

May 2020

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What is the AFA?

It's your union, protecting and fighting for the rights of all adjuncts covered under the bargaining agreement between the college and the AFA (anyone teaching at least six LHE's in any of the three previous terms).



WE DID IT.

AFA Happy Hour

*Friday, May 15, from 4 to 5 p.m.
in your living room!*

Miss your colleagues? Change into something special, bring your favorite drink, and join your colleagues for a Zoom hour at 4.

We will host a quick meeting, followed by a casual check-in depending on the number of participants.

If you would like to ask the AFA Board a question in advance, please add it to the form below & we'll answer it.

Fill out this form to be sent a link to enter the meeting. This is simply to prevent uninvited Zoom bombing guests. If you want to be included, but can't figure out the Google form, just reply to this email saying you would like to come.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScS3UHPNf9hwZLU9N-479NYpv74FDrOeGOI1vzoLRO2P0Bthg/viewform?usp=sf_link

When I put out the invitation to some of you to share something of your sheltering-in-place life, I expected a few lines written in return. You wrote missives! I think all of us miss greeting each other in the hallways, chatting in the lounge, catching up with each other and exchanging opinions and teaching tips in the Division offices. Here is what we have missed. Enjoy.

from Sun Choi, Art:

I am doing OK, but feel like I am always chased for time. Even when I have time, there is not enough time to prepare for virtual classes I used to take Yoga Sculpt classes but can't now even though I can access some free yoga classes. So I go to Flick Park in Glenview and walk for an hour in the morning. Nature brings me fresh air and a calm spirit. Here is a photo of a stack of my artwork for virtual art classes.



From Phil Prale, Education:

I am staying well. Whenever we have decent weather, I head outside to bike, run, walk, or simply enjoy the longer days. On-line experience has been a work in progress,...using the virtual classroom, the whiteboard, and

polling in the BBB...I'm reading Paul Beatty's *The Sellout*, after finishing Patti Smith's *Just Kids*, Ben Lerner's *The Topeka School*, and Kiley Reid's *Such a Fun Age*. Sarah Broom's *The Yellow House* is in the queue, as is Roth's *The Plot Against America*. Series? I finished *The Outsider*, and Season 10 of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, and Season 3 of *Fauda*. Here is a picture of me from last summer, hiking in Estes Park Colorado.



From Linda Karlen, English/ESL:

Hello!

This semester has required extra doses of patience and compassion. Like most faculty, I've had to upgrade my at-home equipment/broadcast space and my online teaching skills for remote learning. Like so many adjunct faculty teaching at two institutions, I've had to make the adjustments on two different communicative platforms (in my case, D2L and Blackboard). Teaching is learning, and no more so than this semester. In addition to teaching, I've started an ION course on online teaching/learning. I'm encouraged by the perseverance of my students, many of whom are also experiencing huge adjustments in employment, pandemic protocol, and online learning. A one-day-at-a-time approach along with frequent communications with students, colleagues, family, and friends have helped me immeasurably. Also, almost-daily walks, journaling, and staying in contact with nature are my life savers.

Am I the only one who doesn't subscribe to Netflix? My college-aged sons do and give me occasional recommendations as do my students. Can't reciprocate for now. I have taken some extra time for leisure reading. The other day I walked up to my bookcase and pulled out Jack Finney's *Time and Again*, a book that has survived many purges but one I've never read. Now is the time. Though I don't miss my commute to work, I do miss listening to audio-books in my car. In brief drives to the grocery store or forest preserves, I'm continuing with the *The Personal History of Rachel DuPree* by Anne Weisgarber.

Rachel's struggles with self-worth, drought, hunger, social-distancing (in the South Dakota Badlands!), parenting, prejudice and racism are peculiarly hopeful.

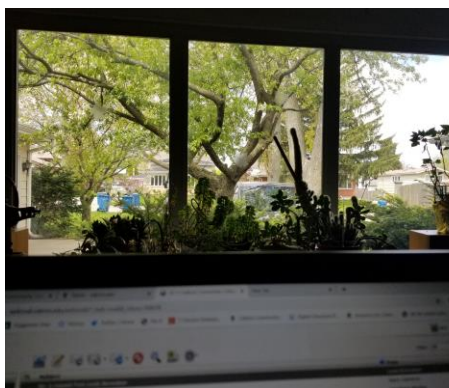


Figure 1 The view from Linda's 'classroom'

From Shannon Sloan-Spice, World Mythology:

I must say I am so grateful for the *Kairos* moment we find ourselves in! What a perfect time to be a mythologist and to be able to fully teach the richness of these sacred stories. I am mindfully observing how the old way of life is crumbling away and realizing how unsustainable and exhausting it was. I have a fantastic ceremonial community and we have been doing weekly virtual sweat lodges. There is

nothing more comforting than having an intentional community to share the ebb and flow of courage

I have experienced a flourishing of creativity in photography, and had an awesome accident happen with Zoom virtual backgrounds. Here



are a few self-portraits working with landscape images I took in Ireland, and portraits of myself with my parents and with my partner, Jimi. It was so much fun working with images, especially with my ancestors!

I began knitting again, grew plants from seeds, am already out in my garden. I discovered I write more creatively with pen to paper, so I have been journaling. I am enjoying cooking so much more and eating with my family every night. We have been picking up trash on our dog walks, admiring the horizon over Lake Michigan, no longer sullied by a smog line. Loving the birdsong that can be heard well into the evening. I am honored to announce that I was the recipient of a Milwaukee Artist Relief Fund Grant from Imagine Milwaukee as all my theatre work was canceled this spring.

My new obsession has been with Dr. Martin Shaw, a most fabulous eco-mythologist in the U.K. What a fantastic storyteller!!! You can find him at Cistmystica.com.

From Jan Nagowski, English:

My on-line teaching was exhausting but fine. For some reason, I felt closer to many of the students communicating with them on-line. Right now I have no time for hobbies or books. I'm trying to encourage students to get a bunch of late and final papers in; I'm giving my first on-line exam. I have only gone out a few times, mostly to the grocery store. I've not been out since the required mask rule. I'm on-line for hours teaching my virtual classes, answering student e-mails, and grading. I flop into bed at night and watch PBS News, BBC News, Amanpour and Company, and countless Covid-19 reports. Late nights I watch again and again (or sleep through) old movies on

Comcast. Two new ones I liked were: Green Book and The Best of Enemies. Fresh lemons are feeding my spirit right now in the form of hot lemon aid. Daniel Cleaver (BJD) would respond, "What a gripping life you do lead."

From Barb Cohen, English:

I am safe, healthy, and bored. I do keep to a routine: Check and update D2L though sadly, most of my students have dropped or disappeared. Exercise (treadmill or bicycle). Shower. Wear real clothes. Complete the daily *Tribune* crossword puzzle. Avoid the tv until 4pm. ZOOM Happy Hour with friends. Order pizza from Lou Malnatti's. I really miss the local library though happy to download books onto my Kindle. My favorite new authors are Mark Pryor and Simone St. James. At night I have watched 800 Words, Grantchester (season 5 starts June 20), Hamish Macbeth (need

subtitles unless versed in Scottish) and Captain Marleau.

My family is also safe and healthy though everyone is working or in full-time childcare mode (no daycare) so cannot say they are bored, just very busy. My younger daughter moved her wedding date out a full year since it clearly is not happening in a few weeks; she also took a webinar and is now trained to deliver speech therapy online. My son's new job of Events Planner disappeared but he found work for a moving company (yes- people are moving). And with my grand-kids walking distance, I see them at least twice a day. I am so lucky to have that opportunity, despite keeping our 6 feet distance; makes me glad my backyard still has the 1992 swing set. If you're in my neighborhood, my home is easy to spot- the driveway is decorated every day with new chalk pictures, a hopscotch board and dinosaur footprints.

Yes, I miss the Face-to-Face contact with my students but truly miss my Oakton colleagues. I am looking forward, hopefully, to seeing everyone soon.

From Randy Felsenthal,

I was sitting in a convention hall with 1100 educators on March 6, 2020. An announcement was made that the National Education Association annual meeting scheduled for June, would be cancelled. What? This epidemic must be more serious than we think.

Soon after the college closed, academic continuity plan implemented, and non-essential work force sheltered in place. I was already teaching an online class and had designed my two in-person classes with a continuity plan.



Thanks to Ileo, Marc, and Tracy for your persistent messaging to create the plan.

The first home week I wanted to send an encouraging message to my neighbors. I created two yard signs, one thanking all essential workers for their service. The other sign asked for all of us to practice more civility, common sense, compassion, and courage.

Many walkers came by and waved or gave thumbs up outside out window.

Look forward to Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays when I teach. My students have expressed the same sentiment. They've been a good time to share personal stories about coping with the sudden change of life.

Spend most days with exercise, food, reading, TV, long walks, phone, and video meetings with family and friends. My wife and I are married 45 years; we've both learned more about each other during these close quarter times - some quirks and some emotional. We've become good at creating interesting meals, many reaching back to parents and grand-parents' recipes. We've sated our Starbucks cravings by finding you tubes to make frothy coffee drinks and baked many carrot, banana, and cinnamon cakes. Overall we feel very fortunate to be healthy

and safe. Our oldest son and daughter did have covid 19 but have since recovered and are feeling well now.

I've participated in a Passover Zoom Seder and Torah study and am reading *Winds of War*, Hopkins and Roosevelt, and *Battle Cry of Freedom*.

From Linda Berendsen, English/ESL:

I've never worked so hard in my life! It feels like I never leave class, but a class with no students in front of me. Meeting them during regular class-time with Google Meets helps all of us keep the little community we had created in class. Working at home is challenging. My 21-year-old daughter and her 2 large dogs have been staying with us; they are energetic and affectionate, and just love to get up close and personal. There are baby quilts for family to make, my garden to tend (my goal is to eliminate any grass to mow), and the 2 art classes I am taking at Oakton to keep working on. I must say, figure drawing does not adapt well to on-line

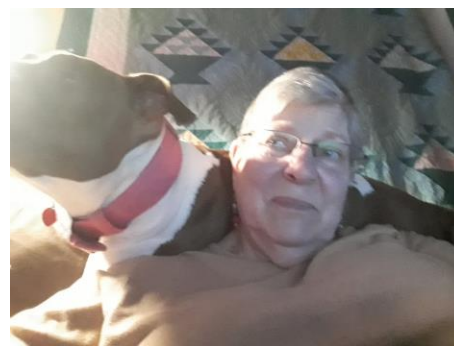
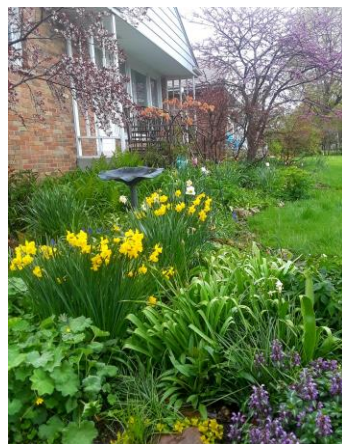


Figure 1 On-line teaching in the time Covid

learning. My husband and I are devoted to British mysteries and have just recently joined the rest of the world and subscribed to Netflix. And have you checked out the new Masterpiece Theater, *Baptiste*? It's great!

From Bill Tong, Earth Science:

I have worked from home for the EPA since March 13. I have a designated basement office, so it has been relatively comfortable to work from there. My wife, daughter and son (both adults) and I are in good health. I figured out to convert my traditional earth science (EAS-100) class to on-line after spring break by computer

recording my lectures (PowerPoint and other documents) using Flash Express, and uploading the videos to a YouTube play list:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBpycCVhQyzAjA3h5oZQZcvwpYVn1SU10>

I have converted my written exams to be taken on D2L. Lab has been a bigger challenge, but I was able to create a rock identification exam using photos that I got from my students (I created photo pages for them to study from, and for the exam, I used Microsoft Paint to remove the identification numbers.) I also have been holding Google Hangout video meetings on our normal meeting times on Monday and Wednesday evenings, for lab and lecture review and to answer questions.

Although it has been exhausting, I have solved a long-standing problem for me, but updating my teaching and presentation

materials and creating a future study resource for my future students; the videos may be used as a resource for reviewing before exams, or for students who missed a lecture or lab. I've kept the videos unlisted, because I don't want students to cut class.

I have lost my summer teaching assignment (EAS-125-850, Survey of Oceanography) because I don't have an approved on-line course. But I can use the time off, and I will create lecture videos for the first half of EAS-100 to complete the project.

I haven't been able to get together with my musician friends to jam since Feb. 29. So, here are some songs from



home:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avHKhEULRdg&list=PLyyYqDS_Lelinb6MpWTBcCIom5-A-63Gw

from Sue Uribe/ECE

I am coping with our new "at home" situation. Taking long walks by myself with my face mask, gloves, and music is feeding my spirit now. I'm noticing the many birds that are in the area and their sounds. Some days I'll take the walking path and meet my daughter along the way. We walk 6 feet apart and talk to each other on the phone. When we are done, we give each other a virtual hug. It is the highlight of my day.

On-line teaching has been a positive adventure. Thanks to the wonderful tech support from the IT department, I'm really starting to enjoy it. It's becoming fun and sometimes frustrating at the same time.

My main hobby has always been fitness - dance, weight lifting, swimming. I'm still trying to figure this out. I'm cooking more. I try to laugh every day. I mean "really" belly laugh so I try to find a sit com or a Staying connected to my friends and family through Zoom is also helpful. I'm also

working hard to finish the video that is just funny. It helps my spirit. semester and very grateful to be working!

I recommend *Unorthodox* on Netflix and also *River*. Hoping that all my colleagues at Oakton are staying healthy and content.

From Dave Williams, Economics:

Every day I wake up healthy is a good day. Since the beginning, I've often thought of an old spiritual I heard sung by a male quartet at a church in St. Louis a few years back. It was written by Kris Kristofferson, and is one of those country/crossover tunes, called *One Day at a Time*. Kind of like *Old Town Road*, if you know what I mean.

My students have been outstanding. I would not have imagined so many of them would stay engaged. I use Big Blue Button through D2L. Most of the students join in listen only mode, so we make more use of the chat room, which is a

different vibe, but interesting. Sometimes it feels like a support group, which is fine. A chance for students to communicate. And some have told me they **actually look forward to class**, as a break from boredom and bad news everywhere. We dissected the latest GDP report from the Bureau of Economic Analysis and spent more time than usual on Costs of Production, which I think will help if they are restarting businesses.

I'm reading a couple of books. Just completed *The Great Influenza*, by John Barry. A thick, slow, ponderous text of about 500 pages. Not an easy read, but worth it. Alas it offered no insights on the post pandemic economic recovery, which is what I was looking for. But it did help me understand the science of the virus. According to this text and others, viruses are a "not quite life" form, 1,000 times smaller than bacteria, and may have "climbed out of the primordial soup, before we did." As near as a layman like me can understand, they are fragments of genes, RNA, wrapped in a protein, that hijack the reproductive capability of other cells. They are the ultimate parasite, a mutating swarm. My high school Biology teacher, Mr. McMahan, engaged us with his contagious enthusiasm and tendency to personalize cellular, biochemical processes: "Protons don't like neutrons" that sort of thing. And it seems to me that the people who do approach things that way, get it. Like Dr. Fauci saying that the virus has its own timetable.

I've also been reading *The Success Principles*, by Jack Canfield, the Chicken Soup for the Soul, guy. Turns out he's a protege of W. Clement Stone, he of the skinny mustache, one of the original self-improvement gurus. It's got so much "Positive Mental Attitude" in it, some of it is bound to rub off, even on a skeptic like me.

And then just a few pulp fiction novels, for fun. I'm not indulging much with the whole Netflix / streaming thing. Instead I'm trying to exercise and not eat too much.

Overall, I'm blessed. Fortunate that I have a job that allows me to work remotely, and just taking it, *One Day at a Time*.

From Jennifer Dadivas-Hong, English/ESL:

I'm a move-around-the-room kind of teacher, so I miss being with students and helping them understand the material when I can see some confusion on their faces. (I can't see their faces now since most of them have cameras off during our virtual class meetings!). Also, as the writing placement (WSAT) coordinator, it has been very challenging adapting the WSAT to be taken remotely. I am actually looking forward to reading placement essays on paper when campuses reopen!

The upsides: Prior to the shelter-in-place order, my family and I were usually not home until 8:30 pm on weeknights and weekends were busy with the kids' extracurricular activities. We now spend quality time together, and I love getting to really talk to my kids and laugh and have fun with

hem. We've really enjoyed binge watching "The Good Place" on Netflix. It's such a creative way to present and discuss ethics!



Books? I've read or will read during SIP (photo): I'm reading "To Kill a Mockingbird" again since my son is reading it for his high school English class. One book that I recommend that is not in my photo is "The Alice Network",

a historical fiction novel about the actual Alice Network made up of female spies during World War I.



I hope all of you and your families are staying safe!

Would you like to join the conversation? E-mail me at Laberendsen@gmail.com and I can compile a new edition.

