity. If we don't have job postings that reflect a desire to have people with diverse skill sets apply for these positions, then we're going to need so much money to do retraining for the individuals we do hire. If we're able to project in our job postings that diversity is in our core values, and we need people to help us realize those core values, then we minimize the training costs, because we have people already here with those skill sets.

This is all part of the effort, part of the recommended budget that we have for a diversity plan. But it's not just budgets. It's not that we're asking for more money; we're asking for the resources to make this the most inclusive and respectful work environment that it can be. If we have the capacity to serve a diverse population, if we're able to provide an environment where diverse populations feel free to express who they are, then that enhances the learning environment, not only for the teachers, but also for the students—and that's the goal. I mean, diversity should be connected to learning. Because if we don't attract a diverse workforce, faculty or staff, we're not going to enhance our learning, we're not going to enhance our ability to come with different approaches to these problems or challenges that we face.

When you have people from different perspectives, it creates a synergy for people to say, "I never thought about it that way." But if we only recruit a work force that thinks the same way, we're not going to enhance our creativity—which is part of one of our Core Values: Innovation. *This* is how we should be seeing difference: as an opportunity to enhance our learning. It creates energy, synergy, it breeds innovation. Again, this is what diversity is all about.

CCM: It sounds like you're making a connection to what matters to many taxpayers. They look at an institution like Lane and say, "What am I getting in return?"
Garcia: Another goal of diversity is to become a higher performing organization. That way, there's more value to the dollars that are invested in that institution. It's not economical or cost-effective to hire a work force that is not capable of being flexible, a work force that is not

innovative or creative. If you hire people with those kinds of values and skill sets then you have the capacity to respond, while organizations that do not hire those people do not have the capacity to respond. Guess who's going to get the students? Guess who's going to get the best and brightest employees to work for their organization? It's a positive, upward spiral that leads one thing to another and another and another. But the basic things need to be in place in order for that dynamic to occur.

CCM: So, do we have those things in place at Lane?
Garcia: I think we have a good foundation to identify the gaps that we still have in our institution.

What happens many times at colleges is that you have people being hired—not hired for diversity, just hired for the position and coming from diverse populations. They see a need, and want to start something new—incorporate diversity in the curriculum, start a new student organization or a multicultural center. But their efforts are seen as their own personal agenda, not reflected in what the institution is all about.

I think there's a nice core of folks here at Lane who are engaged in diversity, and looking at the Diversity Plan, looking at our Core Values. Because when we see these statements, the Core Values, I say to people in my trainings, "Well, if you have a desire to do something with regards to diversity, it's not your own personal agenda, not your own personal thing; it's about helping the college realize our Core Values."

Some departments here are making changes for the right reason. You look at their job postings, and you can see they're looking at skill sets to develop their own capacity to serve diverse populations. Others have just not been there; for whatever reason they just have not made that move. My hope is that the departments who are the leaders—the classified or managers or faculty members who are engaging diversity in their work—can be examples and motivators to the other folks who are hesitant about doing diversity.

I feel we have a lot things in place to help us go in the right direction. Because, as we pursue diversity, the word that we really need to connect to the other language we've come up with is *outcomes*. We'll need to have results.

CCM: What kinds of results?
Garcia: If we have things in place, programs that are part of our infrastructure, if we have job postings that require, or ask for skill sets that require, innovation, creativity and diversity, that's going to assist in our capacity as an institution to attract the candidates who are able to show those skills. If we also have this energy put into the Diversity Plan, into a Diversity Council, into all these diversity activities done by a variety of departments, that's going to make it more attractive for people to stay here at Lane.

We had a wake-up call two years ago when some African-American staff were called a term that's pejorative to the African-American community, and we were not able to identify who said those words to these folks. We saw that even though we're coming up with some nice language in our Core Values, we still need a lot of work. It was a perfect example why we need to address the *-isms*.

After hearing about this incident, we responded with an all-campus meeting. I mean, the President was there. I think that went well with the community. They said, "Well, at least Lane responded." And it was well attended; we had it at the Forum here.

CCM: People weren't required to come—
Garcia: No... So, that's action. Again, we're always coming back to the words, and this is what I get from the community members. They say, "We're really impressed with what you're doing at Lane in terms of your statement, because you're really spelling it out when you're saying the words that need to be said." But what we need to do now is make sure the Diversity Plan is not going to be a document that people just put on the shelf, that it's going to be something that people can *do*.

CCM: How are we making that happen?
Garcia: By identifying who's accountable for making sure it happens. I think one of the things we can be proud of about our Diversity Plan is that we spell out pretty clearly what our action items are, and who's going to be accountable for doing them.

What happens on many college campuses is that you have a Diversity Team, and they're responsible for everything. Again, in my research with diversity plans at institutions, the statements are very general. They'll say, "Goal Number One: increase the number of students of color at the campus." And that's what it says. There's no action related to how you're going to do that. There's no statement about who's going to be responsible for what, no assessment attached to it. Okay, how will they know if it's been done? Are they going to come back five years from now and say, "Who did it?" And when is it going to be done; is there a time line?

That's not the case here at Lane. Here we do have vice presidents, we do have AVPs [associate vice presidents], we have instructors, we have managers, and everyone is responsible for diversity. So, in the Diversity Plan we provide an index for people. If I'm an AVP of Information Technology, I can see the action items I'm going to be responsible for. It's pretty well spelled out. We try to provide some guidance to say, "Okay, here you go..."

CCM: You're talking about what people can do, what they take away from training. The language in the Diversity Plan says diversity is everyone's responsibility. Imagine I'm the reader of this interview. I've just finished reading and I look up. What can I do?

Garcia: One thing a person can do is utilize our diversity resource library. We have a number of videos and reference materials, so people can engage in their own learning. We have resources where people can be aware of conferences that talk about different diversity topics. There are magazines they can read at the library here, organizations in this community that sponsor events for them to experience learning. For example, we had a pow-wow here in December at Lane. If you've never been to a pow-wow, that's how you experience diversity. You don't have to say anything; just be there and listen and experience it. Don't ask people at the pow-wow, "What's a pow-wow?" Just observe. And later, if you want, come talk to me. Or we'll have a discussion group and ask, "What did you see?"

If an instructor says, "I want to instruct with more multicultural observation, how do I go about doing that?" I have reference materials that give guidance on how people can incorporate diversity, how to facilitate difficult conversations you have on diversity—teaching strategies. I have resources on how people can address their notions of culture—say, Mexican culture or Arabic culture—that can give them information on stereotypes.

We have diversity events on this campus. Take time out to attend those events, show support, go to the student groups and ask, "How can I help?" Pass out flyers, make a few phone calls, send out emails, be a resource yourself. We have the Oregon Diversity Institute here at Lane, so when there's conferences help out with the work; it goes a long way. Talk to your colleagues about diversity. We have a "Spanish-only" table, where people can practice their Spanish. You can form a study group, so if there's a certain topic you want to engage in and run it by others, my office can arrange for a room for people to meet, or provide materials, or a book you want to read.

If folks have an idea about diversity and how they might incorporate it into learning, my role as Diversity Coordinator is to provide support to make that idea happen.

CCM: I notice the Lane Diversity Plan does have a timeline. 2003-2008. What's it going to be like at the end of that five-year period?

Garcia: One of the things about our Diversity Plan is that it's not carved in stone. It's very flexible, and there's a process for new action items to appear and be incorporated into the plan. I think the key for the future is that staff here need to be in tune with what's happening in the community that we serve in Lane County, and the community will tell us how we need to respond. For example, from 1990-2000 there was a 140 percent increase in the Latino population in Oregon, and a 114 percent increase in Lane County. Are we aware when we do our job postings that we should be responding to a changed demographic in our community? I think the key is when we have job openings here at Lane, that we have the future in mind, that we don't hire for just the present, and what the administration people need to look at is the change in demographics both statewide and locally.

One example a good friend of mine uses with regard to diversity is to make the connection of diversity as a skill set. Let's take computers as a comparison. Let's say here we are at Lane in 1980, and the computer thing is going on all over the community, statewide, nationally, and we're not in tune with the needs of computers, we don't even know of its existence, we don't use computers here. Everyone's using computers except for us. Same thing with diversity today. If the change in demographics is happening and we don't make a connection that it's a skill set we need to have here to be able to compete, and to serve our students well as they go into the world, it doesn't bode well for them in terms of their promotion or their opportunity to enhance their job future.

That's something we haven't mentioned here—that by enhancing their learning environment, we're preparing our students not only for Lane County or Eugene-Springfield, we're preparing them for the state, for the country, for the world. And that's the value of having a respectful, inclusive learning environment where people are able to share their diverse experiences so that when the students leave Lane, they're not engaging in their first diversity learning in the workplace.

My own professional and personal spirit about this whole outlook of diversity is that it's not because we're in an institution called Lane Community College. I'm here because of the thrill I get when I see people learn about new things. I've been an instructor for twelve years, and I've seen people light up when they learn something new. I'm hoping that the Lane staff, when they participate in diversity learning, find that it becomes a rewarding, enlightening experience as opposed to "I'm just doing this so I can do my job better." Sure, that's one of the goals of diversity, but I'm looking more at the personal view, a personal transformation. I understand that it will lead to professional competency, but if it touches you on a personal transformational level it's not going to leave. I'm hoping people can capture the spirit that diversity learning is all about —that we can explore very difficult issues of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and still come up with the attitude that "I needed to do this, I'm glad I did this, and I'm a better person for it."

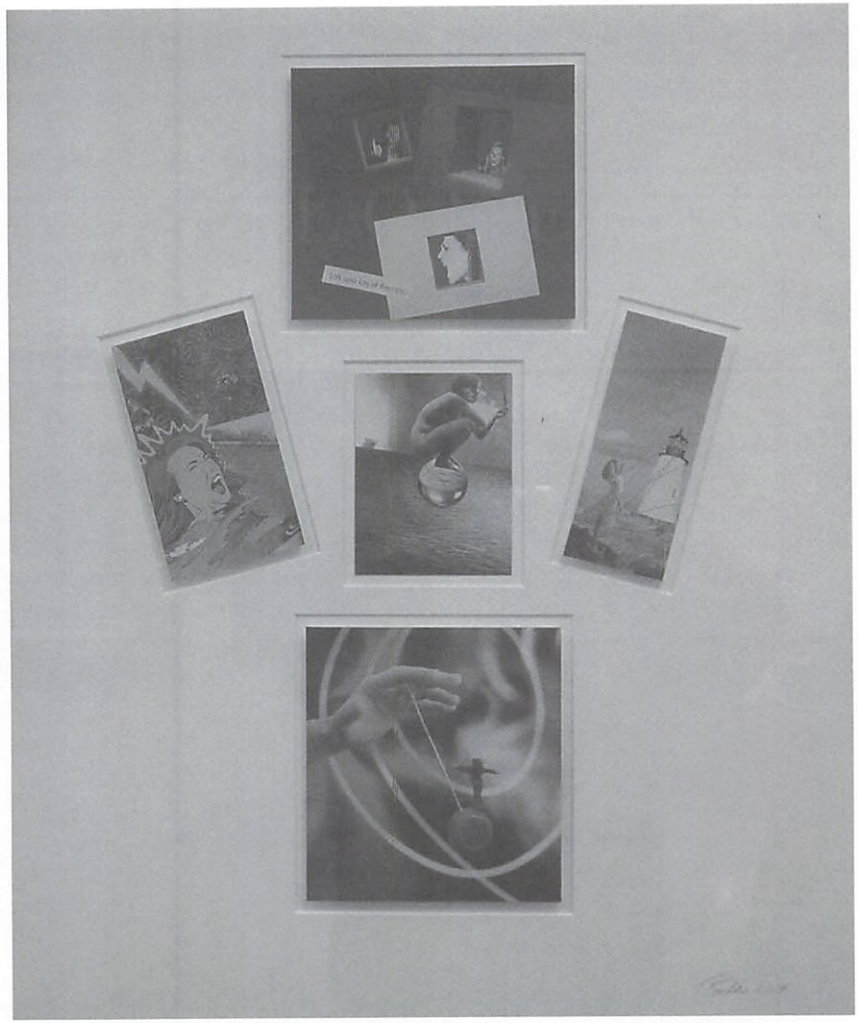
For more information on diversity at Lane, visit:
http://www.lanecc.edu/afirmact/diversity.htm

Jim Garcia
is a second-generation Mexican American from southern California. He has served as an instructor and administrator for over twenty years in Oregon. In 2000, the National Association for Chicana & Chicano Studies honored him with a Community Service Award. In 2004, he received the Human Rights Leadership Award from the Springfield Alliance for Equality and Respect (SAFER) and the Equity Award from the Eugene 4J School District Equity Committee. In 2005, the City of Eugene Human Rights Program awarded him the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Award. His interest is to present a more complete and accurate representation of Mexican American life and culture.

Tamara Pinkas
is Cooperative Education Coordinator for the Advanced Technology and English, Foreign Languages and Speech divisions at LCC. She has been Faculty Council Chair and a member of College Council, and has participated in the development of the college's Strategic Plan. She is currently a member of the Learning Council, Vice President of Professional Technical Faculty for the faculty union, and the LCC College Representative to the League for Innovation. She is active also in the Northwest Career and Educators Association, Cooperative Education and Internship Association and the National Society for Experiential Education. She holds a Master's degree in Art Education from the University of Oregon and a B.A. in Aesthetic Studies from the University of California at Santa Cruz.

Lots and Lots of Therapy

Tamara Pinkas



Works in Progress

Sometimes an author submits a piece that addresses a topic or idea the editors feel is timely and provocative, yet may not be fully realized. To foster discussion, deliberation and debate, the Moment publishes these pieces with the understanding that they are not complete. In that spirit of innovation, risk-taking and creativity, we offer these Works in Progress.

From the B.A.S.E. Files: The Justice Chess Gambit

Mark Harris, B.A.S.E. President, Justice Chess Knight

Editors' note: *The author informs us that this piece draws largely on the B.A.S.E. Files, a collection of materials concerning race relations at Lane, gathered informally over a number of years as an alternative to the institution's personnel files, which, we are told, are typically restricted to payroll, evaluations and transcripts, and may also be protected by non-disclosure agreements.*

B.A.S.E. (Black American Staff, Faculty and Employees) is the first organization of staff of color at Lane Community College. It enjoys unofficial status in the sense that it has a constitution, members have made presentations to the Lane Board of Education, and at its founding a request was made to have a reporting seat at Board meetings. Its goals are to reduce attrition of African-American students and staff as well as to assist the college with strategic planning to meet the challenges of changing demographics.

B.A.S.E. was organized in 1999 under the leadership of Lane's longest employed African-American, Bill Powell (28 years), when there were twelve African-Americans employed full-time on Lane's main campus—a critical mass of sorts. These twelve, two managers and five each from classified and faculty, were the original signatories to the B.A.S.E. constitution. Six years later, only four of those original members remain: three faculty and one classified. This does not mean there are only four African-Americans employed full-time on the main campus, although it is worth noting that B.A.S.E. informed the Lane Board of Education in 1999 that a hostile work environment existed.

While state agencies, legislatures, the United States government and other institutions of higher education have advisory groups to assist them with critical diversity issues, organizations like B.A.S.E. arise mainly because members of minority groups feel the need to gather for support and to strategize for greater organizational inclusion and ultimately organizational progress. They realize that the employing organization alone is frequently incapable of offering effective culturally competent support, that in a collective bargaining environment such as at Lane the bargaining units are not assured to be culturally competent, and that these conditions do not necessarily improve through sporadic ethnic diversification in leadership at the top of hierarchical organizations.

The dilemma of African-Americans (and other communities of color) as articulated by Ellis Cose's *Rage of a Privileged Class* extends from the "Last to be hired, first to be

fired" syndrome. One feels—despite any excellence you possess or demonstrate, despite your adherence to values of organizational loyalty, enthusiastic and productive work ethic, and attempts at self and organizational improvement—that the simplest suggestion you might offer towards progress will be resisted by the organization. Furthermore, you sense your suggestion is resisted not because it has no merit, or because it hasn't been implemented anywhere else, but because it is *you* tendering it.

Many white women or women of color in largely white male organizations report the same experience of offering suggestions or making observations within meetings and having those offerings ignored or rejected, only to see the exact same offering coming shortly after from the lips of a white man, and watching that man alone lauded as a paragon of brilliance (thus considered in the culturally specific vernacular: a *fair-haired boy*).

Obviously those of us who can never be considered fair-haired boys in any manner of the word sense intuitively what diffusion of innovation research has proven empirically: "new" ideas are resisted by organizations or societies at first, until they are tried by those on the cutting edge, then implemented by early adopters, and finally accepted as common sense by the mainstream. As Gandhi so aptly put it: "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."

Because institutional memory is often incomplete (whether through transfer from varying paper trails or upgrades in computer hardware and software), and Lane as an institution has tended to forget egregious and embarrassing incidents, the B.A.S.E. Files have been created. They exist largely as narrative "adventures" stemming from human memory, electronic database and other forms; they are available to any B.A.S.E. member and are often supplied to new African-American hires. Their contents refer to a thirty- to forty-year interpretation of incidents indicating a hostile work environment to faculty and staff of color at Lane. They are meant to help us all avoid making the same mistakes twice. As Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

As the longest-employed B.A.S.E. member at Lane, I am default president; I was also the initial griot *pro tempore* and the speaker before the Lane Board in 1999. I have recorded personal conversations with twenty-four of the thirty historical African-American employees at Lane, and also serve as a repository for information regarding incidents involving students and staff of color, particularly those incidents which may not generate either formal or informal paper trails.

In the research compiled by B.A.S.E. members at Lane, we have found there may be more to organizational resistance here than simple mistrust of something "new" (even

though considered standard nearly everywhere else). The innovation may be new to Lane, but when proffered by Black leadership, it has been generally rejected. Note these observations about the experience of African-American employees at Lane:

> In forty years Lane has hired only thirty African-Americans, never exceeding twelve total full-time on the main campus. In my own hiring cohort, the forty-four faculty hires of 1992, I was the sole minority hire out of 1400 applicants, over 160 of those being minority applicants. The statistical analysis of this calculated three standard deviations from chance; the federal standard needed to prove discrimination is two. Is it possible that out of 160 minority candidates in a national search only one was qualified?
>
> No African-American manager or administrator has remained at Lane longer than four years, as well as can be determined through accessible records. According to B.A.S.E. files, an African-American instructional manager was told by one of his faculty members within the first six months of his hire: "We know you are just passing through Eugene; why don't you let us decide who is going to be here?" Would a white manager hearing the same words consider that a welcoming work environment?
>
> B.A.S.E. files also report that African-Americans proffering innovations have been personally ridiculed within the workplace on the basis of race, and those innovations also ridiculed or resisted, despite their widespread use throughout academe and the "real" world.

Knowing that hostility from white co-workers is at least a possibility, would an African-American leader dare offer an innovation that is not supported by sound principles or practice? I spoke with a white female manager recalling Richard Turner, Lane's only African-American president (1985-88), who, among other things, brought the concept of telephone registration to Lane. This manager said apparently it had been a feature at the school Turner was from, and that he met resistance in implementing it at Lane. It may be 20/20 hindsight now that we've gone to online registration, but ask yourself which is better for students and staff: standing around in a gym handing out computer cards, or phoning in class selections? Was it the innovation being resisted or the person suggesting the innovation?

Many B.A.S.E. members were raised by the "old school" generation who lived under segregation, or who had themselves been raised by those who remembered slavery.

Along with the "last to be hired, first to be fired" dictum was the warning that you had to be twice as good to be considered equal. You were admonished to work hard and prepare to be twice as qualified as a white candidate who relied on nepotism, the "good old boys" network, or simply white privilege, if you wanted be hired into a largely white organization. Your objective excellence may not land you the job—and if it does, it is as if your qualifications suddenly disappear when you try and change the status quo to something more in accord with standard practice elsewhere. When an "innovation" such as telephone registration is only an innovation *at Lane,* and introducing it is a simple attempt to bring Lane in accord with standard practice elsewhere, one wonders at the impulse to resistance. An easy test is to ask: If this innovation were posed by a white person, would it be carried forward or rejected?

An even easier test is to ask if a department which loses an ethnically diverse staff member seeks to replace those same skills and innovative aptitude. To be sure, African-Americans are not the only people in Lane's workforce capable of innovation, but it is interesting to note whether the innovations arise before the Justice Chess players arrive on the scene.

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Justice Chess is my metaphor for the practice of organizational development and institutional change. Standard game chess is populated by pieces symbolizing people in particular hierarchical roles. Justice Chess, on the other hand, is populated by actual people within hierarchical roles in the organization. A gambit in chess is a move in which a piece (usually of lesser value) is sacrificed to achieve a strategic advantage. In Justice Chess at organizations like Lane, the strategic advantage is the larger goal of diversity. Since these organizations traditionally resist change, the result of a gambit is that the person initiating the move towards diversity is often sacrificed by not being made to feel welcome and then not retained within the organization. It is not necessarily the intention of the people initiating change towards diversity or progress to leave Lane. Quite the contrary. If you are a change agent, you initiate and gestate the change, see it born, and you hope to shepherd it through its crawling formative years—cleaning up its messes, tolerating its tantrums, until it stands on its own and takes its first stumbling steps. But often intolerable conditions and other circumstances beyond the change agent's control, be they of any race or culture, forces them to leave. Quite often only the most resilient, nimble, or innocuous Justice Chess pieces are retained. Typically in the Lane experience of B.A.S.E. members this means faculty and classified staff.

On a societal level, Justice Chess is the practice of deliberate social change and the non-military revolt against injustice. To accomplish this one must engage in a program of self-affirmation and self-development. That is, to plant the seeds of food for thought,

and cultivate them in an inner garden, even while others declare you are growing weeds. These spiritual fruits and foods, once harvested, become soul food to nourish oneself and the world. It is as if the lowliest pawn, in the process of engaging and overcoming a superior adversary, gains the strength and knowledge of the adversary. As Emerson observed, "We take on the strength of that which we have overcome." More basically, the struggle for justice and equality often must be achieved against what seem like hopeless odds. Though emulating Hannibal, the Justice Chess player could also be audacious enough to think of invading and conquering Rome by taking elephants through the Alps (without losing an elephant). Chess, the game, is a simulation of war. Justice Chess is the practice of transformational peace.

Because African-American change agents typically structure their strategies based on the study of history, it is useful to look at the history of chess. The game we call chess evolved from a game in sixth-century India called Chaturanga, which had six pieces: king, minister (queen), elephant (bishop), chariot (rook), cavalry (knight), and infantry (pawn), played on a game board of sixty-four squares. The Moors had trading relationships with India, and when they conquered the Iberian peninsula in 711 A.D., they brought with them a form of checkers, called Al-Quirkat. They added their own pieces and rules to the Indian game of Chaturanga and called it Shatranj. While this is after Hannibal's time, no doubt the use of games simulating military strategy couldn't have been unknown. The game became popular under the rule of the Moors and was modified again at the time of the European Visigoth reconquest of the Iberian peninsula in the late 1400s, into its present form. These modifications were designed to express the triumph of the white Visigoths over the black Moors. Whether or not the black and white pieces originally symbolized race isn't clear, but certainly church and secular writings of the Inquisition referring to Moorish and Jewish "blood," and chess pieces where Moors and Christians faced off against each other, easily lend a racialized cachet. The queen piece, a minor player in Shatranj, was given greater power in chess, symbolizing Queen Isabella of Spain. The elephant of Chaturanga became the bishop of chess, symbolizing the ascendancy of the Church. In the chess that we know, White moves first and therefore has the strategic advantage through the initiative. Despite this advantage, Black in as little as twelve moves can achieve equality (according to my game chess informant, Lane English Instructor Russell Shitabata). I like that image and its implications: Once equality is achieved, all Black has to do is wait for White to wear itself out in futile attempts to win. In Justice Chess, as in game chess, the goal then for blacks is to achieve equality, a balancing of the scales of justice. Not simply to win and conquer the opponent, but to achieve justice for all.

Depending on the size of the game "board" (recalling that game chess is a simulation of war between nations) Justice Chess strategies apply both on a national level and within an organization. Nationally, Justice Chess pawns are workers or foot soldiers, knights are the military or police, rooks are the schools and educational system, bishops are the churches, the queen is commerce (Business moves like the schools and the church except money is God) and the king is government. In game chess any pawn that reaches the end of the board can become any other piece except for the king. In Justice Chess a pawn can become any other piece, period. This is because in outmaneuvering a more powerful piece, you absorb greater knowledge and therefore power. Thus applying the game board to Lane: the king is the president (regardless of gender), the queen represents the top-level administrators, bishops are the department chairs, instructional or other managers, knights are classified supervisors or faculty (Given academic freedom they can jump over opposition at least in the classroom or writings), pawns are classified line workers and sometimes students—who, like the president, can only move a square at a time but can capture or block any other piece in the right configuration.

Chess has a hidden history reflecting racial conflict. Justice Chess reflects similar conflicts, except that the game is more complicated than race or ethnicity. Factored into play are hidden systems of privilege which are intended to confer advantage for particular characteristics and reinforce dominance. Remie Calalang, Bethel School District Multicultural Coordinator, and I coined the acronym C.R.A.S.H. to refer to the interlocking systems of discrimination and privilege along the lines of Classism, Racism, Addiction/Ability, Sexism, and Heterosexism. What bell hooks refers to as White Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy (WSCP), others refer to as The Matrix of Domination. The Matrix (much like its namesake popular movie series) reinforces conformity to a wealthy white male heterosexual view of what is normal—for example, Nietzche's *Übermensch*. Higher education itself reflects and reinforces a middle- to upper-class viewpoint within its practices and curriculum. That systemic racism and sexism continue to exist throughout the Matrix is indisputable, as evidenced by disparities in relative income, power and other standards. Co-dependency and addiction have a long historical relationship with higher education, and there is little question that sexual minorities face discrimination. So if the basic rules favor wealth, gender conformity and skin privilege, then we could see that interesting divide and conquer strategies, power disparities and advantages could be conferred by the possession or suppression of certain characteristics. Which characteristics might trump others at any given time depends on a calculus which can be observed, deduced and predicted, but

whose workings I will leave to a later piece. Suffice it to say that the configuration of the Justice Chess board (whether national, state, local, or private or public) and the hidden rules (what we say we do, and what we really do), determine what is fair play and when and how cheating will occur. As they say in hip-hop culture, "Don' hate tha' playa' hate tha' game."

Indeed, Lane's organizational experience reflects this complexity since our definition of diversity moves beyond the legal strictures of Affirmative Action—with its focus on "protected classes" such as white women and ethnic minorities of either gender—to include sexual orientation, class, source of income, disability, and other characteristics. It becomes a tricky dance to not hate the players, especially when they cheat *and* trash talk you about calling them on their cheating. I've been accused of hiding behind my race for protesting blatant discrimination *against white candidates* in the course of one hiring process, and called a racist for referring to someone as a "fair-haired boy" in the course of another—both times from members of the same department. A white faculty member related to me a lunchroom conversation from that same department: "Have you heard they hired an African in Math?" "Won't they ever learn?" Given that the speaker's department hired only two full-time African-American faculty twenty years apart, and failed to retain a third highly talented African faculty member, such attitudes are not surprising.

In the current form of game chess, each side has sixteen pieces: eight pawns, two each of rooks, knights and bishops, and the royal couple of the queen and king. In the simplest form of Justice Chess, a contest between Black and White, the two sides are never equal. Black is always outnumbered; White controls the strategic center squares as well as overt and covert rule making. At this level it is a simple matter of simulating historical American race relations and strategic moves and countermoves as they play out in the workplace. In organizations where whites have traditionally outnumbered blacks, they have of course defined the overt rules (*de jure*) as well as the unspoken ones (*de facto*). If two people, black and white, are equally qualified, does one or the other have a hidden tactical advantage? The black player might see the white player as having the ability to utilize the white privilege construct of "the good old boy" network. The white player might see the black's tactical advantage as Affirmative Action. However, Affirmative Action in hiring can only be used legally to break a tie between equals if an organization is underutilized for protected classes in the job category for which it is hiring). For example, the U.S. Army is 25 percent black; does this mean that one quarter of the generals or officers are also black? Do barriers exist to upward progression or performance in the military? At Lane the employment rules of the game do define the number of Justice Chess pieces Black is allowed: the proportional numbers

allowed by Affirmative Action. But, according to a B.A.S.E. file based on a thirty-year faculty of color's memory, the actual number of black faculty at Lane has never exceeded five or six full-time, and even fewer part-time, even though Affirmative Action allows potentially for more than twenty-five.

A Justice Chess analysis shows why this is so and where to apply strategic action. If you are playing the game, and you are outnumbered, the basic strategy is to increase your numbers and place strategic pieces in influential places on the board. The first Justice Chess piece in this analysis is the king: Richard Turner, Lane's only black president. While anecdotal accounts vary about his overall efficacy, his administration was able to, in addition to the aforementioned telephone registration, initiate one fairly innocuous but important policy: that all hires faculty and above will be national searches. (Black king moves to control the strategic center squares which define critical aspects of the game and widen the pool of players.) The change was innocuous because it was already standard policy elsewhere in higher education. Interestingly, according to former Lane Affirmative Action Officer Donna Albro, no white president before Turner—indeed, no hiring authority at Lane before him—had suggested implementing such a strategy. The policy change was important because the hiring norm at Lane appeared to rely on University of Oregon cronyism, parochial nepotism (i.e. church members as well as family members), and other time-tested, in effect discriminatory hiring practices.

According to a white manager with a long history at Lane, a black faculty member in the counseling department had briefly served as an Affirmative Action officer in the 1970s, although no workforce analysis or records can be easily accessed today. In the interim a Justice Chess queen, Jackie Belcher, served for a time with Richard Turner. Her legacy at Lane seems to be that "her leadership style wasn't a good fit for Lane," according to some white administrators. She didn't even get an interview in the selection process that brought President Jerry Moskus to campus in 1990. Interestingly, Belcher seemed to be a good fit for larger and more diverse community college systems in Minnesota and Georgia, where she has served as president.

The conclusion drawn early among some of us in B.A.S.E. is perhaps the "leadership style" issue is code for something else. Because larger institutions didn't seem to find Belcher incompatible, is the "fit" issue actually that she is better suited to an urban diverse environment rather than an environment slowly evolving out of legal segregation, such as Lane County? I find it not unthinkable that Lane Community College might reflect the values of its county, and the county its namesake, Joseph Lane, who was not exactly an ally for equal human rights for communities of color. It is relatively simple to find that Eugene has been well-represented in the Ku Klux Klan, with mem-

bers prominent in the Elks Club, Chamber of Commerce and American Legion. I'm not casting aspersions here, but merely pointing out that active racism is part of Lane County history, and can we really say those historical influences have been put in the recycle bin of our current workplace desktop?

With the hiring in 1992 of Donna Albro, an African-American woman and the first dedicated Affirmative Action Officer (Justice Chess bishop) at Lane, certain conditions began to be illumined in sharp relief. First of all, as the college was an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer, it was supposed to perform basic things like workforce analysis and keeping records of hiring processes. Ostensibly a white male vice-president was the previous Affirmative Action officer, but Albro said she found no evidence of records being kept in a way to ensure compliance with federal standards, the consequences of which include the loss of all federal funding and exposure to lawsuits.

At the time, the Affirmative Action officer reported directly to the president and was independent of the personnel department. (This is one accepted way to operate in terms of checks and balances. In some institutions Affirmative Action is independent of personnel; in others it is incorporated into Human Resources.) Though accounts may vary as to why, Albro was not given her own physical office for more than a year and not given dedicated administrative support. The Women's Center put her up in a spare room, and she made do with a Work Study student to help handle complaints and the basic compliance research. Again, ask the Justice Chess question: If a white man had been hired in her position, would an office have been cleared and an administrative assistant hired or reassigned to assist him with the work of bringing the college into compliance with federal standards?

One of the first things Albro began doing was the workforce analysis. Beginning with my hire in 1992, she recorded the following results: There were forty-four faculty positions open due to retirements. Lane received more than 1400 applications, over 160 of them minority applicants—11 percent of the total applicant pool. African-Americans alone can comprise up to 12 percent of faculty (depending on region and discipline) in higher education nationally. If Lane's hiring processes were transparent, i.e. barrier-free, then the hire ratio for national searches reasonably would have resembled the nation's. It's reasonable to expect then that four of the forty-four would be minority hires, assuming qualifications were met. I was the only minority hired. Ask the Justice Chess question: Is it possible that only one minority applicant out of a pool of 160 was qualified to work at Lane? *Arguendo*, let's say only a third of the minority pool met qualifications; out of more than fifty, could only *one* make the cut? What are the

chances? The federal standard for determining the presence of discrimination in Affirmative Action, once you do the statistical math, is two standard deviations from chance. Albro, crunching the numbers of my cohort, found that the chances of one minority being hired out of 160 was three standard deviations from chance. Minorities were applying in proportional numbers, but they were somehow being screened out.

One B.A.S.E. file concerns an Asian Fulbright scholar who taught part-time on campus and related to me that he felt he was not being given a fair chance at a full-time position. After he had left Lane for a Washington state four-year school, I had a conversation with a white faculty member in that department, who said that students had complained that the Asian scholar's accent was difficult to understand, and that might have played a factor in the hiring decision. "His *accent?*" I asked incredulously. How about his skills in the classroom and command of the material? I have to understand sixteen types of accented English—eight regional American and eight European—and that's just from white people. One could add another sixteen accents, taking into account various Latino, Asian and Francophone or Anglophone African-accented English. Where I come from, an educated intelligent sophisticated person is expected to understand a person's accented English without comment; perhaps you might ask the person to repeat a word for clarity to improve your learning curve. Are we preparing our students to operate competently in a world of difference, or in a world of rural Lane County?

Leaving behind the obvious discriminators mentioned by Albro (double points for previously employed part-timers, nepotism, allowing hiring committees to see the voluntary ethnic identification on applications) and accounting for the fact that people often feel comfortable hiring people like themselves, ask the Justice Chess question: Is it really in the interests of our students and community to hire a monolingual white male from Idaho or Montana to teach world history, or a Coptic Ethiopian who speaks five languages besides English and teaches the same subject using all of those languages in the classroom for comparison? As one past B.A.S.E. member (a Justice Chess bishop who spoke seven languages and fell to a gambit) observed, some faculty members' idea of diversity was hiring caucasians from Colorado, Idaho, or Wyoming, rather than simply hiring caucasians from Oregon.

Judging from the actual workforce numbers, it appears that has been the case. Furthermore, when it was announced at a recent spring In-Service day by emcee Russell Shitabata that three-quarters of then-current faculty of color had been hired over the preceding five years, those numbers can be attributed to policies started by Albro, who said she finally had to file a constructive discharge lawsuit in her frustration with less than reasonable responses to her standardized programming. (Black bishop moves to

strategic center squares deep in White territory, redefining the rules of the hiring game to be consistent with the law, and acts to increase proportional minority numbers.) This is like calling in an airstrike on your own position, in effect telling the Feds your organization is not making progress and the only way you can be constructive is to leave, but that the Feds need to come check this out. (There is no accessible federal record of investigation, although there was at least one substantial out-of-court settlement arising from racial discrimination in hiring, and a documentable hostile work environment for a number of protected- class employees.) Albro's legacy at least consists of a dedicated Affirmative Action office, initiating a Diversity Team, recreating Ethnic Studies, and a hiring training mandatory for at least committee chairs. But she was ultimately sacrificed in a gambit, taking herself out of play. After all, if you file a federal lawsuit against your employer, you probably don't want to hang around waiting for the results.

Another Justice Chess bishop falling to a gambit was told by at least one of his faculty members, ostensibly apologetically, that that person resisted his initiatives solely because it was an African-American bringing them forward. This bishop's gambit was bringing me in to assist in recruiting another knight into a strategic department. (Black bishop moves Black knight into position to facilitate the entrance onto the board of another Black knight deep in White territory.) It's my perception that if I hadn't been involved in that hiring process, another black faculty member wouldn't have been hired (bringing total black faculty at the time from four to five). It was a perfect Affirmative Action play: If you have a tie between equally qualified candidates and one is a protected class for which the institution is underutilized, you may use Affirmative Action to break the tie. I pointed out that since the candidates were equally qualified, and there were no black faculty in the department, then let's give this one a whirl. This knight and the bishop later both left Oregon for Georgia, where Jackie Belcher also presides. I'm sure Eugene considers itself more liberal than Georgia, but evidently Georgia is somewhat more used to utilizing educated black people as a standard practice.

There is a century-old adage: "If you're yellow, you're mellow; if you're brown, stick around; if you're red, come ahead; if you're white, you're all right; if you're black, get on back."

The 2003 ethnic breakdown compiled by IRAP (Institutional Research and Planning) and presented at the Lane In-Service of Spring, 2004 showed that out of 1005 total employees 884 identified as White, 30 American Indian, 29 Unknown, 24 Hispanic/Latino, 23 Asian/Pacific Islander, and 15 African-American. (The B.A.S.E. count

is 10 for that year, but we only count people we actually can see on the main campus. During In-Service for example, part-time workers from other Lane centers in the county might account for the difference.)

When pointing the finger at unequal scales of justice, the tendency to intervene, to tip the scales back by weighing in on one side or another, should be resisted. After all, a finger gets tired pushing down on the lighter side against heavier forces. Is Lane the kind of place that could support another twenty-two African-American faculty scattered among strategic departments without it being worthy of comment? Not yet. Not if the experience of B.A.S.E. members are any indicator. Do we value the actions supporting institutional diversity or the inaction of institutional racism when the B.A.S.E. files report use of the N-word coupled with gun threats directed at an African-American classified supervisor ("If I had a gun I'd shoot that nigger") and the offending party gets moved to another building on the main campus? Run the Justice Chess simulation in photo-reverse: If a black male subordinate in this organization had called a white woman supervisor a bitch and threatened to shoot her, could he expect to be immediately terminated, or simply to receive a transfer and a letter of reprimand? What signal is sent to an African-American classified worker who hears the N-word used in their office? ("I didn't know there were so many niggers working up in here, and I work here.") Ask the Justice Chess questions: If the nigger-haters and those who object to the hiring of Africans don't support the college's Core Values and mission, why are they retained? How are they integral to the college community in a changing and increasingly diverse world? Does "zero tolerance" mean zero effective action?

I have no illusions that purging the college of vocal anti-diversity heavyweights will rebalance the scales. It could be a start, one I'd support, but also one I don't expect from the college. After all, being a Klansman or a member of the National Alliance isn't illegal, though their historic domestic body count outweighs that of al-Qaeda. However, they apparently occupy some strategically protected squares on the Lane Justice Chess board.

Perhaps that protection is not in our best interest as much as allowing and supporting diversity. But are we ready for a more diverse future? When does academic freedom give way to responsibility, to a larger view of humanity? When does that responsibility lead to active support and retention of demonstrably targeted yet skilled and talented staff of color? Some of us are used to working in difficult situations, but is it entirely necessary that we must? Using the Justice Chess metaphor, I'd transform or replace the White knights and bishops who protect the hostile pawn structure that prevents Black pawns, knights and bishops from advancing. A more blunt way of putting it could be: Diversity works here; if you have a problem with that maybe *you* shouldn't.

Mark Harris
is a son, father, partner and mugician-griot, who performs the occasional songwriting gig, writes the pithy commentary, articles and trainings for print or radio, as well as a book on recovery from racism. He received his Bachelors and Masters in Psychology from Sonoma State University. He seeks to emulate a maroon tradition, which actively resists colonization and mental slavery while creating a free culture through a process involving creativity, scholarship and activism through learning. He has been at Lane for thirteen years as the Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator, where he facilitates the Multicultural Substance Abuse Prevention Program and its outreach organ, The Recovery Center. He collaborates on a local multiethnic history project called "I Too Am Eugene."

Justice Chess players, acting singly or in concert, are always outnumbered, always outgunned, but sometimes able to occupy strategic squares to define the terms and rhythm of incremental change. In my home department where members of the "Fab Five" hold forth on fashion and style, where a baby shower is held on campus for a lesbian couple, where three faculty of color were hired in a row, not by lowering standards but by raising the bar requiring a culturally competent standard as part of the minimum qualifications for a job, we are proving that Lane is capable of changing to meet the needs of a diverse world. This world actually always *has* been diverse, but apparently some of our community have not been comfortable living there.

As Lane Community College celebrates it's 40th anniversary, B.A.S.E. celebrates the thirty or so African-Americans who have worked for Lane and contributed to the current campus climate toward greater diversity. Though African-Americans are not alone in contributing to the efforts to diversify Lane over the last forty years, Justice Chess players have played significant and strategic roles. If we were allowed to exist in parity with our available numbers, change could occur faster, but could Lane and by extension Eugene handle it? No Justice Chess player in B.A.S.E. has taken a job here without an attitude of "You knew the job was dangerous when you took it." But you can't win if you don't play the game well; Justice Chess players need to have the full complement of players occupying strategic positions in strategic departments. Knowing that Justice Chess players can be of any demographic characteristic, knowing that opponents aren't necessarily Klansmen (though some are and unfortunately I am being literal, not hyperbolic), on the simplest level Justice Chess White represents White Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy (WSCP), and Justice Chess Black represents *any* more inclusive point of view, not just opposition. In Justice Chess, Black strives for equality, justice and unity, not simply uniform conformity. I'm okay with Klansmen believing I am culturally inferior, but they'd better not expect me to believe it or act in a subservient manner. I am a Justice Chess knight after all. Knowing that there are more Justice Chess players than B.A.S.E. members causes me to be optimistic. Wisdom begins when you plant a tree, the shade of which you may never see, the fruit of which you may never eat, but whose taste will set the taster free.

From the LaSells Stewart Center to the Center for Meeting and Learning:

Is the Oregon Diversity Institute a Replicable Social Justice Vehicle?[1]

José Ortal

...what we are able to do or not do is seldom a matter of money; it is almost always a matter of will.
—*Charlie Nelms*

Introduction

This sketch of the Oregon Diversity Institute's (ODI) ten-year history focuses on the post-1998 period. Based almost exclusively on ODI records, it outlines areas of ongoing ODI Board interest and discussions, and concludes with a partial inventory of areas in need of further study.

The ODI is an outcome of the Oregon Institute on Ethnic Diversity Seminar, convened with the assistance of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and held at the LaSells Stewart Center in Corvallis, Oregon from October 16-18, 1994, with Chemeketa, Clackamas, Lane, Mt. Hood, and Rogue community colleges participating. ODIs have since been held at the Eugene Downtown Athletic Club, Chemeketa Community College, Salishan Lodge, Red Lion Inn in Salem, Rogue Community College, and Lane Community College. Over the years regionally and nationally recognized diversity practitioners, including Rudy Acuña, Suzanne Benally, Faces of America, Victor Lewis, Evelyn Hu-DeHart, Tim Wise, Ed Morales and Robert Greygrass, have made indelible contributions to the ODI. Geographic accessibility issues, the desire to accommodate schedule conflicts with regard to participants' needs and other regional conferences and, more recently, the ODI's survival in the increasingly frugal post-2001 period have been a constant concern for ODI Board members.

The synergistic energy first experienced in 1994 at the original seminar in Corvallis has evolved into ODI's current mission statement of honoring, valuing and celebrating individuals from all of our diverse communities; providing learning venues to help conference attendees prepare for an increasingly diverse future; strengthening existing network ties between educational institutions and learners; fostering private and public sector partnerships; championing planning and institutional transformation initiatives that address historic and present inequities; and examining hegemonic power relations.[2]

The Oregon Diversity Institute

Descriptive Data on the 1999-2004 ODI Conferences

Year	Conference Theme	Dates	Location	Registration
1999	Changing Faces: Connecting Cultures	Oct. 27-29, 1999	Gleneden Beach, OR	57
2000	Changing Faces: Connecting Cultures	Nov. 2-3, 2000	Salem, OR	119
2001	Voices of Diversity: Focusing on Personal & Institutional Transformation	Nov. 7-9, 2001	Salem, OR	166
2002	Keeping the Spirit: Building Inclusive Communities During Uncertain Times	Nov. 7-8, 2002	Salem, OR	178
2003	Recognizing Your Contribution to Oregon's Diverse Future	Nov. 13-14, 2003	Grants Pass, OR	225
2004	Successful Diversity Strategies: Ten Years of Working for Access, Social Justice, Human Rights, and Equity	Nov. 5-6, 2004	Eugene, OR	193

The 1999 ODI benefited from generous contributions from the Oregon Community College Association, Western Center for Community College Education, Tenison Haley, and Sony Corporation. Kip Fulbeck's multimedia keynote on Hapa identity and related topics brought the house down. The program included strong presentations on student retention initiatives, "Konaway Nika Tillicum: Native Youth Academy," the over-representation of minorities in the juvenile system and racial profiling, a panel of community college deans and vice presidents, Deborah Cochrane's retrospective, the "Portland Teachers Program: Ten Years of Partnership," and presentations on Latino(a) student issues. The "Student Fishbowl: A Dialogue With Students" session yielded important information for participants and non-student services staff interested in doing a better job at their institutions. Presentations by then Oregon State Senator Susan Castillo and Treasurer Jim Hill helped increase the ODI's state-level name recognition, and added to what many attendees rated a top-notch program.

The 2000 ODI received direct financial support from Blue Mountain, Clakamas, Mt. Hood, Umpqua, Central Oregon, Lane, Oregon Coast, Chemeketa, and Rogue community colleges, and Tenison Haley; and in-kind assistance from Linda Herrera, Cris Cullinan, Oregon State University's Western Center for Community College Development, Jerry Moskus, Adrian Rodriguez, Jim Garcia, and Michael Sámano. Harrison Owen's *Open Space Technology* methodology[3] was posited as a viable strategy in preparation for and during the heat of debates about diversity, and Carla Gary's "The Promise and Power of Community" keynote set the tone for a somewhat more academically focused conference. Discussions about community college student disability accommodations issues, the diversity/accreditation nexus, Evelyn Hu-DeHart's "Race in 21st Century America: Black, White and Beyond" keynote address, and pedagogy and student survival strategies panels were nicely complemented by Anselmo Villanueva's and Greg Rikhoff's "Building Alliances and Institutional Planning Across Multiple Public Agencies,"[4] a screening and subsequent discussion of the film *Children of the Camps: The Documentary,* and the opportunity to learn salsa and merengue dancing.

I remember musing, as I was driving back from the very successful conference, that many of the academic and institutional contacts and public relations initiatives for the ODI's ongoing vigorous growth seemed to be in place.

Jason Mak's work on the 2001 ODI's *Proceedings Report from Open Space Technology* is exceptional in that it is the first such ODI conference report. Three Thursday afternoon concurrent session strands examined Chinese American, Native American, Hispanic/Latino, and Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT) issues, institutional and programmatic initiatives and best practices, e.g. Racism Free Zone, diversity practitioners'

milieus, strategic planning for institutional diversity programming, and the academic preparation of bilingual teachers, and survival strategies for students of color.

Friday's intriguing *Open Space Technology* work included discussions on "People of Color Twelve-Stepping the Ivory Tower," "Media Influence on Race Relations," "After 9-11: Are We Blaming the Victims and Other Conundrums?," "Getting Ethnic: Understanding Our Roots and How They Affect Our Work," and "Educating People on Muslim-Arabic Culture." Given the charged political atmosphere of November 2001, that year's ODI was an exceptionally successful conference.

Tenison Haley's death in October 2002 robbed the ODI of perhaps its most passionate supporter and greatly saddened its board members. Blue Mountain, Chemeketa, Lane, Linn-Benton, Mt. Hood, Rogue, and Umpqua community colleges provided financial support that year, and Linda Herrera, Oregon State University's Western Center for Community College Development, and Mary Spilde furnished in-kind help. Keynoter Tim Wise opened the conference on Thursday. Anti-bias alliance building, multicultural and linguistic pedagogical strategies and panels focusing on Native American issues rounded out the conference.

In Spring 2003, Rogue Community College staff proposed a new ODI hosting strategy to the Board, requested seed money and offered to host the 2003 ODI at the Grants Pass Redwood Campus. The conference planners' extraordinary identification of and partnering with twenty-three contributors, a well-organized Rogue Theatre performance, and rich presenters tableaux led to an ODI first: Late-comers turned away due to a full venue. Student led presentations, vocational-technical workshops, panels on LGBT issues, discussions of anti-hate strategies, and an in-depth description by Oregon Shakespeare Festival staff of their diversity initiatives rounded out a well-developed conference.

The 2004 ODI funding was provided by Chemeketa, Clackamas, Clatsop, Mt. Hood, Lane, Rogue, and Umpqua community colleges. Jim Garcia, Victoria Payton, Julie Baker, Colby Sheldon, Susan Matthews, Ellen Cantor, Jerry Ross, Karen Edmonds, Dennis Carr, Ruth Wren, Sabrina Davis, Melissa "Spider" Smith, Greg Evans, Debbie Johnson, Lori Brenden, Shirley Nagy and Drew Viles gave spirited staffing and support. Juried workshops were organized into eight institutes: Student Leadership and Empowerment; Multicultural Organizational/Policy Development for Senior Level Managers and Policy Makers; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer; Social Justice Education; Promoting Social Justice and Diversity in the Classroom; Community Building and Partnerships; Promoting Social Justice and Diversity in the School/Workplace Environment; and Lane Community College's Reading Together Project. The conference theme outlined the Board's, stakeholders' and presenters' conviction that an injury against one is an affront to all.

Conclusion

Had it not been for Tenison Haley's tenacity, would the ODI still be alive? Like Charlie Nelms in this piece's opening quotation, Haley never gave up, and, in large measure because of his perseverance, leadership, collegiality, continuing interest in all aspects of the diversity equation and substantial finacial support, the ODI is alive and well today. As the ODI Board continues its journey through the diversity continuum, the yearly conferences take on lives of their own and gift conference participants with indelible moments such as Fulbeck's 1999 keynote address. Examinations and re-examinations of varied academic topics, such as the exploration of the *Open Space Technology* methodology, are ODI trademarks.

Good stewardship practices dictate that collaborative vigilance is the best guard against complacency. The ODI Board's expanded and more geographically inclusive membership bodes well for the Institute's support of the 2005 ODI (scheduled for Bend, Oregon) and ongoing fostering of diversity issues explorations. Although many aspects of the ODI's operations and long-term impact remain unexamined, it is hoped that this synopsis will focus scholarly interest on the Institute. Areas ripe for further attention include:

- What are the ethical and intellectual connections between the Civil Rights Movement and the European-American allies (e.g. Tenison Haley and the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity's Maggie Abudu) that have played such prominent roles in social justice initiatives?
- Would a corpus of analyses of these leaders' impacts broaden the current political discourses on the Civil Rights Movement and yield important organizational development information and/or furnish innovative reinterpretations?
- Are there more methodologically rigorous ways of measuring the long-term effects of initiatives such as the ODI? Monographs in search of authors might be the creation and housing of a Women's Center in an Oregon State University building on the Central Oregon Community College campus as a direct result of the 2003 ODI, historical increase in the number of ODI student panels, a much more detailed analysis of the themes enumerated in the ODI conferences brochures, equally meticulous mining of available conference evaluations, and structured or unstructured oral histories of ODI presenters, conferees, supporters, and past board members.
- Equally important questions regarding the long-term prospects of diversity initiatives and conferences generally and the ODI in particular, remain only

José Ortal
was born in Cuba and raised in Los Angeles. He earned a B.A. in History from California State University, Long Beach, an M.A. in History from the University of California, Los Angeles, and is currently ABD at the University of Miami, Coral Gables. His career has included stints with the cities of Los Angeles and Santa Monica, and Cordoba Corporation. He currently serves as the Oregon Diversity Institute's Board Chair and Centro LatinoAmericano's Board Co-Chair. He is currently Director of AA/Diversity/EO/Recruitment & Employment at Lane Community College. There is an urban legend that Mr. Ortal is quite the fisherperson.

partially answered. What lessons may be gleaned from the Institute's various fundraising strategies, and what should be the ODI Board's short- and long-term positions on fundraising? How can social justice efforts remain true to their mission and survive in an increasingly politically conservative yet hopefully transitory period?

To paraphrase Socrates: Only through critical analyses and reflection can we better educate ourselves so that the journey towards an equitable and just society is the province of all and not the purview of the few.

Notes

[1] The views expressed herein are the author's, and he is responsble for any factual misinterpretations. Cris Cullinan, Jim Garcia, Steve McQuiddy, Victoria Payton and Sharon Smith helped sharpen this piece's context and content.

[2] The first version of the ODI Mission Statement and Goals and Objectives was finalized in 2001. The 2004 Mission Statement and Goals and Objectives are available at www.lanecc.edu/odi/ODI2004brochure.pdf .

[3] Owen, Harrison, *Open Space Technology: A User's Guide* and *Expanding Our Now: The Story of Open Space Technology* (Berrett-Koehler, 1997) and *The Millenium Organization* (H.H. Owen and Co., No Date).

[4] This panel outlined the process that was formalized through the signing of the *Memorandum of Understanding* by ten Lane County public agencies in February, 2002 and co-presented as "Academy and Community: A New Model for Social Justice Collaboration" at the 2003 National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education.

Diverse Reflections

Robert Lovitt
lives in Olympia, Washington. He studied poetics at Naropa University's Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, where he apprenticed with poet Allen Ginsberg. His work has been published in magazines such as The Christian Science Monitor, The Shambhala Sun, The Plaza *(Japan) and the* Jewish Frontier. *For information regarding his new book,* Daily Basis, *email: dailybasis@comcast.net. Robert currently teaches at Pierce College in Lakewood, Washington.*

Teacher Heaven

Robert Lovitt

barefoot in my office at 5:20 pm
charlie hayden and pat metheny
beyond the missouri sky
on the
mellow jazz tape player—
guitar and bass

no sun setting sunset
worlds turn
beyond the continuous rain

my chinese students
down the hall
bent at small desks
studying my vocabulary words
as if they were important

me in this quiet office
bent at my wooden desk
symbiotic
correcting their papers
as if i was important

who can say this is not heaven?

No Face

Sandy Jensen

I've told this story to myself before, gone over and over it like a monkey rinses a sweet potato, like a photographer washes the print over and over, changing light, changing emulsion, hanging print after print by short, plastic clothespins to the line, the face of the little girl turning and wavering on the page as the fan whirls angrily in the corner. In the faint red glow, I examine print after print, looking now at the Edvard Munch scream-faces of my mother and aunts, now at the dark mass of shadow that is old growth Western red cedar forest. I'm looking for a hunched-over figure seven feet tall, thick, sleepy eyes, huge, leathery lips protruding and painted a garish, haphazard red. The light picks up a tight weave of branches—is that her basket? Is that mass of black the horsehair wilderness of her head? The figure moves forward, recedes, each print different.

What we see in sharpest focus is the four-year-old girl. Her mother made the white party dress for her birthday; pearl-handled pistols from her father cinched around her hips. The black-and-white image shifts, some angle of light changes, and all the primary colors leap vivid from the emulsified page. She is gathering dandelions, the enormous, shaggy-headed, neon-yellow dandelions of the upper Skagit River. The pasture she crosses is a saturated, kelly green, and there in the distance is her grandfather's gyppo logging rig. Most interesting and compelling to an adventurous, curly-headed girl on her fourth birthday is the big-toothed saw mounted on a tractor frame. High metal seat catches sunlight; rusty saw blade teeth slicing the air to ribbons stands Sunday-still.

A man once told me his family came from the Ukraine. They were Mennonites, he said, who are a peaceable people. Stalin had this idea at that time to extend the boundaries of Russia into the beautiful, fertile country of the Ukraine, so he used a variety of coercions to decimate the male population. Some he arrested and sent to Siberia. This man's father was at home, just a boy himself, when bandits raided the family farm. The father-boy saw his own father and uncle shot in front of him. After this, in some way, the family came to America, but there is no life new enough to erase the shock waves that reverberate through generations. This man turns this story over and over in his hands, like a raccoon with an egg to break, or a photographer who has found an exposed roll of film in the attic: he's on his way to the darkroom.

I'm up on the metal seat when I see Dzonokwa in that cedar light. She opens her drooping eyes and looks straight at me. She raises her hand and places a thick, black finger over red lips as if to shush me, as if to say, "Keep our secret." Then she turns, looks back over her shoulder

and gestures to me. "Let's go," the gesture says, an urgent movement of arm through shadow and light. As I move toward her, I begin the fall toward the blade. I fall through childhood and time; I fall toward my mother's horror, my aunts screaming at the bright, arterial blood on my mother's hand-stitched party dress, the brilliant yellow dandelions spattered with blood; I fall toward their perfectly Oh'd mouths; I fall toward playground jeers of "No face! No face!" I tumble slow-motion toward a red horse who will save me from high school, who will catch my fall, and wild as a Horse Heaven mustang, lead me into the wilderness of a future without a face.

A man once told me that many years ago he had a spinal tap that went terribly wrong. As a result, for over a week his hearing became painfully acute. He could hear all nineteen overtones to a single note, so that playing music became agonizing. He could hear a furnace go on in a house three lots down the block. He wanted to say that to hear too much was for a time a curse, yet later, now, something remains, some acute sensitivity to the striking of a sitar string, some sense of latent meaning he seeks to understand in the reverberations where others cannot hear.

The red convertible with the three young men passed my car. They stared in the windows at the young lady with dark hair blowing back over a tanned shoulder. Her face came into view, and they started to laugh. One made a blade out of his hand and jerked it from nose to throat. "No chin," that meant, "No face. You ugly bitch, why don't you stay home?" That's what it meant. She could hear and not hear what they said.

Dzonokwa turned toward the forest. "Follow me," that meant.

The red horse jerked his head against the reins. "Let's run," that meant, and bareback, half flying off those high withers, one hand wrapped in thick, black horsehair, we ran.

A man once told me when he was in the Yukon with a Siberian Upic friend, they were sitting in the back of a pick-up truck talking. "Let's not talk for a while," said the friend, so they gazed out over the tundra with its tiny red grasses, its hummocks and invisible poolings of water, the small willows that thrive there. A small bird, perhaps a Savanna Sparrow, came near to perch on a willow branch. The Upic friend said, "See that bird? That's an ancestor who has come to tell us something. It might be your relative, or it might be mine. That's how the dead speak to us, through the birds."

Some wildness entered me like a vertical river. At first, I practiced with others; I made ceremonies and plays and elaborate events where others could perform, pretend to draw down the moon. But when I read out loud some old story, I felt her in the shadows. I was living at Glen Ivy at that time, in that big inn up against the Santa Ana Mountains. That was not Dzonokwa country, but during the stormy winter of 1978, she was there, living in an ancient bear cave high up the ravine formed by Coldwater Creek. I'd catch sight of her basket disappearing around a live oak, and I'd see where she'd been foraging for acorns, using the

centuries-old Luiseño mortar holes in the granite. Then those nights when we were all gathered around the river stone fireplace with the pear-shaped keystone, I'd see her nodding in the corner, big eyes closed, that huge head sunk down on her chest. She looked like she was sleeping, but when I opened my mouth, I felt her voice in me. Sometimes it grew large, like the night I read a new poem. I'd put on my red dress and yellow shawl, my long hair swinging like a horse's mane in front of my no face, and she was in me from the beginning: a cry, a call, a command, an invitation, a rising and falling in the night wind, a voice of sagebrush and salt, of cedar and longing, of hooves drumming and the distant call of a small bird. After many years, I stopped seeing her, but her voice is in my story, my painting of the world, the one with the door that opens on the sky.

A woman named Rosy Comfort once told me the story of two fourteen-year-old girls who were best friends. One was shy and disorganized, easily flustered, unable to focus on schoolwork. The other was bright-faced and outgoing, always at the top of their class. They argued, as girls will do, about free will versus destiny. Can humans ever deliberately, willfully change, they wondered, then double-dog-dared each other that very day: let's exchange personalities, and did. The shy, disorganized girl became a vivid, brainy beauty, who went on to CEO a dot.com in the late 1980s; she rode fortune's high wheel. The extrovert closed herself off with an act of free will, spiraled down into alcoholism, depression, and poverty. This is a true story.

In my painting of the world, there are blue horses you can't look away from. There are hills flung with sensual abandon in their golden folds, arms open to any gathering storm. Lightning flickers its spangled tongues across the wheat in a restrained eroticism—there where bold violet paint meets the green of a fading bruise. In such a universe of color, form, design, the sifting wind with its stories and songs, what preoccupation with personal face can matter? I age, I age. The world creates and destroys, creates and destroys, and I paint or do not paint. I sleep in the corner or hunt acorns, but some human pain that was once mine is now a shattered mirror. I enter the painting through a door in the sky.

When I was thirty-five I knew a man who said to me, "Is it time to have your face rebuilt? I think laser technology has caught up with you."

And so that happened. Not without process and pain, and not without wonder, but when it was done, and I could speak again, I became a teacher.

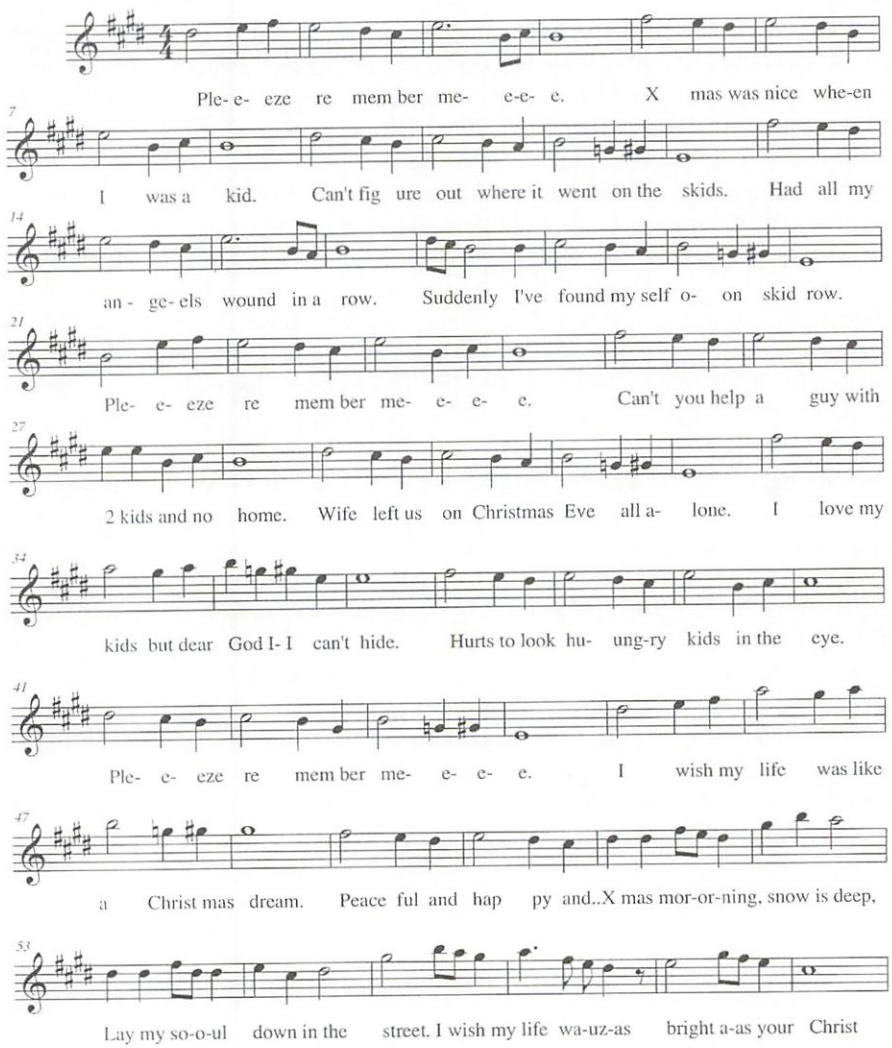
Sandy Jensen

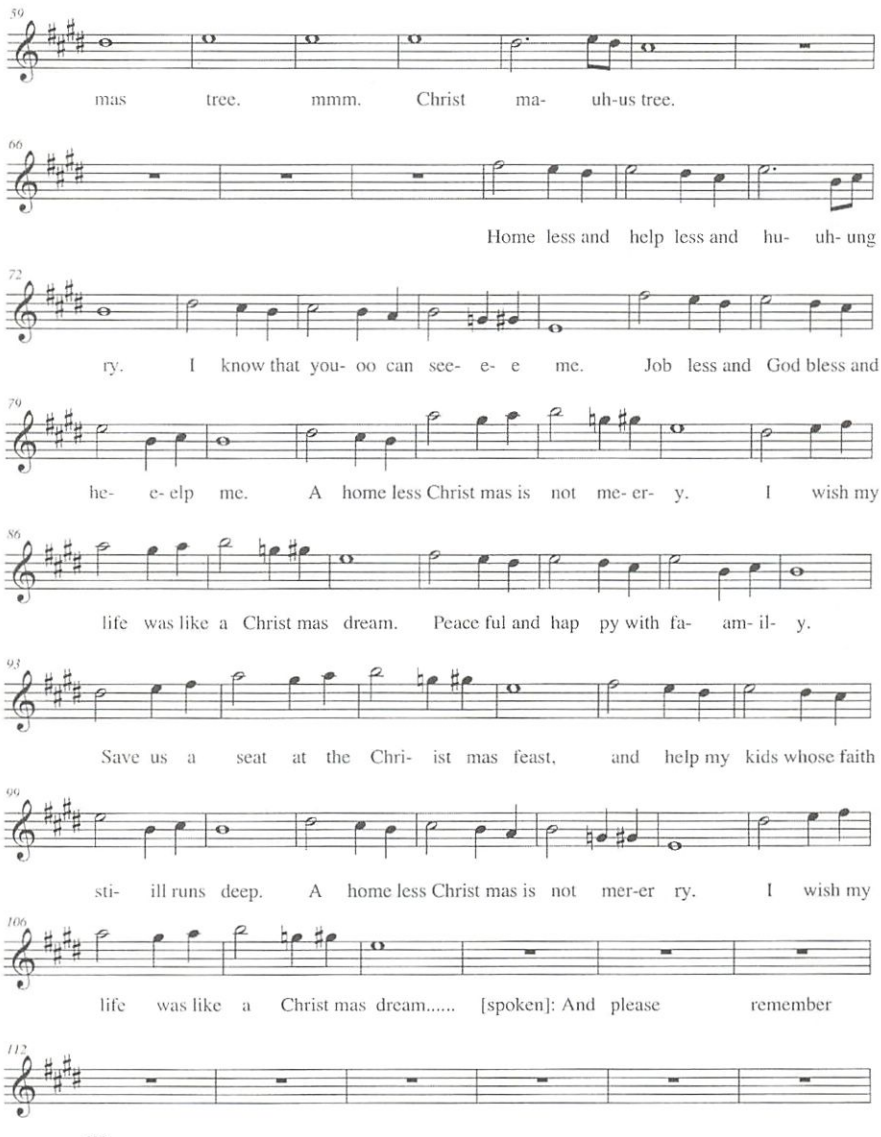
of Eugene, Oregon, is a three-time Teacher-of-the-Year who specializes in teaching literature and composition at the community college level. She has published essays, poetry and short stories for thirty years, and has won many local awards, including the OCTE Teachers as Writers Competition, 1st Place; OSPA NW Sonnet; OCTE Prose Poem, and others. On the web, you may view "Blue Ronel Running," February 2005 at the Cafe Irreal: http://home.sprynet.com/~awhit/fiction.htm.

Upcoming in print: "Home After Dark," Summer 2005 Pilgrimage Magazine.

Remember Me

Rich Ross





Rich Ross
is a faculty member at Lane Community College in the Science Department. He set out to write a verse story similar to Dr. Seuss (see "Zark the Shark"). It seemed an uncomplicated task as he had read stories to his child nightly.

He also composes music and lyrics for songs. He states that this has been a much easier task than his Dr. Seuss attempt because the magic of music is that the end-of-line words don't have to rhyme, and often do not.

Also, as a tool of the tune, the written lyric does not need to flow on paper, it has to flow with the music. Therefore, the written form of the lyric will often seem disjointed, klunky and not lyrical. The lyrics to "Remember Me" reflect this. But they fit well with the tune.

This piece marks the Moment's *debut into song publication. Enjoy this piece and if you have a guitar, pull it out and let us know what you think.*

Dan Armstrong *received his Ph. D. from Indiana University and taught at the University of Arizona, Oakland University, and Oregon State University before coming in 1991 to LCC, where he teaches film studies and composition. Most of his research and publications over the years has been in film studies, but his passion is for poetry.*

Work Song

Dan Armstrong

For Julie

Circling the birthing room
pacing in the ancient pain
laboring with your mother load
you startle us, then soothe

as we below
gathering at the table
for quiet conversation
or passing one another
in our circling paths
from room to room

listen to
your day-long work song
your labor of love
measuring by your breathy moans
your place on the scale of pain
as note by note
your mothering arias rise

telling us
how far he has dropped
how urgent his coming
how hard your work
until you reach deep down
for sounds that say "Soon!"

Midwife and assistant
hurry up and down the stairs
bringing hot water and towels
and our hopes
back up to you

as we
hearing the signal pitch
of your song that says "Now!"
move as metal to magnet
to the mouth of the stairs
leading up to you
but closer than if there

and huddle together
under the Roosevelt elk
standing in the tawny grass
on the wall behind
straining

to hear a word
a cry
anything
to tell us
he has arrived

he has swum
from the watery world
of your womb
into our common air.

Love's labor song
long last

Cultural Taxation: Workload Issues for Faculty of Color in Predominantly White Institutions

Michael Sámano

Introduction

College and university faculty are hired with relatively clear work role and workload expectations in the form of job announcements, job descriptions, or some sort of negotiated contract. Within the scholarly literature that focuses on faculty workload issues, one may find an area that looks specifically at diversity-related work role and workload experiences of faculty of color at predominantly white colleges and universities. The purpose of this paper is to explore aspects of this literature, identified broadly here as "Cultural Taxation," to gain a deeper understanding of how diversity-related work role and workload demands may negatively impact the personal and professional lives of faculty of color.

At predominantly white institutions, faculty of color consists of a numerically small population. Because of this, there may be work role and workload expectations and experiences unique to this group that are not shared by majority white faculty. Ibarra (2003) refers to these expectations and experiences as "minority burden" to describe an "over-commitment to minority activities/teaching."[1] Cooper and Stevens (2002) write, "When minority faculty are hired, they may face disproportionate advising and service loads because they are often the only faculty of color in a department."[2] Aguirre (2000) observes:

> Because they are often the only one in their academic department or college, women and minority faculty find themselves performing more service activities than White men faculty, such as advising or serving on committees that focus on women and/or minority students.[3]

Up to this point, this paper has used terms such as "faculty of color," "diversity-related work," and "predominantly white" colleges and universities. Prior to a discussion of the concept of Cultural Taxation, what follows is a discussion in order to define certain foundational concepts of this paper.

Faculty of Color

The use of the term *faculty of color* in this paper is for descriptive purposes only and not an assumption of homogeneity. Aguirre (2000) points out that use of the term faculty of color should be seen as a:

> ...descriptive category for examining the academic workplace experiences of non-White faculty. By no means does the term indicate a perspective that non-White

> faculty are a homogenous population, especially one with no internal variation...Thus, the term...is a descriptor, much like a fisherman's net, for capturing how the minority faculty is described in the research literature.[4]

Using a term like *faculty of color* not only attempts to label and distinguish one person from another, but also implies that, to some degree, the person in question agrees with one's use of the label to describe them. In other words, to achieve any degree of accuracy, identifying someone as a person of color, even if the person experiences light-skin privilege, takes some understanding of theories that address social identity development, and the historical social construction of whiteness.

Much of social identity development theories describe social identity in terms of levels, stages, or degrees. Various theories present a spectrum from having little, no, or negative self-image on one end, to having considerable or positive self-image on the other end, usually with some degree of overlap in one's attitude about one's self (Morey & Kitano, 1997).[5] Hardiman and Jackson (1997) point out, "in reality most people experience several stages simultaneously, holding complex perspectives on a range of issues and living a mixture of social identities."[6]

In addition to the degree to which one feels about their self-image, are discussions that focus on how a person maintains their identity, and how individuals look toward the identities of their ancestors when creating a sense of ethnic or racialized self. Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994)[7] discussed the notion of racial formation. The idea that race should be observed from a larger structural perspective, where it is developed within a sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhibited, transformed and destroyed. Schaefer (2004) writes, "Many writers [historically] have shown almost a fervent hope that ethnicity would vanish...Ethnicity was expected to disappear not only because of assimilation but also because aspirations to higher social class and status demanded that it vanish"[8] (p. 143). Marcus Hansen (1952)[9] developed the Principle of Third-Generation Interest. He argued that in the third generation—the grandchildren of the original immigrants—ethnic interest and awareness would actually increase, because by the third generation individuals would be secure enough in their position as a citizen, and they could feel safe in exploring the history of their ancestors. Mary Waters (1990)[10] interviewed white suburban ethnics and found grandchildren wanting to learn more about their ancestor's cultures, histories, countries of origin and spoken languages.

Diversity-related work

Diversity-related work refers to diversity work that is action-oriented and critical of institutional paradigms that have created tiered levels of oppression for various student and em-

ployee populations. In practice, this type of diversity-related work maintains a focus on social justice reform, what Rhoads (1995)[11] would refer to as "Critical Multiculturalism." Rhoads describes the difference between mainstream and critical multiculturalism this way: Mainstream multiculturalism has limited impact because it fails to transform monocultural institutions into multicultural democratic communities in that it does not fundamentally challenge Eurocentrically-conceived institutions. In contrast to mainstream multiculturalism, critical multiculturalism combines the conditions of cultural diversity with the emancipatory vision of a critical educational practice drawing from feminism, postmodernism and critical theory. Critical multiculturalism seeks to transform educational institutions from monolithic centers of power to democratic constellations in which organizational structures reflect diverse cultures and perspectives (pp. 10-11).

Diversity-related work represents a wide range of experiences. Depending on what U.S. Census box one checks, "diversity-related work" can impact different types of populations. For example, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Questioning) colleagues have requests made of them that are directly related to issues of sexual orientation such as: serving on a committee as a representative of a group or perspective, expected or feel the need to advocate for a student or club, pressure to coordinate certain events on or off campus, or advocate for students who are drawn to them because of who they are or represent. Female faculty on university and college campuses have requests made of them that are directly related to issues of gender, and so on. One can imagine that if someone occupies more than one "box" the requests made of them can increase or decrease.

For faculty of color, this type of work could include the following, regardless of one's professional training or spoken (job-related) workload expectations: curriculum development or assisting other faculty with diversity-related curriculum matters, research, teaching diversity-related subjects, student and/or club advising, mentoring (students or junior faculty of color), assisting with or conducting training/workshops related to diversity, conflict resolution related to race and ethnic relations, department/division/campus committees related to diversity, guest-speaking on self-identity issues (versus professional training or knowledge), campus festivals or holidays, translating or interpreting, and community volunteering and advocating.

Predominantly White Institutions

Earlier, there was a discussion of the social construction of identity in relation to one's sense of self. The discussion continues here with a clarification of the use of the term *white*. Embedded in the title of this research project is the phrase *Predominantly White Institutions*. According to the National Education Association (2004)[12], less than 15 percent of full-time faculty in public colleges and universities are defined as ethnic or racial minorities. Pre-

dominantly White Institutions, or PWIs, is a phrase that has been used to describe those institutions of higher education that contain a significantly higher percentage of white faculty than the number of white individuals in the United States.

In addition to a predominantly white faculty, PWIs also describe those institutions that serve a predominantly white student body. Similarly, there is also a term to describe those institutions that hold a statistically significant minority faculty and student body. "Minority-serving institutions make up a category of educational establishments including historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions and tribal colleges and universities" (Electronic dictionary 2004)[13].

There are certain things implied in this research project by using the socially constructed racial label *white* as a descriptor. Usage in this paper has to do with an acknowledgement of the historical differential treatment between those who have used, or benefited from, power to position and maintain themselves as part of a dominant group, and those who have been excluded as members of subordinated groups. Haney López (1996) writes, "White as a category of human identity and difference is an enormously complex phenomenon. Races are not biologically differentiated groupings but rather social constructions."[14] Schaefer (2004) explains, "the designation of a racial group emphasizes physical differences as opposed to cultural distinctions...The issues of race and racial differences has been an important one, not only in the United States but throughout the entire sphere of European influence."[15]

Haney López (1996) argues that race exists alongside a multitude of social identities that shape and are themselves shaped by the way in which race is given meaning. We live race through class, religion, nationality, gender, sexual identity and so on.[16] Haney López believes that like other social categories, race is highly contingent, specific to times, places and situations. He says,

> Whiteness, or the state of being white, thus turns on where one is, Watts or Westchester, Stanford University or San Jose State; on when one is there, two in the afternoon or three in the morning, 1878 or 1995; on the immediate context, applying to rent an apartment, seeking entrance into an exclusive club, or talking with a police officer.[17]

In addition to the historical context above, Schaefer (2004) explains that part of the social construction of whiteness in terms of skin privilege and a societal position of advantage when he writes,

> Whiteness carries with it a sense of identity of being White as opposed to being, for example, Asian or African. For many people it may not be easy to establish a social identity of Whiteness...However, one can argue that the social identity of White-

> ness exists if one enjoys the privilege of being White...Being White or being successful in establishing a White identity carries with it distinct advantages.[18]

The rationale for focusing on faculty of color at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) is because faculty of color experience different diversity-workload issues at minority-serving institutions than they do at PWIs. Diversity-related workload issues in minority serving institutions may be just as heavy, but will be validated, honored and appreciated, as compared to the tendency for that type of work to negatively influence the careers of faculty of color in PWIs.

Cultural Taxation

Some scholars have labeled unspoken workload expectations experienced by faculty of color as "cultural taxation." Cultural taxation is a concept adopted by Amado Padilla in 1994 to describe additional workload issues experienced by minority faculty. (Although this paper focuses on faculty of color, the literature points to various minority populations that experience this phenomenon). Padilla points out that not only does cultural taxation carry a burden of increased workload, but much of the diversity-related work that is asked of minority faculty is not valued. He refers to this as a "double-blind" or no-win situation.[19] Throughout the socialization of people of color, first as students then as professionals in the academe, they are told that:

> ...although diversity may be important, it is not a substitute for intellectual excellence and that we must develop more than ethnic competencies in our training. In fact, our competencies must be in a substantive content area, plus research methodology, and, of course, we must publish. However, at the first sign of trouble with an ethnic student or client, the administration relinquishes responsibility and calls upon a resident ethnic faculty member or graduate student(s) to deal with diversity experiences that the administration is unable to manage on its own. Unfortunately, the eventual 'payback' for such service is, in the case of the student, the warning that too much time is being spent on ethnic matters and too little on one's graduate program or, in the case of the junior professional, threat of loss of job security and advancement within the organization.[20]

Hobson-Horton (2004) points out that because of lack of representation in the faculty ranks, minority faculty tend to have heavier advising loads than white faculty members, causing minority faculty to spend more time with students. The time demands of such advising include "providing social support for students, writing letters of recommendation, and helping them with such post-undergraduate activities as job seeking, and selecting

graduate/professional schools."[21] For many people of color, these spoken and unspoken expectations and requests because of a lack of a core group of employees of color begins in graduate school. As Gay (2004) observes:

> Graduate students of color also experience a form of marginalization that, on the surface, appears not to be marginalization at all, and seems to counter the isolation [that some students experience]. Their status of being the 'only one,' or 'one of the very few' in their programs of study causes them to be in popular demand for many service functions. They are sought after to 'represent' diversity on committees, programs and promotionals, as well as being frequently called upon to make guest appearances in classes...This 'popularity' has some troublesome features. First, it is indiscriminate in that these students are asked to participate in affairs without giving due consideration to whether they have the competencies the tasks require. The invitations come from people in status positions who have power and authority that can be used to the benefit or the detriment of the students...The second problem with this 'popularity' is that it is precarious. Graduate students of color are popular and in high demand with faculty, administrators, peers and staff as long as they do not differ with or significantly challenge the wishes, ideologies and authority of the powers that be. If, or when, this happens there is no forgiveness.[22]

Kersey-Matusiak (2004) sees individual identity attached to the roles that we are asked or implied to perform, especially in situations of isolation, such as "professor, researcher, scientist, philosopher." She writes:

> For most of us, being the only representative of any group, or one of few, forces us to seriously consider who we really are in these settings. For a novice in the academy, particularly when one is isolated from networks of support, it becomes critical to acknowledge a self-identity that goes beyond the designated role of teacher, researcher, or scholar.[23]

Personal Impact of Cultural Taxation

Regardless of how the phenomenon of differential workload is defined, some scholars have started hypothesizing how the lives of faculty of color may be impacted. What Ibarra (2003) calls the "minority burden," Padilla (1994) identified as "cultural taxation," Gay (2004) refers to as "problematic popularity," and Smith (2004) likens it to a sort of "battle fatigue" found in military veterans. He observes:

> Racial battle fatigue develops in African Americans and other people of color much like combat fatigue in military personnel, even when they are not under direct (racial) attack. Unlike typical occupational stress, racial battle fatigue is a

> response to the distressing mental/emotional conditions that result from facing racism daily (e.g., racial slights, recurrent indignities and irritations, unfair treatments, including contentious classrooms, and potential threats or dangers under tough to violent and even life-threatening conditions).[24]

Smith (2004) believes that this phenomenon of "battle fatigue" can bring on various psychological and physical symptoms. Smith argued that race-related stressors are "those events that can 'throw a body out of balance' and can bring on the following symptoms: tension headaches and backaches, trembling and jumpiness, chronic pain in healed injuries, a pounding heart beat, rapid breathing in anticipation of conflict, an upset stomach, frequent diarrhea or urination, extreme fatigue, constant anxiety and worrying, increased swearing and complaining, inability to sleep, sleep broken by haunting conflict-specific dreams, loss of confidence in oneself and one's colleagues/department/college/university/community, difficulty in thinking coherently or being able to speak articulately under stressful conditions, rapid mood swings, elevated blood pressure, and emotional/social withdrawal."[25]

Professional Impact of Cultural Taxation

Ibarra (2003) observes that there are concentrated efforts by voters, state legislators and court rulings to dismantle decades of Affirmative Action and antidiscrimination legislation. At the same time, women and ethnic populations on campus continue to argue that the barriers that they have always faced in academia remain unchanged. He believes that this is a crucial point in the debate about educational reform. Despite steady increases by underrepresented populations on university and college campuses, real equity and diversity continues to remain elusive.[26]

Fogg (2003)[27] notes that institutions are disingenuous when they hire minorities, because the institutions will trumpet the hires as their proof of a commitment toward diversity, while not supporting the unspoken diversity-related work expectations placed on these same minority faculty members. In addition to teaching and service, there is the issue of research and publication. Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, Bonous-Hammarth, and Stassen (2002) reported that:

> Women faculty and faculty of color often encounter obstacles that constrain their ability to move up the academic hierarchy. Two obstacles of particular concern are (1) the tendency of women faculty and faculty of color to be overburdened with teaching and service responsibilities, and (2) the inflexible expectations of universities and colleges about research and publications.[28]

When identifying institutional barriers for faculty of color, one usually thinks of overt racist acts and practices. The reality is that in the twenty-first century, discrimination has become more covert in nature. Minority faculty may encounter what Hobson-Horton (2004) describes as "micro-aggressions."[29] The researcher describes micro-aggressions as "indirect racially motivated comments that are delivered verbally, nonverbally, and/or visually."

Micro-aggressions can manifest themselves as derogatory comments, the use of stereotypes, the posting of offensive materials on a departmental bulletin board, or the subtle differences in how minority and nonminority faculty are given opportunities for networking, socializing and mentoring.

Cooper and Stevens (2002)[30] believe that the key issue currently facing minority faculty in academe is their absence and undervaluing (p. 6). Cooper and Stevens argue that minority faculty often feel "unwelcome, unappreciated, and unwanted" as they face continual pressure "to prove that they deserve their positions" (p. 6). Cooper and Stevens argue that there are both structural and personal barriers to academic success, usually measured through tenure and promotion. They highlight the following (p. 6-8):

1. Minority faculty continue to be underrepresented in academe, holding a higher percentage of part-time and non-tenure track positions.
2. Minority faculty remain disproportionately located in less prestigious community colleges and four-year schools.
3. In the face of discrimination, minority faculty tend to leave the academy before they obtain tenure in significantly larger numbers.
4. Research on minority-related topics is attacked as nonacademic or inappropriate because of a focus on social change and minority issues.
5. Minority faculty hold more split or joint appointments which can serve as a barrier during the tenure review process.
6. Minority faculty often feel isolation, lack mentors, experience higher rates of occupational stress, and have to deal with institutional sexism and racism.
7. Teaching is undervalued if it involves minority-related subjects or courses.
8. When minorities are hired, they may face disproportionate advising and service loads because they are often the only minorities in a department.
9. Minority faculty tend to spend more time on teaching and service, leaving them vulnerable to attack at the point of tenure and promotion.

Cooper and Stevens conclude, "in sum, minority faculty continue to be perceived as 'other' and suffer from institutionalized racist attitudes that reflect their differences as inferior to dominant White Western values and norms" (p. 7).

Conclusion

Understanding how to identify micro-aggressions, individual prejudice and institutional discrimination is a key strategy to those who not only want to acknowledge the existence of a hostile work environment, but want to work toward eradicating systems that negatively impact the success of faculty of color. Ultimately, knowledge of how micro-aggressions and cultural taxation impact minority faculty can help to inform higher education leaders who are interested in working toward the creation of more equitable and safe working environments for all employees.

For those institutions working on diversity as a strategic area of focus, this area of scholarly research helps to draw attention beneath the surface of how individuals can be personally impacted by unspoken expectations that we sometimes knowingly and unknowingly place on each other. In a broader sense, research is important on this topic because it has the potential to impact strategic planning areas such as (a) contractual workload, expectations, and roles, (b) compensation for degree of cultural competency, (c) campus diversity initiatives, (d) recruitment, hiring, mentorship, retention and tenure/promotion of faculty of color, and (e) quality of work environment.

Notes on Page 155

Michael Sámano *self-identifies as bi-racial Chicano. After four years of military service, he started his academic career at Lane Community College. At the University of Oregon he studied Sociology and Ethnic Studies. He holds Master of Arts degrees from Humboldt State University and the University of California, Davis, and is currently working toward a Ph.D. in Education at Oregon State University. Professionally, Sámano has journeyed full-circle, as the program coordinator for Ethnic Studies at Lane. Personally, he enjoys dividing his time between the loves of his life: his partner, a young child, and a restored 1960s muscle car.*

Road Trip, With Signs

Leslie Rubinstein

Author's Note: *This travelogue is intended as a humorous look at signs of the times as well as a testament to my own glaring naiveté of so many things, including great swaths of American customs and cultures. But it has also been labeled as offensive.*

I welcome responses, and I think this journal's editors would agree. Is this piece an example of bias and stereotyping? Or is a writer's personal perspective on politics and public relations a suitable subtext for nonfiction? Or does your reaction just depend on whether your mental state is red or blue?

In June of 2000 I undertook a road trip with my brother Mike. Our mission was to drive our mother's car from Florida to Oregon, in a week, while she flew to her new home state. This type of move may not seem unusual if you are imagining a youngish person wanting to leave an urban megalopolis for the wilds of the Pacific Northwest, as some of us have done. Our mother, however, was 76 at the time. In fact, she was retiring from Florida, but that's another story.

On Friday morning, after dropping her off at the bustling Miami Airport ("...next time I'm going to take the train"), Mike and I headed north on the Ronald Reagan Turnpike, the toll road formerly known as Florida's Turnpike. We soon encountered a very unusual sign, a virtual advertisement for heaven. Imagine an enormous black billboard with thick white letters:

"You think it's hot here!"

—God.

My jaw dropped as we drove by, but then it dropped again when we had to pay $10.91 for our three free-market hours of driving.

Early the next morning we drove north through Daphne, Alabama, skirting Mobile Bay. When I noticed a small green "Adopt-A-Mile" sign sponsored by the "Optimist's Club," I forgave Alabama all of its sins. Maybe it was my middle-aged eyesight or kids with magic markers, but that had to be the best club name ever. And it reminded me of the "Adopt-A-Shore" sign I had seen in Florida. Then I had been annoyed at the sign's visual pollution as I was trying to appreciate the Atlantic Ocean, but now I realized that if volunteers were cheerfully willing to pick up other folks' trash in exchange for a bit of P.R., why should I complain? We drove on with a smile, crossing the Tchoutacabouffa River in Mississippi, headed for Louisiana.

So much of urban America looks the same, until you come to New Orleans. We spent Saturday afternoon sauntering through the city, encountering a cigarette machine (I thought they were illegal), and the oldest bar in the country. Talking about the risk of flooding with the proprietor of an expensive junk shop, I was told, "We live in a marsh...nobody's going to get left behind—everybody's going to die." Too bad the French Quarter doesn't have an Optimist's Club.

Back on the highway, we saw some very scary handwritten signs tacked onto trees: "Duke Country" (remember David?) and "Confederacy Museum—lest we forget." Having lived on both coasts, but never in the middle of the country, this is a part of the world I just don't get. I think of it as the sandwich meat of America, and I'm a vegetarian.

Due to strange geographical contortions, we entered Mississippi a second time, stopping at the Vicksburg National Military Park for an evening picnic. While taking a walk, I was startled to discover an old Jewish cemetery next to the park, not expecting many Jews in Mississippi today, let alone 100 years ago. Although we didn't find any headstones with our family's surname, I was reminded of the pluralism that exists everywhere in America, despite the stereotypes.

The next morning, we discovered that Arkansas has the worst interstate road surfaces in the country, giving you the feeling that you're galloping on a horse, with sound effects. On the other hand, all the highway gas stations trust you to fill your own gas and pay inside, afterwards—on the interstate! Arkansas's signs are also notable. There were quite a few Adopt-A-Miles, including the "Hi-Profile Dance Team", "Juvenile Court" and the "S.E. Arkansas Department of Community Punishment." Then, near Little Rock, we noticed a warning sign: "Penitentiary Area: Beware of Hitchhikers." I wondered how much of Arkansas was incarcerated.

By Sunday night we were in Oklahoma City, pulling into a small store to buy a phone card and ask directions to a nightspot where we might hear some live music. The two Pakistani brothers running the store suggested the gay club, which they said was the second largest in the country and the only venue open on Sundays. Although curious about the gay nightlife in Oklahoma, we were also tired, and opted for sleep in a motel.

In Texas the next morning, it wasn't the signs but the "sculpture" that was notable. I say sculpture, but that's not really the right word: what do you call the biggest cross in the western hemisphere, conveniently located next to the interstate highway? Then, half an hour before Amarillo, we passed the most cryptic sight of the whole trip: a long row of Cadillacs, with their back ends stuck in the ground and their front ends pointing towards the sky, all at the same unnatural angle. Yes, that was it. As we whizzed by, I could only scratch my head. Obviously, some Texans had a better sense of humor than I had imagined.

We didn't see any Adopt-A-Something signs, which is very odd because the first Adopt-A-Highway program was started in Texas. Many other states and even countries now have these programs, with guidelines that a club or business will gather the refuse on the roadway a few times a year. So people all over the world are volunteering selflessly to clean up litter in return for a little free advertising. In fact, there are now Adopt-A-Block, Adopt-A-Street, Adopt-A-Road, Adopt-A-Spot, Adopt-An-Area, Adopt-A-Reef, Adopt-A-Trail, Adopt-A-Bike Path and, in England, Adopt-A-Minefield groups. Clearly, Texas started a great movement.

But I didn't see any sign of it. And with the dearth of signs, I was getting bored. Because we were passing through Texas, in June 2000, I was reminded of what I believed to be the unrealistic yet still awful possibility of a Bush Jr. White House. With Mike driving, a pad of paper on my lap, and another 2000 miles to go, I felt compelled to compose a number of bad limericks to entertain myself.

In New Mexico, the Adopt-A-Signs were back, and by late Monday evening we approached Albuquerque. The first sign of high sign quality was: "Albuquerque: Next 17 Exits," followed by "Gusty Winds May Exist." Although we didn't catch the winds, our car was attacked by a swarm of bees sadly splattering themselves to death on the windshield and limiting our vision considerably. We were lucky to be able to see two very exciting signs: Adopt-A-Highway Litter Patrol: "Clowns of Enchantment" and "Deciding Factors Paintball Team." It would have been really thrilling to see the clowns and the paintball team picking up litter, but I was satisfied that clever folk were getting some visibility.

Heading for the Grand Canyon, we entered Arizona, and here the signage took a turn towards the macabre. The "Scary Larry" Adopt-A-Highway sign had me wondering if there's an Adopt-A-Sign executive board with editorial power over name content. What if "The Grim Reaper" or "Satan" volunteered to clean the roadsides? So I was glad to see the humble Adopt-A-Road: "Anonymous" south of Sun Crater National Volcanic Monument. But even odder was a string of litter patrols in memoriam. Instead of sending flowers or a donation to the deceased's favorite charity, you could volunteer to clean highway shoulders in honor of your recently departed loved one. We spent some time at the Grand Canyon early in the morning, and then headed north.

At a rest area in southern Utah on Wednesday evening, we encountered a religious anomaly. Four young Asian men were sitting at a picnic table, dressed in the traditional orange robes of Buddhist monks. For a moment, in the heat, I thought I was back in Thailand, where such a sight is common. What they were doing in the heart of the Mormon empire was beyond me. Could there actually be Buddhist missionaries in Utah?

I didn't expect a lot of environmentalists in Utah, either, so we stopped to admire the Adopt-A-Highway: "Earth Celebration Committee" sign, and found the best chile rellenos this side of the Rockies.

Back in Oregon early Friday morning, I noticed that our state's Adopt-A-Highway signs are very practical, but without much humor, intended or otherwise. Mostly we saw the first and last names of couples, as if trash patrol could be combined with the kind of regular "dates" that married people go on. Very close to home, the last Adopt-A-Highway sign simply said, "Roy and Dale." I liked that. A week on the road had me appreciating the public commitment but also the personal simplicity and, I must admit, I was tired of reading.

Much later that summer, taking a leisurely drive on the back road to Eugene, I encountered a mysterious and wonderful sign: Adopt-A-Highway: "Ananda Marga Yoga Society." I still don't know exactly who they are, or if they pick up litter with unusual grace and flexibility, but I have my eye out for them. If I can't pitch in with the Alabama "Optimists' Club" or the Albuquerque "Clowns of Enchantment," the Ananda Marga Yoga Society will do just fine.

Leslie Rubinstein *has been a part-time instructor at Lane Community College since 1997. She teaches students who are still learning that reading and writing are inferential activities, and not just a matter of black marks on a white page. She received a B.A. in Liberal Arts from Sarah Lawrence College in 1980.*

My Vita, Mi Vida

Wilkins-O'Riley Zinn

> *Describing yourself in understandable terms—your life's work, your image of yourself, your priorities, what you would like people to think you do, what you do, and what you would like to do next—is a telling slice of reality and aspiration... We should all have a personal curriculum vitae or resume that attempts to describe who we really are and not who we are trying to pretend to be.*
>
> —Richard Saul Wurman

> *Who am I anyway? Am I my resume?*
>
> —*A Chorus Line*, lyrics by Edward Kleban

I went back to school when I was forty, finished a bachelor's degree in two and a half years, taught high school and completed a master's degree at night, worked at a community college, and earned my doctorate in community college leadership while working full-time as a teacher educator. I'm now in my fifties, an associate professor at a small liberal arts university where I love my job. But these things that might be found on my vita are not all that I am, nor do they represent even a fraction of what I have been, or what I long to become. I have been many women, and I expect to be many more, all of them linked to my dreams for my life. Reflecting on what I have been allows me to use my past as foundation for building a future truly representative of my passions.

> *The events in our lives happen in a sequence in time, but in their significance to ourselves, they find their own order. . .the continuous thread of revelation.*
>
> —Eudora Welty

What does your life-list include? You'll find part of mine in "The Other Woman," which follows here, a poem I wrote during my doctoral studies as I began the outline for an autoethnographic dissertation. A reduction of "Quilting Me: Gathering the Pieces of My Life," the iconic outline for my dissertation, created during the same quarter, follows the poem.

The Other Woman
An Alternative Vita

I have made doll clothes out of crepe paper,
carefully sewing, gathering, ruffling edges.
I have colored hundreds of zinnias in shades of aqua and magenta,
row upon row of carefully outlined petals.
I have designed my own line of clothing for Lucille Ball paper dolls,
crayoning her coordinating hats and shoes and purses on notebook paper.
I have dressed in outfits beautiful to me
and never cared what any other person thought.
I have decorated rooms from coast to coast with cheap treasures
scavenged from unexpected places.
Making home wherever I have been.
I have sequined and bedazzled.
Sewn costumes for many Halloweens.
I have danced and tapped and twirled and done the splits
and backbends off of coffeetables.
And played the piano.
Endless scales and Mozart.
I have sung for congregations and for crowds.
Made a lot of joyful noise.
I have acted. Danced some more. And sung again.
And hung pictures and baskets. Spackled holes.
Listened. Cared.
Worked with stained glass. Learned to make linoleum prints.
Made curtains. Made a home. And another. And another.
I have baked a thousand cookies and then a thousand more.
Pink frosted bunnies with cinnamon candy eyes.
Chocolate chip with walnuts.
Oatmeal with raisins.
Shapes and colors and batches of fudge and
Bundt cakes decorated like Christmas wreaths.
I've folded origami animals and flowers and tried to learn to knit.
I've wrapped so many presents I couldn't start to count. Cleverly.
And I've done macrame and crewel, embroidered pillowcases and
made dishtowels out of flour sacks.
I've created clothing and picnics and parties with a theme.

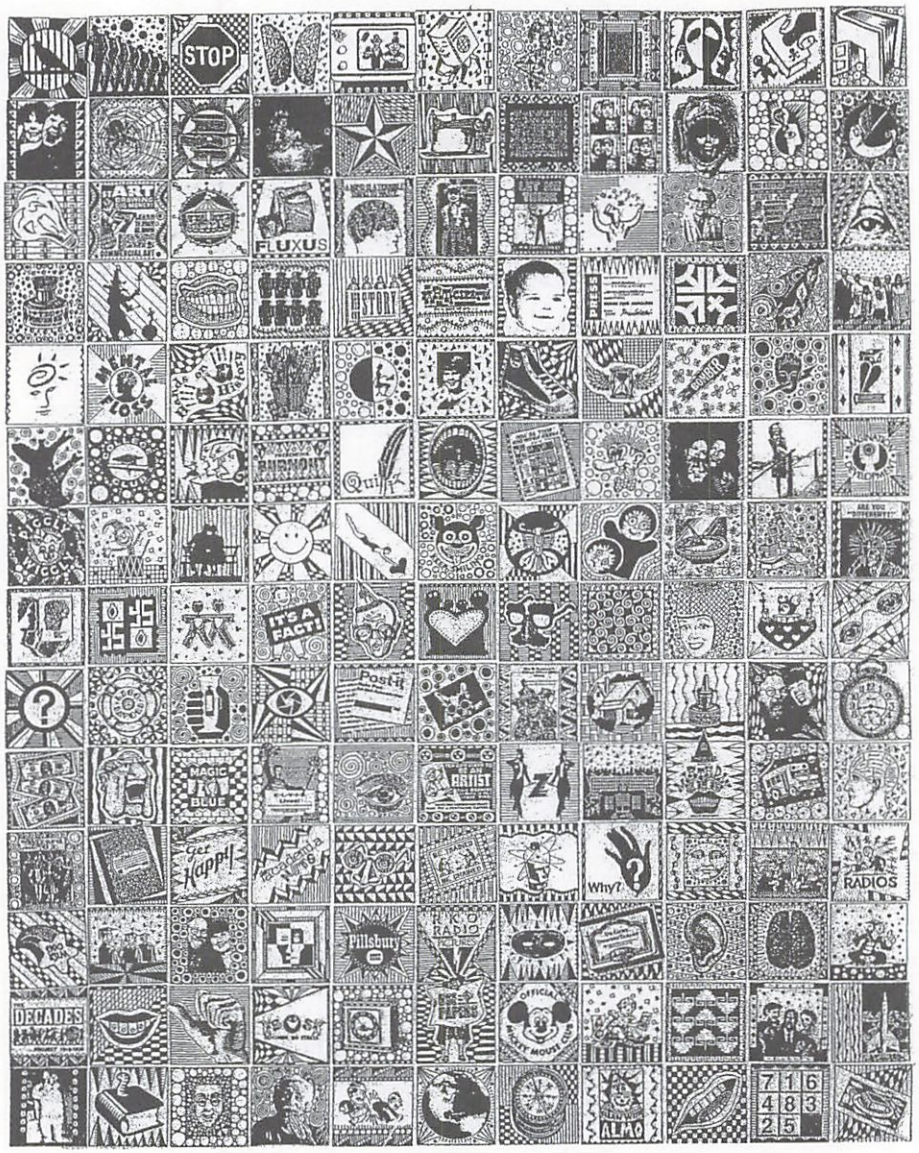
I've costumed shows.
I have taken this and transformed it into that.
Trash into treasure.
Stuff into home.
Wherever.
Whatever.
Life gives. I take. I make.
I have decorated boards with pine cones.
Fringed the edges of burlap cushions.
Designed the table for those very special dinners
with placemats cut and pasted from a rainbow.
I have carved pumpkins.
Led the celebration at years and years of holidays.
Baked a cake shaped like a deer head, antlers made from Tootsie Rolls,
going to five stores before I found the red jawbreaker for his nose.
I have filled pillowcases with newspaper-wrapped gifts.
Used layaway.
I've made and I've made do. Happily.
Three meals from one chicken.
A half pound of ground beef to feed four—or more.
Taking hints from Heloise, I've scrounged and scrimped
and cut the corners off of life.
I have crocheted and hemmed and hah-ed.
I've been the ghost of Christmas past.
I've dressed in kimonos.
Worn other people's shoes.
Safety-pinned my bra strap.
Collected books and alligators and shiny brooches sparkling with cold rhinestone fire.
I've made spaghetti and biscotti and real cream-filled eclairs.
I've baked a lot of apple pies. Cherry too.
I've made cinnamon rolls without a mix.
Popped corn in the same pan since 1965.
Patchworked a wedding dress from a thousand gingham and calico pieces.
I've used new sheets for festive tablecloths, then slept on them until
they turned to rags. Then used the rags.
I've imagined that the dark and empty spaces under the lilac bush
were home, a kingdom peopled by tiny beings
from some other more enchanted life.
I've whirled and wished the wind would blow me any place but here.
Made lemonade and sold it for a nickel.
Ice pops from grape Koolaid.

Turned pancake batter into Mickey Mouse and dinosaurs.
Made dolls from hollyhocks.
Porkchops, potroast, meatloaf, and the perfect toasted cheese.
Eggs over just right.
Tacos with freshly fried shells.
Handmade Valentines.
I've made you laugh.
I've made acorn caps for people drawn on fingers.
And in the dark I've flown away, been big and strong and uncontrollable.
I've painted walls. Trimmed windows. Hung shutters.
Painted the ceiling royal blue, the crib bright red.
I've ordered a high chair from Spain and followed the directions
two days before the birth.
I've had less luck with a tricycle from Sears.
I've quilted. Made pillows from old bathing suits.
Decorated every where with the leavings from a hundred other lives.
I have made molehills out of mountains and leveled off their tops.
I have stretched dollars and time and energy.
And made something out of not much.
I have measured and packed and made it all fit somehow.
And done it once again.
I've listened. I've been home.
I have fried chicken, baked chicken, barbecued chicken, grilled chicken,
made chicken taquitos, chicken salad, chicken enchiladas, chicken in a
crockpot, with rice, with stuffing, with garlic mashed potatoes.
I have eaten the burned hot dog and the smallest piece of pizza.
I have fixed what you wanted. I have wanted what you fixed.
I have made pink and white seersucker pedal pushers,
a black satin flapper gown with rows of undulating fringe,
a sailor suit, a lime green mini-dress.
I've dusted and I've scrubbed and I've banished dirt.
I've washed dishes and clothes and dirty faces.
Cut the kernels off a wheelbarrowful of corn.
Picked blackberries and strawberries and tomatoes.
Made jam.
Made a lot of messes.
Made a lot of homes.
I have hung Grandma's Chinese checkerboard in the dining room and
Mama's souvenir state tablecloths at the kitchen windows.
I've made a place for Grandpa's teddy bear in every living room I've had.
I've decorated Christmas trees and left them up all year.

Quilting Me:

Gathering the Pieces of My Life

An Outline for a Dissertation



Wilkins-O'Riley Zinn, Ed.D.

Zinn's genetic heritage includes the poet James Whitcomb Riley and the Drew and Barrymore acting families, along with a mother, grandmother, aunt and son who are also poets. But as a funsultant, inefficiency expert, aesthetic recycler, artist, writer and teacher, she is perhaps proudest of her late nineteenth century cousins who, after years of grinding poverty, discovered oil on their land and promptly purchased a full-size merry-go-round. She understands. The late Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev said, "Life is short; live it up." It is. We should. Discover what gives you joy and lay claim to it!

I am Tired

Wilkins-O'Riley Zinn

I am tired.
Without excuse.
It's not brain surgery
or picking cotton
or even one of many other things
I've done and done again.
And yet I almost
cannot move.
My eyelids heavy
I look through slitted eyes
into a dayfull of nothing awful yet
all taking asking needing far too much from me.
More than I have to give.

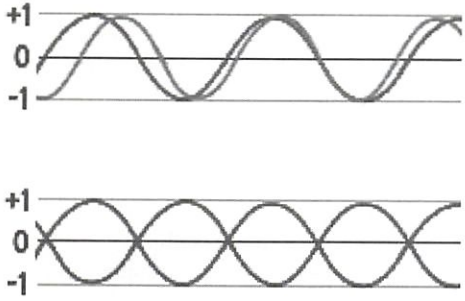
The lassitude creeps from my head, my neck,
into my shoulders and down my back, through my arms
a snaking silent stoppage
making it quite difficult to write these words
even as my muddled thoughts project them.
I am tired.
Exhausted in some fundamental way.
Used up.
Emotions worn and tattered, guilty from the knowledge that I have no right
and weary from the cheerfulness demanded
and beaten down and in
by an avalanche of words
that pile around me never melting as my own pile up inside and never really overflow
the damming of the years the fears the tears
that pressure up until the bursting
seems inevitable
and yet they squeeze themselves together
ever more tightly packed.
And so I wonder.
What will release it all?
And I'm afraid.

Wilkins-O'Riley Zinn's *biography can be found on page 120.*

I am tired
of wanting wishing knowing wondering keeping it together
scared to let it go in case
I never get me back.
I am tired.
And I am never enough for me.
In fragmentation I am lived
even as I long to discard hold on worry less about some new disaster
that isn't but might as well be poised on edges of ruin all my life.
I am tired.

Bi-Polar

Mark Harris



Sine Waves

I'm Bi-Polar from Western Civilization
I keep cycling between Killing Rage and Post Genocidal Depression
Self Defense Malcolm and Non-Violent Martin
Geronimo the Warrior and Grandpa David Monongye the Prophecy Keeper
Amistad Cinque and Nelson Mandela
John Brown and Fred Douglass
Harriet Tubman and Nzingha
I can't say that 16 years in the military drove John Muhammad crazy
But it sure helped...
Maybe there is a red, white, and blue pill I can take
Make me feel proud and strong and patriotic like Colin and Condoleeza
So I can say the Pledge of Allegiance or sing the Star-Spangled Banner with a straight face, 'thout a hint of irony or derision in my voice.
Help me forget all that's been done to make this the "greatest country in the world"
Not just the blood of patriots, but the blood of slaves, the Indians before them,
the nameless people who assemble the clothes I wear, who mine the bauxite to make the aluminum my kids drink pop from
The voices of the Ancestors keep whispering to never submit
I keep raising my head but all I see is: Stars from the club and stripes from the whip.
If those don't work there's the rope, the gas chamber, the chair, the needle, the pipe, the bottle.
Is this as good as it gets?
I remember better.
I'll ask my doctor for a pill to cure this persistent memory problem: déjà vu all over again

7 Directions

Mark Harris

7 Directions
Like Nzingha, my archery teacher
I reach back into history's quiver
Draw an arrow from the Past
In the Present
And shoot into the heart of the Future
Crack! Into the Slaver's heart
Shot through with colonialisms cancer, it's a mercy killing
I'm doin' you a favor massa, it's a better world when all Gods chillun are free

Pierced but Babylon's beast still won't die
It grows another head whose face is my own
But I am not fooled
I draw sword like Manjusri and split the head down the middle
Like my sensei taught
But still true dat I struck, it is still two heads that face me
With the same face
One black, One white
The white one speaks Ebonics
The black one, Hooked on Phonics
Demon! My mind cries!
I draw on John Horse and Harriet Tubman
I wrestle with little white lies and Sojourners Truth
The slave must lead or be lead to freedom or die
So I take a gunboat up the Combahee River
I sit with the Maroons and Kumbaya Indians
We sit around the fire
Ask the Drums the Question
In the dawn comes back the answer
The Slave must learn to Master, Master Yourself Bridle your Ego
What the massa never learned
Sell your family into bondage
And you incarnate as your descendents
AIDS infected, Drug dependent
All the horrors you inflicted shall be visited on you
What goes around comes around till you break the cycle... True

So I sit within a circle
Red and Yellow, Black and White
Sky Above Me, Earth Below Me
And The Direction That's Inside
Like Vincente De Guerrero
Black Indian Mexican Too
The Answers to the Problem Are in the Questions Facing You
Al-Gebra, it means The Mending
Ashe, Ashe, means it is so
Mexica Tawey All my Relations
Free the Slaves and Let them Go

Some Monsters, Monster Slayer, & Me
5 Short Stories in 55 Words

Mark Harris

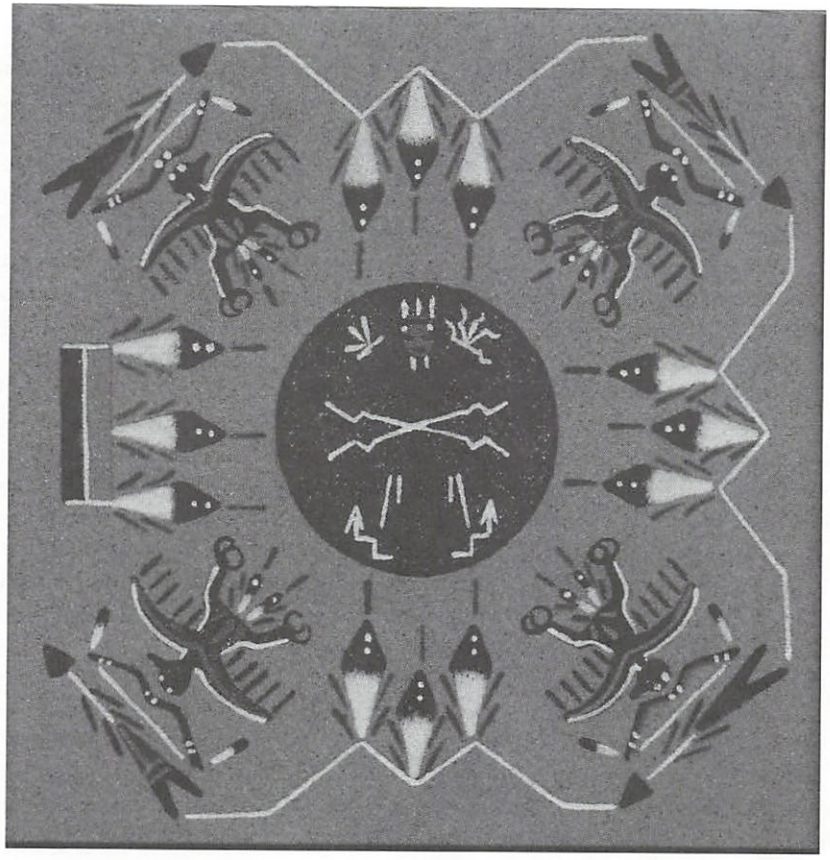
Some monsters It explained are not big ugly and horrible.
They start out small like a mosquito bite, irritating at first.
Scratch the itch, ego swells gets fat.
All about you? More for them.
Eat you bit by bit, your spirit starves
till there is nothing but a shell left.
A fine trophy. It smiled.

Some monsters She explained are not big ugly and horrible,
but soft, vulnerable and seductive. Sweet. Salty.
Soothing, Flattering, Fattening. Feels good to be indulged,
more for them.
They nibble, lick, and snack.
You like it while they eat you till there is nothing but a shell left
and then they are gone.
I'm sorry.

Some monsters he explained are not insensitive brutes…
they pay sincere attention to you.
Feels good? Close your eyes.
It's warm while your life drains away.
You don't even notice you're getting sleepy.
They even cover you with a blanket when you feel the first warning chill.
Just the way it is. Smiling.
More coffee?

Is not so easy slayin' monsters.
Some of dem are loved ones.
Some are easy to hate. You hate yourself for loving dem.
Dey get inside you.
Feels like you cuttin' part of yourself away, slaying dem.
Get inside of dem, you see the best parts of you dey ate.
Grow dem parts back, 'kay?

I'm a grown-up now.
Monsters ain't hiding under bed or in the closet.
They hid under sheets. They hid in swastikaed uniforms.
Traded those sheets, uniforms, for suits, badges, books
Degrees, Corporations, TV.
They walk around me, Try'n get in my head
Live in dey belly! See dey hearts!
Give Heartburn!
No cure but Unity-Alaha



See Mark Harris' bio on page 88.

Play the Accordion; Go to Jail

David G. Such, Ph.D.

As a kid I knew him as the bubble man with the diamond ring. He used a thin baton to scrawl lazy half circles in the air while his orchestra played to brilliant translucent bubbles that glistened sharply as they glided wistfully across the TV screen. For my family, watching the bubble man on TV every Saturday night had arguably become the single most important ritual that brought us together. It also nearly tore us apart, for the bubble man loomed constantly over my brother's head, like a dark, threatening storm that no sun could penetrate.

My brother and I grew up in a household full of music, and we all played instruments. My mom, a devout Jehovah's Witness, practiced the piano at home and sometimes played at congregation meetings, which instilled in me a sense of pride and wonderment. It also instilled in me a fascination for the spiritual that stayed with me well into adulthood. I liked watching my mom rise from her seat as the whole congregation watched and waited. Then she walked over to the piano and started playing as the entire congregation stood and raised its collective voice in song. She made it look so easy, and from that point on I knew that my family had music in its genes. Sometimes at home, she taught me to play movie theme songs on the piano, and sometimes she paid Mr. Periwinkle to come to the house and give me lessons. He was well ripened, gray and, in my youthful eyes, broken down. He chain smoked, and the smell of stale tobacco blanketed the air around me. Nevertheless, we sat together on the piano bench, as I watched his left hand quiver a bit each time before it pressed down on the keys. Once the sound came out, I relaxed and absorbed everything he taught me.

Never having a music lesson in his life, my dad sat at the piano and improvised quixotically romantic songs that drifted aimlessly, never seeming to have a beginning or end. If this wasn't enough, on Saturday nights after drinking a little too much beer, he broke out the hi-fi and thumbed through our collection of vinyl LPs. He flipped past the likes of Bing Crosby, Peggy Lee, Hank Williams, 101 Strings, and Fats Domino, until he came to Frankie Yankovich: the undisputed king of the polka accordion.

"Now, here's some good music," he used to say.

He put on one of Yankovich's albums—it didn't matter which—and cranked up the volume until the sound blared out, straining through the thin, monaural speaker. Then he searched the house looking for a willing conspirator for his late-night antics. If mom was already in bed, he grabbed me up, stood me on his feet, and started dancing the polka. Laughing with glee, I held on for dear life, swirling madly around the room, while taking in the crisp scent of his hops and barley flavored breath.

My dad—a first generation Polish American born in Cleveland, Ohio and raised in a largely Polish neighborhood—loved the accordion. To him the accordion was the mustard on the kielbasa of life, for it bore much of the tell-tale essence of his Polish roots. So he assigned my hapless brother the task of learning the accordion.

Then one Saturday night, as usual, my dad called us all into the small family room of our suburban home just outside Los Angeles. As we filtered in, he stood over the TV. They were still relatively new inventions that caused my dad to study them in a curious sort of way. Then like discovering magic for the first time, he switched it on. As the picture tube crackled and glowed to life, our anticipation mounted in equal proportions. I waited for the bubbles, whereas my mom admired the man—who like herself—grew up poor on a Midwest farm. My dad simply waited to hear a good polka. When the images metamorphosed to life on the screen, he inevitably began fidgeting with the aerial in search of the sharpest focus; which was always a compromise of sorts, for the images never stood out in perfect definition. Some had shadows, while others looked a little wavy. Then he went to work on the volume knob, which he turned up, down, and back to where it was when he first started. That's where he always left it in the end, but he was in control, or so he thought.

Satisfied with his handiwork, he turned and surveyed his small but attentive audience, "Where's Darrell? He should watch this." However, he was nowhere to be found. My dad was the last to know, which was not a good thing. Now it was the third week in a row that my big brother had failed to be present during this moment of family unity. The first time, he sat lethargically in his room, claiming to work on stacks of homework urgently due Monday. In truth he hated homework and rarely applied himself wholeheartedly to such an endeavor. The second time, he feigned a bad headache and once again spent the evening cooped up like a chicken. Tonight he was having dinner at a friend's house. Cleverly, he waited until my dad left for the hardware store. Then he asked mom for permission, saying his friend's parents needed to know right away so they could plan. My mom acceded on the spot.

"What?" My dad shouted.

My mom replied, "While you were at the hardware store this afternoon, he asked me if he could go. I told him he could."

"Why'd you do that? You know he's supposed to be here. Anyway, he doesn't need to scrounge around for meals. I'm working, aren't I? Pretty soon the whole neighborhood's going to think I can't feed my own family. Now I suppose we'll have to have his friend here for dinner."

"He just wanted to visit his friend. He hasn't been out much lately since school started. So I thought . . ."

"You're supposed to check with me first. How's he going to learn what good accordion playing is if he's out every night running around like a bat out of hell listening to Elvis the pelvis or whoever he is."

"He doesn't get much chance to see his friends while he's in school. I just thought . . ."

"Alright, forget about it, but next time check with me."

"Yes, dear."

Right then I sensed there was more to the bubble man than mere fizz and flashy diamond rings. His powerful presence leaped from the TV screen into our room, into the family consciousness, and into our lives, which it impacted dramatically. At the time, I knew little about this man, nor how he tore at the core of a family. To understand the man and his music, one has to go back to the 1930s—a time when things drastically slowed down in America. The Depression was in full force, taking good men from their jobs and putting them in long, cheerless bread lines. Things had also slowed down for the man with the diamond ring. So he spent the last of his cash reserves, loaded up his dance orchestra, and left the dairy rich farm towns of Wisconsin for the dry, hot climate of Phoenix, Arizona.

After several dusty days rumbling across dusty Midwest roads, the orchestra arrived in Phoenix. Tired and frazzled musicians stepped off the bus that day and walked several blocks to the Mirador Ballroom, where they expected to perform that night. When they arrived, they stopped and stood silent in stunned disbelief, staring at the tightly boarded up windows and doors, which had once lent passage to throngs of eager dancers. The Mirador had also fallen victim to hard times. Dejected, stranded and broke, the man with the diamond ring played his last card. He walked over to the nearest pawn shop, slipped the shimmering ring off his finger, placed it on the counter and walked away with enough cash to feed and shelter his band for the next few days. In the meantime, he ran down the owners of the Mirador and presented them with a proposition. He agreed to take responsibility for any losses, if the owners agreed to re-open the ballroom. Taking the man for his word, the owners opened once again for business; and business they got! For four consecutive weeks, the band attracted capacity crowds. People danced the hours away, forgetting momentarily the economic plight that consumed their waking moments. The ballroom turned a handsome profit, and a young Lawrence Welk walked back to the pawn shop with more than enough cash in hand to redeem his diamond ring.

His gamble paid off as people during the Depression sought entertainment to lift their spirits out of the dark hole of despair. The trend grew into a movement. Consequently, during the 1930s, hundreds of big bands began to dot the American musical landscape. Many toured relentlessly and competed with one another for fame and popularity. All subscribed to the same formula: give a generation that craved to dance good dance music. To

keep pace with the demand, large cities across the country built huge dance halls capacious enough to accommodate 2000 or more dancers.

Like most band leaders in the 1930s, Welk worked hard to keep his band gigging and touring. Musicians call it "paying dues," as though a god of fame stands ready, calculator in hand, to exact payment from untested tenderfoot musicians who willingly lay their sacrificial horns atop an altar of vindication. Those who stick it out join the elite ranks of surviors in a thorny, unforgiving occupation. Fame did flirt with some band leaders of that era, but soon shrugged them off like used lovers, leaving them stranded without work and a means to continue. However, where others failed, Lawrence Welk kept floating along, bouyed by the wake of his bubbles. He was a survivor; a rare bird in a jungle overgrown with the tangled vines of competition and limited resources.

Things began to get better as the country seemed poised to lift itself out of the Depression. Then Hitler and Japan dragged America into WWII. As America's military forces geared up, band leaders arrived at rehearsals only to discover that entire saxophone sections had enlisted or had been drafted. Throughout the course of the war, the government imposed gas and rubber rationing, which made it virtually impossible for bands to tour; and a hefty cabaret tax transformed a casual evening of dance entertainment into an extravagance few could afford.

In 1945, as the smoke cleared and WWII ended, Americans rummaged through the war-torn debris in search of their beloved big bands to find only a few big bands had survived. Duke Ellington, who in the 1920s had risen to fame performing over national radio at the Cotton Club in Harlem, survived because he used royalties from sales of his numerous compositions to pay band members and offset expenses. Bennie Goodman, the first and last jazz matinee idol, built a large enough popular following to keep him on a roll. Count Basie, whose bands always yielded remarkable arrangements and skilled, fiery rhythm sections, also plodded through the tough times. Lawrence Welk survived because he knew what people wanted to hear, and he gave it to them!

Welk, a first generation German American who grew up on his father's farm in rural North Dakota, fell in love with the family heirloom: an accordion from the old country. He practiced on the instrument until he outgrew it and yearned for something better. He persuaded his father to lend him $400, which he used to buy a new accordion from a mail order catalog. In return, he promised to stay and work the farm until he turned 21. On his 21st birthday, Welk left to pursue his dream of becoming a professional musician. He traveled the Midwest, played here and there and eventually landed a gig with a Vaudeville show—where he learned an invaluable show-biz lesson: give the audience variety. Later in his career, he gave them bubbles; sweet champaign music dipped in charming harmonies, oozed over with soft, pleasant melodies. Unlike the Count Basie and Bennie Goodman

bands—which delivered bustling, hard-driving swing rhythms to work dancers into a frenzy—Welk's music soothed dancers like silk over glass. Welk's fans didn't care for music that smoldered hot under one's feet.

His big break came in 1951 when Welk opened at the Aragon Ballroom in Los Angeles. A local television station began airing the weekly performances, which quickly grew in popularity and continued for the next ten years. Then in the early 1960s he moved the band to the Hollywood Palladium where ABC, a nationally syndicated network, picked up the show and raised the curtain on Welk before a nationwide audience. Welk's brand of squeaky clean, wholesome family entertainment sounded a consonant chord, especially among Central European immigrants and their first generation offspring. He not only gave them waltzes and popular dance tunes, he threw in some polkas and German beer-drinking songs reminiscent of family gatherings and the old country.

My brother shrugged off everything associated with the old country, especially the accordion. To him the old country was backward, stale, and out of step with James Dean's youthful image of the hipster sporting a cool exterior persona that masked a jaded interior. Like Dean, my brother wore cuffed blue jeans and snapped his fingers to the heartbeat of rock n' roll and jazz. My brother saw Welk as the complete antithesis of cool, modernity and what my brother secretly yearned to be: a rock and jazz guitarist. However, my dad didn't understand rock or electric guitars, nor did he want to. He smirked his way through the Elvis years, and once commented that Elvis should take lessons from Frankie Yankovich. He thumbed his nose at the British rock invasion and forthrightly denounced anything that didn't connect with Polish American culture.

Unfortunately, my dad ruled the household with an iron will and dictated my brother's musical development. He implemented a plan, which called for long hours of accordion practice and weekly lessons. If things worked out according to plan—if beer does flow in Heaven—my brother one day would debut on the Lawrence Welk show. His fate seemed tightly sealed.

On weekdays, my brother slowly dragged his feet home from school to begin his practice sessions, which lasted from 3:30 to 5:30. He hated it. While his friends played sports after school or hung out drinking Cokes at Harvey's Diner or some local food stand, my brother went home to exercise the stiff bellows of the belly piano. Sometimes, if Mom stepped out to shop for groceries and my dad wasn't yet home from work, my brother broke out the hi-fi and put on some 45s of Elvis or surf music that he kept hidden in his room and which he bought with his meager allowance. Wary of my brother's duplicitous deeds, my parents recruited me as an informant. Anytime my brother goofed off, I tattled. Not only did my brother get grounded, my dad added a few more hours to his practice schedule. On other

occasions, my brother bought my silence with a couple bars of candy, and I swore my secret allegiance.

Saturday mornings were perhaps the worst. My brother sat silent in the family station wagon as we drove to his accordion lesson. Tall, lanky, middle aged, and sporting a thick crop of wavy dark hair, my brother's instructor hailed from the old country and spoke little English, enough anyway to get his message across. If not, my dad was there ready to translate. My dad closely supervised each lesson, making sure my brother got his money's worth and understood everything. Usually it wasn't necessary, since my brother easily absorbed it all.

After the lesson, my dad stayed on a bit, talking to the accordion instructor in Polish, which he loved to do. All the time, my mom sat quietly listening, occasionally interjecting brief comments into the conversation. Mostly, she watched over us siblings, while reading church literature or knitting a sweater, which kept her hands busy as she often explained.

After leaving the lesson, we sometimes visited family members or friends for a little get-together. For me, a visit to Harry and Irene's house always meant a fun-filled afternoon of games, food and watching my parents dance. My dad said that he knew them from his old neighborhood back in Cleveland. For my dad, anyone who spoke Polish came from the old neighborhood. If I was good that day, I often got the privilege of making a wish and running my hand across Harry's completely bald, shiny pate. I believed he was a jolly genie blessed with magical powers. For all the ice cream in the world I simply had to give that gleaming, glistening dome a good rub. For my dad, it was a mini vacation, a sunny desert island where beer trickles from rocks, kielbasa grows plentiful on trees, the women care for their men, and everyone dances the polka.

Irene always kept an eye out for our family station wagon and greeted us outside as we pulled up the driveway of their small, plain residential house. With her vivid, toothy smile that glowed beneath thick plastic-rimmed glasses shaped like butterfly wings, she welcomed us with slow broad waves of her arm.

The afternoon's festivities usually progressed in stages beginning with bottles of beer and light conversation while sitting around the living room. Often someone brought a batch of homemade kielbasa or Polish sausage, which he or she handed out wrapped in small napkins as appetizers. Sometimes, there was a friendly undercurrent of competition to see who had the best recipe. Since my dad regarded good kielbasa as the benchmark of one's Polish ethnicity, he was determined to introduce his own recipe despite the fact that he never quite mastered the art. Instead, he used store-bought kielbasa, which he chopped into medium-sized chunks and placed in a jar along with salt, vinegar, garlic and onions. He stored the jar and its potent, fermenting contents beneath the sink where it sat for a few days until it was ready to eat or explode. The stuff was awful, but he handed it out proudly and without a

flinch to unsuspecting guests. He used to say something in Polish equivalent to, "Try this, it'll curl your toenails." To Harry, he said, "It'll put hair on your head." Harry laughed.

The next phase began as the women folk retreated into the kitchen where they briefly huddled together and collaborated on some recipe from the old country, which to me seemed distant and nebulous whenever anyone alluded to it. As the pungent, inviting smells of the kitchen filled the house, somehow the old country got more familiar, and I felt part of it. It's when the unmistakable tell-tale aroma of kapusta (cabbage leaves broiling in a caldron) hit the air that I knew things were moving along. The men stayed congregated in the living room or else went outside and talked about their cars and what needed fixing or would soon need fixing. While holding their beer bottles, they spoke half in English and half in Polish. Meanwhile, us kids found games to play in one of the bedrooms.

Finally, when all the food was cooked, Irene patrolled the house announcing dinnertime. As she gathered everyone to the dining room, she directed the adults to one table and everyone not old enough to drive or drink to a second table. Everyone sat down and filled their plates with a variety of meat and potato dishes.

When everyone finished dinner, the women tended to the clutter of plates and glasses while the men moved back into the living room. Once the women returned the kitchen back to normal, they rejoined their husbands. Everyone seemed content, except my brother, whose mood—noticeable only to a few—grew darker and more listless. He didn't laugh or talk as much, and his ponderous thoughts seemed to weigh down his shoulders. He knew what came after dinner, and he couldn't stop it.

The after-dinner phase began with conversation, which usually started low and slow, but in time built up in sizable volume and speed. Someone brought up Johnny's wedding next month, which triggered a chorus of questions and comments about the bride, honeymoon, and other details. The conversation eventually branched out to other topics and usually continued for another hour or so, until finally my dad rose to his feet and boisterously announced, "Let's dance some polka!"

I could feel my brother's stomach nosedive into the floor as if it were my own. He cringed at the words; small, sharp razors that sliced through his skin. Like ravished dogs, the words gnawed at his bones and chilled his soul more forcefully than a mad winter wind off the cold Atlantic. Yet, as dire and dreadful the toll these simple words took upon my brother, it was merely a prelude to what came next.

"Darrell, go get your accordion," my dad ordered.

My brother sat petrified with his gaze stuck to the floor.

"C'mon, go get it."

He knew better than to make my dad repeat the command a third time. So he rose lethargically and dragged himself in silent protest over to the accordion case. Looking at him

this way, one could only believe that he had little skill or talent to show. However, after he removed the accordion, lifted it to his lap, strapped himself around it and took a deep breath, the music roared and thundered out of him. There was no pause, hesitation, or wounding of the music at the hands of a novice. Instead, boy and accordion melded together as one. Sound—loud, radiant and alive—cascaded out and belied any visible clues of my brother's internal strife. Husbands set down their beers, graciously reached for the hands of their wives, and got up to dance. With his accordion, my brother transformed a festive occasion into a world where normal time stops and the motion of one's body through the ether of music begins. He flawlessly reeled off from memory one polka after another, while rollicking dancers flung their bodies across the living room floor, gripped by the rhythms of my brother's steady hand and the upbeat gaiety of the polka.

If you take all the traditional ethnic folk music from the old country Germans, Bohemians, Slovenians and Slovaks, roll it into a big ball, ship it to America, and feed it some beer, you get the polka. Soon over time the polka ingrained itself in the hearts and social fabric of Central European immigrant groups, especially those living in the Midwest. Its fast, raucous, and deceptively sentimental as well as humorous character rarely dwells on thought-provoking problems or social issues. Instead, the polka's answer to the weighty issues of life is dance, dance, dance. In the Polish American community it goes like this. Boy meets girl at a party; they dance the polka. Boy marries girl; they dance the polka. They continue dancing throughout their lives until their feet move no more.

While my brother played, dancers showered him with requests for their favorite polkas. Without fail, most called for "Beer Barrel Polka." For me, it's one of those polkas that latches itself onto my brain, sprouts roots and, like an unwanted houseguest or pesky rodent, never leaves. It remains dormant, sometimes for a year or two, until one day, for no reason in particular, it decides to plop itself down onto the turntable of my mind, which like a subservient fool mercilessly replays it a hundred times in succession, or until I soak my head in a bucket of ice water or stick my finger in a light socket. To this day, I hope I'm never driven to do both at the same time.

Like many other kinds of folk music around the world, polka lyrics convey attitudes about love and life. In the case of "Beer Barrel Polka," the title alone suggests that beer occupies some degree of prominence in the Polish American ethos. Imagine a person's life as a huge glass filled to the brim with small rocks, representing family and all one's experiences over the years. At that point, most people would say their glasses were full. However, a Polish American might often take a quantity of beer, pour it into the glass and watch it fill all the tiny spaces and crevices between the rocks while stating, "There's always room for beer."

My brother obediently launched into the song, and a few seconds later someone began to sing:

Roll out the barrel, we'll have a barrel of fun
Roll out the barrel, we've got the blues on the run . . .
Zing! Boom! Ta-ra-ra
Sing out a song of good cheer
Now we'll have to roll the barrel
'Cause the gang's all here

All groups on the planet grapple at some point with concepts of the eternal and metaphysical, and sometimes these thoughts find expression through their music. The closest the polka comes to addressing the metaphysical is to mourn the absence of beer in Heaven. Like money, you can't take beer with you when you finally go.

"Play the 'No Beer in Heaven' polka," Harry shouted.

"Okay," my brother replied. Still no smile came to his face even when it was obvious how much the dancers enjoyed and wanted his music. Then his fingers flashed across the keyboard, and Harry sang:

In Heaven there is no beer
That's why we drink it here,
And when we're gone from here,
All our friends will be drinking all the beer.

Sometimes I think the Pope is missing a key opportunity here. If he were to declare the presence of beer in heaven, perhaps more than a few devotees would begin to take their heavenly pursuit a bit more serious.

Though beer seems to get more than its fair share of mention in the lyrics, eating habits rate special consideration as well. I also had a favorite polka, so I yelled out, "Too Fat Polka."

My brother hated me for my treachery; though, duty bound, away he went. Harry jumped in again, singing:

Oh, I don't want her, you can have her,
She's too fat for me.
She's too fat for me,
She's too fat for me...

Then Irene took the next verse:

Oh, I don't want him, you can have him,
He's too fat for me.

He's too fat for me,
He's too fat for me...

Then together, they chimed:
I get dizzy, I get numbo
When I'm dancing
With my Jum-Jum-Jumbo...

With grim lassitude, my brother worked his strange magic through the afternoon. In place of counterfeit smiles, my brother's countenance bore the protest of indifference: his only recourse. My dad pleaded, but the smiles never came. Instead, my brother skillfully cranked out one brilliant polka after another. As he played, his downcast eyes stared at detached fingers that danced monotonous parodies across the keyboard of the stomach Steinway. People dismissed his dour expression as an artistic idiosyncrasy, never bothering to penetrate the surface. Nevertheless, my brother won over audiences the hard way: with skill, dazzle, and a bit of wizardry.

Over time, it got worse for my brother. Word about him spread throughout the Los Angeles Polish American community, and soon he started getting gigs at Polish American weddings and other social gatherings. Still too young to drive, my brother relied on Dad for rides to the gigs, and Dad often hauled the rest of the family to watch and eat. My dad saw it all as a win-win situation. My brother earned his allowance and then some, while my dad—who saved his extra pennies in a large coin jar—fed the family for free, compliments of the host.

As word continued to spread, people showed up less interested in hearing the spoken vows of the betrothed couple than the sounds my brother's gifted hands squeezed out at the reception. Soon, dancers approached my dad saying, "Your son there's a natural. He should be on the Lawrence Welk show." Bells went off in my dad's head as he beamed a giant smile. My brother shrank at the words. It wasn't the idea of playing in front of a TV camera or national audience that bothered him. He could do that. What ate at him from the inside was that the whole country—and more importantly, his high school buddies—would discover that he played the accordion. It meant nothing less than the end of his social life and all that was meaningful in his world.

For my brother, the accordion, like a cement necklace about to drag him down into the depths of depression and the uncool, seemed to embody in clear terms the image he so anxiously kept hidden from his upper middle-class, WASP high school buddies. In my brother's imagination, the accordion symbolized all that was hick and peasant-like about Polish Americans. They thought, acted and danced differently than their mainstream coun-

terparts. They worked in factories, handed out baggage at airports, and repaired trucks. They didn't wear white shirts to work or own two-story homes with five bedrooms and a swimming pool in the backyard. Though mostly trivial in nature, to an adolescent teenager groping in a liminal netherworld, these considerations took on giant proportions, and they rumbled into my brother's awareness like high-speed locomotives about to collide each time he drew air into the bellows of the accordion.

He didn't blame my father as much as the man truly responsible. After all, Lawrence Welk fashioned the accordion out of old country sentiments and turned it into an instrument that caused eighty-year-old first-generation grandmas with colorful babushkas tied snuggly under their chins to comment in Polish, "He's such a nice boy." For some in the Polish American community, Welk's accordion transported listeners in time and imagination back to the old country. For my brother, walking naked at noon through the high school cafeteria seemed a better way to travel. He wanted little to do with the old country and the old ways, which fit my brother like polka dots on a zebra. Welk took the generation gap and, with the accordion as a giant shovel, widened it into an insurmountable trench that divided father and son. Like my brother, many second-generation Central European Americans fell victim to Welk's wide sphere of influence. However, many refused to buckle under without a fight, and some plastered bumper stickers on the rears of their cars that read, "Play the accordion, go to jail." The backlash inspired one writer to describe the accordion as an " . . . instrument in harmony with the sentiments of an assassin."

My brother never bragged about playing the accordion, never took it out to play for his own enjoyment, and absolutely never allowed his buddies to discover his secret. When they came to visit, the accordion found seclusion in a dark corner of the closet. When they invited my brother out for sodas after school, he excused himself, saying he had too much homework. Instead, he went home, punched his time card, and practiced the accordion. How he kept his buddies in the dark all that time, I'll never know.

As things often go in the music business, musicians plod along in obscurity until one day the "big break" arrives. Once it arrives, careers turn golden as success, fame and fortune follow. For instance, in the 1960s a surprisingly large number of black entertainers who won talent competitions at the Apollo Theater in Harlem went on to stardom. Michael Jackson and the Jackson Five, Dianna Ross and the Supremes, Smokey Robinson, and dozens of other entertainers define those pivotal moments at the Apollo as career makers. Within the Polish-American community, an appearance on the Lawrence Welk Show carried about the same weight.

One Sunday afternoon my brother played at a wedding for Harry and Irene's nephew. Lawrence Welk's piano player, who had grown close to the nephew's family over the years, also attended. After hearing my brother play, he went to my father and said, "Your son there's

a natural. He should be on the Lawrence Welk show." My father beamed his customary huge smile. Except this time, those words didn't remain empty. The pianist went back to Welk and raved about the young, talented, albeit serious, unsmiling accordion player he discovered. The following week my father got a call from Welk's producer who invited my brother to audition for the show. My father's ship had arrived.

In the meantime, my brother baled water to stay afloat. When he heard the news from our elated father, he fell into a deep funk, trembling at the thought that Lawrence Welk wanted to air his secret on national television. My brother went to his room, shut the door, and stayed there all afternoon and night. The next day, after returning home from school, while my dad was at work, he lifted the accordion case out of the closet. Instead, of opening the case as he usually did to begin his afternoon practice session, he clutched the handle, lifted the rectangular monster up with his right hand, leaned his body to the left to counterbalance the weight, and started walking. He walked out of his room and then out the front door. He kept walking another eight blocks, struggling with the weight of a life's burden, until he arrived at Sal's Pawn Shop. He placed the $1200 accordion down in front of Sal and said, "Let's do it, Sal."

Sal replied, "Are you sure, kid?"

"Got to."

My brother walked out of Sal's Pawn Shop not with cash or a diamond ring. Instead, his right hand gripped a slightly used top-of-the-line Gibson electric guitar. In his left, he clutched the handle of a Fender amplifier. Walking back to face his new fate, my brother's body didn't teeter to the left as before; he walked upright and straight, the weight now evenly distributed in both hands.

David G. Such, Ph.D. *is a critically acclaimed recording artist, performer, composer, author, videographer and multi-instrumentalist specializing in western flute, clarinet, and non-western flutes. He has performed on soundtracks for major films, as well as documentaries for National Geographic, Discovery Channel and the Disney Channel, and has released two CDs to critical acclaim. He often travels the world performing, collecting musical instruments, and studying native musical traditions. His video documentary on Kalinga music from the Philippines won an international award in the category of culture, and his documentary on Amador Ballumbrosio and Black Peruvian music is due for release in Spring 2005. Such also wrote* Avant-garde Jazz: Performing "Out There" *(University of Iowa Press), and has contributed numerous articles to scholarly music journals and dictionaries. "Play the Accordion" is an excerpt from a book in progress. He teaches at Spokane Community College in Washington.*

The Flow of Significance

Nate Capeheart

> *To name, to signify, is to help the memory. Naming makes significance, and significant events must be named. These two are recursive, are also real and in time, and build the history, the intermingle of place, and time, and persons, and egos. They are words calling back places and events to the present as it moves on, evoking more evocations; naming and calling back; naming and recalling. Flows of meaning in the river of time. We must be careful and not drop words into a sweet spring of ideas, stirring mud into the natural clarity of the linear movement of moments of naming.*

I remember the yellow-green shine of the sun on Twelve Pole Creek, named for the twelve poles with which George Washington measured it, or so my mother told me. She knew many such things: the names of plants and stones, and the histories of places and objects. I recall the creek mainly because Dad took me and my two older brothers fishing, one at a time (we were eight to fourteen years old then). He wore waterproof waders but we wore blue jeans and old tennis shoes. And I recollect wading, the cold brown-green water flowing around and into my tennis shoes and soaking my jeans up to the rope, worn as a belt to avoid ruining my good leather one. I felt my way on the bottom of the creek, careful not to step in a deep hole. This I remember, but I think many of these memories come to me from color slides and movies that my parents made. That yellow shine may be the sun on the lens of the camera. But some things are not in the pictures and are snagged in my memory like leaves caught on a gnarled tree branch hanging in the stream. The wading was like this, and it is like remembering, feeling for the bottom, the significance of the long-past experience.

This was at Cabwaylingo State Park in West Virginia. The name includes the four closest counties. C-a-b is for Cabell County, w-a-y is for Wayne County, named for Mad Anthony Wayne, the l-i-n-go is a combination for Lincoln County and Mingo County. Our parents took us there for a week's vacation for several years during the late 1940s and early 1950s. The cabins were made of creosote-soaked logs. A creosote odor still evokes thoughts of the vacations there. I can't bring back to mind our everyday life in those cabins, what we ate and when, but I vaguely remember trying to sleep in that strange environment of insect sounds and water flowing. Scents were thick in the air: dust, mildew, the creosote, war surplus banana-oil insect repellent, smoke from coal oil lamps, and citronella. The things I do remember, as I feel for the experience again, by definition must be the events and perceptions that are significant after fifty years.

Besides the wading and fishing I have other definite memories: baby eels pouring with the water from the mouth of a smaller creek into Twelve Pole Creek; pipsissewa and other plants, which my mother pointed out to us; a pet groundhog at the local store where we bought food and cases of Nesbitts Soda Pop; a tiny turtle, which I kept for a several years; and hikes in the flourishing green hollows and up Tick Ridge to an old deserted farm.

What we called baby eels were about two inches long and all black. One end, as I remember, was all mouth and I seem to recall one tooth. They would latch onto and suck on our skin. They may have been eels, lampreys, or some type of leech. The cold, clear water swept hundreds of them over the rocky bottom at the mouth of the little creek. We filled paper cups with the slick black little worms and had contests for who had the most. We soon tired of this and emptied the cups, letting them loose into the ever-moving stream.

We learned about plants like the reclusive evergreen laurel relative, pipsissewa. In Cree this means "to break it up," referring to its use as a diuretic and in the breaking up of bladder stones. I have often, as I grew older, confused its fascinating name with the fascinating form of Indian pipes, which are saprophytes that live on dead leaves, mulch, and formerly live things, and grow under dead wood or low cliff edges. They live on old residue like a memory that takes what it can from the past and uses it to make reality and flourish. They grow as a single stem, bent over to form the flower at the top, giving the appearance of a smoking pipe. The flower is made of the same waxy material as the stem, all white or all pink. My mother showed us these and many other plants and named them—others were lady slippers, may flowers, wood violets, and jack-in-the-pulpit, but the name pipsissewa and the form of the Indian pipes invoke these moments the most.

We drove out from the state park to a local store for food and drinks. The store was in a frame building, backed against a sandstone cliff, its white paint peeled off in flaps showing weathered wood underneath. Chewing tobacco and soda-pop advertisements filled the window. A general store, it sold junk food and modern "gee-gaws" for vacationers, and staples and produce for the locals.

A groundhog hung around the front door and would take offered food from the customers. I extract a picture from my memory, or from the movie camera with the yellow shine, of a fat complacent grey-brown sort of beaver-like animal, but without the flat tail, sitting in a gravel parking lot eating crackers. As in many of my recollections, I am sure there is some idealization.

I don't long for the past to return to it, but some things I remember seem better than my experiences now; either my tastes have changed dramatically or the Nesbitts Soda Pop we bought there was better than anything that we can buy today.

On a hike up one of the lush hollows where the pipsissewa grew, as I rested from hiking on a large moss-covered rock overlooking the creek, a movement near my right leg startled

me. At first, thoughts of snakes and insects flooded my mind, but within a few moments I was holding a turtle about two inches across. It was a pond slider or red-eared turtle, a type they used to sell in the pet shops. I'm sure it was against the law, even then, to take anything from a state park, but I smuggled it home and kept it for several years. Eventually it escaped and I never found it again. I gave it a name but it must not have been significant; I can't remember it. Memory is like the sandstone rock cliffs in the eastern forests; rough, weathered and usually hidden by foliage. We came upon them suddenly, and from several yards they looked like old stone ruins. I learned they were sedimentary rocks, grit of long ago dropped to the bottom of a body of water where the current slowed. Fossil memories of older times were deposited and a stable stream bed, firm enough to find footing on, solidified. I know now this strata is designated by the time period in which it is laid and the area in which it was first named, Pennsylvanian, Pottsville; and the dark black fragments of formerly living things in it are called Matewan or War Eagle coal strata. Again, I know this from my mother. Before she died in 1996 she sent me a book on the geology of West Virginia. Odd, that she would once more, through a rivulet of time, help me signify an ancient silt. That older stream, though dried, still has significance in the larger, longer stream of time. My imagination coupled with a natural affinity for large stone formations gave the hikes in the hollows there a special excitement.

The hike up the worn mountain chain called Tick Ridge was long and I remember very little of the trip except that we complained of it being tiring and too hot, and Mom had to keep encouraging us to continue. There are no home movies or slides of this, but as before I remember the light; on a day with no clouds it seemed special, bright, but filtered and striated as through moving water.

At the top of the ridge we found a deserted farm which had been a large self-sustaining enterprise. A machine to make wooden roofing shingles stood under a tree. It seemed an odd bit of the past and my father, who was raised on a hilltop near New Haven, West Virginia with eight brothers and sisters, had to tell us what it was. Except for the weathering of the wood and the rust on the metal it could have been used only the day before. Some buildings were still standing, others reduced to foundations, but all were being slowly washed away by long duration: a stone cellar, some wooden outbuildings, a fenced-in rock overhang, and a sort of chimney rock with a ladder to the top. I was not able, or maybe not allowed, to climb the ladder to the top and was left at the bottom with my little brother in some blackberry bushes in the hot sun.

When we were running on the trail back to the farm from the rocks we almost stepped on a copperhead. I have a striking memory of a sleek coppery length, like a self-contained bit of fluid, moving swiftly away through the profuse jungle of the eastern forest.

A muddy forest trail led off of Tick Ridge in another direction. We followed it back down to the blacktop county road. Along the way several old foundations of houses lost and worn like a memory in the flow of time survived the moist forest; one is particularly unforgettable because of the rose bushes growing around it and the large shade tree in what was formerly the yard. I wondered who remembered those places as home.

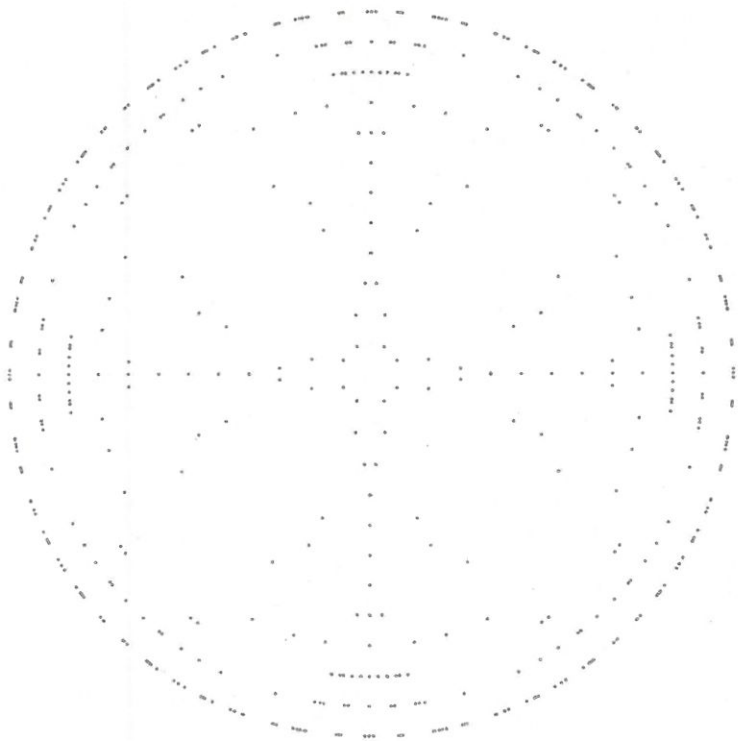
Since the 1950s I have been back to Cabwaylingo sporadically. I taught high school and elementary school music and English in the area and ended up there several times on outings. It never appears again as dramatic as it seemed in my childhood or as I see it in the pictures from those vacations. One of the last times there, I slept all night on Tick Ridge in a tent. A large group of old friends and relatives sang and ate around a campfire near the fire observation tower that sits on the ridge. The high tower above the memoried eastern forest allowed a far view across great green space, with clouds scudding as though caught in a tide of blue water. The next day we hiked to a deserted farm on up the ridge where the grandfather of one of my friends had lived. It evoked memories, but it had been a long time and I wasn't sure whether it was the same farm I hiked to as a child. There were only foundations, nothing left standing, and it was very overgrown, very worn, like my memories from thirty years before.

That I think I remember is meaningful; details from so long ago are hard to recall. I've come this far into the creek fishing for significance; wading, with my nostrils full of the odor of sweat, branch-water, dark loam, and moss; finding memory coalesced as in a still pool on the far inner side of a curve in the creek. I'm not sure the significance is there, anymore than value and relevance is anywhere in our long story of remembrance, our ego history, the story of this entity on this planet during this century. The question of significance is really, "who am I, wading in this water now, and from where does the light shine?" The only answer is that I am the past, the light is remembered, whether from a picture or from an actual memory (if there is ever actual memory). I am the one who played with little wriggling black snake-like creatures at the mouth of a fresh clean stream on a steamy day sometime in the mid-twentieth century, sometime in eternity. I am the one who was then, and the one who now thinks he remembers all of that and yellow light. We can only define ourselves or anything with names and descriptions from the past, and we can only feel for those memories, as for footing and stability, while wading in this stream that is all around us, flowing.

Nate Capehart *has a B.A. with a language arts concentration and a certificate to teach in secondary schools with an M.A. in the theory and practice of writing. He has taught literature, music, and writing in a variety of settings and levels of learning. He also writes poetry, essays, and fiction. He is interested in how humans connect to the world and whether and/or how language helps or hinders this communion.*

The Fermat Mandala

Phil Moore



Pierre Fermat (1601-1665) was a French jurist and amateur mathematician who has been called the father of modern number theory. He was interested in prime numbers that are equal to some power of 2 plus 1, and he observed that the numbers , $2^1 + 1 = 3$, $2^2 + 1 = 5$, $2^4 + 1 = 17$, $2^8 + 1 = 257$, and $2^{16} + 1 = 65{,}537$ are all prime. He also knew that if the exponent is not a power of 2, the result is composite (not prime). Fermat then claimed that all further numbers in this sequence such as $2^{32} + 1$ were also prime. These numbers grow very rapidly, and Fermat admitted he couldn't prove this, but he made the claim that it was true numerous times in his correspondence and asked other mathematicians if they could

help him fill in the details of a proof that eluded him. The reason that a proof could not be found became obvious in 1732, sixty-seven years after Fermat's death, when the Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler (1707-1783) found that $2^{32} + 1 = 4{,}294{,}967{,}297$ was not prime, and was in fact equal to the 641 times 6,700,417. Numbers of the form $2^{2^n} + 1$ are known as Fermat numbers, or Fermat primes in the cases where the numbers are prime. The five primes known to Fermat correspond to the values $n = 0, 1, 2, 3$, and 4. No other Fermat primes have ever been discovered, and in fact we know today that these numbers are composite for all values of n from 5 through 32 as well as many larger values of n. Many researchers suspect that the five primes known to Fermat are the only primes in this sequence.

Finding a factor is the easiest way to prove that a Fermat number is composite. Many people have looked for factors of Fermat numbers since Euler found the first two, and today over 250 factors are known. Factoring has recently become important in the field of cryptography, the design and study of codes. Many methods of data encryption used in computer systems are based on the difficulty of factoring large numbers into their prime factors. It is believed that if you multiply two 150-digit prime numbers together and give someone only the 300-digit product, that it is impossible using current factoring methods and technology to find the original factors without any additional knowledge. When someone sends an encrypted version of a credit card number over the internet, that person is implicitly trusting that any third party intercepting the communication will be unable to decode the information because cracking the code involves a seriously difficult factoring problem. Obviously, the invention of new factoring methods could place currently used codes at risk. The cryptography community is keenly interested in following the current state of factoring research in order to know if current standards are secure. The problem of factoring Fermat numbers has historically been a challenge to those devising new factoring methods. Progress in this area has been considered one of the important benchmarks of overall factoring progress.

I have been searching for new Fermat factors since 1999 using four different factoring methods, but have not found any new factors so far. All the Fermat numbers up through the eleventh, that is, $2^{2^{11}} + 1$, have been completely factored into prime factors. The twelfth Fermat number contains 1,234 digits. Five small factors are known of this number, but the piece that is left still contains 1,187 digits. The most powerful factoring methods in use currently might be able to find factors up to around sixty digits, but it is very unlikely that these methods will be sufficient to completely factor this number.

Recently, I started using a new factoring method that I hope holds some promise. This method is not really new, as it was originally discovered by Euler, but it has not been used much in recent years. I will try to describe this factoring method in non-technical terms.

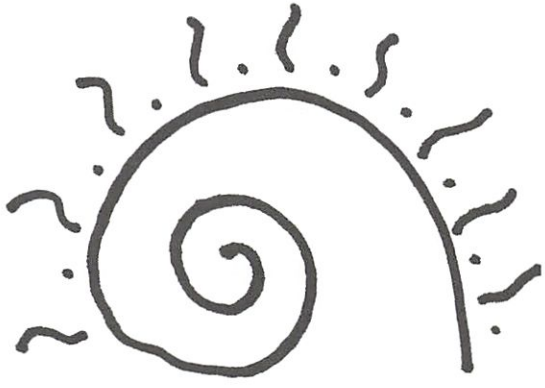
Think of traditional factoring methods where one wants to find factors of some number N. Finding a factor p then gives us a solution in whole numbers to the equation $N = p \cdot q$, where $q = N \div p$. We know that this equation $N = p \cdot q$ already has two "trivial solutions," one where $p = 1$ and N and another where $p = N$ and $q = 1$. If N happens to be prime, these are the only two solutions, but if N is not prime, there will be other solutions. We want to find new solutions of $N = p \cdot q$ where N is some Fermat number. For large N, say, over 200 digits, the most useful methods of looking for factors will only be able to find factors where one factor is small compared to N, probably not more than sixty digits. Euler realized that for certain numbers N, finding the whole number solutions of $N = p \cdot q$ was equivalent to finding the whole number solutions of another equation: $N = x^2 + y^2$. Euler realized that knowing two different solutions of this second equation gave him enough information to find a solution of the first equation. For example, if $N = 65$, there are two solutions: $65 = 8^2 + 1^2$ and also $65 = 7^2 + 4^2$. Euler knew how to use these solutions to find the factors of the original equation $65 = 5 \cdot 13$. This factoring method is generally impractical for two reasons. It does not work on all numbers N, and it also requires two solutions to the equation $N = x^2 + y^2$, whereas it may be difficult enough to find even one solution. However, when N is a Fermat number, the method is guaranteed to work, at least in theory. Furthermore, there is always one solution with $y = 1$, so we only have to find one additional solution to apply Euler's method.

The graph at the beginning of this article shows all whole number solutions of the equations $N = x^2 + y^2$ where N is one of the first twelve Fermat numbers. Each set of solutions lies on a circle. The smallest circle corresponds to the first Fermat number and the largest circle corresponds to the twelfth Fermat number. We could continue this graph with more circles for larger Fermat numbers if we wish, but since our knowledge of solutions gets more fragmentary as the Fermat numbers get larger, we stop with the twelfth circle which corresponds to the first Fermat number not completely factored. From any solution to $N = x^2 + y^2$, there is a second solution obtained by switching around x and y, and there are six more solutions obtained by allowing x and y to be negative as well as positive. We consider this set of eight solutions as actually being only a single solution, but because we graph all eight, our graph has a pleasing eight-fold kaleidoscopic symmetry, reminiscent of a Buddhist meditation mandala.

Because all Fermat numbers up through the eleventh are completely factored, the first eleven circles display a complete set of solutions. However, the twelfth circle solutions are not known completely, and there are at least as many unknown points on this circle as there are known. The discovery of even one new solution will give us information about new factors of the twelfth Fermat number. I have been examining small segments of this circle and searching for new solutions in those segments, but so far, this brute force search method has not been successful. One problem with this method is that the circle is in reality

extremely large. The radius of the circle is a number with 617 digits, and I am not able to search very much of this circle at a time. I am currently making this method more efficient by implementing the possibility of searching several sections simultaneously, but I am doubtful that even this increased efficiency will suffice to help me find a new solution unless I am extraordinarily lucky. I need a new idea, and I am currently studying the first eleven circles to see if there is any structural clue in the arrangement of the points on those circles that might give me a hint toward where to search on the twelfth circle. It is tempting to think that the beauty of this graph hints at some underlying pattern. On the other hand, the example of the stellar constellations is enough to convince us that the human mind often creates patterns out of underlying randomness. An initial study of some of the smaller circles has suggested that there may be some sort of pattern, but not necessarily a pattern manifested in the geometric arrangement of the points on the circles. Nevertheless, I cannot help but see the beauty of this graph as a reflection of the rich structure of this problem which has fascinated mathematicians for over 300 years.

Phil Moore
has been teaching math at Lane Community College since 1998. He grew up in Iowa, attended Harvard as an undergraduate, and did graduate work at the University of Iowa in physics and math. He is married to Char Heitman and they have a son, Rio, born in September 2004.



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Notes for "Everywhere I Go, I'm White..." continued from Page 44

[1] Robert Terry, "The Negative Impact on White Values," *Impacts of Racism on White Americans*, Benjamin P. Bowser and Raymond Hunt (Newbury Park, Calif: Sage Publications, 1981), 120. (This quote has also been widely attributed to James Baldwin.)

[2] In this essay, I am primarily speaking to other white people about my ongoing journey of coming to terms with privilege and racism. If you are a person of color reading this, please bear with me. When I say "we," meaning "we white people," I don't mean to be exclusionary. Rather, I feel that these are subjects that white people need to face together, before we can become conscious, competent allies to people of color.

[3] Harlon L. Dalton, *Racial Healing: Confronting the Fear Between Blacks & Whites* (Anchor Books: New York, 1995) 165.

[4] Jane LaZarre, *Beyond the Whiteness of Whiteness* (Duram, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 49-50.

[5] Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," adapted from "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies." Widely reprinted, it can be found in Anna Minas (ed.), *Gender Biases: Feminist Perspectives on Women and Men* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1993), 30-38.

[6] Ibid., 38.

[7] Allen G. Johnson, *Privilege, Power and Difference* (Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield, 2001), 66.

[8] McIntosh, 38.

[9] Johnson, 9.

[10] Paul Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1996), 83.

[11] Johnson, 96.

[12] Johnson, 36.

[13] Johnson, 81-82.

[14] James Baldwin, "On Being White . . . and Other Lies," *Essence*, 1984. Reprinted in David R. Roediger (ed.), *Black on White: Black Writers on What It Means to be White* (New York: Schocken Books, 1999), 177-80.

[15] *Race – the Power of an Illusion, Episode 1: The Difference Between Us.* Video documentary produced by California Newsreel in association with the Independent Television Service, and summarized in the accompanying study guide "Ten Things Everyone Should Know About Race," found at www.pbs.org/race, 2003.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] James R. Barrett and David Roediger, "How White People Became White," in *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*, ed. Paula S. Rothenberg (New York: Worth Publishers, 2002), 30-32.

[19] Joseph Barndt, *Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America* (Augsburg Fortress: Minneapolis, MN, 1991), 28-29.

Notes continued on page 152

Notes continued from preceding page

[20] *Race – the Power of an Illusion, Episode 2: The Story We Tell.* Video documentary produced by California Newsreel in association with the Independent Television Service, 2003.

[21] Reginald Horsman, "Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism," in *Critical White Studies*, eds. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefanicic (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997) 139-144.

[22] Gary R. Howard. *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know White Teachers, Multiracial Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999), 59.

[23] Melvin L. Oliver and Thomas M. Shapiro, *Black Wealth / White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 19.

[24] *Race—the Power of an Illusion, Episode 3: The House We Live In.* Video documentary produced by California Newsreel in association with the Independent Television Service, 2003.

[25] Oliver and Shapiro, *Black Wealth / White Wealth*, 24.

[26] Ibid, 25

[27] Jeff Hitchcock, "What Kind of White Person Are You?" Center for the Study of White American Culture. April, 1999, http://www.euroamerican.org/editorials/Edit0499.asp.

[28] Kivel, *Uprooting Racism*, 12.

[29] Howard, 108.

Notes

[1] Allan G. Johnson, *Privilege, Power and Difference* (NewYork: McGraw-Hill, 2001). Dr. Johnson was the keynote speaker of Lane's 2004 Spring Conference, and his book was featured in the *Reading Together* program and adopted by instructors as a secondary text as a part of that program. In his book, Johnson credits capitalism with playing a major role in the creation of white racism as well as producing a system of static, stratified economic classes in America forming a "matrix of domination." He attacks with gusto the concept of individualism, calling it "the myth that everything is somebody's fault."

[2] In a recent case that garnered some national media attention, Ahmad Al-Qloushi, an international student from Kuwait, received the following essay topic in a Fall 2004 course at Foothill College (a community college in California) from Professor Joseph Woolcock: "Dye and Zeigler contend that the Constitution of the United States was not 'ordained and established' by 'the people' as we have so often been led to believe. They contend instead that it was written by a small educated and wealthy elite in America who were representative of powerful economic and political interests. Analyze the U. S. Constitution (original document), and show how its formulation excluded majority of the people living in America at that time, and how it was dominated by America's elite interest." Ahmed argued that, contrary to Dye and Zeigler, the Constitution "was a progressive document for its time" and "symbolizes and embodies what America is today, a just and democratic society where all men and women are created equal and...free to pursue their own happiness and fulfillment." Professor Woolcock not only refused to grade his paper, he lectured Ahmed on his misguided political views, insisted he seek psychotherapy and threatened his visa status if he did not do so. (http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org/archive/2005/January2005/AhmadFoothillarticle010605.htm).

[3] There have been several recent studies on the ideological and political leanings of college faculty, all showing similar results. In November 2004 Klein & Stern released a nation-wide study of college professors, finding that in the Social Sciences and Humanities, Democrats outnumbered Republicans by a ratio of at least 7 to 1, with disparities as high as 28 to 1 and 30 to 1 in the fields of Sociology and Anthropology, respectively (http://swopec.hhs.se/ratioi/abs/ratioi0053.htm). A paper based on their research "How Politically Diverse Are the Social Sciences and Humanities? Survey Evidence from Six Fields" is forthcoming in *Academic Questions*. In a separate survey based on voter registration, a public and objective indicator of ideological leaning, Klein & Western ascertained that across 23 major academic departments, including mathematics, business and the hard sciences, which tend to lean less to the left, Democrats outnumbered Republicans at Stanford by a ratio of 7 to 1 and at Berkeley by a ratio of 10 to 1 (http://swopec.hhs.se/ratioi/abs/ratioi0054.htm).

[4] Paul Greenburg, *How Diversity Became Orwellian*, July 18, 2003 (Tribune Media Services). (http://www.townhall.com/columnists/paulgreenberg/pg20030718.shtml).

Notes for "The Fiction of Whiteness..." continued from page 61

Notes

[1] The scientific literature on the fiction of race is immense, and easily accessed. For interesting and highly readable introductions to the notion that whiteness is fictive, see Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995) and Paula S. Rothenberg, *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism* (New York: Worth, 2001). For a provocative challenge to all sorts of assumption on race, see Richard Rodriguez, *Brown: The Last Discovery of America* (New York: Penguin, 2003).

Notes for "Cultural Taxation..." continued from Page 111

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[1] Ibarra, R. A. Latina/o Faculty and the Tenure Process in Cultural Context. In J. Castellanos, & L. Jones (Eds.), *Expanding the Representation of Latina/o Faculty, Administrators and Students in Higher Education* (pp. 207-219). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing. (2003).

[2] Cooper, J. E. & Stevens, D. D. The Journey Toward Tenure. In J. E. Cooper & D. D. Stevens (Eds.), *Tenure in the Sacred Grove: Issues and Strategies for Women and Minority Faculty* (pp. 6-7). New York: State University Press. (2002).

[3] A. Aguirre Jr., *Women and Minority Faculty in the Academic Workplace: Recruitment, Retention, and Academic Culture.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (2000).

[4] A. Aguirre Jr., Ibid pp. 86-87.

[5] A. I. Morey & M. K. Kitano, *Multicultural Course Transformation in Higher Education: A Broader Truth.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon. (1997).

[6] R. Hardiman & B. W. Jackson, "Conceptual Foundations for Social Justice Courses." In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin, (eds.), *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook* (pp. 16-29). New York: Routledge. (1997).

[7] M. Omi & H. Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States.* New York: Routledge. (1994).

[8] R. T. Schaefer, *Racial and Ethnic Groups.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, p. 143. (2004).

[9] Hansen, M. The Third Generation in America. *Commentary 14*, (493-500). (November, 1952).

[10] Waters, M. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America.* Berkeley: University of California Press. (1990).

[11] R. A. Rhoads, *Multiculturalism and Border Knowledge in Higher Education.* Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED383370). (April 1995).

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Continued on page 156

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Community College Moment

Call for Work

The *Community College Moment* offers a forum for high-quality progressive articles of interest to community college instructors, administrators, and professional/classified staff that reflect a new vision of scholarship at the intersection of academic, activist and community interests. We invite articles, interviews, photographs, artwork, poetry and other original work that reflects the interests of a community college mission and environment. Submissions should address a thoughtful, but not specialized, academic audience, and may address issues of interest to local, regional, or national readers.

Submission deadline for 2006 Sustainability issue: October 7, 2005

For full submission guidelines including format requirements, see our website: **http://teach.lanecc.edu/ccm**

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In addition to general submissions on any topic relevant to the Moment's audience, we invite submissions for a special section titled "Sustainability." While the generally recognized topic of sustainability often deals with humans' relationship to their environment, we welcome work that explores a broad and inclusive notion of personal, societal, economic, political and other relationships. From master recycling to seventh-generation democratic principles, from bioregional food production to our fundamental connection to all things. The Moment is open to a variety of submission formats. Examples of kinds of work considered for inclusion are:

- Full-length articles (5000 words maximum; work in languages other than English welcome)
- Collaborative projects
- Web-based projects
- Works-in-progress (provocative ideas not fully worked out)
- Collages of your work over time
- Plans and reflections on innovative pedagogies
- Artworks of any kind: poetry, paintings, sculpture and choreographic projects (which we would feature through photographs), musical compositions (print and/or taped), etc.

We also invite you to submit for consideration short (300-word) essays that summarize and evaluate a book you would like to share with your community college colleagues.

Send all submissions before October 7, 2005 to: The *Community College Moment* / Attn: Editors/ Lane Community College /Bldg. 20, Room 133/ 4000 E. 30th Avenue, Eugene, Oregon 97405. For additional information, contact editors Tracy Henninger (henningert@lanecc.edu) or Steve McQuiddy (mcquiddys@lanecc.edu).