

# review

LINCOLN LAND



# L I N C O L N   L A N D   review

*A collection of visual  
and written work  
by students of  
Lincoln Land  
Community College*

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## Editors' Note

The edition of the Lincoln Land Review you are reading is different from past issues. It still contains the best artwork, poetry, fiction, and academic writing from current LLCC students, but it also includes submissions from alumni. Faculty editors wanted something unique with this volume because the Review itself is changing to a publication more curated and executed by Lincoln Land students. We are not issuing a call for new submissions in this Review, which feels a little strange after so many years, yet we are thrilled for the changes to come. Future students will shape the Lincoln Land Review into a year-round, online publication. We know it will become even more dynamic, diverse, and interactive. Thank you, readers, for being part of the old and looking forward with us to the transformation!

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We would like to thank the Lincoln Land Review's other founding editors, Professors of English John Paul Jaramillo and Alison Stachera and Professor of Art Thom Whalen. We also express our gratitude to Professor Cara Swafford for serving as Co-Editor from 2014-2021.

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Last, but most certainly not least, we thank the many students who have

supported the Review with their contributions over the years, especially those whose work we have had the pleasure of celebrating within its pages. On that note, we proudly announce this edition's "best of" award winners:

- Fine Art – Miriam Carter, "Self Actualization"
- Digital Media – Nathan Atchinson, "Wrath of Nature"
- Academic Nonfiction – Erik Bartholomew, "Social Media Regulation and the 1st Amendment"
- Poetry – David Lasley, "Finally Still"

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NOAH ALBIN

## College is for Squares

Like many students who graduate from high school, I enrolled in college the following fall. I “knew everything” already. College had nothing new to teach me, and it wasn’t a path I felt particularly invested in. As I trudged and bumbled my way through my first semester, I made a dramatic decision. *College is for squares*, I thought. Everyone here has parents. Everyone here loves to read textbooks, and drink expensive coffee. They’re all going to live the exact same life with their shirts tucked in and somebody else mowing their grass. Not being a square myself, I made my next move with confidence. In the dreary January weather of the famously destitute city of Danville, Illinois, I visited the admissions office of my college.

“What would happen if I dropped all of my classes?” I asked.

“You would get your money back.”

The next day I was on my way to the Sunshine State.

I started learning new lessons right away. I hadn’t even completed my drive to Florida before I had to confront my own arrogance and shake off the idea that I knew everything. I drove eight hours to make it to Georgia. After at least four and a half more grueling hours of driving into Georgia, I decided I must be lost somehow. A sign that read “Valdosta” to me meant “Florida doesn’t exist.” I hadn’t heard of Valdosta, Georgia, and I didn’t realize how big the state was. Embarrassed by my lack of preparation, I bought an atlas. I’d been out on my own for less than one day, and I was already discovering that I still had a lot left to learn.

My first job in Orlando, Florida was with an 80-billion-dollar international company--McDonalds. My daily tasks felt like a slow, slippery, sleepy dance. I wasn’t any more engaged than anyone else would have been, but I did try to do my job well. My time assembling McDoubles under the golden arches taught me the “golden standard,” a concept that perfection can be worked into a formula.

The golden standard McDonalds taught me is about success stemming from a carefully prepared and outlined plan to succeed, not from talent as I had thought before. In the golden standard, an employee throws away old french fries every seven minutes so that every customer can expect a fresh and consistent product. This concept wasn’t something I was able to apply to my character right away, but over time it would contribute to my understanding that what I had believed about college might need to be revisited.

Illinois called me back home. I wish I could say I was coming back to fulfill some higher purpose--to step back into my progress-making shoes,

make progress, achieve, or put into practice lessons learned for years in an environment uniquely suited to my personal growth. The truth is that I came back to go rock climbing with a girl. My car broke down in Springfield, IL. A nearby nonprofit offered me a week of work while repairs were done. One week turned into six years. By the end of my time at this employer I was serving as the interim director, pursuing a permanent role in my position. I knew it wasn't likely that I would be hired. I knew people that landed jobs like this had beards, children, credit scores and student loan debt. I knew that I didn't fit the description. My attitude prevented me from seeing that it might be as simple as the search committee quickly glancing at the "education" section of the field of resumes. I felt that nine months serving as interim director, and six years of quality work should count for more than they did. I was defeated. It's not always easy, clear, or quick when we learn from our losses. Even today it is hard to name the lesson I learned from this chapter. If I had to try though, I'd say my ego was out of balance. Ego isn't evil or out to ruin our lives, but without being checked it can hold stubborn views that inhibit our growth without reason or logic to back them up.

My next destination in the extended (free) semester of education that life was blessing me with was my second nonprofit employer. This time around my role involved building and running summer camp programming for elementary-aged children. I loved everything about working at this job. Kids have a lot to teach. Kids believe, imagine, explore, they have courage, and sometimes their lack of deep abstraction can be a real strength. I learned to stop taking myself so seriously by spending time laughing with kids, and I feel uniquely blessed to have been given this opportunity. Ultimately though, someone with elementary education credentials came along and my job became their job. I'd lived and worked at these places, and in losing employment, I'd also lost my home. At times, I felt that I was spectating my own life. Some of those moments, watching, things felt disconnected or out of focus, but that wasn't the case when I lost this role. Everything was in sharp focus. I was sleeping in my car in parking lots. Some nights the temperature would drop below 20 degrees, and I'd have to stay awake with my engine running, forced to think about where I'd come from, and what steps I might take to get back to a place that allowed me to sleep. Since leaving college in the Fall of 2010, I went through seventeen different mailing addresses. Sometimes I didn't have a mailing address at all. With no security or place to belong, I picked up the puzzle pieces of experience I'd been collecting. It was time to come up with a plan.

My ego kept quiet while I put things together. I was ready to start taking some small steps out of the mess I'd made for myself. I rented a room. I visited libraries to read books on finance like *The Intelligent Investor* by Benjamin Graham. I studied strategies to make every dollar I earned in

my jobs work for my benefit. I ate peanut butter sandwiches, worked 70-hour weeks, and built a credit score. I sought advice from people with more experience than me, and I added their wisdom to my plan. This summer I bought a house, which was a major triumph for me. Houses come with mailboxes, and with that, I had everything I needed to be able to return to higher education, but did I really want to?

There was a framework being developed in my decade outside of school. I learned incrementally through freezing nights, long shifts, and dinners at diners where the staff called me "traveler." I had to recognize that what I felt when I decided that college was for squares was fear. I was afraid that what made me special might be washed out in the unknown world of higher education. I was afraid that the challenge would be too steep to meet. What was missing when I was afraid though wasn't courage, it was maturity. Maturity has a way of gently nudging us into the places we belong. Ten years of nudging was just enough for me to realize where I wanted to be—I wanted to study finance, starting with accounting, in college. Maybe I was a square after all, but at least I'd be an educated square. What's the harm in having someone else mow my grass for me?



LARRY WRIGHT

## Twelve and Over, Seventy-five Cents

Larry turned to the back page of the paper. "The movie starts at seven o'clock. Twelve and over, seventy-five cents, and under twelve, fifty cents." He felt the wadded dollar bill in his pocket, wrapped around two quarters he'd gotten from Mrs. Havrilka for weeding her flower bed and sweeping her sidewalk. "We turned twelve three days ago. We have to pay full price now."

Jerry snapped the paper from Larry. "Yeah, but we can pass for under twelve."

At the table his mom licked the end of her pencil and wrote milk on her grocery list. "You won't pass for little kids much longer. You better make sure you have the full amount in case Rosie Tanner figures out you're over twelve."

"But Mom," Larry said, "You told us not to lie and it says, twelve and over."

"Shut up, Larry," Jerry said, crumpling the paper and throwing it into Larry's face.

His mom tucked the grocery list inside her pocketbook, took out her change purse, and counted seventy-five cents for each of them. "Seventy-five cents or fifty cents, that's up to you and your conscience, whether you just want to see the movie or want popcorn and soda besides."

Harry, who'd been reading the comics, folded them over. "We better go," he said.

The three of them went out the back door and headed down the alley. They took the short cut on the hobo's path along the train tracks, pausing to pick blackberries from dying bushes that had been sprayed by the railroad company.

Larry moved away from the bush he'd been picking from and searched for one with more berries. George Washington never told a lie. "We're suppose to pay full price now that we're twelve," he said.

Jerry spit a blackberry into the back of Harry's head.

"Stop it, Jerry." Harry shoved another handful of berries into his mouth. "Rosie Tanner don't know how old we are," he added.

Larry bent down to pull cockleburs out of his shoe laces and from the cuffs of his pants. "We're not supposed to lie," he said. "Anyway, I have my own money to buy popcorn and soda with."

Jerry hurled a handful of berries towards Larry. "You lied on Thursday when Mrs. Wempen asked you if you had done the science experiment. You told her you did, but you didn't. What about that lie, Larry?"

"I did work on that assignment, so it wasn't really a lie."

"When we get up to the window," Harry said, "I'll give her fifty cents and wait for my ticket."

Larry lifted a thick cane, twisted sideways, and shoved his hand deep into the bush to get a really big berry. A briar snagged his sleeve at the shoulder. "Dang it," he said. "I'm caught, somebody help me."

"Don't do it, Harry," Jerry said, "He got himself in there, let him get himself out."

Larry jerked free and popped the berry into his mouth. Tiny dots of blood appeared on a long scratch that trailed down his arm. He wiped the blood off with the palm of his hand. Harry would have helped if Jerry had kept his mouth shut. He wished Jerry would get stung by a wasp or a hobo would hit him in the head with a railroad tie.

In single file, Jerry led them along the path behind Paddock's lumber yard. They stopped at the railroad crossing for Harry to tie his shoe. Larry fondled his money. If he paid full price this time, that meant he'd have to from now on. But if he didn't pay full price, that meant he was cheating Rosie and old Mrs. Tanner and he liked old Mrs. Tanner, even though his dad had turned down a job at their scrap yard and said he wasn't working for no Jew. When they'd gone to see *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*, Mrs. Tanner had squirted extra butter over his popcorn when nobody was looking and raised her finger to her lips.

When they got to the laundromat, Harry turned to him and said, "Ask if we can use the bathroom."

"Why? I don't have to go."

"Go on, Larry," Harry said, shoving him inside the door. "I got blackberry juice on my shirt. I have to wash it off."

Larry stumbled in. He took a deep breath of Spic and Span. A fat woman with a cigarette dangling from her mouth swabbed a mop back and forth. She stopped and glared at them over her glasses. "Don't you kids mess up my floor." She dropped the mop into the bucket, worked the handle up and down, and slopped water out onto the floor.

"Ma'am, could we please use the bathroom?" he asked.

She stared at him for a moment. "I suppose, since you're so polite, but don't leave me a mess to clean up." She unhooked the safety pin from inside her blouse and handed the key to him.

Larry led his brothers between the washers to the bathroom at the back of the laundromat and opened the door. "I get to wash first," he said.

Holding his hands under the spigot, Larry rubbed the dirty bar of soap between his palms to wash off the blackberry juice.

"What about my shirt?" Harry said. "Wait, I know." He pulled the t-shirt off, turned it wrong side out and put it on. "People won't notice so much this way," he said.

While Jerry washed, Larry grabbed hold of the dirty hoop of toweling and pulled down, but it wouldn't budge. He wiped his hands along his pant legs, opened the door a crack and slipped out.

While he waited for his brothers, Larry stood in front of the candy machine and wriggled the knob under the Junior Mints. His mom wouldn't let him get the candy Lucky Strike cigarettes when he was there with her the last time to do the wash. He stared into the glass at his brothers' reflections coming out of the bathroom.

"Let's go," Jerry said.

"Thank you," Larry said, returning the key before they headed out the door.

Jerry took off racing down the street towards the Roseland Theater. "Last one there is a rotten egg."

"Hey, stop running, you kids," a man in a long apron yelled as they passed his table of vegetables and fruit. "This here's a public sidewalk, it ain't no racetrack."

Harry went first to the ticket window with the circle of holes bored into the glass for Rosie to talk through. A sign in big red letters taped to the inside said TWELVE AND OVER 75 CENTS. Under that, in smaller letters, it said UNDER TWELVE 50 CENTS. Larry stared at her red hair showing white roots.

She slid the little wooden window aside and held her hand out for the money. Harry pushed two quarters through the opening. The NOW SHOWING window to the left of the booth held a picture of Davy Crocket with his coon-skin cap tipped back.

Jerry was next, and then Larry. If he gave her seventy-five cents, she'd know that Harry and Jerry had lied and they'd get in trouble. He didn't want to get them in trouble. He handed Rosie two quarters and followed Harry and Jerry inside.

Popcorn pushed out of the kettle and banked against the sides of glass. Overflowing sacks sat on top of one another in the hopper. Old Mrs. Tanner stood behind the counter waiting on the line of people who'd gotten there ahead of them. By the time the line had dwindled, it was almost time for the show to start. Rosie closed the ticket window, and going behind the counter, scooped up cups of ice and lined them in front of the soda dispenser.

"I'm going to get in my seat," old Mrs. Tanner said. She always sat in the back row during the movie. Her purse swung from the crook of her arm as she limped through the lobby and disappeared through the heavy drapes to the other side.

When they had their popcorn and Cokes, Jerry and Harry went to the front row, where they plopped down next to Marvin Greene and Ricky Nation.

Larry couldn't sit in front because his neck hurt when he tilted his head back. The theater was packed. He saw several vacant seats in the seventh row, and scooting along the back of the seats, walked sideways past people to the

middle. When he got there, he couldn't see over three girls in the row ahead. He came out the other end and went back four rows, where there was another empty seat. He stepped over a boy holding his girlfriend's hand, climbed over Janice Morosko and her mom, and took the seat two over. He heard a "Psst" and glanced over his shoulder. His eyes met old Mrs. Tanner's. She said something, but he couldn't make it out. Maybe she'd found out they were over twelve. He excused himself past Janice and her mother, stepped over the lovebirds, and eased in next to the old woman in the last row. "What did you say?" he asked.

"Oy vey. I said find a seat and stay. All seats good in here to see movie."

The lights began to dim and the huge curtain at the front of the theatre opened, and the newsreel began. A man was talking about the Bay of Pigs, but it didn't show any pigs. Soldiers ran down a big boat ramp to a sandy beach and an airplane roared across the screen. Clapping and thunderous foot pounding and whistling came from the front of the theater when the Daffy Duck cartoon came on.

Old Mrs. Tanner folded her arms and kept her eyes on the front row. She shook her head when popcorn soared through the air.

"My mom would be mad if we did that at home," Larry said, leaning into the old woman. He smelled a faint whiff of vanilla.

"Such waste," Mrs. Tanner whispered back. She opened her purse, took out a handkerchief, and blew her nose.

"God Bless You," Larry shouted, and there were several giggles from the middle of the theatre.

"Shh," Mrs. Tanner hushed, putting her handkerchief back in her purse.

The movie screen went black, and the audience groaned. After a bit, it came back on.

"My mom forgot to pay our electric bill and the lights got turned off," he whispered. "My dad got real mad."

"I bet he did," she said.

"My dad says we pay our bills on time. Ain't no shame in being poor, long as we're honest and truthful," Larry said, and then remembered that he had only paid fifty cents to get in. But that was to protect Jerry and Harry from getting in trouble.

"Are you here by yourself?" she asked, folding her arms.

"I'm here with my brothers," Larry said. "We're triplets. We like to come to the movies, but we can't since we're over twelve and have to buy three full price tickets every time we come." Now he was telling the truth.

"And Mom gives you money to come here every week?"

Larry stared up into her face, "No, but she would if she could," he said.

The old woman leaned down to Larry's ear. "Come out to the lobby." Taking hold of the seat in front, she pulled herself up, hooked her purse over



her arm, and pushed him into the aisle and through the heavy curtain. She shuffled over to the concession stand. “Rosie, give me seventy-five cents.”

“Why?” Rosie asked.

“Give me seventy-five cents,” she repeated.

Rosie picked three quarters from a pile of the money she was counting and handed them to the old woman. Licking her fingers, she went on counting the dollar bills.

Larry followed Mrs. Tanner back toward the curtain. She turned to him and placed the three quarters in his hand. “Here, this is for you being a good, honest, trustworthy boy.”

Larry stared down at the coins in the palm of his hand. “Thanks,” he mumbled.

“You tell your mother she should be proud of you.” She turned, lifted the heavy drape aside and said, “Go back to the seat. I sit on the other side so I can watch the picture show.”

Larry slid the money into his pocket and went back to his seat, grinning. It paid to be honest. He didn’t see why he should give any of it to Harry or Jerry though since they lied.

The cartoon ended. He’d stay over for the second show to see what he had missed.

**RACHEL IMLER**

## Is Flat Earth Just a Theory?

On the surface, it may appear that the Flat Earth Society’s only aim is to convince others of a flat earth, but beneath that purpose, there is a different goal they are pursuing. What they are really trying to do is plant seeds of fear and doubt. The Flat Earth Society realizes that most people already have some sort of distrust in authorities. Increasing this distrust is the simplest way to make someone agree with them. Essentially, all the flat earthers must do is introduce even the slightest amount of doubt into a strongly held belief. Once doubt creeps in, the feeling of being lied to causes anger toward governmental and scientific authorities. This carefully planned process ends up leaving people susceptible to the answers the flat earthers provide. By making people feel as though authoritative figures have fed them lies, while simultaneously giving people the “truthful” answer, the Flat Earth Society easily manipulates people into believing their conspiracy.

The Flat Earth Society is built upon the very foundation of questioning both governmental and scientific authorities. The Flat Earth Society admits this on their website: “Descending from Samuel Shenton’s International Flat Earth Research Society, and the Universal Zetetic Society before it, we continue the age-old tradition of questioning the Round Earth doctrine and challenging authorities” (Svarrior and Bishop). This goal of “challenging authorities” points to one of six main concepts why conspiracies are formed. Zaria Gorvett, a writer with both a bachelor’s degree from Exeter in biological science and a Master of Science from the University of London, lays out these concepts in an article she wrote for *BBC Future*. Gorvett’s first concept, called “Convincing Culprits,” explains that “successful conspiracies always have the right villain.” Because the Flat Earth Society’s website frequently calls out the government for lying or faking information, they have clearly chosen the government as their target “villain.” The Flat Earth Society’s goal of “challenging authorities” is a sign that their society’s belief is not just a theory like they claim, but a conspiracy.

The Flat Earth Society stirs up distrust in governmental authorities by manipulating people into developing a “conspiracy mentality.” Asheley R. Landrum, who is a psychologist that specializes in strategic science communication, and Alex Olshansky, who has a Master’s in mass communication from Texas Tech University, explore how “conspiracy mentality” affects people’s trust in the conclusions that scientists come to: “Conspiracy mentality... has been described as a political worldview consisting of general feelings of distrust or paranoia toward government

services and institutions, feelings of political powerlessness and cynicism, and a general defiance of authority.” Once this conspiracy mentality takes control, it leaves people vulnerable and wondering where to go or who to turn to for the truth. Gorvett explains how “Uncertainty,” another one of her concepts, causes people to end up seeking answers from some other source than the established authorities, which often leads them into a conspiracy. By setting up authorities as the lying “villain” and itself the truthful “hero,” the Flat Earth Society manages to become the one that people rush to for answers.

The Flat Earth Society’s main “villain” is government space programs. Flat earthers claim that not only NASA but all space agencies in the world are part of one big conspiracy to fake space travel. The Society says that the concept of “faking space travel” “[has] been attributed to the Flat Earth Society under the leadership of Samuel Shenton [their founder]” (Bishop). Although this lie could have been kept a secret when the U.S. and the Soviet Union were the only countries that had space programs, the United Nations now lists forty-one countries with space agencies. NASA points out that there have been 249 individuals from nineteen countries that have visited the International Space Station. This is a serious problem for the flat earthers. By their logic, every worker and astronaut that is a part of each country’s space agency must continue the lie of faking space travel. An even greater problem for the flat earthers is that commercial space flights are now being conducted. NBC News states that “a ticket could set you back anywhere from \$250,000 to tens of millions of dollars.” Why would someone pay such a high price if they are not actually going to space? Are all those people also involved on the space travel lie? The flat earthers cannot explain how an ever-increasing amount of people have kept the space travel lie since 1961. The Flat Earth Society has become an expert at giving “answers” that fail to answer anything.

In the pursuit of information and answers about the flat earth, people go to the Flat Earth Society’s website. On the homepage, the first thing that catches a visitor’s eye is the animated banner which depicts the flat earth model most flat earthers believe. Their model shows how the sun and moon travel almost parallel to each other in a circular pathway above the surface of the flat earth. The flat earthers typically describe the sun as a spotlight that travels in motion above the earth. This spotlight causes daytime when it is over a certain section of the earth and causes nighttime when the light is absent. This model sounds good in theory, but that does not mean it could work. The Flat Earth Society appears to be so confident in their model that they conveniently avoid addressing the possibility of any issues.

Unfortunately for the flat earthers, there are many difficulties in their model. Without a globe to orbit, the moon would be incapable of having

phases. The phases occur in direct correlation with the position of both the sun and the earth as the moon orbits. The flat earth model also affects the sun’s ability to rise and set. If the earth was flat, there would be no horizon from which the sun could disappear and reappear. Therefore, the sun would always be visible to everyone on the earth, making nighttime an impossibility. The Flat Earth Society gives their best answer for how the day/night cycle could work with the flat earth model: “There are several potential theories for the apparent effect of the Sun’s rising and setting” (Svarrior and Bishop). Other than pointing to four different potential explanations for the sun’s movement, they do not give a straightforward answer. They seemingly never concluded how the sun would rise and set in their model. Even though the flat earthers attempt to make their model convincingly workable, these issues result in it not being able to function the way they claim.

The number one question a flat earth skeptic would ask is, “What evidence is there?” The Flat Earth Society directs those who ask this question to the “Experimental Evidence” section of their Wiki. All the experiments on this page attempt to prove that the earth lacks curvature by using the Flat Earth Society’s favorite form of evidence, an “empirical approach, or an approach that relies on information from your senses” (Wiki). Most of the experiments attempt to show, when viewing an object from a sufficient distance, the curvature of the earth should hide the object from view. Through their experiments, the flat earthers demonstrate that instead of being hidden by the horizon, most objects are still visible. They ask a crucial question about this phenomenon: “Why are we still able to see something that the curve should hide?” The flat earthers’ answer is that the earth is flat. The problem with their logic is that they do not take into consideration the effect of mirages. Mirages happen when a difference in the air’s temperature causes a refraction of light rays. A mirage would cause us to be able to see an image of an object that is below the horizon. Instead of acknowledging the science of mirages, the flat earthers use their experiments as confirmation that the earth is flat.

Almost everyone has a certain amount of healthy wariness toward the information that the government gives out, but the flat earthers play into this distrust—increasing it exponentially. By using arguments that sound logical, the Flat Earth Society introduces doubt into people’s minds about the earth’s form. This ultimately leaves people feeling lied to by the government. This feeling of betrayal is the leading force behind the research that people conduct about a flat earth. People seek answers from the very Society who made them question the earth’s form in the first place. Unfortunately, the flat earthers are not providing any truth: they instead lie by omission. They refuse to admit the weaknesses with their model and the problems with their experiments. This Society is not any better than the authorities that

they target. After researching the flat earth theory, the evidence reveals that the Flat Earth Society is not a trustworthy source. Therefore, it is crucial to research thoroughly every aspect of a “theory” before accepting it as fact.

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KIRY AUMANN

## Small Pieces, Big Picture

Imagine being able to take buckets full of different materials, such as glass or tile, and turning that material into a beautiful work of art. This is exactly what artist Christopher Warren Elam does. He makes the most beautiful mosaic pieces out of seeming buckets of scraps. I had the honor of having a conversation, albeit virtual, with Chris to discuss his life as an artist.

Chris grew up an only child in Springfield, Illinois. Never would I imagine I would have anything in common with an artist, but Chris and I both happened to be born in the small town of Hillsboro, Illinois. Taking a mental walkthrough of Chris’ life was like going on a virtual field trip. One of Chris’ biggest mentors in life was his childhood neighbor, David Stephens. He had an “open garage” so to speak. Together, they made everything from electrical circuits to remote control cars to carpentry projects. Most of the love of he has for working with his hands, Chris credits this man. David always wanted Chris to become an architect, but strangely enough, Chris wasn’t even drawn to arts at all in high school. He was drawn to religion and philosophy.

After graduating Glenwood High School, he went on to attend Lincoln Land Community College, receiving his Associates in Liberal Arts in 1997. Chris took many art classes while at LLCC. He furthered his education at Lincoln Seminary College, studying Theology. Upon completing his graduate studies, intellectual exhaustion hit, and the burning desire to work with his hands settled in. Chris trained to lay tiles for a local craftsman and that’s where his passion for mosaics started. It was during his time as a laborer that he attended a seminar in Chicago where he met Francine Goergecheon, a mosaicist. This was a pivotal shift in his life. Her portfolio blew his mind. He pondered to himself, “How does setting tile in an architectural setting collide so beautifully with art? Is there a way I can do what I love and turn it into something I want it to say?” Yes, yes there was, and the Chicago Mosaic School was the place he needed to go to learn how.

To this day, Chris still studies periodically through the Chicago Mosaic School, and he also has his own studio where he teaches. His studio is not just a space to teach others, but it’s also his personal working studio as well as a space where other artists can come when they need somewhere for clear thoughts and creative expression. Having a studio is so important in the art of mosaics. It takes collecting large quantities of materials (tile, crockery, shells, stones, glass, etc.) to be able to work in mosaic art, so having that space is essential. Having a good light source and the space decently organized is very important for Chris to keep a clear mind to be able to

create.

When asked about his goal as an artist, Chris said, “to play and be in touch with myself to the degree that I have something to express visually. Most importantly though, it’s to play and enjoy my work.” Artists can be inspired by many different things both internally and externally through relationships with other artists and personal relationships. Being a mosaicist, he finds inspiration through the ongoing “conversation” had by showing his work to other artists. Mosaicists move forward as they “talk” to each other about their works. Chris admits that much of his inspiration is religious due to his passion and expertise in religious studies.

In today’s world, we see many artists using their art/mediums as a voice of activism. Naturally, this sparked my interest as a point of conversation. While activism is something he supports, it’s never been his primary focus. Chris and his wife lived in a Catholic Worker community for 10 years and activism was a component of their daily life during that time. Activism is one of the functions that art can take, and it can be a powerful tool for sure. Fritz Eichenberg’s work often adorns Catholic Worker houses and their zines. Eichenberg’s work has an almost iconic status in those circles. With that being said, Chris does love working with organizations he admires and supports. Chris has made mosaic signs for the Shalom Community Center and New Hope Family Shelter and a host of Catholic Worker Houses and Farms.

After learning about Chris as an artist, I turned to learn more about his art form. I’m aware of the basic premise of a mosaic piece: different types of materials are set in mortar to create a whole image. I didn’t realize there are different forms and different mediums from which an artist can create a mosaic piece. Chris works with two loosely connected mediums: 1) tile mosaic and 2) contemporary mosaic. Tile mosaics use machines and hand tools for cutting materials and the interstices between the pieces are usually filled with grout. Contemporary mosaics lean heavily on classical Roman, Greek, and Byzantine mosaic tradition in terms of materials used (mostly fragments of glass and stone), and they are cut with ancient hand tools. The pieces are then embedded in a mortar bed; they are not grouted. They are “contemporary” in the sense that they draw from this tradition, but they are also a reflection of our lives today and seek to move the tradition forward, sometimes departing from the tradition in important and intentional ways. It’s important to know the history of the art, but it’s equally important to be able to personalize the piece based on the artist and/or the buyer.

When asked what he felt his personal aesthetic was as an artist, his response was the following: “Dynamic, energetic, playful, poetic, primitive, and restless...” I wasn’t even sure how to follow that response up, so I approached from a different angle, asking if he thought his aesthetic had changed with time. Chris said, “My mosaics have gradually become more

dynamic with line intersections. My earlier works were much calmer in the way the pieces were set. I’ve recently become more interested in portraiture and spontaneous mosaics.”

I was able to view Chris’ portfolio on his website. His work is fascinating! With the recent pandemic, artists have leaned heavily on marketing their pieces online. He’s also been pretty lucky to work with galleries that are working for artists and not the other way around. He has exhibited in galleries for shows but does not regularly sell his work through galleries due to the 30-50% cut that they take for promoting work. Most of his sales have either been with regular patrons he knows in the community or commissions that have come through word of mouth. It’s rare that one of his pieces leaves his hands without first forming a relationship with the new owner.

Mosaic art is a passion of time. It can sometimes take months to complete one project. The thrill of completing the piece often shadows the emotions that come with the actual sale. It’s not until sometime later that Chris is able to reflect on his completed projects. He often misses the pieces, but he knows each one was created with passion and with a specific purpose. That purpose is to be enjoyed by the buyer. He gets to keep the memories for himself. To quote Chris, “If you choose to give yourself to it (art), make your work a love offering and offer it back to the world. This is the gift of presence.”



ERIK BARTHOLOMEW

# Social Media Regulation and the 1st Amendment

*2023 Best of Academic Nonfiction Winner*

While there have been detractors of social media since its inception, the industry has found itself under ever-increasing scrutiny over the past decade. Reports of social media platforms doing too little to curb misinformation have emerged, detailing the disturbing results of inaction. Former Facebook employee and whistleblower Sophie Zhang discovered “multiple blatant attempts by foreign national governments to abuse our platform on vast scales to mislead their own citizenry, [which] caused international news on multiple occasions” (Wong). And in the U.S., turmoil was injected into both the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections from verified reports of tampering (“Contemporary Practice”) and “coordinated inauthentic behavior” by Russia’s Internet Research Agency (“Facebook Announces”). The key instrument used to manipulate social media users is fake news, defined as news parody, fabrication, propaganda, and advertising disguised as journalism (Tong et al. 756). Currently there is no law against it proliferating on social media platforms, but platforms can choose to moderate this content. Citizens and U.S. government officials from all sides of the political spectrum have put forth various proposals to set industry standards for managing social media content, but their recommendations find themselves at odds with a cornerstone of U.S. democracy—the 1st Amendment. The 1st Amendment was put in place to maintain the freedoms of U.S. citizens from foreseen challenges to open dialogue, and while fake news can be wielded to many different malicious ends, it is a form of protected speech. Attempts to regulate fake news on social media platforms by the government would only serve one purpose: to enable the slippery slope that jeopardizes the right to free speech of Americans and their businesses.

First, for those wishing the government would step in to provide rules for social media content moderation, it is important to consider that the policies of the U.S. government often change as different officials are elected. To this point, it would be difficult to ignore the actions of former president Donald Trump during his tenure, who often mischaracterized news stories, journalists, and news outlets as being “fake news” to discredit his critics (Tamul et al. 302). In May of 2020, Twitter chose to moderate two of Trump’s posts by attaching a fact-check label to them. As a reaction to perceived biases by the social media industry towards himself and other outspoken conservatives, Trump signed a toothless executive order that would reign

in the control social media companies have on their users’ content (“What you need to know about Section 230”). With this type of attempted political overreach, it’s not a stretch to say that had the opportunity presented itself, the Trump administration would have manipulated the social media industry to enhance the voices of his supporters and suppress those who opposed him. While some conservatives may celebrate this type of heavy-handed politics as a victory, they run an equal risk of being muted in the same way should liberal politicians regain a majority in a subsequent election cycle. For this reason, all U.S. citizens, regardless of political affiliation, should be vehemently against relinquishing their constitutional freedoms to the government.

Second, government enforcement of regulations for online user-produced content is next to impossible. The difficulty begins with online communications anonymity and discovering a user’s true identity. Users may choose to not display their real name and information, or they might utilize a Virtual Private Network to obfuscate the IP address assigned the user’s computer. Per *Business Insider*: “Most VPNs claim that they keep no server logs, which means that it’s not possible for an entity (like a government agency) to figure out later who was connected to what server” (“What is a VPN?”). The amount of resources and time required to track just one user and litigate a criminal or civil penalty is immense when compared to the ease and low cost of creating fake news (Horner 1). Plus, if a user does lose their account due to a Terms of Service violation for posting fake news, that user could simply open a new account under a different name or choose a less scrupulous platform (Reynolds 201). The other option is to hold social media companies accountable for user content, although that protection from civil liability is given by Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (Kosseff 2). Without Section 230 of the CDA, social media platforms would be forced to choose between maintaining free speech standards and moderating normally viable content to avoid lawsuits (“Section 230”). Given this information, it’s clear the current regulatory status of fake news online exists due to the functional limitations of legal enforcement, but more importantly the laws enacted to promote free speech.

Third, high-profile conservative politicians such as Marjorie Taylor-Greene and others that have been banned or suspended by major social media platforms for posting misinformation believe regulation should be enacted to designate social media as a public space, giving users 1st Amendment privileges that would allow them to share any information they choose (“Twitter Bans”). But it’s important to remember that social media companies have 1st Amendment rights too, namely the constitutional right to expression (“Social Media”). Freedom of the press affords social media companies the right to express themselves through editorialization,



meaning they can legally enact a Terms of Service outlining how they may amend, delete, or add to user content. Those believing the 1st Amendment somehow applies to social media user content have distorted its intention. The 1st Amendment was enacted to protect the rights of its citizens *from the government*; it does not protect citizens from the actions of *private third parties*. (“The Bill of Rights”). Whether its labelling user posts as misleading when they share a COVID-19 misinformation piece or choosing to host articles its users share about conspiracy theories, the platform has the right to cultivate their environment for the sharing of ideas. This practice has been tested through the legal system, and the courts consistently ruled in favor of social media companies (“Section 230”). Their reasoning, of course, was that the challenges were unconstitutional based on infringement of the 1st Amendment rights of social media platforms.

Some would argue that regulating fake news on social media is necessary because companies have no incentive to moderate fake news on their platform, and in fact promote fake news through algorithmic targeting to generate more ad revenue. In addressing the potentially manipulative nature of social media algorithms, Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen stated: “Facebook has realized that if they change the algorithm to be safer, people will spend less time on the site, they’ll click on less ads, they’ll make less money...” (Ruben). I agree that fake news has thrived on social media platforms, but it is questionable to suggest that the platforms promote it intentionally. In a statement from Facebook: “...its algorithm optimizes only for what people want” (“Inside Facebook’s Effort”). Social media uses algorithms that present users with content they are most likely to enjoy, but the user still makes the choice to read or not read fake news, and ultimately the user decides what motivates them to consume the content. It is also the user’s choice to decide whether the article is fake or not. This is again a right protected by the 1st Amendment, which protects U.S. citizens from compelled speech. As for the lack of incentive to regulate fake news, most major social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok generate most of their revenue through advertising, but in 2020 a number of companies, including Starbucks and Coca-Cola, chose to suspend advertising on all social media in response to the handling of hate speech by the platforms (“Starbucks Suspends”). Across the board, social media companies quickly reassessed their policies and made changes to how content is monitored. TikTok updated its video screening services, and Facebook and Instagram changed their news feed to expand their “topic exclusions.” Their explicit reasoning for these changes was to promote themselves as providers of safe platforms for brands to advertise on (Sloane). It would seem there is more than enough incentive for social media to self-regulate. However, this form of motivation could be considered a negative if reasonable content is

removed or pushed down a news feed to appease the whims of advertisers.

The different methods for communicating fake news on social media are complex, especially in how it can be promoted through artificial means and weaponized to manipulate or harass. Fake news can be dangerous, with little more emblematic of this fact than how the Big Lie led to the January 6th insurrection at the U.S. Capitol Building (“Capitol Riot”). There are some valid arguments for regulation to combat fake news, and one reasonable regulatory measure is ensuring social media companies track and remove malicious bot-generated content. The detection and removal of exploitive technologies such as this is necessary to maintain the integrity of social media platforms, but this process is demanding. Adrian Rauchfleisch and Jonas Kaiser write: “Not only will bot creators (especially in the context of fraudulent social bots that pretend to be human) try to convince users as well as researchers applying their detection methods that their bots are legitimate humans, but they will also adjust their bots to the newest identification methods and will thus often be one step ahead of researchers.” (Rauchfleisch and Kaiser). With this knowledge, it may be unreasonable to hold social media companies accountable for malicious bot-generated content without the existence of technology to consistently combat them. It may also be too burdensome of a standard for the creation of new social media platforms, leading to further monopolization of the industry by its major companies. While I do concede there is the potential for sound regulation of social media content, it should be made clear that regulations should be extremely limited in scope and specific to deterring the abuse of the technology by users. For reasons stated previously, attempts to control speech on social media platforms through regulation is unconstitutional and dangerous.

Whether a news piece is satirical, unintentionally misleading, or purposely fake, it does have a place in public discourse. Former Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. articulated his sentiment toward misleading statements in news with this statement: “... erroneous statement is inevitable in free debate, and that it must be protected if the freedoms of expression are to have the breathing space that they need ... to survive” (Lewis et al.). It may be used to dangerous ends at times, but the argument for regulating it is as old as the nation’s inception, with many constitutional scholars reaching the same conclusion—fake news is a price we pay for freedom of speech in the United States. Moreover, its existence should implicitly compel users to think critically about what various media sources present them with. With that said, the 1st Amendment leaves it up to United States citizens to decide whether they will seek out even more salacious content or choose to support integrity in journalism.

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NIC SKINNER

## Rediscover the Human Soul?

“The ultimate freedom depends on knowing the ultimate Truth. Truth is not what people say it is, it is what it is. And Truth, quite remarkably, sets one free, just like philosophers have said down the ages.” This is a quote by L. Ron Hubbard, the creator of Scientology that promotes itself as a religion that offers a precise path leading to a complete and certain understanding of one’s true spiritual nature and one’s relationship to self, family, groups, Mankind, all life forms, the material universe, the spiritual universe and the “Supreme Being.” While most fringe religious movements operate outside of the public view, Scientology has been in the mainstream conversation about religion in the United States since its founding in 1952. The perceived relevance of this belief system is kept alive by its celebrity following, Tom Cruise, John Travolta, Elisabeth Moss and others. In the same vein, advertisements for Scientology are broadcast during the Super Bowl. Ads for Scientology are not regularly televised and the broadcast during the Super Bowl was surprising to viewers. The commercial, aired during the 2020 Super Bowl, depicts images of the hectic and unsettled nature of humanity but, also, the serenity and peacefulness many espouse to crave and for which Scientology claims to have the path. The intended audience for this commercial is those individuals who may feel stuck in life, without purpose, meaning, or direction. Although the commercial is only one minute in length, it takes the viewer on a crash course of how their life may be now, to where it can end up, if they were to only inquire about what Scientology has to offer. The message to the viewer is that Scientology can change your life by offering serenity and peacefulness.

The commercial opens with a rapid succession of videos flashed on the screen, which last only five seconds. The collage of videos includes: a concert; medicine being manufactured; an ambulance racing down the street with lights and sirens ablaze; a busy street in a large city, and a fire, which appears to be from a riot or some other chaotic event. Then comes the narrator and a broad change in appearance to the commercial. The intended message is birthed as the narrator pontificates, “It’s time to rediscover the human soul. Not the mystical, the metaphysical, or the supernatural.” Along with these spoken words, images of a soothsayer and individuals manipulating a Ouija Board flash upon the screen. The narrator continues the dialogue, transitioning from where the viewer is currently, “in a life filled with convenience, boredom, and dissatisfaction, to a more ideal place; a destination filled with self-fulfillment, happiness, and peace of mind.” Images of individuals are swiftly brought to view depicting the former and the latter. Images of unhappy individuals sitting in the dark and shots of modern

technology like robots and a smart watch change to someone, smiling, sitting at a desk with the light shining in while the Apple watch is replaced with an image of Scientology’s “Bridge to Total Freedom,” which depicts the steps to ultimate happiness. And, just like that, the commercial concludes with the opening tagline, once again, “It’s time to rediscover the human soul.” As the narrator’s voice is silenced, the question “Curious?” appears. Lastly, the commercial concludes with “Scientology.tv” appearing on screen, a web address that leads the curious to more information.

Unlike most product commercials, which are very general and broad in their context, this Scientology advertisement is directed toward the individual; not the collective whole of soda drinkers, pick-up truck drivers, or delivered food consumers. The right individual at the right moment, such as someone suffering from gambling, addiction, or the dark art of palm reading, may be enticed to seek further information due in large part to the calming, reassuring feeling given off by the narrator.

The narrator’s voice is manipulated with sound software effects like reverb and echo to sound like someone or something ethereal. The timbre of the voice is warm and dense—much like James Earl Jones’ in his voicing of Mufasa or Darth Vader—kings, leaders, godlike. For a skeptical Christian or the agnostic viewer this is particularly enticing. The vocal delivery is empowering and feels like a higher being guiding a lowly lost soul.

The vocabulary throughout the ad is intentionally chosen to appeal to anyone in doubt about their life’s purpose. “It’s time to rediscover the human soul” are the opening and ending words to the commercial. The words “you” and “your” are also repeated frequently throughout. This is likely done to personalize the message, causing the individual, any individual, to question or challenge their present state of existence. A viewer, even with a previous bias towards Scientology, might catch themselves reconsidering their previous thoughts.

The choice of imagery guides the viewer’s train of thought through the possibility of life improvement. Images of playing cards, a palm reader, and a medication bottle, reflecting humanity’s desire for “peace and happiness” are displayed. These images are used to evoke a response from the viewer that these items promise happiness but fail to produce it. Pictured are vices someone might try in their search for happiness. The narrator of the commercial speaks to the passion of humanity to “rediscover the human soul” and how, prior to Scientology, man’s attempts were feeble and void. In this fast paced commercial the narrator attempts to direct our attention away from the ways in which we’ve been laboring for happiness and peace of mind and redirect us to a new way of thinking. Quickly, an image of the “Bridge to Total Freedom” appears and then disappears again, leaving a novice or otherwise ignorant viewer curious, hopefully wanting more. The



pyramid shaped levels to success, from processing to training, briefly depict the extensive nature of Scientology's vision for the process of "rediscovering the human soul." The commercial concludes with images reflecting how Scientology believes an individual can achieve this lofty goal. In one particular image, two women are seated across from each other at a desk. The narrator and the caption read "to look." The commercial leaves the average viewer with a lot of questions and a sense of curiosity of this pseudo-religion.

The music chosen for this commercial is emotionally provocative as well. The music elicits an aesthetic response from the listener by using compositional techniques that create discomfort and transitions to provocation. In the first three seconds the music is overshadowed by other sounds from a rock concert and busy street to the sound of an ambulance and a party. As the commercial transitions to the message and the narrator comes in, the music segues to a more theatrical/classical vibe. It begins in a minor key, which evokes sadness, dread, and fear. A simple piano plays arpeggiated chords and the percussion plays a constant repeated rhythm that gives the viewer a sense of movement and urgency. This music features the same compositional techniques that motivate runners to keep going, like there is a reason to move forward or a destination to arrive at. Low notes are sustained in the baseline and evoke a sense of depth as though there is something beneath the surface waiting to be discovered. The auxiliary percussion plays "magical" sounds using instruments like the chimes, as if a magic spell were being cast or a revelation being made. When the narrator begins offering Scientology as the solution to life, the music switches to a major key that creates a sense of calmness, security, and happiness to the listener. A guitar is added, and the percussion rhythms become more complex as the narrator presents the positive things Scientology has to offer. When the narrator ends his sales pitch by saying, "It's time to rediscover the human soul," the music returns to its previous ominous form. The sudden change of key and instrumentation jerks the viewer back to "reality" like a runner whose music suddenly stops in the middle of a good groove. It leaves the listener with the desire to go back to the aesthetic they felt while they were watching Scientologists in action.

Provided the time-limit of a Super Bowl commercial time slot, the Scientology advertisement's clever use of imagery and music, as well as the choice of language and voicing make it particularly effective in creating and delivering the intended message, a message for a very specific demographic of society, those yearning for direction in life and, perhaps as stated in the commercial, those ready to "rediscover the human soul."

*(Written Works continue on page 58)*

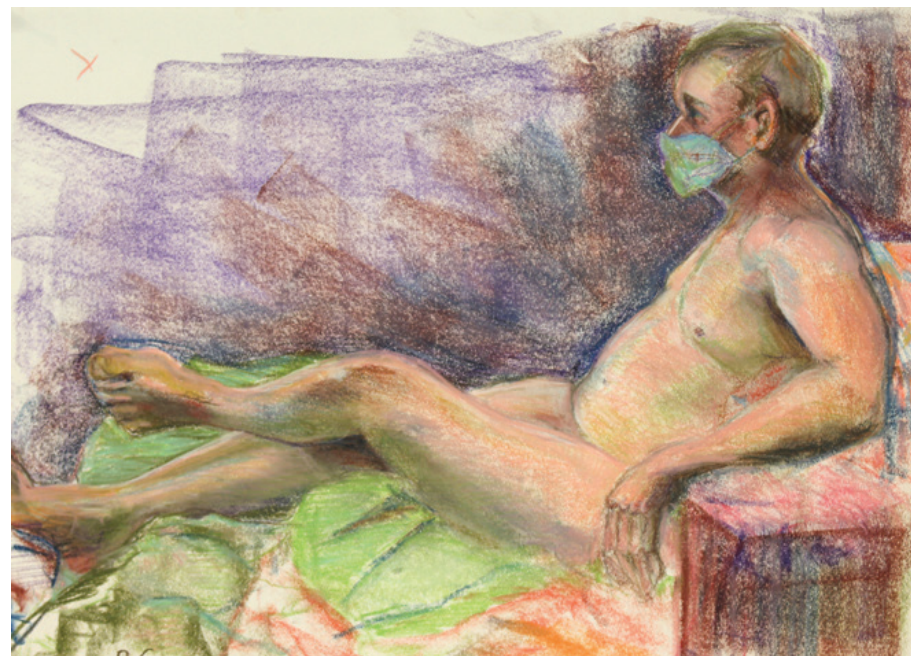


**Denise Church**  
Figure Drawing  
pastel





**Nathan Atchinson**  
*Wrath of Nature*  
 silkscreen  
 2023 Best of Digital Media Winner



**Denise Church**  
*Figure Drawing*  
 graphite

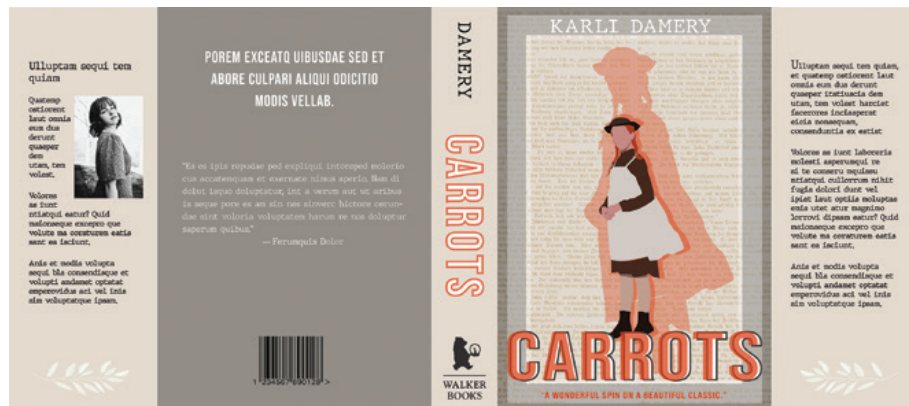




**Sarah Crays**  
*Eddie's Adventures*  
digital



**Claire Waibel**  
*Swiss Poster*  
digital

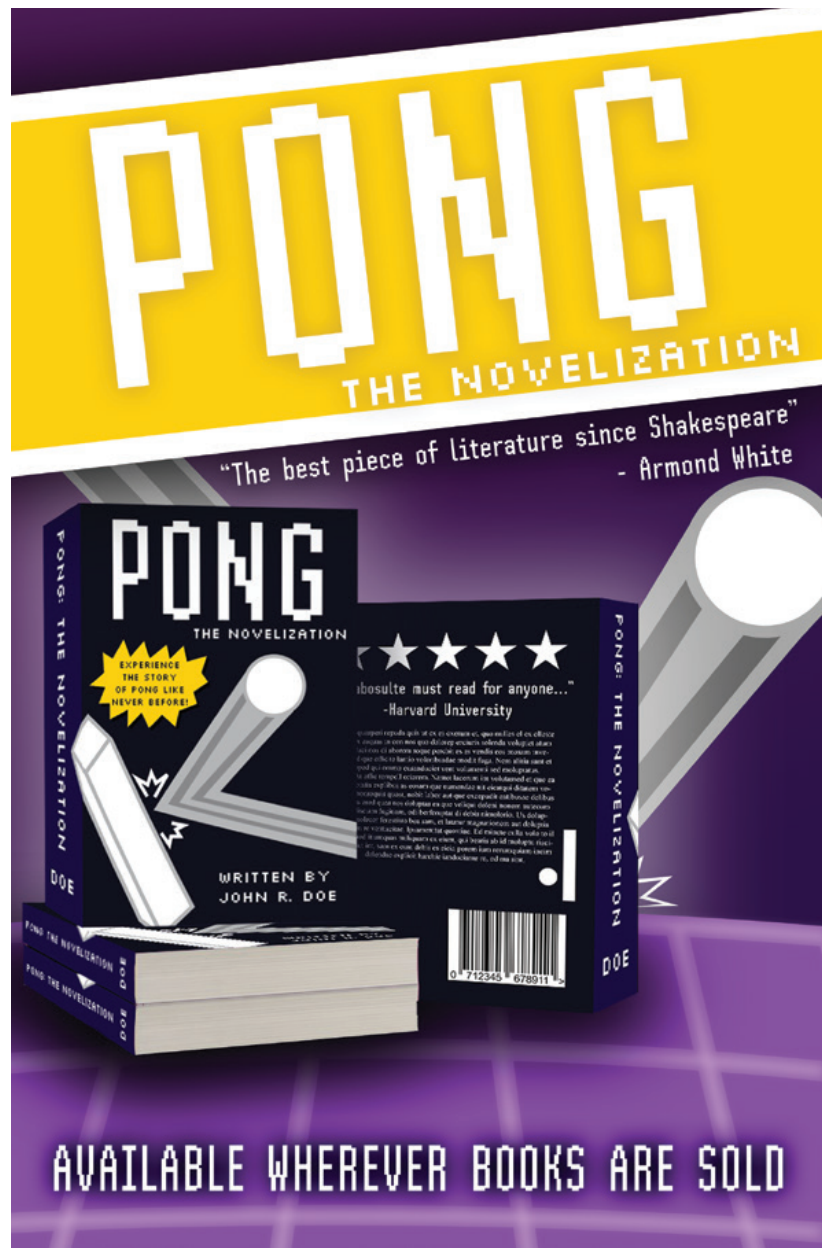


**Karli Damery**  
*Book Cover Design*  
 digital



**Carol Bauer**  
*The stuff that dreams are made of*  
 clay





**Jack Christen**  
Book Cover Mockup  
digital



**Crux May**  
Untitled  
photography





**Peyton Cox**  
*Figure Study*  
 charcoal

# STUDENT ART EXHIBITION

This annual exhibition presents the best student artwork from the 2021-22 academic year. Prizes will be awarded to LLCC art students whose work demonstrates the highest artistic merit.

**April 11th - May 6, 2022**

*Life at Lincoln Land Community College  
 never. - Winston  
 Homer*

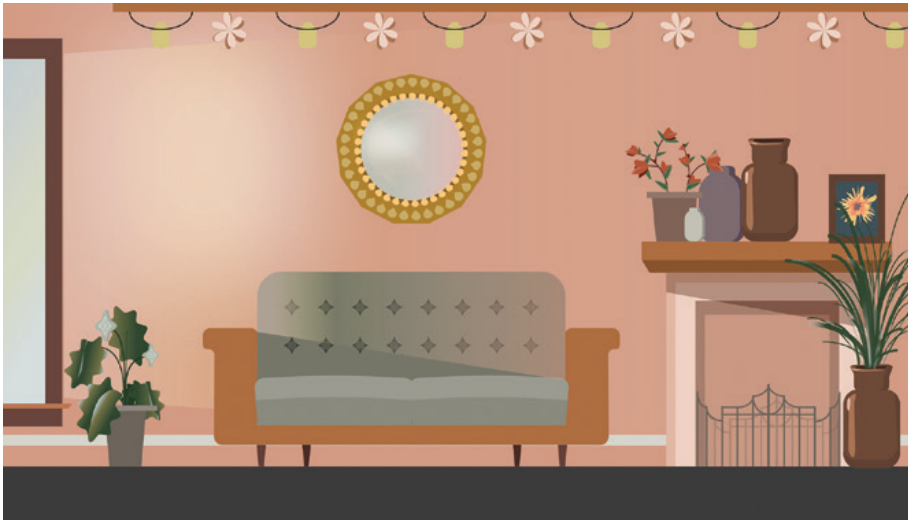
**Gallery Hours**  
 Monday – Friday 9AM - 5 PM

**Dates**  
**April 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>** | Open Workshops  
**April 7<sup>th</sup>** | Submission Deadline  
**April 14<sup>th</sup>** | Open Reception at 5: PM

Amanda Greive - Juror:  
<https://amandagreive.com>

**Awards**  
 Best of Show  
 2D Design  
 3D Design  
 Art History  
 Digital Media  
 Photography  
 Pinnacle Award

**Daishaun Barnes**  
*Exhibition Poster*  
 digital



**Teal Sprouse**  
*Interior*  
 digital



**Charissa Fox**  
*Spring Bee*  
 photography





**Julie Shaul**  
*Figure Study*  
charcoal



**Miriam Carter**  
*Self Actualization*  
sculpture  
*2023 Best of Fine Art Winner*



**Colton Rowden**  
*Mach 1*  
 photography



**Crux May**  
*Railroad*  
 photography





**Justin Daniels**  
*Miami Monkey*  
 digital



**Emma Rothering**  
*Trees*  
 gouache

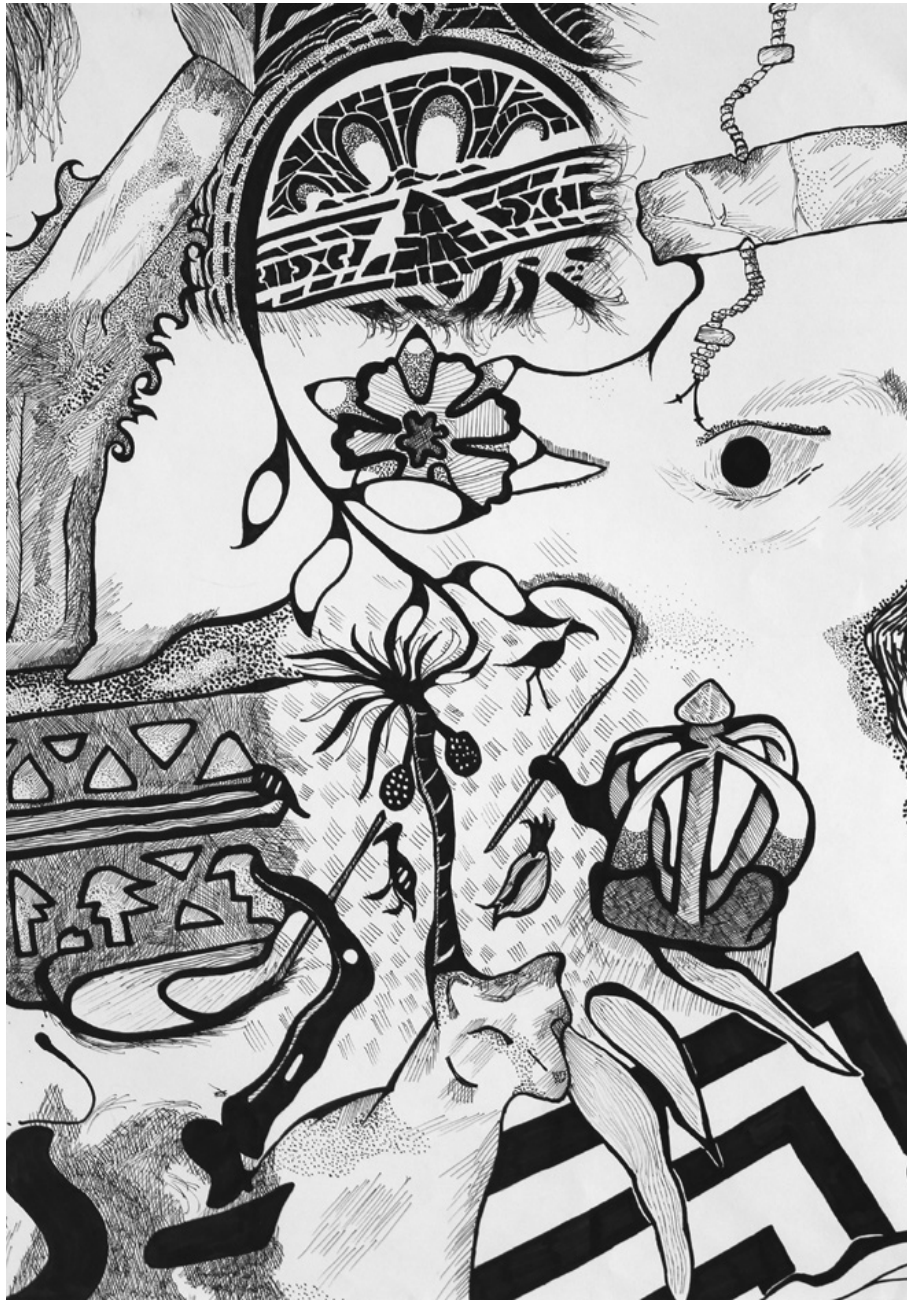


**Wyatt Spradlin**  
*2ft*  
 digital

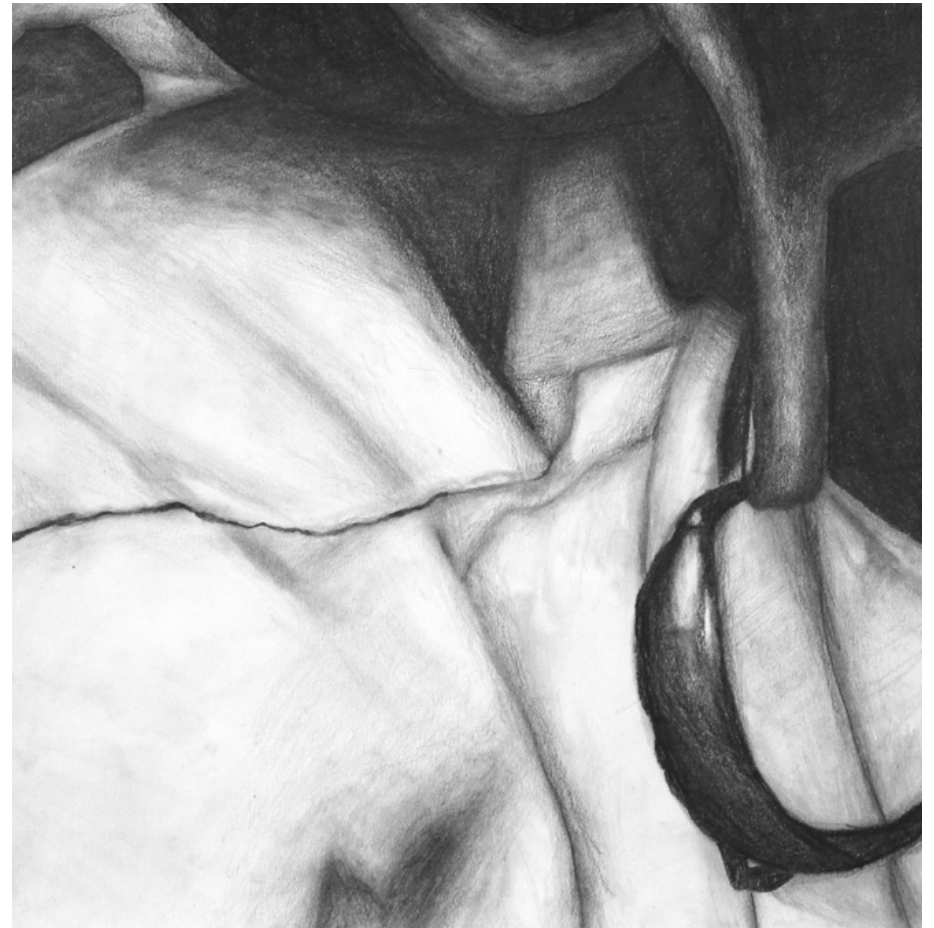


**Teal Sprouse**  
*Self Portrait*  
 digital



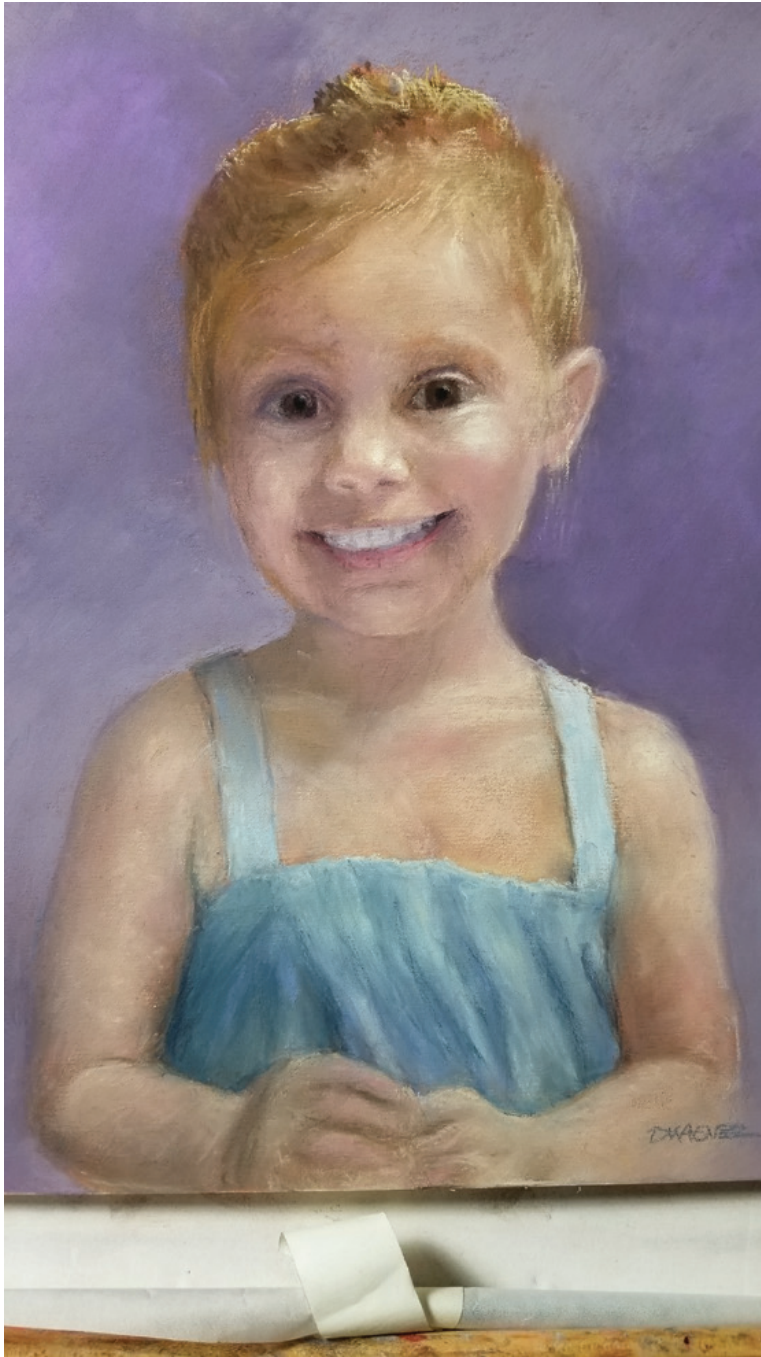


**Audra Liniger**  
*Monochrome Medley*  
 ink



**Victoria Alamu**  
*Shading Exercises*  
 graphite

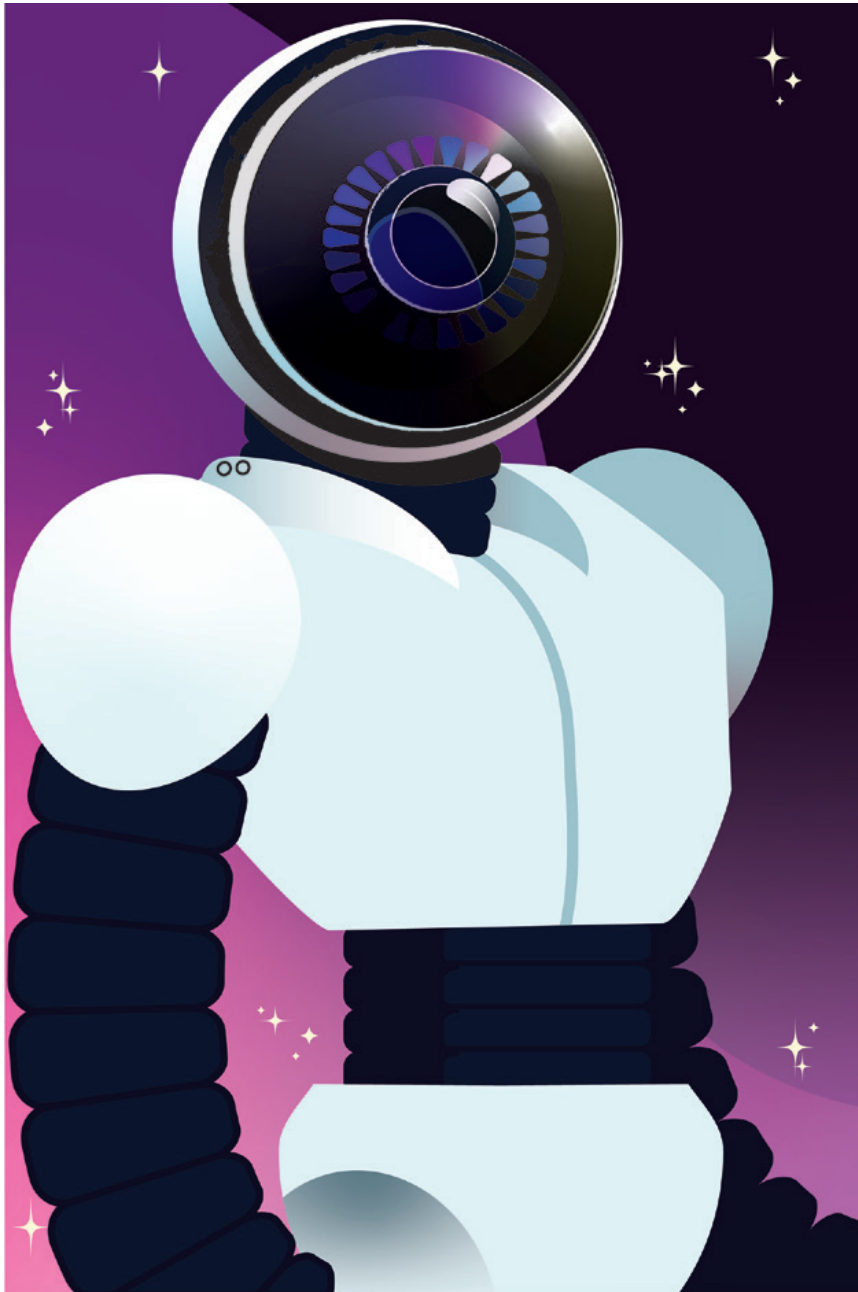




**Doug Wagner**  
*Averie*  
 pastel



**Claire Waibel**  
*CityScape*  
 digital



Claire Waibel  
*William*  
 digital



Skyler Voss  
*Open Your Eyes*  
 silkscreen  
 2023 Review Cover



TIFFANY ELLIOT

## The Tattoo Artist

Your needles penetrate your patrons' willing skin  
 revealing secrets locked inside the souls that dwell within,  
 where angels and demons are released to play and fight  
 in pigments rendered brilliant in the figments  
 of your imagination come to life.  
 You tell the stories of countless lost and damaged souls,  
 personal mythologies etched in flesh instead of ancient scrolls;  
 still, the enigmatic mysteries of collective human truths  
 are, through some primeval tattooist witchery, by your hand set loose.  
 You immortalize the insides of bleeding, broken hearts,  
 and transmogrify to beauty the most sick and poisoned parts  
 through intricate designs imbued with tints and shades of your own soul,  
 as you sculpt others' visions into something you control.  
 This is the artist's burden but his superpower too  
 that they entrust their dreams and nightmares wholly unto you,  
 a special kind of shaman working mystic arts  
 with a genuine alternative medicine  
 that soothes the spirit and heals the heart.

AMY MORRES

## To Dino or not to Dino

There is a section of society that does not believe dinosaurs existed in the history of our planet. Despite all evidence in the fossil record, the fossil remains that are pulled out of the ground and put on display around the world daily in every scholarly, scientific, and historical setting, and all historical facts to the contrary, a Christian based organization self-entitled *Christians Against Dinosaurs*, or CAD for short, began promoting their opinion that the dinosaurs never existed with their platform on Facebook and on their own website, which they also named *Christians Against Dinosaurs*. The CAD members themselves have few things in common outside of their belief in Christ and show no real intention other than trying to win Christian converts with dinosaur arguments. However, since there are close to sixteen thousand fans of the organization on Facebook, I took an open-minded, unbiased, and objective look at the evidence and at the arguments made by the Christians Against Dinosaurs community to see for myself.

The message that dinosaurs never existed caught traction when people watched and critiqued the release of the movie *Jurassic World* on June 12th, 2015. A debate about the movie's computer-generated graphics, more commonly known as CG began on Facebook shortly thereafter. People disputing the dinosaurs questioned why the producers of the movie used no real animals in its making. They argued that if the dinosaurs ever really existed then the producers would have used live animals instead of CG. The debate went viral and built up so much momentum that the portion of the people arguing against the existence of dinosaurs formed their own group known as *Christians Against Dinosaurs* in February of 2015.

These debates were used as bait for a hook aimed at catching human souls. In other words, the primary intent of CAD was to convert people to Christianity. The goal was to aim Christians towards a more Christ-centered view of the events during the Jurassic period, as seen by the bible and by CAD. The main argument or appeal to logic or logos made by CAD is rooted in the fact that the bible is a relevant and valuable source of historical fact that makes no mention of dinosaurs. In other words, God says nothing in the bible about the existence of dinosaurs, which to CAD means they simply never existed. The bible and the authority of God lend credence to the website's main arguments because there is no scripture about it. In referencing these principles of historical accuracy, it is easy to see the appeal for some of the followers.

The *Christians Against Dinosaurs* website has no current articles or videos. A look in the archives reveals that their activity ceased in December

of 2018. There is a tab within the web design named “News,” which seems as if it seeks to give the site credibility. The banners on the site are provocative saying things like “Sharing Christ and the truth lovingly” and “teaching others to deny the dinosaur lie and accept the Lord.” Messages with questions such as, “Do you have what it takes?” insinuate that a Christian cannot accept the lord if they do not agree with the site’s argument against dinosaurs. The site claims that the paleontologist community is making up dinosaurs in exchange for millions of dollars in government grants but shows no proof of such allegations. A banner that says, “Click here to join the fight against big Paleo” is suggestive of political and government affiliation. However, this link to “Big Paleo” does not even work, which hurts the group’s credibility. The website’s designs seem like surface illusions aiming to give false credibility.

The *Christian’s Against Dinosaurs* website tries to promote a sense of ethos by standing on its Christian foundation. It uses God as the supreme authority which removes anyone human being responsible for the material. Since God is infallible this is an especially useful way to avoid accountability. In other words, who can argue with the authority of God? This also removes all responsibility from the people in the group and allows for the easy ducking of questions. CAD claims to have no leader, but the name Kristen Auclair appears quite frequently in the content as their unofficial leader. However, there is no biography on the site to confirm her official or unofficial leadership. A look at Auclair revealed her as a business professional who is also a council member for the town of Southbridge Massachusetts. Auclair’s credibility as a businessperson does not make her a scientific source regarding the existence of dinosaurs.

The group appeals to human emotion or pathos as well as core Christian values. CAD gives its paramount emphasis on expressing God’s love for us and how we must repay him with our blind obedience. In other words, the group suggests that God never forsakes us with an expectation of reciprocity. These emotional projections compound our reactions, especially our sense of guilt. CAD’s appeal to other fellow Christians is hard to escape. In other words, a sense of duty is imposed on the reader to obey and follow the biblical guidance related to dinosaurs. It is a very convincing argument to make that God makes no mention of dinosaurs in the bible; therefore, they are not real. All of this adds up to a feeling that if you do not agree with CAD, you are not Christian and do not respect or honor either the bible or even Christ himself.

*Christians Against Dinosaurs* maintain their belief that dinosaurs never existed from the echoes of past website postings and in an archival fashion. In other words, even though CAD’s website is not current or a source of scientific data, the conspiracy continues to persevere and proliferate across the web on other forms of internet media. The extinction of the group seems

to have happened in large part due to the inability to communicate with the members, to join or to ask questions. Due to this fact and many other inconsistencies, CAD seems to have run its course. In other words, the site and its members seem to have died out naturally just like the dinosaurs; although, the conspiracy itself rages on.

#### Works Cited

Brown Josh, web, “Myth Busting Dinosaurs with Kristen Auclair,” *Christians Against Dinosaurs*, [www.christiansagainstdinosaurs.com/video-myth-busting-dinosaurs-kristen-auclair/](http://www.christiansagainstdinosaurs.com/video-myth-busting-dinosaurs-kristen-auclair/)  
Web, [www.linkedin.com/in/kristen-auclair-b438a077](https://www.linkedin.com/in/kristen-auclair-b438a077)

GARY SMITH

## Pandemic Tales

(Herein excerpted is part of “Week Thirty-Two,” consisting of five stories accordant with a weekly motif told by an aged man of eighty years to another of seventy-three years, as an entertainment and distraction, while being self-sequestered for the greater part of the calamitous COVID-19 pandemic, and now being dedicated to all surviving listeners and tellers of tales)

### Week Thirty-Two Tales of Lust and Greed

#### The Penis

Last October a distant cousin, Otis Burke, found the tip of a penis in a bowl of the tomato soup which he stole by the case from the cannery where he worked. At first, he wasn't sure what it was. Even when he was sure, he couldn't believe it. He scooped it up in his spoon and held it out to his wife and his oldest son and asked them, “What is that in my soup?” After studying it for a bit, they both agreed that it was indeed the tip of a man's penis. The next question that arose was, “Who did it belong to?” Otis had heard nothing at work about anyone losing a penis. It had to have been cut off somewhere else and brought into the cannery and thrown into the vat. But who would do such a thing?

It came to him like lightning. Jake McCracken was a bitter man. He'd been passed over for promotion six times, even after doing so well on the test two months ago. Of course, after taking the exam five times already, only a fool wouldn't do well the sixth time. To make matters worse, Jake had recently caught his wife cheating on him with his younger out-of-work brother who had been staying with them. Jake had kicked him out and told him to leave town and never come back.

Or had he, Otis wondered, staring down at the tip of the penis in his spoon. He was sure now of what had occurred: Jake had caught them cheating, killed his brother, and cut off his penis before disposing of the body--probably in the kiln at the brickyard not far from where he lived. And being bitter about not getting promoted, he took his revenge by throwing his brother's penis in the vat of soup, figuring someone would find it and sue the cannery.

Otis' face darkened with blood. In a rage he went to Jake McCracken's house, burst through the door, and beat him until he begged for mercy and then some. “You're lucky it was just a beating,” he howled. “If I had tasted that soup before I saw the cock, I'd have killed you.”

The next day Otis called in sick and carried the penis, wrapped up in

one of his wife's handkerchiefs, to see a lawyer about suing the cannery.

The settlement was enough, even after the lawyer took his cut, for Otis to retire and never work again.

#### Jokester

Once an unmarried man named Leo Calcaterra lived in our village, and he was known for two things. First, he was very clean and neat. Constantly washing his hands so that, even as a young man, the skin on the underside of his fingers was white and wrinkled. He had a modest but spotless house. Everything in its place. Canned goods lined up in the cupboards, labels facing front and in alphabetical order: asparagus, beans, corn. . . . And the spice bottles, too: all spice, basil, bay leaf. . . . Leo refused to shake hands with anyone, not knowing what awful thing they might have touched; and even though he went to church every Sunday, he would never take Holy Communion because of all the lips that had touched the chalice. “Are you blind?” his friends said. “Can't you see how the priest wipes the chalice with white linen after each person drinks?” But Leo looked at them scornfully and replied, “Humpf. That doesn't erase germs. It just spreads them around.” Now I have said that Leo was known for two things. And the other was that he was a jokester. Always playing jokes on people. When he was younger, it was whoopee cushions and calling grocery stores to ask if they had Prince Albert in a can. When he retired and met the other old men for breakfast at some fast-food restaurant, it was loosening the salt-and-pepper-shaker lids. But, being a good guy, when the laughter was over, he always went to the counter to replace the order that had been ruined, plus something to boot, like a hush puppy or chocolate chip cookie.

Not until he was dying, did Leo finally put aside his fear of germs--what harm could they do now? --and announce that he wanted to confess and take Holy Communion. The priest beamed when he heard this and hastened to Leo as fast as he could. After the others left the room, Leo confessed to the priest that he had been a part of the Mafia and sold drugs to school children. In his younger days in the old country, he said, he had murdered many people, even women and children, and buried them next to each other--alphabetically like spices--in a vacant lot. He confessed to fornicating with other men's wives and daughters, helping more than one of them to get an abortion. A few times--and this horrified the priest more than anything Leo had yet confessed--a few times he'd fornicated with men, using them as women, and once being used as a woman himself.

It was said that when the priest came out of Leo's room, he was pale and sickly looking and even needed help to make it back to the church. From Leo's room, they heard a violent fit of coughing, although some said it sounded more like laughter than coughing.



### Deer Meat

Reese Cantrell--remember him? No? He used to live four houses down. Always drove too fast through the neighborhood. One day I heard that the son-of-a-bitch had hit and killed a deer. Afraid that someone would make a complaint against him if he just drove off, he stopped and called the authorities to report the accident himself. A policeman arrived, looked at the deer, and pulled out his notebook to write down what Reese told him. "Do you want the deer?" the officer asked.

The question surprised Reese. He didn't know how to reply.

Seeing his confusion, the policeman added, "When someone hits a deer, they get first dibs on it."

"What will you do with it if I don't want it?" Reese asked out of curiosity.

"Call the next person on the waiting list and give it to them," the policeman said.

A waiting list. Then the deer must be quite valuable. "I'll take it," he said.

The policeman helped him load the dead animal into his trunk. "If you take it to Murski's, they'll process it for you."

"Process?"

"Cut up the deer and package the meat for you." He wrote down the address, handed it to Reese, and stood there shifting from foot to foot.

Reese, remembering a television show he'd seen about how everyone was expecting to be tipped nowadays, reached into his pocket and pulled out his wallet. The smallest he had was a ten. The policeman took it and got back in his car. He rolled down the window and stuck out his head. "You'll have to gut it yourself before you take it to Murski's," he said and drove off.

Reese got in his car. The hood was damaged, but he could still drive. First, he went home and got the sharpest knife he had. Then he drove out by the lake and parked behind some trees. He'd watched his father clean squirrels and turtles, but never a deer. When he was finished, he headed for the address the policeman had given him.

"Jesus fucking-A Christ," the man behind the counter at Murski's muttered when he saw the carcass. "We got another amateur," he yelled to someone in the back.

It cost more than he thought it would to have the deer processed. When he went to pick up the meat and saw how much there was, he realized that he had no place to put it. He'd have to buy a freezer and return for the meat later.

The next day, with the packages stacked neatly in the trunk of his car, Reese headed for home. He tried to figure in his head how much money the deer had cost him: \$500 car repair that fell within the deductible, \$10 to the policeman, \$315 to process the animal, \$532 for the freezer. At least they

wouldn't have to buy meat for a long time.

That night the family sat down at the table to eat. His wife had prepared deer steak for all of them. Reese cut off a piece and bit into it. The meat had a strong, gamy taste.

"Yeck," his twelve-year-old son said, ejecting a mouthful of half-chewed deer onto his plate. "I can't eat that."

"Me neither," his ten-year-old daughter added.

He looked over at his wife and caught her discretely spitting a piece of meat into her napkin. She went into the kitchen and came back with bottles of A-1 and Worcestershire sauces. "Try these," she said.

Nothing helped. Reese laid his napkin on the table. Maybe he could call the station and ask the policeman for the name next on the waiting list. Maybe he could sell them the processed meat. And maybe the freezer with it.

An old cliché says that some people would take a sack of shit if it was free. I guess it's a cliché for good reason, but sometimes it's what you get for free that costs the most.

### Family Planning

Sometimes I used to chat with the janitor of the apartment building next door. He's a righteous man. Always prays over his food before he eats it, even if it's just a bag of potato chips. So I believe what he says. Plus he's told me this story several times and it never changes. So, here's the story:

A newly wed couple moved into his building. Into a two-bedroom apartment. They fixed up one bedroom as a nursery, but two years passed and no kid. That's when the woman's unseemly behavior began. Her husband would go to work and what would she do? Flirt with every man she saw. In the hallways, at the mailboxes, down in the laundry room. "She's not ugly," the janitor said, "but not something you'd look at twice on the street, either."

One day the woman came to his room to complain about drafts blowing through her window on the north side. Now the janitor had been drinking hot brandy for a bad head cold, to thin the mucus. He said he wished he'd have died of pneumonia before drinking all that brandy. If it hadn't been for that brandy, he told me, looking very repentant, he'd never have let her seduce him.

After that, when he saw her husband, he felt contempt and a bit of hatred. If the husband had kept her in hand, as was his duty, he--the janitor--would never have been led astray. But regretfully, he admitted, crossing himself, he felt a touch of glee, too, as if he had robbed a bank and gotten away with it.

For several months he no longer saw the woman. Just the husband, trotting in and out of the building whistling, happy as a dog with a bone. Then one day the janitor saw her at the mailbox. Pregnant. He eyed her,

counting back to the time of his cold; but she ignored him, as if she had never seen him before in her life.

### **The Drunken Sailor**

Now all those tales I've told you this week are about, like the topic says, lust and greed. So let me end with a different kind of story, one which I heard from a paramedic who heard it from an injured man in his ambulance before the man died. It's about a Good Samaritan. A man who had neither lust nor greed in his heart.

Thomas Lincoln was the man's name, and he was an insurance salesman covering a rather large territory, newly arrived in Louisville, Kentucky to attend a convention held annually to honor all the top salespeople.

Nowadays when you hear about a traveling salesman, he's no longer coupled in a joke with a farmer's daughter, since all the small farms have been bought up by corporations. Instead, you hear about all the drunkenness and fornication that goes on at these conventions, where no one cares what you do or who you do it with.

Now Thomas knew what went on at the conventions, but he was not a judgmental man. In the evenings he merely absented himself from the cocktail lounges and other places where he knew his wife would not want him to be. Instead, he walked the downtown streets, soaking up local color, sometimes going to a movie or sitting at the counter of a café, drinking coffee, and reading a book he'd brought with him.

So it was that Thomas found himself downtown around eight o'clock on one fine spring evening after all the day's awards and speeches had been given at the convention. Before him, a young sailor in a black wool uniform, wet at the crotch from where he had pissed himself, lay drunk on the sidewalk. Passersby went out of their way to walk around him, some "tssking" and shaking their heads, others laughing and pointing.

Thomas looked down at the boy. He couldn't just leave him there, lying helpless on the sidewalk. Nor could he go dragging him into the hotel where he'd run into people from the convention. A sign several doors down said ROOMS. Struggling, Thomas finally lifted the boy to his feet. With the sailor's arm around his neck and Thomas' arm around the boy's waist, he half-walked, half-carried him to the hotel, which was really just a flophouse.

The desk clerk, who looked more like a street person than a desk clerk, took his money and handed him a key. Once in the room, Thomas let the boy fall onto the bed. He took off the sailor's shoes and socks, unbuttoned the fly of the trousers, and pulled them down off the boy's legs. He hung them over the shower rod to dry. The boy's white underwear was sodden and yellow.

After hesitating a moment, Thomas pulled them off, too, and hung them next to the trousers. After which he pulled the covers up over the boy, figuring the sheets would soak up what dampness was left on the boy's skin.

If the desk clerk saw him leave, would he come up and let himself into the room? Rob the boy? Or worse? Sighing, he pulled off his suit, folded and laid it neatly over a chair, and got into the bed in his underwear, keeping close to the edge. The boy should be sober enough in the morning to navigate on his own. Thomas would buy him a good breakfast and give him a stern lecture about drinking too much and point out all the bad things that could have happened to him. Maybe it would do some good.

Now all of this is what Thomas told the paramedic before he died of his injuries on the way to the hospital. The paramedic heard the rest of the story from a policeman on the scene. It seems that the sailor, having awakened and found himself in bed naked with an older man, assumed he had been molested. Grabbing a heavy ashtray off the nightstand, he struck it against Thomas' head several times. Then pulling Thomas' body from the bed, he proceeded to kick and pummel it. Finally, he ran from the room, forgetting even to put his trousers back on. The desk clerk, seeing all the blood on the naked boy, called the police.

No one bothered to interview the paramedic, so it was the sailor's version of the story which appeared in the newspapers and on television.

Now, I've heard that by the time you say, "to make a long story short," it's already too late; so instead of saying it, I'll just do it:

The sailor was tried and found not guilty.

Thomas' wife moved to another town and tried to hide what she believed was his "secret life" from the children.

The children found out, anyway.

So, you see, when you hear about Good Samaritans like Thomas, it's bound to make you feel good to know there's such helpful people in the world. It's not all just lust and greed.

**ELIJAH SADLER**

## Our Division

Division is a weapon that people have mastered.  
Look at your neighbors, at their individual success.  
There is only one path to greener pastures.

We look for tomorrow and find only fear,  
Which is because “it gets worse every year.”  
Division is a weapon that people have mastered.

We turn on our neighbors, we turn on our friends.  
It turns out the political cycle never ends.  
There is only one path to greener pastures.

My way is better than yours and so it goes,  
But none of that matters because no one really knows...  
Division is a weapon that people have mastered.

How long will it take to finally accept a true solution,  
An answer not found when including exclusion?  
There is only one path to greener pastures.

We must come together regardless of view—  
This is the path, the one we must pass through.  
Division is a weapon that people have mastered.  
There is only one path to greener pastures.

**PAUL WATSON**

## A Grim Forsaken Place

It is a grim forsaken place,  
existing cold and gray twilight.  
A desolate field that is devoid  
of anything that’s green in sight.  
A withered skeletal oak tree  
stands more as shadow than cool shade.  
It rakes the air with taloned twigs  
from tempests on a howling raid.  
A tall man clad in runes and rot  
stands with his back against the gale.  
It whips his cape that’s lined in blood  
and stings his face that’s ghostly pale.  
A lipless smile engraves his face.  
He points; I look, then gasp for breath.  
My name across a tombstone flames.  
I wake from dreaming of my death.



RACHEL IMLER

# Active Recall: Changing How Teachers Teach

## Abstract:

In this article, I highlight the detrimental effects that traditional homework can have on the life of a student. I offer background information on the ongoing homework debate and the two sides of it, followed by their arguments. To create a unique solution, I present an idea to tie in active recall methods with the homework debate. Drawing on research studies, I show how active recall is the most effective method for studying. I end by offering practical applications for active recall as homework and by urging schools and teachers to educate themselves on these methods.

## Introduction:

After a long day of school, sitting down to do my homework was the last thing I wanted. Already mentally exhausted from the day, I usually opted to take the next two hours to plow mindlessly through my assignments. For all the time it required of me, my homework failed to help me retain concepts for the long-term. This meant that I ended up spending another hour or two studying my subjects to create that long-term memory. Toward the end of my high school years, I crossed right over the line of total burnout for learning. Instead of school fostering a love of learning, I ended up associating it with mental wear and tear. Learning became a day-to-day battle against exhaustion, resulting in me feeling unmotivated and disheartened to learn. I desperately want to avoid this result for other students. I believe schools should reevaluate traditional types of homework. Instead, teachers should use active recall methods in homework that will foster long-term memory and, most importantly, a long-term love of learning.

Active recall, also known as active retrieval, is the act of retrieving information from the brain when it is needed. Imagine your brain contains file cabinets. Within each file is information that has been learned. Each time something new is learned, a new paper containing the information is placed into a file to be referenced later. Unfortunately, this information does not help anyone if it is never retrieved. Therefore, the files that are consistently referenced become more accessible the next time and the papers that are hardly referenced are often shredded. This is the importance of active recall. Active recall is the process by which the brain searches for and retrieves these files and papers of information.

The process of active retrieval is crucial for students to solidify

concepts. Unfortunately, it is rarely taught or described to either teachers or students. I, for one, had to figure out by trial-and-error different study methods that ended up being the most beneficial to me. At the time, I did not know these methods involved active recall. My most helpful study methods included using space repetition and practice test options on popular flashcard apps. Mentioned later in this article, two research studies completed on active recall demonstrate the incredible usefulness of these two study techniques. Unbeknownst to me, in addition to active recall methods, I was still using study methods that were not actually benefiting me at all. Methods like rereading and skimming my notes were mostly fruitless and a poor use of my time. There are still many teachers and students who are left in the dark about beneficial study techniques like active recall. My primary goal is to change this and make sure that no teacher or student is missing active recall as a game changing tool in their belt.

## A Hundred Year Long Debate:

When I began my research, it did not take me long to become overwhelmed with the amount of research papers, articles, and blogs written by parents, brain experts, and educators, all of them sharing their own opinion of the homework debate. This homework debate has been stoked up periodically since at least the beginning of the 1900s. Covid-19 sparked the debate anew as kids all switched from school classrooms to their own homes. Though now, just as it has been since the beginning, the sides of the debate have remained virtually unchanged. There have been calls for heavy reductions of homework and even outright bans, but the pendulum soon swings back to a demand for more homework. By some, a type of middle ground is proposed. This view attempts to acknowledge the positives of homework, but also recognizes that the homework given needs to be of quality, not just busywork.

Besides a “middle ground” argument, the two primary sides to the homework debate are those who support homework and those who oppose it. A principal argument for supporters of homework is that excessive amounts are not a problem for most students but are only an issue for upper-class and middle-class students. The typical reason for this is that upper and middle-class students often attend private schools, which pride themselves on academic excellence. To follow through with this claim of producing academic excellence, these private schools push their students to engage in incredibly rigorous studies. Janine Bempechat, a clinical professor of Education & Human Development, does not deny that students in those higher social classes do often struggle with overwhelming amounts of homework, but she breezes past this to make her point: “in families of limited means, it’s often another story.” Along with other supporters, Bempechat emphasizes that many minority children receive little homework already, and

homework is a key for closing the academic gap between students of different social classes. The fear is that banning homework or even just significantly reducing it would only lead to an increase in the academic gap.

For educators who support homework, they insist there is not enough time in-class to cover everything, therefore homework is argued to be an essential extension of classroom time. Parents also make up many of those present in the debate. They claim without homework, kids will be left unprepared for life as an adult. Consequently, homework is seen as a huge benefactor in the building of life skills, such as managing time and fostering discipline when facing difficulties (“Is Homework Beneficial?”). Andrew Wilk, who has a MA with a professional educator license in Illinois, has taught both in secondary education and at the college level. On his personal website, Wilk explains that many students who had little to no homework are not prepared for college life, which involves taking initiative in your own education outside of a lecture. He ends his post with this thought: “[homework] may cause a few students—and parents—to whine and complain, but it might be the greatest possible kindness in the long run.” For supporters, homework is an essential part of any student’s life to effectively learn and grow as a person, but has it only become so essential because traditional homework is “just the way we do things”?

In stark contrast to the supporters, opposers claim excessive homework to be a prominent problem. They point out that there is no indication homework is linked to academic achievement. Alfie Kohn, an author on many facets of education, has lectured to numerous universities and groups in an attempt to change the traditional means of education. Although studies are often quoted to prove a link between academic achievement and homework, Kohn believes the evidence in the studies are only construed to appear that there is a link. In his article “Studies Support Rewards, Homework, and Traditional Teaching. Or Do They?” he describes an interesting theory:

The studies finding the greatest [positive] effect [of homework] were those that captured less of what goes on in the real world by virtue of being so brief. View a small, unrepresentative slice of a child’s life and it may appear that homework makes a contribution to school achievement; keep watching and that contribution is eventually revealed to be illusory.

In sharing this theory, Kohn warns his audience that these studies are not usually conducted long enough to produce genuine truth. There is just not enough conclusive and consistent evidence among the studies to prove there is a connection between academic achievement and homework.

As I mentioned before, private schools push excessive amounts of homework on their students to achieve academic excellence. To private schools, higher difficulty in academics is seen as a benefit for students in the long run, but I wonder if it actually is beneficial. For one father, the

amount of homework his daughter took home from her private middle school astounded him. In his article, he describes his daughter typically spending three to four hours on her homework, often staying up until midnight trying to finish it all. This father set out to work through his daughter’s homework for one week to see what it was like. The title of the article says it all: “My Daughter’s Homework Is Killing Me.” While he struggled to understand one night’s homework, his daughter gave him the advice of “memorization over rationalization.” He discovered that his daughter rarely understood her homework, but merely memorized it because she had so much of it (Greenfield). This demonstrates a child who is suffering both mentally and physically from the pressure her school is placing on her all for the sake of “academic excellence.” And all I ask is, “At what cost?”

One of the most important arguments made by parents who are against homework surrounds their children’s free time, or rather, lack of it. Raychelle Cassada Lohmann, who has a Ph.D. in counseling and counselor education, makes an important statement: “Most adults don’t work a full-time job and then go home and do three more hours of work, and neither should your child.” After a long day of work, adults look forward to going home and relaxing, but children often do not have this luxury. There are a few factors opposers reference as causes for too much homework and lack of free time. In one case, homework claims to take far longer than estimated by teachers. Although, it is recognized that this is a difficult thing to estimate, since depending on the child, an assignment might take fifteen minutes or forty-five minutes. Teachers are scrutinized more for their lack of communication between classes. Some schools require teachers to collaborate on a schedule to not give too much homework across classes, but this is not the case for most schools. Youki Terada, a researcher of trends for Edutopia, notes the danger of this lack of communication: “It may seem reasonable to assign 30 minutes of daily homework, but across six subjects, that’s three hours.” Neglecting to consider their student’s other classes, teachers leave kids struggling under the pressure to finish all their homework.

The biggest difference these two sides represent are those who highlight academic success and closing academic gaps and those who emphasize the importance of children’s physical and mental health. Do not misunderstand me. I wholeheartedly believe that both sides come from a place of prioritizing children’s best interests. These sides just differ on what a balance between the two look like. I believe there should be more focus placed on wellbeing because that greatly affects, for better or worse, a student’s academic success. To clarify, I am not advocating for a complete ban of homework, for it has its place in the academic world. However, I would like to see schools reevaluate how much graded homework is required by teachers, and to reconsider the amounts, in order that homework could only

be used sparingly. As I mentioned, other than the two dominating sides of the debate, there is a middle ground that some take. The middle ground is what I associate myself with. I wish to see a solution that leans more towards the importance of students' health, yet still allows them to succeed academically. I propose a move away from the "traditional" style of homework, for something new, exciting, and efficient.

### **The Middle Ground with a Twist:**

My take on the "middle ground" of this homework debate is to make a shift in what type of homework is utilized. Most types of homework only involve passive methods of learning. A teacher might assign homework that involves reading "Chapter 1" and then writing terms and definitions for "Questions 1-8." Unfortunately, both reading the textbook and writing the terms is redundant as they do the same thing for the brain. Writing the terms and copying the definitions from the book is an unneeded step that does not benefit the student's long-term memory, which is essential for any quizzes or tests. A student needs to move past this "learning" step, a passive action, and begin the "reinforcing" step, an active action.

To understand the difference between these phases, it is helpful to understand the way the brain works. It is often forgotten that the brain, though not really a muscle, works much in the same way as a muscle. After learning new information, the brain creates a new connection to the information. These connections can either strengthen or weaken overtime, or as I said at the beginning of my article, these "files" either become more accessible or are shredded. The determining factor is whether we exercise this information. This is the difference between passive studying and active studying. Passive studying involves learning new information, which creates a new connection in the brain. Active studying happens when we strain our brain to retrieve/recall a piece of information. This is the "exercising" process that strengthens a new connection, making it easier to find the information the next time. It is crucial that homework involves both passive studying and active studying. It is impossible to retrieve information with active recall without having information to retrieve in the first place. To summarize, passive studying puts new information in, active studying retrieves old information in order for it to be used.

### **A New or an Old Method?:**

In recent years, active recall has been part of frequent discussion surrounding its fundamental role in retaining ideas for the long-term. There are many recent blog posts and articles about active recall on the internet, but this idea is not as new as it first appears. Edwina E. Abbot presented the earliest known study on active recall in 1909. Her study showed that active recall is

incredibly effective in learning, especially when study times are spaced out instead of crammed together (this is spaced repetition). Now, the argument might be made against the relevancy of this study. Surely, times must have changed since a hundred years ago. But this is not the case. The following two studies have been conducted within the last ten to twelve years, and they come to some of the same conclusions as the study completed in 1909.

A study in 2013 concluded that the two most used study techniques, rereading and highlighting, had a "low utility" compared to active recall techniques, such as practice testing and spaced repetition which had "high utility" (Dunlosky et al.). Jeffrey Karpicke, the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Psychological Sciences at Purdue, attempted to figure out which study methods proved better for long-term memory. His conclusion mirrored the 2013 study's results. Interestingly, when Karpicke asked the students in his study to predict which method(s), they thought to be more effective, he recognized a pattern in their answers: "The more times students repeatedly read the material, the better they believed they had learned it. However, ...[the] students' actual learning exhibited the opposite pattern. The more times students practiced actively retrieving the material, the better they retained it in the long term." I believe the reason students and teachers gravitate towards these passive study methods is because they take less effort and, like Karpicke concluded, they trick one into feeling confident about what they are learning.

### **Practical Applications:**

There are quite a few possible applications for active recall methods in the classroom and in homework. I will present a few suggestions for those schools that would prefer pen and paper homework and schools who would like to branch out into incorporating technology. Pen and paper options could be the most easily integrated into the current setup. Overall, most math classes are already using active recall methods by assigning math problems. A student must remember what was taught in class and then apply it without aid to solve the problems. These practice problems are excellent to have, but they should be assigned sparingly. Even just three to five practice problems per method will show a teacher if the student understands the process or not. Other subjects, such as Social Studies or Science, can benefit from ungraded practice tests or quizzes. Flashcard assignments can be utilized as well for most classes. Instead of a teacher assigning a student to write terms and definitions in a notebook, they could have them make flashcards and assign a ten-minute study period using them.

For reading and other English assignments, flashcards can be used in the same way for vocabulary as they can for terms and definitions. Ungraded practice quizzes can help with learning vocabulary as well. The



number one thing that would benefit any grade in schools is if teachers assigned independent reading. A writer for scholastic describes the benefits of independent reading: “When students self-select books to read, they have opportunities to read what interests them, what they care about, and at the same time, they discover what kinds of books they enjoy” (Robb). For those who fear that a reduction in traditional homework would widen the academic gap for minority students, they should see just how crucial reading is for that factor. In their “Early Warning Confirmed” article, The Annie E. Casey Foundation puts a strong emphasis on the dangers of not meeting a proficiency in reading by third grade: “children who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers” (Fiester). Clearly, reading has been proven to be monumental in altering the trajectory of a student’s academic career.

If schools would like to incorporate technology in their homework, it could help take the load off students. For instance, instead of having each student create flashcards, a teacher could use a flashcard app. This way, only the teacher creates the set, and all the students can utilize it. An increasingly popular idea is using video games for homework. Many of which include active recall techniques. With fun levels and achievements in the form of badges and trophies, many students want to do their homework, and they do not even realize they are learning and retaining the information. These video games also have high replayability. This allows students to revisit concepts or practice more on a topic as they see fit. Furthermore, certain games with intuitive artificial intelligence can also learn to adapt to an individual student’s learning style, something that is missing in traditional homework. Although video games might be hard to believe as useful in the education world, it has consistently been shown to help students become more excited and involved with their education. With the right game, it can boost a student’s retention and love of learning—the very goal of education.

### **Change Starts with Schools and Teachers:**

Despite the endless possibilities of these applications in homework and in class, change cannot take place until both schools and teachers shift their viewpoint. Even if a teacher wanted to change both the amounts and types of homework they were using, the schools must first change their policies and goals. Schools often have policies on the number of graded assignments a teacher is required to have. Unfortunately, if the number is too high, the teacher might revert to handing out busywork, essentially in order to meet her “quota” for the school. Additionally, schools might become so fixated on academic excellence that they fail to consider the wellbeing of the child (something that is seen in private schools). To enact change, parents and teachers must bring it to the administration’s attention that the stance

on homework and academic excellence must be altered for the sake of students’ wellbeing. Therefore, a change in homework begins with the school administration before the teachers can have the freedom to create homework that breaks away from the traditional.

The next step for a change in homework gets passed to the teachers. Each teacher typically has the freedom to create the type of homework being given out in their class. Understandably, teachers will usually stick with what they are familiar with. If homework looked a certain way when they were growing up, it makes sense that they would adopt this for their own class. Unfortunately, many times, people get too stuck on “This is how we’ve always done it,” which leaves them shut off to change. I would argue that sometimes something can function dysfunctionally. Homework as we know it may be the tried-and-true way, but that does not mean it is the best way. The most important step for a change in homework is educating teachers on active recall methods and the different innovative applications possible. It is crucial colleges equip new teachers with these homework and classroom techniques to guarantee the best education for their students.

### **Conclusion:**

Homework does not have to be grueling or stressful to be fruitful for the education of the student. Often, homework that puts excessive pressure on a student results in their academic life suffering rather than succeeding. Active recall methods would allow students to receive the most learning for the most efficient use of their time. No more trudging home to do hours of homework only to turn around and spend another hour or two studying in order to actually retain the information. If schools and teachers continue to push their students to the brink of exhaustion, their ability to learn effectively will drop significantly. It is imperative that teachers and students are aware of beneficial active recall methods for change to take place. Learning needs to be given back its spark of curiosity and excitement. By doing so, it could alter the way a child views learning for a lifetime.

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DAVID LASLEY

## Finally Still

2023 Best of Poetry Winner

I hold still for a second in my kayak and watch as the water hurries from this muddy Illinois creek into the lake after a cool night rainstorm. White caps bubble up from its rushing, pushing brittle branches aside that have been hanging precariously over the surface. I push my paddle through the murky water, moving against the current. I watch as this causes the water to frantically swash and splash everything nearby, including me. Even as my muscles burn, my progress is agonizingly slow against the churning, swirling current. Each stroke against the chaos feels like an exercise in futility. Everything around me is in motion: pushing, moving, falling, and hurrying along. It is not unlike the one hundred worries that have chased me out onto this stream. And yet just like the rain clouds' shroud is slowly lifting above this swirling creek, so too are my clouded thoughts dispersing as I paddle along. I'm moving, but finally still.

JOHN MALAN  
**Blessed**

One winter as I walked in the woods  
where a light snow had fallen,  
I saw shallow lines in sets of two—  
they crossed the path at different angles,  
though each two were  
perfectly parallel.

Never more than a couple feet long,  
they began and ended on the path,  
not as if something had flown across  
but had swooped down, left its trail  
and flown away.

As I walked, I saw many of these lines.

It took some time for me to see  
the deer print a little distance  
before and after each set of grooves—  
grooves made by the deer  
dragging the tips of their hooves  
in the snow  
between steps.

They did not do this for me to ponder,  
nor to make some statement  
that would change the world.  
They only walked  
as deer walk.

If I could write  
as deer walk,  
I would think myself  
blessed.

## 2023 Paul Simon Essay Contest Winner

The Paul Simon Essay Contest is an annual scholarship competition hosted by the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) for students attending member community colleges. Students write a 500-word essay on the topic "How My Community College Changed My Life," and each college selects the best essay from its pool of student submissions to forward to the statewide competition for an opportunity to win a \$500 scholarship.

The LLCC Writing Center hosts Lincoln Land Community College's local competition each year in support of its mission to help LLCC students become better writers. Students are encouraged, though not required, to work on their essay submissions for the contest in the Writing Center with a writing consultant. The Writing Center staff review all submissions and make the final selections. The LLCC Foundation and the LLCC Bookstore generously donate prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place local LLCC winners.

Students interested in participating in next year's Paul Simon Essay Contest should contact the LLCC Writing Center for information. Students are also encouraged to use the Writing Center for any writing assignment they may be working on for an LLCC course. The Writing Center is committed to helping LLCC students with any writing assignment for any class at any stage of the writing process. Students can contact the Writing Center by phone at 217-786-2341, email at [writing.center@llcc.edu](mailto:writing.center@llcc.edu), or they can view our online resources at [www.llcc.edu/writing-center](http://www.llcc.edu/writing-center).

The LLCC Writing Center presents the winning essay by:

JOSEPH BROWN  
**How My Community College  
Changed My Life**

My senior year was a stressful time in my life. I was in high honors and worked hard on my dual credit classes. By the time I graduated high school, I already had seventeen college credits under my belt. There were campus visits and a lot of decisions to be made. For me, it made sense to go to my community college and take basic general education classes. Plus, I didn't have to worry about living expenses since I was not staying on campus in the dorms. I liked that I could stay in my hometown and continue serving the community with the clubs I enjoyed.



After graduation, I watched my friends move away to big college universities. I wondered if I had made the right decision.

The courses at Lincoln Land were exceptional. All my professors are caring, and attentive, and genuinely want to help you succeed. The college is big, but not intimidating. Everyone has been knowledgeable, helpful, and welcoming. The online classes are easy to navigate. Canvas is a wonderful way to maneuver through my classes. I have never struggled with any of my courses and never felt lost or alone in my work. I like the fact that I have a success coach that has helped me plan all my classes and checks in on me frequently. I even received a Happy birthday message on my birthday! I love the encouragement and support from everyone.

Enrolling in Lincoln Land has helped me to continue to give back to the community. Over the holiday season, I stumbled across the Tree of Wishes for the elderly at a local senior living facility. There were so many unanswered wishes, with simple requests like a warm blanket, socks, or lotion. My heart was overwhelmed, and I immediately brought it to the Kiwanis Club in Springfield, where I am a member. They liked my idea, and we adopted every wish. I was so incredibly happy to know that we made a difference in their lives. I knew in my heart that if I had left Springfield, I would not have had the opportunity to help them.

I graduated high school in May 2022 and will be graduating from Lincoln land with my associate degree in May 2023. I plan to double major in Computer Science at UIS in the Fall. At first, I was not entirely sure what I wanted to major in. Lincoln Land allowed me to test out some computer classes while taking my required general ed. By doing this I was able to figure out if I was in the right field of study. Thanks to my local community college, I saved money and was able to take all the necessary classes for me to enroll in the computer program at UIS. Education has been quite a journey for me. I have been able to grow into my interests which will lead me to the career that I desire. I am forever grateful to Lincoln Land Community College.

# Student Contributor Notes

## W R I T T E N   W O R K

### **Noah Albin**

“College is for Squares” was written in Noah’s Composition I course with Dr. Alison Stachera in the fall of 2021. He is pursuing a degree in accounting at LLCC.

### **Kiry Aumann**

Kiry graduated from LLCC with an Associate in Arts and transferred to UIS to finish her degree in Elementary Education. She wrote “Small Pieces, Big Picture” in the spring of 2022 for Dr. Deborah Brothers’ Introduction to Humanities course.

### **Erik Bartholomew**

Erik is pursuing an Associate in Applied Science in Computer Systems at LLCC. He wrote “Social Media Regulation and the 1st Amendment” for Professor Eric Stachera’s English 101 course in the spring of 2021.

### **Joseph Brown**

Joseph won the Paul Simon Essay Contest, sponsored by the LLCC Writing Center, for “How My Community College Changed My Life.” After graduating from LLCC, he plans to study computer science at UIS.

### **Tiffany-Anne M. Elliott**

Tiffany is an LLCC alum who received an AA in Liberal Arts before moving on to earn a BA and MA in English from UIS. She is currently serving as the Academic Support Programs Coordinator in the Center for Academic Success here at LLCC.

### **Rachel Imler**

Rachel has two essays appearing in the 2023 edition of the Lincoln Land Review. She wrote “Is Flat Earth Just a Theory?” while taking Dr. Alison Stachera’s College Composition I course during the fall 2021 semester and “Active Recall: Changing How Teachers Teach” for Professor Laurenn York’s Composition II course in the spring of 2022. Rachel is pursuing a degree in Elementary Education at LLCC.

**David Lasley**

David Lasley wrote “Finally Still” in Professor Eric Stachera’s Introduction to Creative Writing: Poetry in the spring of 2022.

**John Malan**

John’s poem “Blessed” was written while a student in Professor Eric Stachera’s Introduction to Creative Writing: Poetry in the spring of 2022.

**Amy Morres**

Amy is studying to earn her associate degree in Liberal Arts with an emphasis in History. She wrote, “To Dino to not To Dino” for Dr. Alison Stachera’s Composition I course during the fall 2021 semester.

**Elijah Sadler**

Elijah wrote “Our Division” while taking Dr. David Leitner’s Introduction to Literature: Poetry course in the fall of 2022. He is pursuing an AA degree in Business Administration.

**Nic Skinner**

Nic’s essay “Rediscover the Human Soul?” was written while taking Professor Eric Stachera’s Composition I course in the spring of 2022. Nic has a BA in Communications and an MA in Sociology from Western Illinois University. He enrolled at LLCC to earn a certificate in secondary education and become a teacher in social science.

**Gary Smith**

Gary is a short story writer and playwright, who has taken several classes at Lincoln Land over the years. “Pandemic Tales” is a collection of five stories written during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Paul Watson**

Paul wrote “A Grim Forsaken Place” while taking Professor’s Eric Stachera Introduction to Creative Writing: Poetry in the spring of 2022. He has already earned associate degrees in liberal arts and general education and a certificate in audio production at LLCC, where he is currently studying creative writing.

**Larry Wright**

Larry is a local writer and former student at LLCC. His story “Twelve and Over, Seventy-Five Cents” is his first published work.

**V I S U A L   W O R K****Victoria Alamu**

Victoria’s “Shading Exercises” was created in Professor’s Leslie Stalter’s Drawing I class.

**Nathan Atchinson**

The silkscreen print “Wrath of Nature” was created by Nathan in Professor Thom Whalen’s Silkscreen class.

**Daishaun Barnes**

Daishaun’s “Exhibition Poster” is a work of digital art created in Professor Laura Anderson’s Intro to Graphic Design class. Daishaun’s poster was selected and used to promote LLCC’s annual student art exhibition.

**Miriam Carter**

Miriam Carter’s sculpture, “Self Actualization” was created in Professor Leslie Stalter’s 3D Design course and won the Best of Fine Art award in the 2022 Student Art Exhibition.

**Carol Bauer**

“The Stuff that Dreams are Made of” is a work of clay Carol created in Instructor Adam Dupuis’ Ceramics class.

**Denise Church**

Two of Denise’s figure drawings are included in this issue; both were created in Professor Leslie Stalter’s Life Drawing class.

**Sarah Crays**

“Eddie’s Adventures” is a work of digital art Sarah created in Intro to Graphic Design with Professor Laura Anderson.

**Jack Christen**

Jack created his “Book Cover Mockup” for Professor Laura Anderson’s Digital Art Intro to Graphic Design class.

**Peyton Cox**

Payton’s charcoal “Figure Study” was created in Professor Leslie Stalter’s Life Drawing course.

***Justin Daniels***

Justin's work of digital art "Miami Monkey" was created in Professor Laura Anderson's Intro to Graphic Design course.

***Karli Damery***

Karli's Book Cover Design was created in Intro to Graphic Design with Professor Laura Anderson.

***Charissa Fox***

"Spring Bee" is a photograph taken by Charissa, who is a graduate of the art program at LLCC.

***Audra Liniger***

Audra is pursuing an associate degree in art at LLCC. She created "Monochrome Medley" for Professor Leslie Stalter's Drawing 1 class.

***Crux May***

Crux is currently pursuing an AAS in Graphic Design at LLCC. The two photographs that appear in this edition of the Review, "Railroad" and "Untitled," were taken in Digital Photography with Instructor Krista Frohling.

***Emma Rothering***

Emma's gouache painting "Trees" was created in Professor Laura Anderson's Two-dimensional Design class.

***Colton Rowden***

"Mach 1" is a photograph Colton took while enrolled in Digital Photography with Instructor Krista Frohling.

***Julie Shaul***

Julie's charcoal "Figure Study" was drawn in Professor Leslie Stalter's Life Drawing class.

***Wyatt Spradlin***

"2ft" is a work of digital art Wyatt created as a student in Professor Laura Anderson's Intro to Computer Graphics class. Wyatt is studying Computer Science as LLCC.

***Teal Sprouse***

Teal has two works of digital art in this issue of the Review, "Interior" and "Self Portrait." Both were made in Intro to Computer Graphics with Professor Laura Anderson.

***Skyler Voss***

Skyler's silkscreen print "Open Your Eyes" won the digital art award at the annual student exhibition in 2022. His print was created in Professor Thom Whalen's Silkscreen class.

***Doug Wagner***

Doug's pastel "Averie" was drawn in Professor Art Shull's Two-dimensional Design course.

***Claire Waibel***

Three of Claire's works of digital art are featured in this edition of the Lincoln Land Review. "Swiss Poster," "CityScape," and "William" were all created in Professor Laura Anderson's Intro to Computer Graphics course.



