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THE VOICE OF THE STUDENTS

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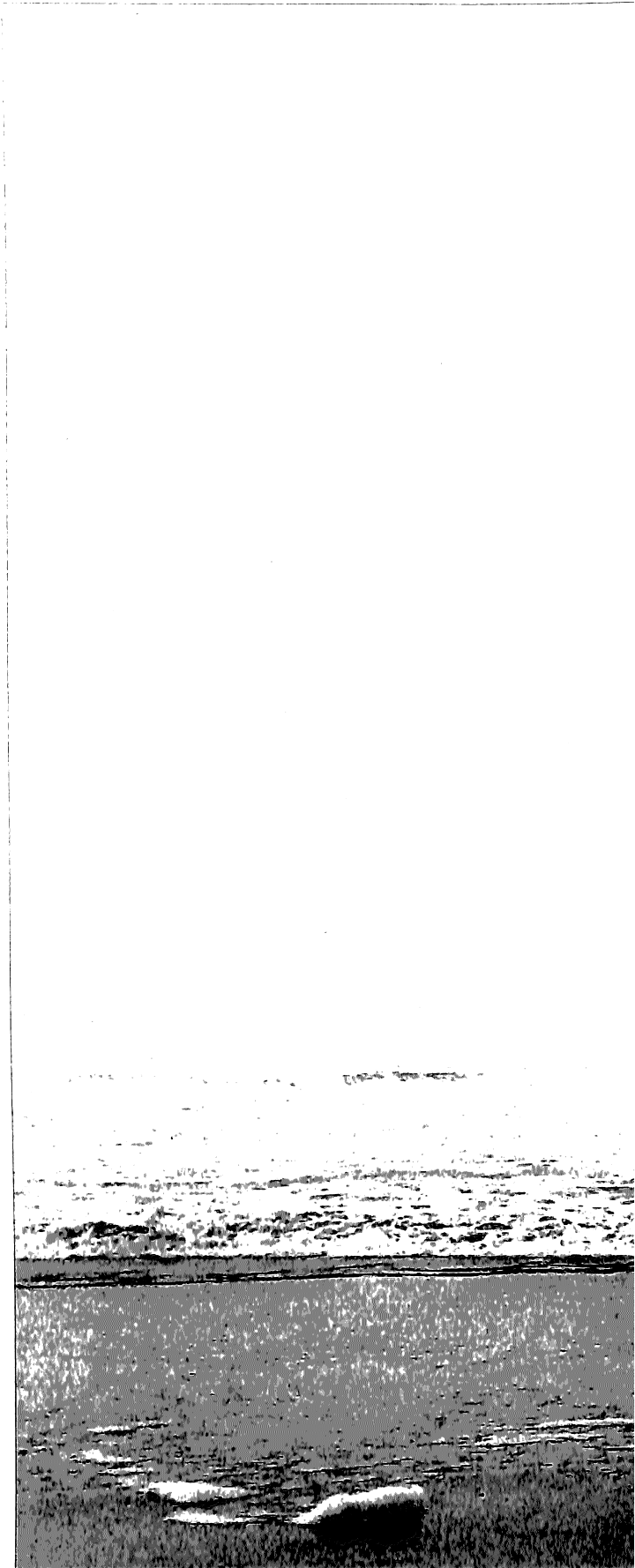
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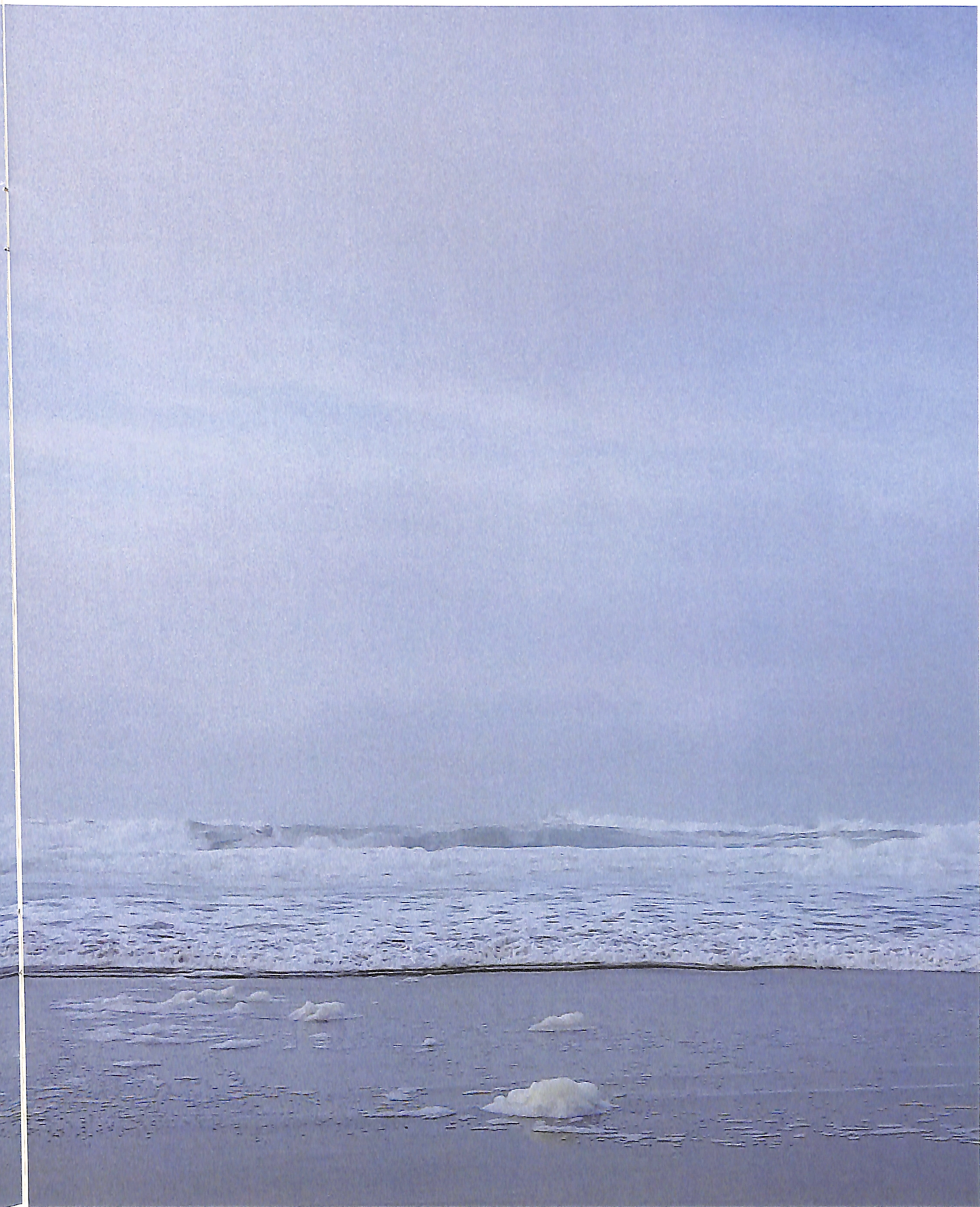
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Volume CLII

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Cover Photograph by Emma Mix





Winter Big Bridge Play

at Shakers

Opens

at George Fox

By Michael Nellis

On Jan. 30, “The Shakers of Mount Lebanon Will Hold a Peace Conference This Month” opened at George Fox University (GFU), and ran until Sunday. The play is the first product of the Big Bridge Theatre Consortium, a community of ten colleges and universities across the United States that GFU leads.

The Big Bridge Consortium was “created as a direct response to the rise in xenophobia, sectarianism and racism within the United States,” according to the George Fox theatre department. Every two years, the consortium will commission a playwright to write a play exploring interfaith conflict. Arlene Hutton, a prizewinning playwright, was commissioned in 2017 to write the Shakers play, which had its debut in two other colleges in the consortium last November.

The play itself, which takes place in 1904 New York, carries strong themes of religious identity and gender roles. The Shakers, a historical Christian sect founded in England in the 1740s, lived in communities that stressed a guarded relationship with the outside world.

In the play, two community leaders, Brother Robert and Eldress Ahna, have differing views on how the Shakers should change in the new century and how much tradition the community should hold on to. The play includes not only conflict between differing Shaker viewpoints, but also between the traditional Shakers and Jews,

whether Russian immigrants or Shakers who were born Jewish.

Rhett Luedtke, the director of the play and artistic director of the consortium, stated, “The play is also about the community’s attempt to create an international peace conference that will critique the wars of the time period, so that play kind of does all the things that we’re hoping it would do.” This message was made clear during the play’s ending sequences that collaged the peace conference’s resolutions with speeches from present-day wars from WWII to the recent crisis in Iran.

“It’s a play that I think our audience resonates with regardless of what side of tradition and progressivism they’re involved in,” Luedtke said. “We’ve all been part of communities that have been torn apart by those two conflicting elements, to the detriment of the church. How do you become attractive as a religious group to people who do not believe what you believe? How do we invite people in without scaring them away?”

Rohina Malik, a playwright from Chicago, has been commissioned for the consortium’s second play, with a working title of “Layla and Her Friends,” that will explore the Muslim perspective and open in the 2021-22 school year. In the meantime, GFU students will be able to see the spring drama “Passage,” discussing cultural divides, beginning April 16.

Now that the spring semester has started, it can be wise to check on your study habits. Often times, the difficulty of college classes can take us by surprise. One professor might be 'harder' than another, and high school classes may not prepare people for the rigors of college.

It's common for people to develop study habits that aren't useful, or aren't as useful as they could be. If you spend a lot of time studying, but find yourself going nowhere, it might be time for a conscious change in how you study for your classes.

The American Psychological Association has compiled a list of study habits that are highly beneficial on their website, all derived from years of research. They boil down to a few concepts. Put space between study sessions, test and retest yourself, and try different ways to learn a topic.

Spacing your sessions can be a great way to remember material. If you have six hours to study before a test, those six hours could be better used if they are split up into three two-hour sessions. Along those same lines, mixing subjects instead of dedicating one stretch of time to a particular subject can be helpful. Giving your brain a break might seem counter-intuitive, but research shows that it works.

A common practice for memorizing terms is to write them on notecards and use those to quiz oneself. This is a really good way to learn something—by testing and retesting yourself. When you are forced to recall something from memory, it strengthens those pathways, and it will be easier to retrieve that information later. You don't have to do this with notecards—you can write out answers to essay questions to see how much you can remember, and so on.

Another strategy is learning something in many different ways. You can take notes and quiz yourself from those notes, and you can also relate course material to your own life. When things are related to you, you have an easier time remembering them.

The Academic Resource Center on Campus has a lot of study resources online, on their Learning Tools page. They can help with note taking, test taking, time management, and reading. If you need one-on-one help, don't be shy about making an ARC Appointment. Their trained staff are ready to help you take control of your classwork.

Study Tips to Start the Semester

By Kathryn McClintock



Illustration by Carla Cieza



Indigenous Students are Here – You Just Don't See Us

By Emma Mix

In the last few years, George Fox University (GFU) has made strides in how it approaches diversity on campus. Clubs, panels and mentors strive to encourage conversations about racial reconciliation and the kinds of discrimination students of color may face on a daily basis.

As an indigenous woman with Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) and Cherokee heritage, I often find it difficult to jump into these conversations, even though I am also considered a “woman of color.” I find that, while many racial groups have to wrestle with being looked at differently, indigenous peoples often have the opposite struggle – we go through much of our lives without being noticed at all. We are unseen, unheard, and most of our lives are spent trying to prove to others that we even exist.

It's difficult, I think, to explain how I've experienced this at GFU. After all, I personally have never been racially discriminated against or asked insensitive questions. In this sense, I feel I've had a very privileged upbringing. But on the other hand, there have been

times when (oddly enough) I've almost longed for such questions – because in a way, even questions asked in ignorance provide an opportunity for conversation and understanding. But instead of these questions, I usually find silence to be my greatest enemy, a silence that seems to confirm that people don't know, much less care, about Native Hawaiians and indigenous peoples in general.

It's clear to me that GFU needs to create a space for conversations about indigenous issues. But it's also important that at the root of this space is a deep understanding and embracing of the unique indigenous perspective. I often find that, when indigenous issues are addressed at all, they are either addressed from an outside perspective or they are treated as issues of the past. "There used to be Native Americans," or "We messed up – a long time ago," tends to be the tone of the conversation. But the conversation usually fails to acknowledge that these issues are occurring right now.

Here is what I propose we keep in mind as we approach the conversation anew:

1) That the unjust treatment of indigenous peoples, their lands, and their ways of life, are not just historical events, but things happening all over the world right now.

In Hawaii, Mauna Kea (the tallest mountain in Hawaii, sacred to the Hawaiian people as being the birthplace of creation) is being desecrated in order to build a thirty-meter telescope at its peak that will also drill multiple stories into the mountain itself. Dozens of Native Hawaiians, most of them kupuna (elders), have been arrested while peacefully protesting the construction of the telescope. As you read this, Hawaiians are blocking access roads to the mountaintop, being labelled by the state as "criminals" and "threats to public safety" for defending their sacred lands.

In Bolivia, interim president Jeanine Añez Chavez recently stated in a (now deleted) tweet, "I dream of a Bolivia free from satanic indigenous rites. The city is not for the Indian: they should go to the highlands or the Chaco." According to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, these "satanic" indigenous peoples are comprised of 36 unique people groups that make up around 48% of the nation's population.

Three years after the Dakota Access Pipeline Protests (which were largely led by the Standing Rock Sioux and other indigenous tribes), the construction of another pipeline is being protested by the Wet'suwet'en in Canada. In Jan. 2019, the Royal

Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) were instructed to use "lethal overwatch" if necessary when arresting indigenous protestors blocking the construction road – or as the RCMP referred to it, "sterilizing [the] site." Officers, armed with assault rifles, arrested 14 people in January, but protests have continued since then.

2) That these conversations require indigenous voices, and that indigenous students need to express their identity in their terms.

So often I have heard indigenous students lumped into the general mixing pot of "students of color." And while it is incredible and beautiful that we are addressing racial diversity, the unique experiences of indigenous students need to be addressed with equal uniqueness, and their stories need to be told in their own words.

And this applies to my fellow indigenous students as well – we need to embrace the incredibly wide range of indigenous backgrounds, the diversity of our experiences. When such a large portion of the world treats us like people of the past, the worst thing we can do is turn to another indigenous student, especially one who may be exploring their heritage for the first time, and say, "prove it." Instead, we need to welcome other indigenous students with open arms, in every stage of their journey further into who they are.

3) That everyone is welcome at the table.

There is a lot of hurt and shame in the conversation as it stands now, and that is more than understandable. I believe a large part of the indigenous experience is coming to terms with what has happened, and finding some sort of balance between forgiveness and acknowledgment, not to mention justice moving forward.

For students who are not indigenous, the struggle may be feeling as though they are unwelcome, or unqualified, to take part. This also has to change. Because at the end of the day, the conversation is not one of villainization or of demanding recompense. The conversation requires that we acknowledge the hurts of the past and present, yes. But it also requires us to love, to understand, and to respect one another. It requires us to come to the table together, as friends, and eat.

I want to challenge other students to take this step – see us. Indigenous peoples have had to struggle to find a voice for centuries. Our issues often go unnoticed. And yet, there are indigenous students walking past you in the quad every day. One might even sit behind you in class. We are here, and we want to be heard. So talk to us, ask us a question – listen to our stories.

ON-CAMPUS LIVING HAS ITS BENEFITS

By Danielle Brown

The majority of the student population at George Fox University (GFU) can't wait to move off-campus where there are no floor hours, no additional fines, and no communal bathrooms, but living on campus does have its benefits. Living on campus keeps students connected to on-campus activities, strengthens relationships, and gives students a reason to immerse themselves in the university they chose to attend.

Most of my friends live off-campus now that we are juniors, and one of the comments I always hear from them is how disconnected they feel from campus because they no longer live there. They don't get to see other students as much as they used to because once their classes finish, they drive home.

And once they're home it's difficult to find the energy to leave again.

There are no surprise visitations from floormates or spontaneous movie nights in the lobby; events must be planned with at least a little advance.

Living on campus also gives me access to move between my apartment and classrooms easily. If I forget a textbook or my laptop I can easily find the time between classes to walk back to my apartment and pick it up.

I can wake up half an hour before class starts, not worrying about traffic or ice on the road or whether I will be able to find a commuter parking spot. Not having a car gives me the opportunity to be more environmentally conscious and avoid the parking fee that affects both on- and off-campus drivers.

I also find that I am much more motivated to work out and do homework when I know I don't have to drive somewhere to do it.

Even if I decided to move off-campus, house

hunting is time-consuming and difficult. Landlords don't want to rent to college students because they may not take care of the home or they'd prefer to sign a lease that lasts longer than a year.

The housing selection process is simple. I fill out a few forms, decide where I want to live next year and forget about it until Selection Day comes around. House hunting requires more attention than that and forces you to make some real-life decisions.

In many cases, it is cheaper to live off-campus. This is the deciding factor for many students. It may even be the reason I finally move off-campus next year. However, this is the only time in my life I will be able to have an experience like this; once it's over, I will never get it back.

So, why not make the most of it?



Photograph by Jeremy Bittermann



Why Reality TV Will Save Our Democracy

By Melanie Mock

My affinity for reality television is no big secret. As a professor of English, I suppose I'm to support only reading classic literature and having heady discussions about deconstruction during my free time, but the truth is, I will take a reality TV show on Bravo over Shakespeare any day of the week.

And for good reason: Because only reality TV will save our democracy.

If you've been paying attention to the news (which you should, by the way), you might get the sense that our democracy is in trouble. Civil discourse has devolved into petty name-calling, with the US Commander-in-Chief as the most prominent spewer of childish invectives.

We are a deeply divided country, prone to make even a seemingly benign event into a battle for who is most righteous, most patriotic, most pure. (And much of what's happening in Washington DC right now is not benign, not in the least.) The anonymity of social media allows us to make vile claims about people we don't know, and even some we do.

Too many of us have lost our ability to empathize with those who are different than we are, and there's few incentives to understand others, especially those whose power and privilege gives them little reason to see beyond themselves or their lives.

But reality TV just might save us from our self-focused, unsympathetic selves. Here's how: by allowing us to see into worlds dissimilar from our own, telling other people's stories, and compelling us to feel empathy for those whose struggles might be different than our own.

Case in point: the recent Netflix docuseries "Cheer," about an award-winning cheerleading team at a junior college in Texas. Honestly, I have very little interest in cheerleading, nor the cheer culture I've long made assumptions about, probably dating back to middle school, when the girls were divided between those who played sports and those who cheered. Yet "Cheer" was some of the best TV I've seen, maybe since "Last Chance U," about junior college football players in Kansas, kept me glued to the television, too.

What shows like "Cheer" do is humanize people we might have only seen through a monolith, allowing viewers to understand that even a perky and petite teenager, bounding the top of a human pyramid, is tortured by a complicated past, by a sense that she is not worthy of any goodness in her life. Or that the young man with huge biceps and a beautiful smile was horribly abused as a child for being a "twink," and only cheerleading saved him from despair. Or

that the hard-nosed coach who makes her athletes do stunts over and over is also their biggest ally.

"Cheer," as with other reality television shows, allows us to see that people are more than just their labels, more than the flattened perceptions we might have about others who seem, on the surface, unlike us. These programs show us that fundamentally, we are all connected by the human experience, and by our longing to be found worthy of love and acceptance. That longing is at the core of "Cheer," but it also drives the feuds in my favorite "Real Housewives" series; and is evident in another new Netflix reality program, "The Circle"; and is manifest even in "The Bachelor," franchise, where we watch people compete, sometimes viciously, for the love of one seemingly perfect woman.

My longing as a writing teacher is to help students see that their stories matter, and that they reflect the unique imprint of the Creator. Our stories show us how we are each fearfully, wonderfully, uniquely made. Stories also make us feel less alone, because we can see ourselves reflected in the lives of others.

When we see ourselves reflected in others—and when we see the imprint of our Creator—we should be less willing to call them the enemy; less willing to support policies and institutions that benefit ourselves and hurt others; less willing to believe that some people deserve our vile name-calling and our hateful rhetoric.

Only that transformation to empathy, and away from hate, will save our democracy. And when we are saved, we might just have reality television to thank for that. (In the meantime, go watch "Cheer." It's amazing.)

New Years Resolutions: Tips and Tricks

By Kathryn McClintock

It's already one month into the new year. How many of us are still on track with our 2020 resolutions? I'm sure I've fallen off the horse a few times—the horse being self-control and willpower. So, I've decided to do some psychological research on resolutions.

I'm used to thinking that resolutions are just silly things people do for a while, but give up on eventually. I still do them, but I guess I never realized that they have the power to change people for the rest of their lives. The simple act of taking a stand, telling people what your goal is, and trying to stick with it can have major influence on your success.

Still, a lot of us struggle with our resolutions, and we all have ways of motivating ourselves. Personally, I don't let a few failures derail my efforts. I try not to be hard on myself, so that if I do fail, it's not the end of the world. Others get into groups with

people who have similar goals to hold each other accountable.

A Psychology Today article by Dr. Shainna Ali lists more tips to beat our resolution struggles. She suggests that it's important to make sure we aren't overwhelmed—little changes can be better than big changes if we are more likely to quit trying when we go too big too soon. Discouragement is also a big pitfall. It's hard to strive for something when it isn't rewarding or we don't feel motivated. This is where support can come in handy.

I've heard some people say that resolutions are useless, and I used to think so too. Wanting to change, and then making a considered effort, is a difficult thing to do—and it's character building. I say, make a resolution, try your best, and don't get too down when you mess up. We're human, we do that. Just get right back on the saddle!



Illustration by Carla Cieza

SEA OF LIFE

By Prateek Samson

On a little lonely boat in the middle of the sea
With dark blue melancholic water as far as the eye could see

Cursed to this endless ocean I seem to be
Closing my eyes as the water floats
Holding on to the beaten sails
My only company being blue whales

The sun shining bright and majestically
And the clouds,
they would come and go, but never stay
As you looked to them in hope
You could see them in the sky, afloat
You could see how they changed into beautiful shapes
Beautiful shapes full of sunshine and hope
I yearn for them
and dream to be among the beautiful white clouds
Full of sunshine and hope
And maybe I was once

But now my hands, they tremble
Full of fear and fright
Because what comes after is worse than death
The dark, cold horrible terrifying clouds approach.
They come like a storm and bring with them deafening noise.
Rolling thunder with scorching piercing lightning bolts
The rumbling of the split sky making me tremble
Tumble with fear, my courage humbled
It beats you down with rain
Rain that seems never-ending

Rain that beats your back with a vengeance
Rain like the teardrops of heartache

As the rain continues to drench me with despair.
The once mild sea was now violent
Swelling sooo high
Waves the size of mountains surround me,
Right in the middle of a depression
I tremble at the sight of pure destruction
As my lonely boat rides the monsters of the sea
I hang on for dear life, just barely
Only fingertips separate me from Hades
And then, then I see it
The very definition of destruction, monstrosity and fear
The wave of despair, approaching, overfilling me with fear
And then it hit
The heat was unbearable, the pain was indescribable
To the point that tears were enjoyable
The sound unblockable
The burden unbearable
Death desirable
Most minds would melt with the pain caused by the sight of it
Like mine, they would be engulfed with fear, hopelessness, and sadness
My mind was forced to melt out all the joy and hope
With frozen cold despair taking ahold,
Ice cold water sprays me
It burns me
Consumes me
Felt like the weight of the sky on me

I looked in despair at the water thinking
“jump in buddy, no more pain there”
For surely sinking to the pit of this blue endless abyss
Would be far less painful than living in this
And as my fingertips started to leave like a rope
unwinding
As my strength started to drift
Like the leaves of autumn

I saw through the waves of despair,
A beautiful promise,
A stunning rainbow
Though the storm may be terribly terrifying
The beautiful white clouds of hope and sunshine
They will always be back
Regardless the monstrous waves you face
Despite the odds against
Be strong and remember the beauty of the rainbow
As a reminder that once the storm passes, which it will
The wonderful, gentle white beautiful clouds full of hope
and sunshine
They will return.
The remembrance of this promise, ringing through my
ears
Vibrating my body and touching my soul.
As I stood strong against the waves of despair
And saw through the monsters a beam of light full of
sunshine and hope
And stood steadfast in my little lonely boat.

Stay Informed

