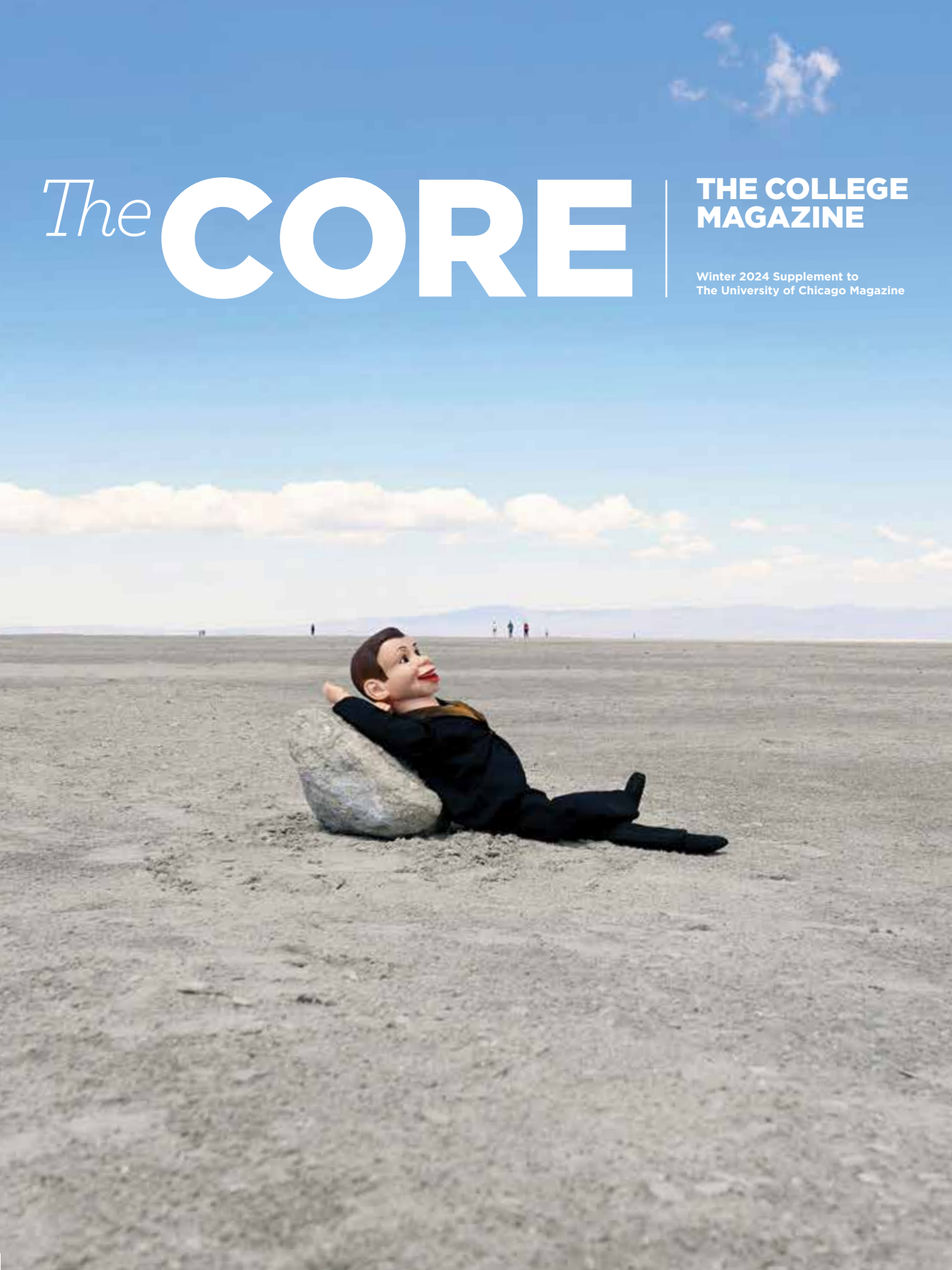


The CORE

**THE COLLEGE
MAGAZINE**

Winter 2024 Supplement to
The University of Chicago Magazine



Don't let your dance card fill up! Mark your calendar for Alumni Weekend, May 16-19.



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EDITOR
Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

ART DIRECTOR
Guido Mendez

DESIGNER
Laura Lorenz

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Susie Allen, AB'09
Chandler A. Calderon
Sean Carr, AB'90
Isabella Romeu, Class of 2026

COPY EDITOR
Katie Byrne

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Laura Demanski, AM'94
Mary Ruth Yoe

773.702.2163
uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu
mag.uchicago.edu/thecore

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From the editor

FINDING THEIR VOICE

This past summer Christine Mehring, Mary L. Block Professor of Art History, took 11 students on a tour of important works of land art (see "Art in the Middle of Nowhere," page 16). Among the many photos Mehring sent to accompany the article were images of our cover model, Serra.

Serra joined the group in Las Vegas. During a visit to a secondhand store, Sila Ulug, AM'23, a graduate student in art history and theater and performance studies, discovered Serra in a baby carriage and bought them (Serra's pronouns are usually, but not always, "they/them") for \$60. After that, Serra accompanied the group everywhere: to Michael Heizer's *City*, to Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels*, to Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*. "It truly freaked everyone out," says Mehring.

Serra is not scary, Ulug insists (although one potential subletter of her Hyde Park apartment passed after spotting Serra in a closet). "Some people, when they see Serra, feel a little bit uncomfortable because they're always smiling," Ulug says. "Why are they so happy? These days it's expected that everybody's suffering from one thing or another, but Serra does not have those sorts of feelings."

Serra enjoys singing opera, Ulug says. They were singing about land art just before the cover shot was taken. "They tend to get excited all at once, so they'll just burst into song," Ulug says. "It's just pure, earnest joy."

—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

Front cover: Photo courtesy Sila Ulug, AM'23. See "Art in the Middle of Nowhere," page 16.

Back cover: Photography by Paul A. Wagner, AB'38; UChicago Photographic Archive, apf4-01180.

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CITIES WITH THE MOST COLLEGE ALUMNI

1. Chicago
2. New York
3. San Francisco
4. Washington
5. Los Angeles
6. Boston
7. Seattle
8. Miami
9. Minneapolis/St. Paul
10. Denver

Updates

WHAT'S NEW IN THE COLLEGE

Marshall, Mitchell, and Schwarzman Scholars

Ethan Ostrow, Class of 2024, has been named a Marshall Scholar. He will pursue a degree in sociolegal studies at the University of Oxford. Ostrow, who leads creative writing workshops at Cook County Jail, hopes to further his work in incarceration reform.

Tommy Hagan, AB'21, has been named a Mitchell Scholar. Growing up, Hagan's Irish grandparents told him about cousins who had been imprisoned during the Troubles, the conflict in Northern Ireland. Hagan plans to pursue an MSc in peace and conflict studies at Ulster University.

Xavier Wu, Class of 2024, has been selected as a Schwarzman Scholar. Originally from Nanjing, China, Wu moved to St. Louis to attend high school. He will enroll in a master's program in global affairs at Tsinghua University.

New Air Force ROTC program

In October the University launched an Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) program. AFROTC trains students from 17 universities across the Chicago area, preparing them for commissioning into the Air Force or Space Force after graduation. Cadets attend weekly classes at UChicago on subjects such as leadership and international relations.



Melina Hale, PhD'98,
dean of the College.

Dean Hale named a top woman in STEM

In September *Crain's Chicago Business* named **Melina Hale**, PhD'98, the dean of the College, to its list of top women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). Hale, the William Rainey Harper Professor in the Department of Organismal Biology and Anatomy, "is a neuroscientist with a research laboratory that studies the neuromechanics of movement," *Crain's* noted. "Hale conceived and led UChicago Eco, an initiative that began in 2021 aimed at promoting and broadening the role of the university in environmental research and sustainability."

A new dean of students

Philip Venticinque, AB'01, AM'02, PhD'09, was named dean of students in the College beginning February 1. A former associate professor of classics at Cornell College, Venticinque has worked in the Office of the Provost at UChicago since 2018.



UChicago creature

HOUND OF LOVE

Claudia Hogg-Blake, PhD'22, with Gracie, her beloved pooch.

Name: Gracie

Breed: Whoodle (Wheaten Terrier-Poodle mix)

Age: 7 (human years); 49 (dog years)

Claim to fame: Inspired a work of academic philosophy. **Claudia Hogg-Blake**, PhD'22, teaching fellow in the humanities, wrote her dissertation "Loving Gracie: An Account of Human-Animal Love" on the profound bonds between people and animals. Hogg-Blake has also taught two College courses on this topic and a third on animal ethics.

First impression: "I remember she was shy but very self-assured and presumptuous," Hogg-Blake recalls of meeting Gracie, then six months old. "Presumptuousness is one of my favorite things about

her. We had all these rules—they're actually rules I don't agree with anymore—but at the time I thought, OK, you can't let the dog sleep in the bed. And she just hopped straight onto the bed and made herself comfortable."

Likes: Walking off-leash on quiet trails, meeting new friends at the dog beach, sitting outside and smelling the world go by.

Dislikes: Vacuum cleaners, plastic bags caught in trees and blowing in the wind, cats ("she's very stereotypical about cats").

Enemies: Turkeys. During a short stay at an Airbnb on an animal sanctuary, Gracie encountered a turkey that was "crazy-looking—it looked like an alien. It actually looked a bit like her, if she was a turkey. It was the first time I had

ever seen her react like that: she marched up, saw the turkey, and slowly backed away. She was like, 'I'm not gonna mess with that. I don't know what that is.'"

Favorite word: Biscuit.

Favorite treat: Peanut butter. She also loves tinned sardines. "We call it her sardine supper," says Hogg-Blake. "For my husband's birthday, he made us a pizza, and then he made Gracie a tiny little sardine pizza."

Admirable qualities: "I think she cares about me—maybe not in the way I care about her, but she does little things, like whenever I get out of the shower, she generously cleans me. It's like, great, now I'm covered in dog saliva, it's impossible to ever really be clean, but to me, that's a caring, affectionate thing."

—Susie Allen, AB'09

Alumni memories

THE DORMS OF YESTERYEAR

In the November issue of College Review, the Core's email newsletter, we asked about defunct residence halls. Readers shared stories of Foster, Boucher, Pierce, the Shoreland—and two tales of long-lasting O-mance sparked at Woodward.

Not many residence halls come with chandeliers, ballrooms, or elderly residents. Shoreland Hall, which closed in 2009, had them all.

Robie

I lived in Foster Hall during 1956–57, the last year it was a full-service dorm. It was the best introduction to college life and a great mix of first-years, upperclasswomen, and graduate students. It was a sad day when the University decided to close it and move those of us who wanted meals to the New Dorms (i.e., Woodward).

Woodward was without character. The only good thing was we had a corner room with a view of Robie House. I had no regrets when Woodward was demolished. Foster is now filled with offices. I wonder whether any of the old character with lovely woodwork is retained.

—Betty I. Wolf, SB'60, MD'65

A boy

I entered the U of C in 1961 and moved into New Dorms [later Woodward Court]. We had Orientation, then the upperclassmen arrived. The first day some upperclassmen were sitting and talking in the courtyard. On the other side of the courtyard, I could hear a boy talking. He sounded interesting. I got up and walked around

to the other side, by the boy, and two years later we were married.

—Nancy Olin Unferth, AB'65, AM'74

Larry

On the first day of Orientation Week, there was a barbecue in the Woodward courtyard for first-years. As I waited in line I saw a group of young men by the fence, gesturing to us to come over. They wanted us to go through the line and get them food. They were second-, third-, and fourth-years, and their meal service didn't kick in for another week. That is how I met Larry, whom I went on to marry. Still going strong 54 years later.—Ofelia Nunez Svart, EX'71

Norman Maclean

Chauncey Boucher Hall, CB for short [formerly the YMCA's training college at 53rd and Ingleside], opened as a dorm for the 1966–67 academic year. CB was huge and had a pool, gym, and indoor track. What it did not have was a kitchen. The demographics in year one included undergrads (all classes, with and



The kitchenless men of Boucher Hall. Top photo (left to right): Bob Sieh, AB'69; Myron Frank, EX'68; Chris Smith, EX'70; Jim Lilly, AB'68, AM'69, MBA'80; and Steve Miller, AM'69. Photo below (left to right): Lilly, Smith, and Sieh.



[AB'72], who once a year played Wagner's Ring Cycle end to end (overnight); Mark Bednar [AB'72, MBA'76], who didn't care much for Brahms; and Steven Blau [AB'70, MD'74], who had an encyclopedic knowledge of classical music. Steve liked to jot down his fellow undergraduates' malapropisms on paper slips, which he pasted on the door to his room. I was one of those so honored.

—Zachary M. Baker, AB'72

without meal plans) and grad students. The kitchen problem resulted in some heated exchanges with Residence Halls and Commons.

The great snowstorm in January 1967 started when I was in Professor Norman Maclean's [PhD'40] Shakespeare class. George Schmidt [AB'69] and I pushed several cars free while walking back to CB.

I can quickly name 15 to 20 dorm mates and see their faces. The nonexistent kitchen contributed to a shared problem and gave us something we worked together to solve.

—Jim Lilly, AB'68, AM'69, MBA'80

Sammy Dawg

Pierce Tower was an all-male dorm: pent-up hormones, 2 a.m. water fights in the hallways, firecrackers tossed into—and exploding in—the shower stalls. Around the time of the 1969 sit-in, we elected Sam Dawg to Student Government. Sam Dawg was the unauthorized animal companion of Jeremiah Benn Simmons [EX'69], Tufts resident head.

My favorite memories of Tufts are of its musical soundscape. Some residents had state-of-the-art audio setups, complete with amplifiers, turntables, and tape decks. The popular music of the era wafted through the corridors: the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, James Taylor, Gordon Lightfoot, Fotheringay, Judy Collins—and a then-obscure Canadian singer who wrote a lot of the songs in the Judy Collins repertory, Joni Mitchell.

Then there were the classical music buffs. There was Bob Dozor [AB'71], who played these interminable symphonies by an Austrian composer named Mahler; my next-door neighbor Alan Hirsh

Fred!

I attended the U of C from 1984 to 1988 and lived on the ninth floor of the Shoreland, Hale House, for all four years.

The storage attic! We were allowed to store our belongings over the summer if we were coming back in the fall. A big musty room with stuff all over the place, no rhyme or reason.

The mice! My sophomore and junior year, I shared a huge apartment with two other women. We had a living room, dining room with chandelier, a full kitchen, walk-in closets, a panoramic view of Lake Shore Drive, and the original furniture from when it was a hotel. There were mice in the drawers of the kitchen. We rarely used it. I did bake potatoes once.

Fred! After a few years, they opened a tiny café called Fred. It served French fries, pizza slices, potato chips, coffee, and this cola called Jolt, for those all-nighters before Red Bull was invented.—Maria Chadam, AB'88

Elvis

I lived in Dudley House on the 12th floor. My first room was apparently one that Elvis stayed in when the Shoreland was a fancy hotel.

I went to the basement to use the pianos and would hear the ska-soul band the Adjusters practicing. I went once to the supposedly haunted 13th floor, but I didn't see anything other than mice, roaches, and lots of dusty furniture.

—Anne Bazile, AB'99

Read more stories of defunct dorms at mag.uchicago.edu/defunct.



Student life

LIVING IT UP ON THE DAY OF THE DEAD

¡Papel picado, flores, y pan de muerto!

On the beautiful autumn afternoon of November 1—*el Día de Muertos* (the Day of the Dead)—about 60 Spanish-language students have clustered around long tables in Classics 110, one of its mullioned windows propped open to let in the crisp breeze.

It's a meeting of El Cafecito, which translates loosely as "a chat over coffee," the club organized by Verónica Moraga Guerra, AM'08, associate instructional professor of Spanish. Moraga invites different guests from the Spanish-speaking community to each meeting. UChicago students get to hear all kinds of accents—Paraguayan Spanish, Ecuadorian Spanish, Spanglish, and more—and pick up cultural knowledge.

Today's guest is Ramón Martino, a Pilsen-based artist trained at Mexico City's Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura (National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature). He's wearing a black T-shirt embossed with a shiny black *calavera* (skull).

Students will craft two key elements of the *ofrendas* (altars) that Mexicans assemble to honor and commune with their ancestors. First they'll make *papel picado*, brightly colored tissue paper pierced with elaborate cutouts. Then they'll create *flores de cempasúchil*, paper flowers modeled on the brilliant orange marigolds placed on altars; their scent and color are said to guide the spirits as they roam among the living.

Speaking entirely in Spanish, Martino explains the significance of the crafts for "una tradición totalmente mexicana-azteca": a Mexican tradition with deep Indigenous roots.

The students listen with serious, inscrutable expressions. It's unclear how many of them are following along and how many are struggling.

"Bueno, son los cuatro elementos," says Martino, naming the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water. He gestures to strings that he has hung between the room's thick square columns. "El papel picado que se cuelga en hilos es lo que representa el viento": the papel picado is strung so that it flaps in the breeze, signifying the air. The flowers signify the earth from which they spring.

Candles are placed on altars to represent fire, he says, along with glasses of water. "El agua también es muy importante porque vienen cansados los muertos y están esperando algo de tomar." (The water is important because

(Left and above) At a meeting of El Cafecito, Pilsen-based artist Ramón Martino explains, in Spanish, how to make traditional Day of the Dead crafts. Cafecito events, organized by Verónica Moraga Guerra, AM'08 (in background), feature guests from Chicago's diverse Spanish-speaking community.



(Right) A student evaluates the first cuts to a sheet of *papel picado*.



the spirits arrive tired from their journey, and they want something to drink.)

Martino pauses to joke that in Mexico, they often put out other beverages to entice los muertos to drink as well. Some students laugh—they get the joke.

Martino demonstrates the *papel picado* technique, cutting a bright green sheet with geometric patterns and hanging it to float on the line.

“¿Preguntas? ¿Preguntas?” (Questions? Questions?) he asks. He weaves through the crowded room—an obstacle course of knees, sneakers, and backpacks—providing assistance and commentary: “¡Bueno!” “¡Órale!” (Wow!) and, occasionally, “Nice!”

Most students revert immediately to English. One holds up a bright red *papel picado* for her friend to admire: “She’s cute, right? I love her!” At another table, a pair of friends do their best to stick with Spanish. “¡Mira!” says one as she displays her creation, “Look!” A few students are obviously fluent, including one who asks Martino about Latin American food traditions. The lines are soon strung with lilac, crimson, gold, and turquoise papers trembling in the breeze.

Next Martino shows how to make a paper flower. The students need to gather “seis hojas” (six sheets) of the gossamer-thin paper they’ll fold like accordions. He holds up the fuzzy green pipe cleaner that will become the stem and asks what it’s called: “¿Cómo se llama?”

Does he want the word for “stem” or “pipe cleaner”? No one hazards a guess.

“En inglés?” he presses.

“Pipe cleaner,” someone offers.

“Y en español?”

Silencio.

“¡Limpia pipa!” he exclaims. The students erupt in laughter at the easy answer. Even beginning Spanish speakers know the verb *limpiar* is “to clean,” while *pipa* is self-explanatory.

As he moves among them, he discovers a glitch in communication: at one table, students are trying to make flowers with a single thin sheet of paper. “¡Seis hojas! ¡Seis hojas!” he repeats.

“This takes patience,” a student exclaims. Heads bent over their bunched papers, the students struggle to separate the flower petals. “Sin miedo, es papel. Si se rompe, ¡ni modo!” Martino assures them. (Don’t be afraid. It’s just paper. So if it rips, no problem!)

Through a mixture of explanation and demonstration, everyone ends up catching on. Cheerful orange flowers begin to emerge.

As a few students prepare to leave, Moraga makes an announcement: There is *pan de muerto* to take on the way out—sweet bread made especially for the holiday, shaped to look as though bones are baked into it.

With that, the event abruptly ends. The students stampede toward the treats.

—Kelley Tatro

GOOD GAME, WELL PLAYED

Arne Meyer, AB'00, of Naughty Dog studio, on the past, present, and future of the games industry.

Long before UChicago had its first Media Arts and Design students or launched the Weston Game Lab, **Arne Meyer**, AB'00 (a public policy studies major), spent his days at the College reading film criticism, reviewing punk records, and publishing a zine called *Total Culture Shock*.

Meyer has worked at Naughty Dog, the video game studio known for *The Last of Us* and *Uncharted* franchises, for more than 15 years; he now serves as head of culture and communications. He joins us for a conversation on internet communities, interactive media, and gaming on a desert island. This interview has been edited and condensed.—Cian Ford

How did you end up in video games—and at Naughty Dog?

A lot of young people think you have to be a programmer or a game designer to work in video games. I felt the same and never really explored

what other avenues—what other jobs—there might be within the industry.

I ended up working for a public relations company, for the department that worked on digital communities and built websites and did digital PR. I think having this broad education gave me the ability to work at a PR firm in tech, even though I didn't graduate in communications or some aspect of web design. The firm ended up pitching the campaign for the original Xbox launch. That's what sent me off working in video games. Then a former colleague recommended me for my first position at Naughty Dog. What attracted me to Naughty Dog is they were doing very narrative-heavy, character-driven games.

Were any of your College courses helpful for your career?

A film studies class with **Tom Gunning** [professor emeritus in Cinema and Media Studies]. I



College artifacts: Meyer's UChicago ID and issues of his zine, *Total Culture Shock*, which focused on ska music.



Left: Meyer sports a spiky mohawk during his time in the College. Right: Award-winning game series *The Last of Us* follows Joel and Ellie after an apocalyptic pandemic has turned most people into hostile zombies.

got exposed to David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's *Film Art: An Introduction* [first published by Addison-Wesley in 1979] and the serious criticism of media.

I took **Michelle Jensen's** [PhD'00] Third Wave Feminism and Girl Culture. I was already in the punk subculture, so we connected on the fact that I liked self-publishing and writing zines.

Do you think video games are art?

Games are a form of creative expression, and that exists in every art. Art can be commercial, it can be entertainment, it can be serious and introspective, it can be funny, but it's always a form of creative expression. And games are just another avenue for that.

Games have only been around for 60 or 70 years—the medium's still maturing. But they are an opportunity to explore personal or political themes, to have a message.

In the games industry, we often struggle to feel legitimate in the cultural consciousness, even though we are bigger than the movie industry in pure dollar terms. So many people play games—including people who don't even realize that they're gamers, because they're playing *Candy Crush* on their phone.

We have games that are providing underrepresented points of view. We have games that are changing people's minds and perspectives. But when you look at the cultural commentary on games, it feels like we're not yet legitimized by the

serious press or in organizations and award shows. That's the next step.

Which game first made a lasting impression on you?

Legend of Zelda on the original NES [Nintendo Entertainment System], because there was a narrative to it. I remember building maps of the dungeons and selling them to people at school. I was enjoying it with my mom. I loaded up the cartridge recently and her "save game" is still there.

What's your desert island game?

Something from the *Soulsborne* series—all right, I'm just going to pick *Bloodborne*, I love the Lovecraftian sort of Eldritch horror aspect of it. I've already put so many hours into it, so I can see myself playing that game for a very long time.

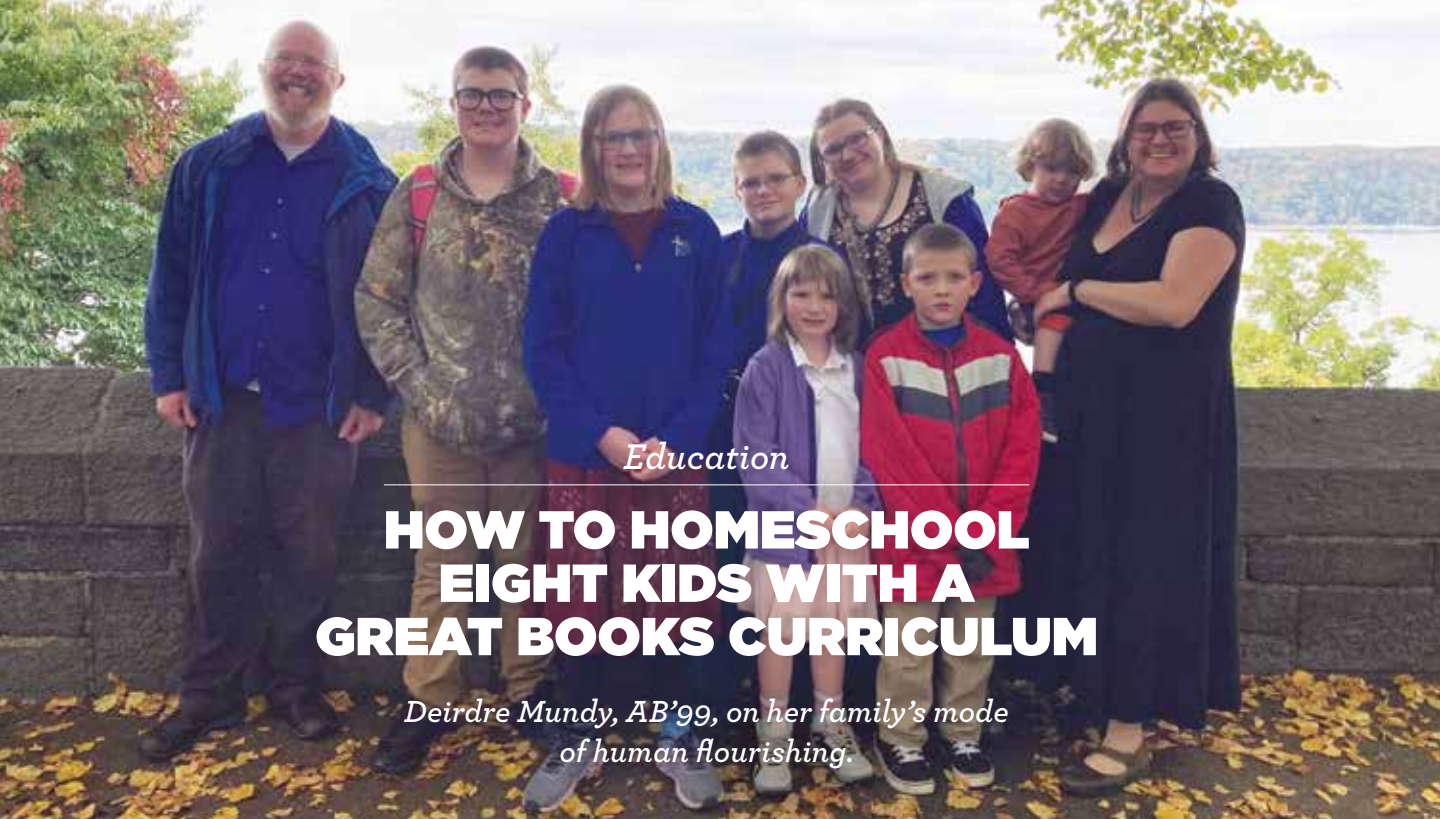
I've always wanted to get into those games, but I've seen how difficult they are, and I'm like, maybe that's not for me.

If you're on a desert island, you have all the time in the world.

Right, that's true.

I'm the same way. I'm terrible at those games. But I love living in that world.

Read more at mag.uchicago.edu/arnemeyer.



Education

HOW TO HOMESCHOOL EIGHT KIDS WITH A GREAT BOOKS CURRICULUM

Deirdre Mundy, AB'99, on her family's mode of human flourishing.

John Mundy, AB'01, and Deirdre Mundy, AB'99, on a college tour with seven of their eight children (left to right): Ben, Ada, Max, Ella, Cecilia, Henry, and Charles.

For the Class News section of the Summer/23 University of Chicago Magazine, **Deirdre (McTague) Mundy**, AB'99, sent in a family update. Oldest daughter Anne is now a materials science major at Case Western Reserve University. The seven children still at home—ranging from a three-year-old to a high school senior—are homeschooled. “If you’re currently in the trenches with small kids, hang in there,” Deirdre wrote. “Teens really are delightful!”

Deirdre works full time as a freelance writer; husband **John Mundy**, AB'01, a former library director, just finished up a four-year accounting degree at Western Governors University in nine months.

Homeschooling seven kids while working and studying full time? The Core had to know more.

This interview has been edited and condensed.

—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

Have you taught in a traditional classroom?

Right after graduation, John and I taught for a year at a Catholic school. We were not great with classroom discipline. Our horrible experience pushed us in the direction of homeschooling.

How so?

Our oldest child has ADHD [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder], and there was no way she could make it through full-day kindergarten. She was cheerful and good-hearted, but she could only do schoolwork if she was standing up and spinning in circles. When she was learning to read, she had to hang upside down by her knees over the back of the couch like a bat. In a home environment, you can let them be that way. Pretty much everyone in our house has ADHD.

How do you stay patient with so many kids?

With the littler kids, I’m pretty laid back, because I was a hot mess as a little kid. If they’re being cheerful and kind, I don’t really care what they’re doing.

On the other hand, toddlers and three-year-olds are super screechy. If you wear lawnmower-guy headphones around the house, you can still have conversations, but it takes that high-pitched screech out. I became a much better mother when I started wearing headphones.

How do you keep the kids from distracting each other?

We live in a small town in Indiana in a big old 1920s house. The beauty of a 1920s house is every room has a door. Every child’s desk is in a different room. We have a school desk in every room except the kitchen.

How big is this house?

It's a three-bedroom house. Four boys in one room, four girls in the other. We have bunk beds. When my eldest went to college and had one roommate, she said it was heaven.

How do you balance homeschooling with working?

I have a basement office. All my kids, except the three-year-old, can get their own food and drinks. Everyone who is tall enough knows how to use the stove. The deal is, if you cook for your younger siblings, you don't have to do the dishes.

In terms of school, I check on them and grade their work. Most of them don't need me standing over them. I have a few who will wander off and read.

And you've chosen a great books curriculum?

There's a homeschool program out of California, the Kolbe Academy, that does great books. The high school curriculum is ninth grade, Greeks; tenth grade, Romans; eleventh grade, medieval and Renaissance; twelfth grade, modern. The curriculum has essay topics and how many pages they should read. Otherwise, I might be too aggressive and burn my kids out.

Kolbe has normal math and science—some homeschool curricula are terrible and will cut your kid off from science and technology careers. And for lab science, we can lean on the local school. Since they take lab science, they're also allowed to take art and participate in any extracurricular activity except sports.

Since you and your husband were classics majors, are the kids learning Latin and Greek?

They're learning Latin, but they only do Greek history. Some



The Mundys "are not a sporty family," Deirdre says, but they enjoy spending time outdoors.

of them may choose to pick up Greek, but I make them do the Latin first. My senior silver-medaled in the National Latin Exam last year, and I thought she was going to try to get a gold this year. But she decided to take a break and teach herself Anglo-Saxon. She was inspired by Seamus Heaney's *Beowulf*, which has the English translation on one side and Anglo-Saxon on the other.

Were you always strong at language learning?

My first year at the U of C, I took Greek. I was coming out of the high-school-Spanish mindset where you can kind of do well enough without actually learning the language. We had **James Redfield** [LAB'50, AB'54, PhD'61], and he only gave out As, Bs, and Fs. I was getting a B minus, so I failed and had to retake Greek. I'm glad he failed me. He was right—if you're only getting a B minus, you're never going to love Greek. I ended up a classics major.

Did your kids ever ask to attend regular school?

No. They don't like sitting still enough to want to do it for six hours a day. If they focus, they can get through a whole day's work in two hours.

And they've never been bullied. Seeing how confident and happy they are in themselves is huge.

Do they argue with you about grades?

My kids are not motivated by grades at all. If you're homeschooled, there's not an honor roll or class rank. You're first and last in your class all the time.

Did you always want a large family?

When we got married, we figured, we'll be like everyone else—three kids, maybe four. I had a nurse practitioner who had five. She told me adding a third child is the hardest thing you'll ever do. After three, it's "Oh, put an extra plate on the table at dinnertime." She was correct. With that switch from two to three, suddenly you're outnumbered. It's horrific.

But after that, it's not hard. We've never been in a position where another child would be that much of a burden. And they're entertaining.

Ever thought of writing a memoir?

I feel like my life is boring. But I like my boring life. At the U of C, there was a lot of thinking about, What is the good life? What is human flourishing? Whatever you're doing, you can be an engaged human being and citizen. I tend to think of myself as the most boring of the people I graduated with, but we have a really good life.

MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE?

Waltz, foxtrot, twist, boogie: a look back at 125 years of Alumni Weekend dance parties.

By Chandler A. Calderon

Photography by Jason Smith



Now one of the most-anticipated events at Alumni Weekend, GO Party 2023 took over Ida Noyes Hall.

One night this past May, alumni of all generations took over Ida Noyes Hall for a dance party. The blowout event featured a DJ and multiple live bands, plenty of food (including a bar just for candy), arcade games, and an “Italian Floral Market” for making bouquets.

Dancing has been a feature of UChicago reunions almost from the start, waxing and waning in popularity over the years. Over the last two decades—and ever since being rebranded as the UChicaGO Party (or GO Party, for short) in 2004—the dance party at Alumni Weekend has become one of its most popular events.

The dance party hasn’t always been the biggest event at Alumni Weekend; nor has it been held consistently, like reunion mainstays such as the Interfraternity Sing and the Alumni Awards. But how the dance has changed over the years gives a look into the University’s efforts to engage the alumni community since the 1890s.

The decision to hold the first “Alumni Day”—June 30, 1898—was “hailed by [alumni] with a great cry of joy,” *University of Chicago Weekly* declared. The Class of 1893, the first graduates of the new university, would have a five-year reunion.

An 1899 Alumni Day program advertised a promenade—a formal dance party, the forerunners of today’s “proms”—following the Alumni Sing. Over the next decades the dance was often held outside, including in the middle of University Avenue. In 1931 alumni gathered in Bartlett Gymnasium, “where dancing was enjoyed to the dulcet strains of the 16-piece University Orchestra under the able direction of Mr. Palmer Clark.”

By the mid-1960s, the dance party had gotten an update. Now called the Reunion Fling (or the After-the-Sing-Fling), in 1965 and 1966, the event featured two simultaneous parties at the Quadrangle Club: guests in the upstairs dining room enjoyed a dance band with their hors d’oeuvres and cocktails, while downstairs, attendees bopped along to a rock-and-roll band. The rock band was an instant draw for young alumni, and the *Magazine* reported that before long, older alumni let their hair down too and joined in the fun.



(Left) In this undated interwar photo, alumni dance in Hutchinson Courtyard. (Right) University Avenue sits ready for the 1921 street dance. Umbrellas painted with each class's year line the street, serving as meeting points for alumni.



In the mid-'60s, the Reunion Fling took a two-pronged (or two-floor) approach to alumni engagement. Attendees enjoyed refreshments and rather tame dancing in the dining room, while on the first floor, young alumni rocked out to a rock-and-roll band (until, of course, older alumni caught wind of the fun and joined in).

Such attempts to make reunion more social and welcoming to younger alumni weren't considered sufficient, though. In 1979 new University president **Hanna Holborn Gray** convened a commission on alumni affairs to recommend changes to alumni club structure, programming, and publications. The commission cited low attendance rates, a lack of organization and purpose in events, and a failure to relate to alumni under 40. They added that "there is a marked absence of programs for current students—programs that could prepare them to become thoughtful and active alumni."

In keeping with the commission's recommendations, in 1981 University and alumni leaders rethought reunion. According to former Alumni Association president **Beverly J. Splane**, AB'67 (Class of 1965), MBA'69, there had been too much emphasis on *scientia*, not enough on *vita*: "For years the University had tried to create for its alumni a

one-day experience which would recreate in miniature the essence of the 'University of Chicago experience,'" she said, complete with a great books class. But "the University was not a carefree womblike environment for most of us, and we feel no desire to return."

For the 1981 reunion, the Alumni Association threw a party instead, combining all the reunion dinners into one and creating the Carnival on the Quads. Daytime festivities were followed by an evening at the Quadrangle Club, where attendees, dressed in everything from "(neat) jeans" to black tie, danced to the music of the University of Chicago Jazz Band.

This party philosophy caught on: in 1985 and 1986, alumni took over Jimmy's Woodlawn Tap for a night of merriment, and by the '90s they were dancing the night away under the "big tent." It turns out UChicago alumni know how to throw a pretty great party (but you already knew that). 🌸



Maroons strike a pose at the 2012 Go Party in Ratner gymnasium. The party had a circus theme that year (stilt walkers and unicyclist not pictured).



Alumni bring some technical footwork to the “big tent” at Alumni Weekend in 1994.



In 2004 the dance party at Alumni Weekend officially became the UChicaGO Party. GO Party-goers danced the night away in a brand-new Ratner gymnasium.

A desert landscape with a large, dark, angular land art sculpture in the foreground and mountains in the background. The sculpture is a large, dark, angular block, possibly made of stone or concrete, standing in a flat, sandy desert. In the background, there are low, rolling mountains under a clear sky. The overall scene is arid and open.

ART IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE

A summer road trip in search of land art.

By Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

By Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93



Mehring and her students were some of the first visitors to Michael Heizer's *City*, a monumental artwork—a mile and a half long and nearly half a mile wide—which first opened to the public in 2022, more than 50 years after Heizer first started working on it.

in the middle of nowhere, and De Maria selected the area because of its frequent lightning storms.

Similarly, six people per day are allowed to visit *City* by Michael Heizer, located in Nevada's Garden Valley. Heizer began working on *City* in 1970 and labored on it for more than half a century. The monumental sculpture looks like a cross between Cahokia Mounds—the ruins of the pre-Columbian center of the Mississippian culture in southern Illinois—and a simulated video game world. It takes about half an hour to walk from end to end. *City*, which cost \$40 million to build, opened to the public for the first time in the fall of 2022.

If you are lucky enough to be allowed to visit *City*, you will be driven to its desert location in the middle of

the day and you must remain there, with only water, for a few hours.

Taking photographs of either *The Lightning Field* or *City* is forbidden. For both De Maria and Heizer, it was the experience of *being* there that was important.

NOW IMAGINE, incredibly, that you want to be one of the first people in the world to see *City*. And since you're already out West, you want to take in *The Lightning Field*, too.

In that case, it helps to be an art history student at UChicago and to know **Christine Mehring**.

Last summer Mehring, the Mary L. Block Professor of Art History, took 11 students—a mix of College and graduate students from last spring's Earthworks Revisited

course—on a traveling seminar. (The full costs of the art history department's annual traveling seminars are covered by a 2013 endowment from **Amy Gold**, AM'90, and her husband, Brett Gorvy.) The small size of the seminar was determined by the limitations on visiting *The Lightning Field* and *City*: two groups of six.

Over two weeks, Mehring and her students road-tripped through five states, seeing such pieces as *Prada Marfa* (2005) by Elmgreen & Dragset outside Marfa, Texas, and *Spiral Jetty* (1970) by Robert Smithson at the Great Salt Lake in Utah. The group also took in the faux art collection at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, where they stayed for three days.

Here is some of what they saw.



The group's first stop was the art installation *Prada Marfa* (2005), a fake Prada store outside Marfa, Texas: "One could consider it land art," says Christine Mehring, "because it is in the middle of nowhere."



The group's primary reason for visiting Marfa was to tour the Chinati Foundation, a contemporary art museum founded by artist Donald Judd on the site of a former military base.



(Left) Ugo Rondinone's *Seven Magic Mountains* (2016) outside Las Vegas is "made from these huge rocks painted in very garish colors," says Mehring. (Right) The group's final stop was Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) at the edge of Utah's Great Salt Lake. The jetty originally protruded into the water, but the lake has shrunk so much, the entire jetty is now on dry land.



(Left) Several land art sites are near Las Vegas, "which is everything land art is not, but all the artists stayed there while making their works," Mehring says. At Caesar's Palace the students mulled over its collection of fake classical art. (Right) Students take in Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* (1973-76) from unusual angles.



CORE COMPETENCY

It sounds like an anxiety dream. You graduated—10, 20, maybe 30-plus years ago—and yet there you are, in Cobb or Kersten or a building that didn't even exist when you were in the College, sitting in on a Core course.

The *Core* (the magazine) sent three alumni of different generations to see how the courses taught now compare. This is what they wrote, instead of a paper.—*Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93*

HUMA 11000

READINGS IN WORLD LITERATURE I

By Sean Carr, AB'90

I am un CHIEN—Andalusia!

Forget retinol. The easiest way to erase three-plus decades is to walk into Cobb Coffee Shop on a Tuesday in 2023 and hear the Pixies still howling from the speakers. (Millennials welcome too: the Strokes were up next on this moshing-to-the-oldies playlist.)

I'd returned to my old breakfast spot to fuel up for that morning's real blast from the past: at 9:30 a.m. I'd be sitting in on a section of Readings in World Literature. I already knew things had changed in my old Hum sequence: "World," for example, had been added at some point since 1986. Also, the class now had a theme—epics—and they were currently working their way through the *Odyssey*. The closest we'd gotten to that, in an Autumn Quarter that bounded whimsically through *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, was Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn." *What else will be different?* I wondered as I sat eating my orange scone (in honor of my 18-year-old self, I'd hoped for Frosted S'mores Pop Tarts) and relishing the fizzy jolt of the day's first Diet Coke. I was also eager to see how smart these Zoomer first-years really were.

When I walk into Cobb 115 a couple minutes early, **Malynne Sternstein**, AB'87, AM'90, PhD'96, associate professor of Slavic languages and literatures, and several students are already in heated debate. About the Philadelphia Eagles' 20-14 loss to the lowly New York Jets two days earlier.

The Tuesday morning quarterbacking is intense when Philly native Sternstein turns to the full class, now seated around the standard rectangle of tables. "This is

my segue," she announces. "I feel shame, and I feel like the Philadelphia Eagles did something that was more than just shame themselves. They shamed the entire city."

"Word," a student interjects.

"They may have even shamed the game of football," Sternstein says. "Now why do I say this? Because I want us to understand the part that shame has in this epic."

After teeing up the topic, Sternstein offers up—and asks for—examples. Someone mentions Penelope's locustlike suitors in Book 2.

"What is shameless about what they do?" Sternstein asks.

"I feel you could potentially connect this to not exhibiting good *xenia*," the student says. (Never having read the *Odyssey*—my shame—I yearn for an explanation.)

"Most definitely," Sternstein agrees. "So much of shame has to do—or is bound up—with *theoxeny*, or the divine law of hospitality or guest-host relations, and *xenia*." (*Thank you!*)

She writes on the blackboard: *Lack of piety = shamelessness*.

"I'm not sure if this is a relevant connection," another student says. "Even if it's not mentioned directly in this book, hubris is a very big sin in most of Greek mythology. That usually results from people thinking that they're godlike or thinking that they're perfect. So they try to commit godlike actions and obviously they get struck by a lightning bolt or whatever. But shame is kind of like the barrier between mortality and godlike perfection."

"There's a thesis claim right there," Sternstein enthuses. "That's beautiful. Write that down." (*So yeah, I conclude, these kids are sharp.*)



“The c in Homeric Greek is pronounced as a ‘kuh.’ But very few people say ‘Keerkee.’ Or ‘Keeklopees.’ So don’t worry.”

For the remaining hour of class, Sternstein is a fount of encouragement: “Excellent.” “Well done!” “Really good point, Ryan”—all the while riffing and referencing like a cross between the comic Sarah Silverman and that friend who has read more books and seen more movies (and in more languages) than anyone else in your book group or pathsofcinematicglory subreddit. (Sternstein has also taught classes on Kafka, Nabokov, and Czech New Wave films.)

She makes connections to the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the first text of the quarter, and advises students to be on the lookout for similar themes (“Spoilers!”) in later entries on the syllabus, the *Mahabharata* and the book of Genesis.

She brings up peculiarities of pronunciation: “The c in Homeric Greek is pronounced as a ‘kuh.’ But very few people say ‘Keerkee.’ Or ‘Keeklopees.’ So don’t worry.”

She can’t resist adding, when reading of Athena spreading grace on Odysseus’s head and shoulders, “That’s where we get the shampoo

brand.” (Small chortle, possibly just her own.) “I don’t know why I said that. I’m shameless.”

Sternstein digs into the nuances of the *Odyssey*, in English and Greek, to illustrate the trade-offs translators must consider. Unlike the other sections of the course, which are reading Emily Wilson’s 2017 translation, Sternstein has assigned the Loeb Classical Library edition. “As unpoetic as it might be,” she says, “it’s actually the most accurate that I’ve found in English.”

That said: with only a few minutes left, Sternstein realizes they’re not going to make it through the day’s reading; they still have books 10, 11, and 12 to discuss. Not a problem with a single-volume edition like Wilson’s, but the Loeb Library spreads the *Odyssey* across two separate hardcovers, and the second starts with Book 13. Sternstein proposes a solution that will relieve her students from having to bring both volumes on Thursday: she can record a lecture on those last three books and post it online—this gets a thumbs-up from the class—“or,” Sternstein says, “you can carry both around if you want to seem more scholarly.”

PHYSICI 11600

PHYSICS FOR FUTURE PRESIDENTS

By Benjamin Recchie, AB'03

Kersten Physics Teaching Center (KPTC) room 120, a severe, gray lecture hall, is packed almost to capacity on this October afternoon. I'm here for PHSC 11600: Physics for Future Presidents: Fundamental Concepts and Applications. The building is now more than twice as old as it was when I was a physics student, but it's changed so little that, if I squint from my seat, I can imagine myself back in the late '90s. Well, at least until a student behind me ends a story with "... that was when classes were still in-person in high school"—a reminder that this is a new and different generation, as if my graying temples and shaky understanding of internet memes weren't reminder enough.

In the syllabus, **Savan Kharel**, assistant instructional professor of physics, promises that "the world of physics has the power to enrich your life in unimaginable ways. You might find yourself influencing policy on critical physics-related matters, contributing to the advancement of society and the world. ... Together, we'll explore topics that offer a glimpse into the awe-inspiring realms of the universe."

The course covers—among other concepts—climate, the physics of hurricanes, quantum information, superconductors, biological physics, and the subject of today's lecture, gravity. Kharel starts with a review question on a video screen: "What are unique features of gravity?"

The students offer answers: "It acts on everything in the universe." "It's relatively weak in ordinary situations"—as one student points out, it can be overcome by a common refrigerator magnet. As Kharel expounds

upon the force's weakness, his foot gets caught in a cable snaking along the floor. "I almost tripped while insulting gravity," he muses.

Besides delivering karmic judgments to unwary professors, gravity also produces waves, which leads Kharel to the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) experiment, which first detected the phenomenon in 2015. (*These lucky kids*, I think. *When I was in the College, gravitational waves were still very much theoretical, but the students today get to learn about them like it's no big deal.*)

Next up: a brief history of the universe, starting with the big bang and the first subatomic particles and running up to the present day. When Kharel mentions the cosmic inflation that brought the universe to its current size, one student raises her hand. "What causes inflation in the early universe? And how far would it go?"

Kharel demurs, saying that one would need a decade of education to be able to really understand it. But he briefly discusses how inflation is tied to the current theory of dark energy, the mysterious form of energy that seems to make up most of the universe yet can't be directly observed. "If you figure it out, please let me know," he concludes.

The course is designed with minimal math to help non-physics majors gain a conceptual grasp of science. "This is essential, as many may find themselves making science-related decisions without being experts," he tells me later. During Winter Quarter, United States Rep. Sean Casten (D-IL) and Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL)—a physicist who worked at Fermilab for

more than 25 years before entering politics—have been invited to speak with the class.

Today in KPTC 120, Kharel moves on to black holes and singularities. Another pang of jealousy: on the screen is a picture of the black hole at the center of our galaxy taken by the Event Horizon Telescope. (*Back in my day, I grouse to myself, we didn't get to see actual black holes—we had to make do with a black circle on a piece of paper, and just imagine it was the collapsed heart of a giant star.*)

On the video screen Kharel posts four statements about black holes and asks which one is false. “Let’s vote,” he says. “Talk to each other, convince each other.” The students discuss for a minute. Then they

each hold up a sheet of paper printed with the letters *A*, *B*, *C*, and *D*. It’s an interactive teaching method Kharel uses to gauge how well they’re following the lecture.

Most have folded their sheets to show the letter *C*, to indicate the third statement, “Black holes are the brightest objects in the universe,” is false. They’re correct: you might see the material *around* a black hole, but not the object itself, since light can’t escape.

“So when you become president, you’ll fund all these scientists except this one,” Kharel says, pointing to statement *C*—meaning a hypothetical clueless scientist whose research depends on a false statement, and who clearly doesn’t know the first thing about black holes.



Back in my day, I grouse to myself, we didn't get to see actual black holes—we had to make do with a black circle on a piece of paper, and just imagine it was the collapsed heart of a giant star.



“You can think about these things for yourself. It’s not just what Marx says.”

SOSC 12400

SELF, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY I

By Elly Fishman, LAB’06, AB’10

“What is a fetish?” **Anirban Karak**, collegiate assistant professor, asks the 18 students in the class Self, Culture, and Society I.

Many answers could suffice in a broader conversation; in the context of Karl Marx, however, only one does.

After a long pause, which Karak endures gracefully, a student raises his hand.

“It’s the conflict between use value and value in any one commodity,” he says. “And how it appears as the external opposition between itself and money, but it’s actually internal opposition.”

“Exactly,” says Karak. Fetishism is the value we assign to objects, which, in a capitalist society, is often expressed through the number on a price tag.

It’s a bright afternoon in early November. The class meets in a sun-drenched classroom in the Campus North Residential Commons,

a concrete contemporary structure on 55th Street; as well as a dining hall, Campus North has two classrooms on its first floor.

This is Karak’s first quarter at the University. A Harper-Schmidt Fellow with a PhD from New York University, he studies the history of capitalism. Among his published papers, two involve discussion of Marxian political frameworks: “Economic Theory Without Historicity” (*Critical Historical Studies*, 2021) and “Accumulation by Dispossession” (*Review of Radical Political Economics*, 2016), a Marxist history of the English Premier League.

Karak’s own copy of *The Marx-Engels Reader* (W. W. Norton, 1978), with its selections from Karl Marx’s *Capital* (Otto Meissner, 1867), sits open on the table, its pages decorated with sticky notes, bookmarks, and scribbled marginalia.

The phrases might also lend themselves to notable fashion choices like my former roommate's, whose beloved baseball cap read "Necessary Labor Time" across the front.

He has two *Capital* chapters—"Chapter I. Commodities" and "Chapter IV. The General Formula for Capital"—to cover in an 80-minute class.

A little over a month into the first quarter, today's class remains an exercise in basic Marxian definitions. *Use value*: Usefulness of a commodity—as opposed to its exchange value. *Labor power*: Workers' capacity to do work. *Surplus value*: Value created by workers that generates a profit for the capitalist.

If this group of students is anything like my own classmates, eventually these same terms will serve as the basis of heated late-night arguments. (One common exchange in my College living room was whether our friend group could truly live collectively and communally within a capitalist society.) The phrases might also lend themselves to notable fashion choices like my former roommate's, whose beloved baseball cap read "Necessary Labor Time" across the front. And if these students are anything like me—I took this same SOSC sequence in 2007—they will carry these first lessons with them for years to come. But for now, they must simply keep up with Karak, who is blazing through the dense material.

About halfway through the class, the discussion shifts to the working day. There are two parts, says Karak, before asking the class to define them. The students respond almost in unison: necessary labor and surplus labor.

"So what is the necessary labor time?" Karak asks.

One student jumps in: "The time needed to produce the value that keeps you alive until the next day."

Karak nods. Surplus labor, another student adds, is everything else. It's how the capitalist makes a profit. Karak wants to linger on the first term. Dig a little deeper. What is necessary for us—in 2023—to live a decent life?

One student says technology. A couple of others suggest medicine, antibiotics.

"Needs change with time," Karak says.

The sun shifts as afternoon gives way to evening. Karak lands on the last of several slides, each of which outline chapter discussion points. As the sound of backpack zippers duets with shutting laptops, Karak reiterates a refrain he hopes lands with the class: "You can think about these things for yourself. It's not just what Marx says."

WHAT I'VE LEARNED IN THE CORE SO FAR

By Isabella Romeu, Class of 2026

The Core's Metcalf intern, **Isabella Romeu**, Class of 2026, has completed seven Core courses: Language and the Human (Humanities); Mind (Social Sciences); Elementary Statistics (Mathematical Sciences); Principles of Biology (Biological Sciences); Natural History of North American Deserts (Biological Sciences); Intro to Genres: The Immigrant Experience Through Literature (Arts); and Language, History, and Culture for Heritage Speakers-I (Language-Spanish). Asked about the most memorable lessons she's learned so far, she came up with this list.

—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

1. *Don't hedge in essays.*
2. *On second thought, it's okay to hedge.*
3. *Mitochondria are the powerhouse of the cell.*
4. *The legion of iPad kids will side-eye you if you dare take notes with a real pen.*
5. *Don't argue with those who play devil's advocate. You will have to accept defeat, but only because they can't.*
6. *Beatrice Fineschi, PhD'98, and Eric Larsen are the best Core biology professors. Professor Fineschi, in her Principles of Biology course, kept the content as simple and straightforward as possible. And Professor Larsen's jokes kept me both engaged and entertained during Natural History of North American Deserts lectures.*
7. *It doesn't hurt to try. But it does hurt to not try.*
8. *Don't take HUM and SOSC requirements during the same quarter.*
9. *Sixty-eight percent of data will fall within one standard deviation of the mean.*
10. *For those who like to wear long nails, don't let your professor question your ability to type with them.*
11. *Use MLA [Modern Language Association] format for citing sources in your papers unless told otherwise.*
12. *Be comfortable in confronting the uncomfortable.*
13. *H. G. Carrillo lied about being Cuban.*
14. *ChatGPT can't do the thinking for you.*
15. *When traversing through the Sonoran Desert, remember this phrase if you ever encounter a tricolored snake: "Red touches yellow / Kills a fellow (venomous); / Red touches black / Friend of Jack (harmless)."*
16. *Shakespeare and Homer are overrated.*
17. *Write in active voice.*
18. *If you need a calculus sequence for your major, take 130s.*
19. *Make sure to attend every HUM writing seminar. You will become a better reader, writer, and arguer.*
20. *In CIV, HUM, and SOSC discussions, you will often witness heated arguments. Usually, the loser is the first to raise their voice.*



A WORD OF ADVICE

How should you live your life? Faculty, alumni, students, classic texts: all have suggestions for you.

Compiled by Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93, and
Isabella Romeu, Class of 2026

Starting five years ago, each issue of the *University of Chicago Magazine* has concluded with “The UChicagoan”—an interview with a well-known faculty member or alum.

The interviewees answer a standard set of questions, including two about advice: “What advice would you give to a brand-new Maroon?” and “Tell us the best piece of advice you’ve received—or the worst.”

Here are some memorable answers the UChicagoans have offered over the years, selected by a new(ish) Maroon: the *Core's* Metcalf intern, Isabella Romeu, Class of 2026.

—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93

Read the UChicagoan interviews in their entirety at mag.uchicago.edu/uchicagoan.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A BRAND-NEW MAROON?



Chicago has 77 neighborhoods. Pick one, look up a restaurant or bookstore to check out, and go there without using a ride-share.

—EVE L. EWING, AB'08

Summer/19: Author and Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity associate professor



Fail in the most interesting and wildest ways possible. Invent new ways to fail that no one has known before.

—PATRICK JAGODA

Summer/23: English professor, digital media theorist, and game designer



Allow yourself to have some fun. I like to say that my roommate, Savannah “Annah” Gregory, AB’95, and I single-handedly raised the U of C from 300 on the Top 300 Party Schools to 298.

—MATILDA SZYDAGIS, AB’95

Winter/20: Writer, director, and *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* actress



Lead from where you stand. You are all leaders. It is about finding your voice and your platform.

—VINEET ARORA, AM’03

Spring/21: Dean for medical education



Use these four years to explore subjects and ideas that are outside your range or comfort and interest. You never know what treasures you will find.

—DAVID AXELROD, AB’76

Fall/20: Political strategist and former Institute of Politics director



If you are the smartest person in the room, you’re in the wrong room.

—HAROLD POLLACK

Spring/20: Crown Family School professor and health policy expert

TELL US THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU'VE RECEIVED—OR THE WORST.



Worst piece of advice?
***“Don’t go to school there;
they never let Black
people graduate.”***

—D. MAURICE CHARLES,
MDIV'90, PHD'13
Summer/22: Rockefeller
Memorial Chapel dean



***“Don’t give a damn if
people think you are
crazy. Everyone working
at the cutting edge is
considered to be crazy
by those doing
incremental research.”***

—SANTA ONO, AB'84
Spring/23: Immunologist and
15th president of the
University of Michigan



***Best: “Don’t become a
professional actress;
use your intellectual
gifts instead.” But I had
to find out for myself.***

—MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM
Fall/23: Legal scholar,
philosopher, and public
intellectual



***“Never make a job
decision based on how
much you’ll make—
money won’t make up for
a bad work environment,
but a great work
experience will make
up for not making as
much money.”***

—ANA MARIE COX, AB'94
Fall/19: Political commentator,
podcaster, and 2014 Institute of
Politics fellow



***The worst advice is
the conglomeration of
advice people give to
women: “be nicer,” or
“smile more,” or “be
more friendly,” or
“wear lipstick.”***

—EMILY LANDON
Spring/22: Infectious disease
specialist and public health advocate



***The worst piece of
advice I ever received
came from an eminence
who told me to give up
paleontology because
I’ll never do anything
meaningful.***

—NEIL SHUBIN
Fall/22: Paleontologist,
evolutionary biologist, and host of
PBS's *Your Inner Fish*



My mother was allergic to self-promotion, “tooting your own horn.” She told me, “You don’t have to tell your bosses about the good work you do. They know.” I was spending my work life in an enormous brass section, and my horn sat in my lap for too long.

—RAY SUAREZ, AM’93

Spring/19: Broadcast journalist and College parent



“But wouldn’t you rather go to Yale?”

—CHRISTINA KAHRL, AB’90

Summer/21: *San Francisco Chronicle* sports editor, Baseball Hall of Fame voter, and transgender activist

Words of advice *from* young people

College students receive a lot of advice from older people—faculty, advisers, employers, parents. Do they have advice to offer in return? Of course. Last names have been redacted to protect the forthright.

—Carrie Golus, AB’91, AM’93

Compiled by Isabella Romeu, Class of 2026

Donate more.

—VICTOR, CLASS OF 2026

You will always find something in common with someone 20 years older than you and 20 years younger than you.

—SARAH, CLASS OF 2027

Age does not imply wisdom. There is always something to be learned.

—BREANNA, CLASS OF 2027

Our generation isn’t lazy; we just aren’t living in your day.

—SAMUEL, CLASS OF 2025

It’s okay to stand your ground on certain things, just be open to listen to the countering perspectives.

—EUGENIA, CLASS OF 2026

Don’t drive. Do take public transit.

—DARIEL, CLASS OF 2026

Revisit Botany Pond when you can. It’s our very own fountain of youth.

—RAYMOND, CLASS OF 2024

TIMELESS ADVICE FROM THE COMMON CORE

College alumni frequently credit the Core Curriculum with teaching them not *what* to think, but *how* to think. So what (or how) do you think of this advice taken from Core readings?

*Come, friend, you too must die.
Why moan about it so?*

—Homer, *The Iliad*

*There is a time for many words and there
is a time also for sleep.*

—Homer, *The Odyssey*

*One pint of wine a day is sufficient for each. ...
If, however, the situation of the place, the
work, or the heat of summer require more, let it
be in the power of the Superior to grant it.*

—*The Rule of St. Benedict*

It is much safer to be feared than loved.

—Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*

*Don't imitate me in every respect;
you need more reserve.*

—Napoleon, "On Governing Italy," *Readings in
Western Civilization: The Old Regime
and the French Revolution*

*Cultivate poverty like a garden herb, like sage.
Do not trouble yourself much to get new
things, whether clothes or friends.*

—Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

Learn not to absorb the world.

—Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric*



WHY ADVICE IS A MYTH

By Agnes Callard, AB'97, associate professor of philosophy

The myth of advice is the possibility that we can transform one another with the most glancing contact, and so it is not surprising that one finds so much advice exchanged on social media. When people are not fighting on Twitter, they are cheerfully and helpfully telling one another how to live. In that context, advice functions as a kind of small talk or social glue: it helps people feel they are getting along in a space not bound together by any kind of shared weather.

There is probably nothing wrong with this, as long as we do not let it bleed into those contexts in which real assistance is possible. I do not have tips or tricks for becoming a philosopher to hand over to my students; my wisdom is contained in the slog of philosophical argument—the daily grind of reading old books, picking out the premises, tearing them apart. I can make you better at that, by showing you how to do more of *this* and less of *that*. I can't help you become a philosopher without being your philosophy teacher, any more than I can massage you without touching you. Someone who wiggles her fingers and pretends she has magical powers isn't actually getting you anywhere. Real assistance requires contact.

Excerpted from "Against Advice," by Agnes Callard, AB'97, originally published in *The Point* online.

KITCHEN CHEMISTRY

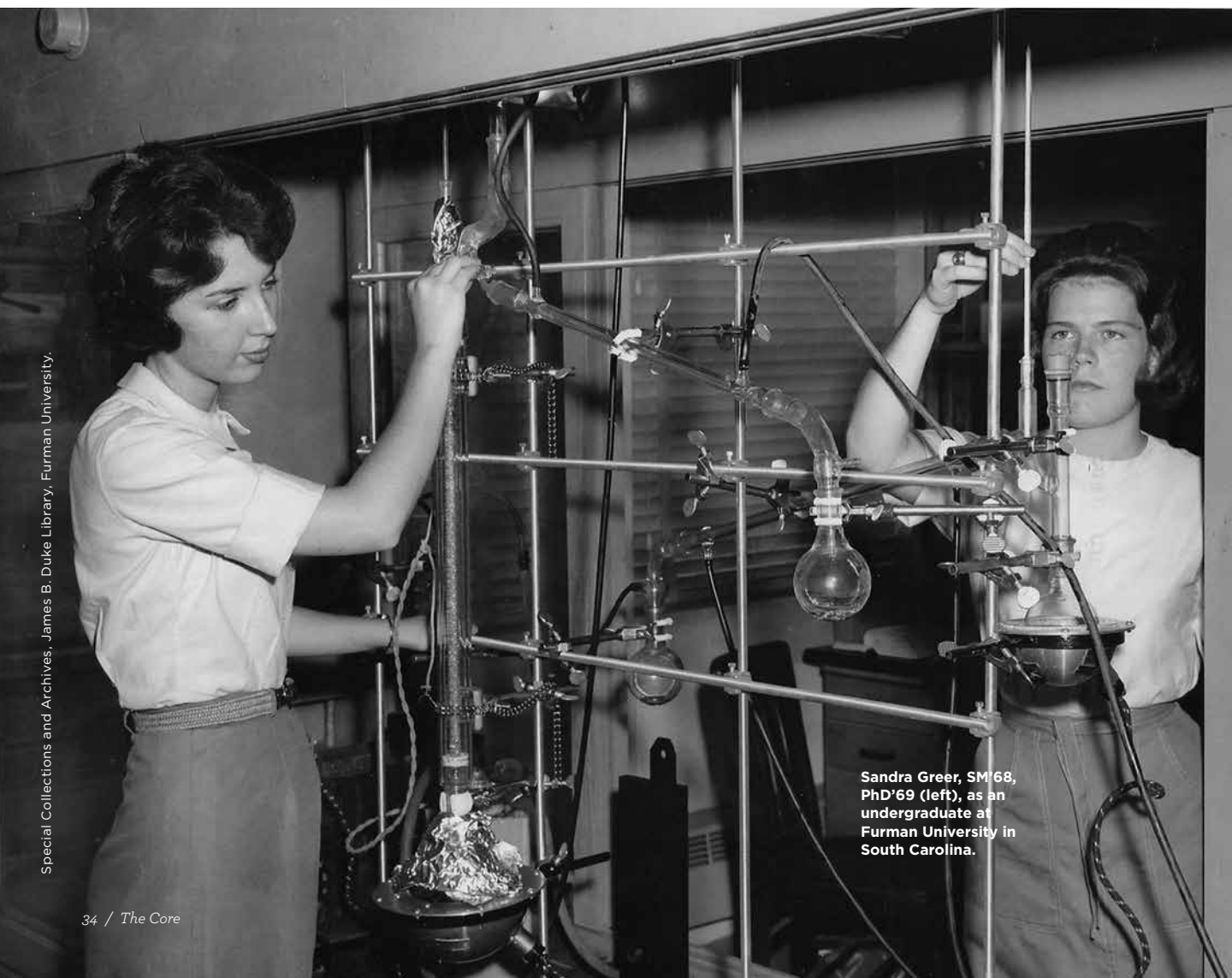
A new book by thermodynamicist Sandra Greer, SM'68, PhD'69, reveals the hard science behind the culinary arts.

In 2014 Sandra Greer, SM'68, PhD'69, taught a class called The Chemistry of Cooking at Mills College. A former dean and provost at Mills, Greer had noticed that undergrads seemed intimidated by their required science courses. "I wanted to have a science course that would be fun," she says. "The class filled immediately."

Greer could not find a textbook that was exactly what she had in mind, so she taught from her own notes. Now she has adapted those notes into the

textbook *Chemistry for Cooks: An Introduction to the Science of Cooking* (MIT Press, 2023).

Each chapter ends with a recipe analysis section, where students can gain practical experience with heat and temperature, acids and bases, colloidal dispersions, diffusion and osmosis, and more. Greer, who grew up in Greenville, South Carolina, has adapted several recipes based on dishes her mother and grandmother used to make, including this one from the chapter on carbohydrates.—Carrie Golus, AB'91, AM'93



Sandra Greer, SM'68, PhD'69 (left), as an undergraduate at Furman University in South Carolina.

COLLARD GREENS

By Sandra Greer, AM'68, PhD'69
Adapted from Louise Childress Thomason



Collard greens
"with ham biscuits
and bourbon!"
Greer wrote
in the email
accompanying
this photo.

This recipe is from my mother, a classic Southern cook. Her old-time method cooks the greens for a long time so that they reach a soft texture and produce a lovely broth, or "pot likker." This also works for other kinds of greens, such as turnip greens or beet greens. Collard greens can be grown in the home garden, even in the winter in mild climates, and provide fiber, vitamins, and minerals to the diet.

YOU WILL NEED

- 2 pounds (1 kilogram) fresh collard greens
- Water
- 6 strips bacon

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fresh collard greens need to be washed carefully to remove any soil. Fill the sink with water, put the greens into the water, and rinse each leaf.
2. Tear the leaves from the ribs and into pieces about 3 inches across.
3. Put all the torn leaves into a large pot and add an inch or two of water.
4. Put the pot on the stove burner and bring the water to a boil.
5. Cover the pot, reduce the heat to a simmer, and cook the greens for about an hour.
6. Taste the greens to see if you are satisfied with the texture or if you want to cook them longer.
7. Cook the bacon in the microwave: Put a layer of paper towel on a plate, put the bacon on the paper towel, put another layer of paper towel over the bacon, cook on high until the bacon is crisp (about one minute per strip of bacon).
8. Break the bacon into small pieces.
9. Remove the greens from the water with tongs and put them into a serving bowl.
10. Sprinkle the bacon over the greens.
11. Serve with a pickled relish on the side.

KITCHEN HINTS: CARBOHYDRATES

At room temperature, sugars do not oxidize in air and (when dry) are not attacked by bacteria, so they are very stable over time and do not need to be refrigerated.

Brown sugar turns into hard clumps when it loses its adsorbed water. Keep your brown sugar in a glass container with a lid and keep a slice of bread on top of the sugar. The bread will release water to the sugar and dry itself out, so it will need to be replaced now and then.

Add acids to cooked vegetables only at the end, because they make the cooking take longer and they can cause color changes.

Never refrigerate tomatoes because the cold inhibits ripening and damages the textures.

You can cook and eat the skins of most vegetables, even the skins of potatoes and sweet potatoes. Beet skins are not tasty, however.

Boiling vegetables makes them lose flavor and nutrients. Steaming or roasting results in less loss of flavor and nutrients.

You can control the flavor of raw onions and garlic by the way that you cut them: finer mincing leads to stronger flavors. A sharp knife bruises less and keeps flavors milder.

Read more about Greer in the Fall/23 issue of the *University of Chicago Magazine*.

Reprinted courtesy of the MIT Press from *Chemistry for Cooks: An Introduction to the Science of Cooking* by Sandra C. Greer.

Poem

COYOTES

By Glenway Wescott, EX 1919

Dusk falls
With a single movement.
The sheep nod in the corral
Fenced with cactus,
I crouch in my hut, playing
On the unpainted flute,
While the moon thickens.

The three dogs
Lie by the door, slim as goats.
And the coyotes
Come, to lure them away
With crooning
And shouts like bells
Which break
On the forked rocks.

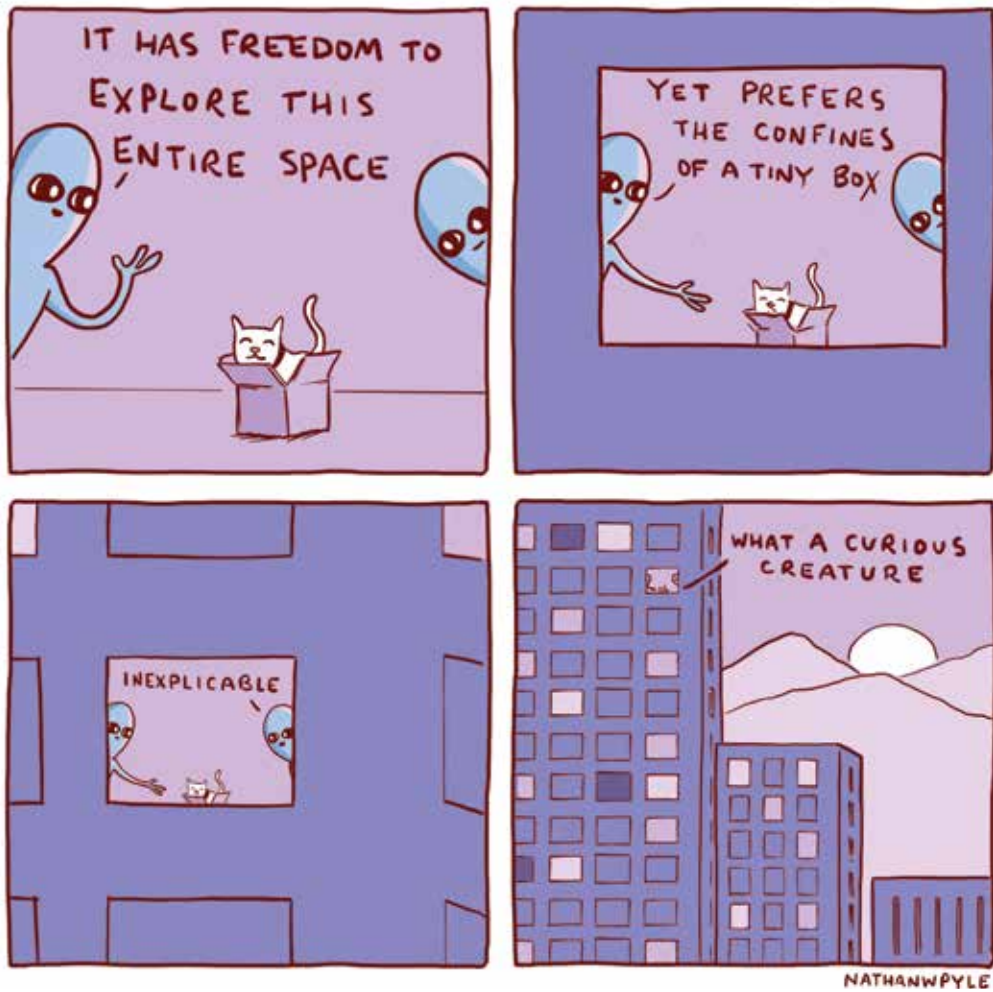
I fall on my
Knees, weeping.
“They will leave
Me alone, to go mad! Stay
Here, they will tear
Your lips and ears!”

They whimper and lick my face,
Leap about
On their shadows
With stiff sharp feet.

“Mountain III. Coyotes.” From *Natives of Rock: XX Poems: 1921-1922*,
with *Decorations* by Pamela Bianco (Francesco Bianco, 1925)

Strange Planet

By Nathan W. Pyle



Ibidem

PAINTING A MANIKIN 1938



The ideal of individuality is marked by the conviction that ultimately no general model can contain the specificity of the true self.

—Karl Weintraub, AB'49, AM'52, PhD'57