

Letter from the Editors

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Abstract: This is the editor's introduction to Volume 19, Number 3. In this issue, the first narratives to the new Teaching Reflections and Historical Reflections special sections are published. For more information on these sections, please see the Call for Narratives on the website. Six additional general submissions are also published in this issue, the sixth to be published at Cleveland State University School of Social Work.

Keywords: teaching; historical; Sonia Leib Abels; Jillian Jimenez; Josh Kanary; Eileen Mayers Pasztor; Robin Richesson

Cleveland State University has published six issues since assuming the role of publishing this wonderful journal in May 2012. In the Cleveland State University website for the journal, found at www.csuohio.edu/class/reflections, you will see at the upper left side a letter from the outgoing editor, Eileen Mayers Pasztor at California State University Long Beach (CSULB) and one from the incoming editor, myself, at Cleveland State University.

This transition began in January 2012, when CSULB announced that the journal would cease publication, due to serious budget cuts in the California system of higher education. Our first issue, V18#2, was not published until October 2013, more than a year later, for reasons which may become apparent here.

This is the first general issue since Volume 19, Issue 1 (V19#1). As can be seen from the cover, this issue, V19#3, is officially Fall 2013, although it is published in February 2015. When a journal gets behind in its publishing schedule, it is standard journal publishing practice to back date the issue, but announce the actual publication date. The actual publication date is noted in the inside cover page. In addition, our online website at www.rnoph.org also notes the actual publication date.

This month, we will complete this volume, by publishing a Special Issue on Interprofessional Collaborative Practice and Education. As the many upcoming special issues noted on our website suggest, our goal is to publish enough issues this year and early next year to complete Volume 22 during the year it was originally scheduled, 2016.

Given the number of issues being published in the months to come, this is a very busy time for the journal. One of the contributions we have made so far is the publication of the entire backfile of the journal on our website. In our archives, we publish not only article PDFs but also the entire issue, including the front cover, inside cover, table of contents, and all other content.

This took some doing. In general, there is a trade-off between efforts to publish the journal and efforts to edit the journal, solicit narratives, interact with authors, etc. Time and effort which went into getting the back file up contributed to our not having kept to as regular a publishing schedule as we would have liked. The patience of authors and readers is very much appreciated as the growing editorial team moves forward with the publication of the planned issues, which will include many of the articles under review or in copy editing status.

The vast majority of authors published in this journal benefit from the revisions or the request for re-submission recommended by our reviewers. Our journal is committed to being a double-blind, two-review, peer reviewed journal, including our special issues. This means there can be a considerable wait from original submission until the final editorial decision, and more time is required until final publication.

To learn the rich history of this journal, one approach is to go back opening the PDF files of the full issues, and perusing the art work, the inside cover page with the lists of editors, reviewers, the creator of the cover art, etc.

I would encourage readers and prospective authors of this journal to explore the letters to the editors of my successors. In particular, it is valuable to read Volume 1#1, where Sonia Leib Abels, the founding editor and now Editor Emerita of the journal, set out her vision for the journal. It is a unique mission, one which takes narrative seriously.

I also want to draw your attention to the wonderful history of the art which has graced the cover of this journal since its inception. Our Art Director, Robin Richesson, MFA, is Professor of Art at CSULB. Robin has been Art Director of the Journal since shortly after the death in October 2009 of *Reflections* editor Jillian Jimenez.

Jillian succeeded Sonia as editor with V5#3. Her death was announced in a letter from the Associate Editor Rebecca Lopez in V15#4, but work she oversaw continued to be published until Eileen assumed the editorship with V17#1. During her editorship, Jillian's husband Dan Jimenez served as art director for many years. If you view the full issue PDFs in our archives you will find that the daughter of Sonia and Paul Abels, Beth Abels, also contributed art. *Reflections* is always looking for art, in particular art for upcoming special issues. Please look at the themes of our special issues, peruse past issues, and think about photography and illustrations which you feel might suit the issue. Please send a JPG or PNG version, and we'll send it to Robin and the guest editors. They will see if they agree that the art would suit that issue.

One of the secrets of this journal is that there has always been a team behind it. Not only the hundreds of subscribers who sustained it in the early years and whose support will still be needed in this online age, but the over 500 authors, of whom 400 have been in email communication with us here at Cleveland State University. And not only the over 70 current reviewers, of whom only the most active ones are listed in our Narrative Review Board on our inside cover.

The cover art for this issue also has a special history. It was created by Christina Geerts, for an issue to have been published in Volume 18#2, prior to the announcement by CSULB that Volume 18#1 would be the final issue published there. We were just about ready to publish an accompanying article by

Christina and her co-author, her instructor at the time, Carol L. Langer. It was a wonderful article, although we were running into some technical problems with the art. We planned to publish the article now appearing in this issue, "The Rhinoceros: A Women's Studies Finale," in our first general issue, Volume 18#4.

Then something terrible happened. We lost Josh. Joshua Kanary, our 2012-2013 graduate assistant, was a wonderful man. An English major from Grand Valley State University, he relocated to Cleveland, guitar and pen in hand, and immersed himself in our community. He became a housing activist and soon a social worker. If ever there was an example of why schools of social work should be flexible with our requirements for how many undergraduate social science courses we require, and why we should welcome those with backgrounds in the humanities and subsequent personal and professional experiences relevant to social work, Josh was it.

However, like many of us coming into the helping professions, Josh was struggling with his own issues. He came from a proud Irish family in Toledo. We who worked with, studied with, or taught Josh remember him telling us about the family gathering in Toledo on St. Patrick's Day that winter. Josh took his own life in April, just a week before he was due to graduate.

Josh had been appointed assistant editor and was set to resume a part-time, paid post-MSW position with the journal. A valuable member of our team was lost, forever.

Josh contributed much to this journal. From September 2012 to April 2013, Josh brought the journal into the electronic age. He facilitated the transfer of journal from Adobe In-Design at CSULB to an early draft of the current design of this journal.

Josh helped develop the Helpful Instructions for Authors and Reviewers. In addition to his always cheerful and friendly presence, Josh single-handedly educated ye olde editor on the nature of narrative. Again and again he tried his best to help me to understand the distinction between exposition (telling the story, providing the context), narrative (providing vignettes that show what happened, as if

the reader was there), and reflection (stepping back to talk about what you were thinking then and what you think now about what happened).

One of Josh's special contributions will endure. His wonderful piece, "Show and Tell: Narrative and Exposition in Reflections," published posthumously with his prior permission, is found in Volume 18#4. Time and time again our current authors and prospective authors have read this article and found it helpful.

His article is the first of what we hope will be a *Many Ways of Narrative* series. For this, we will accept an essay about writing narratives, and it does not have to be in a narrative style. But why not write a narrative about writing narrative? There truly are many ways of narrative, and we want many such flowers to bloom in this journal.

At the same time, the journal was still coping with the myriad matters associated with publishing as well as editing the journal in its new format. Although my formal original appointment was as editor for a three year term, I found myself functioning as both editor and as the chief cook and bottle washer.

The School of Social Work publishes the journal on behalf of the university (which now holds full copyrights to all back and current issues, thanks to our collegial relations with CSULB School of Social Work, which is an Institutional Friend of *Reflections*). But on a day to day basis I have served as both editor and publisher since May 2012, when the initial agreements with CSULB were signed.

At CSULB, the secret ingredient known to *Reflections* authors was Wendi McLendon-Covey, the Assistant Editor, as well as the copy editors the journal regularly employed. Here, all of us share the roles of copy editing, proof reading, issue production, etc. This work has fallen on the editor, our graduate assistants, and one work-study student each year. Their contributions should be noted.

Steven "Leo" Leopold has been the assistant chief cook and bottle washer since he arrived in September 2013 as graduate assistant. Early on, he began working with Cathleen Lewandowski,

formerly of George Mason University and our Director and Professor since July 2014, on the Special Issue on Therapeutic Relationships with Service Members, Veterans and their Families. He graduated in May 2014. As a veteran himself, he soon found a job as a social worker with the Veteran's Administration. However, he volunteered to continue working with Cathleen to publish that issue in November 2014. He is now employed a few hours a week to help us produce the issues. Once copy editing is done, he takes over and assembles the issues in our open-source Scribus desktop publishing software.

Copy editing and proof reading is a team process, involving our current graduate assistant Alison Murphy and our editorial assistant Kailie Johnson. Regarding Kailie, memo to editors: hire the daughter of a librarian if you ever get the chance! The three of us and Leo have a friendly competition to see who can find the most typos, APA problems, and unclear passages.

However, with the support of our individual and library subscribers, readers, authors, and individual and institutional friends, we hope to be able to develop a year-round team, including summer jobs for our graduate assistants and work-study students. A talented copy editor at a university publisher has been recommended to us by one of our frequent editors and reviewers. And we have also located a top notch proof reader with vast experience proofing a nursing journal and with APA style. But work like this, properly done, will cost as much as \$1000 an issue. Online journals don't have print expenses, but they do have other expenses. Please consider becoming an individual Friend of Reflections and/or asking your university program or agency to become an institutional Friend of Reflections. See the website for more information. Remember, the content of this journal may be priceless, but publishing has a price.

Editing also has a price, an emotional price. Please let me explain what I mean. Editing all journals is hard work. But editing *Reflections* is more than just hard work. It is more, even, than a labor of love (which it is for all of us on the editorial team). It is hard emotional labor. Each issue contains narratives which are very difficult to read.

When I took this on, I realized that. I had been a longstanding reader of another publication which is equally difficult to read, *Sun Magazine*. But after I began editing *Reflections*, I stopped reading it. It is hard enough to read and edit *Reflections* without taking on the moving fictional and non-fictional articles in www.sunmagazine.org.

Luckily, all of the editorial work doesn't fall on one editor. This is the reason why this section is called Letter from the Editors. There are plural editors of this journal. In addition to the Editor, there is our Associate Editor for Field Education, Denice Goodrich-Liley, who was co-guest editor of Volume 18#2. Denice is on sabbatical this academic year, but is already returning to her work with the journal. She will oversee the formation of a Field Education Editorial Committee to assist her in recruiting authors from among full time field educators, field instructors and students in the field.

In addition, after beginning as an author in the Mentoring Issue (V18#3), Johanna Slivinske, MSW, author or co-author of two books, active clinical social worker, and adjunct faculty member at Youngstown State University, became a reviewer and soon was appointed Associate Editor for Issue Quality. Johanna personally comments on the quality of each issue before it is published, with full powers to stop the presses, if an issue is not of the quality that should be expected of this journal. She also edits and approves the Letters from the Editors, and may contribute one of her own at some time in the near future.

Soon, a conference call will be held of members of the Narrative Review Board, our most active and involved reviewers. In general, my goal has been to involve those who involve themselves in this journal. We hope to build the editorial team in the months to come.

I am seeking an Associate Editor for Review Quality. This editor would work with me to find a way to improve the quality of the reviews, revise the questions asked of reviewers, and make recommendations for criteria for editorial decisions for the new teaching, historical and research reflections sections. We would work together to convene the meetings of the Narrative Review Board. I am hoping that having such an Associate

Editor would also create accountability of the Editor, Associate Editors and Guest Editors to the reviewers.

We also seek Section Editors for each of those three sections: Historical, Reaching and Research Reflections.

We are also seeking an Associate Editor and an Assistant Editor for Manuscript Quality. For these positions, a degree in English is required as well as a degree in a helping profession. And we are seeking volunteer copy editors, with a degree in English, who would be supervised by these two editors. This team would oversee the copy editing phase, but also work with authors seeking help with revisions.

Finally, I am seeking an Associate Editor who will be responsible for fully achieving the original interdisciplinary mission of the journal. The person chosen will need to be a published author in this journal who has the academic standing to command respect from academics and practitioners in a range of other helping professions. The goal would be to reach out through professional journals to recruit authors and reviewers for this purpose. Eventually, we may form sections for particular disciplines, with section editors from each discipline.

Please watch the journal site for postings of these positions, which will be open until filled. My own appointment as editor has been extended until May 2017. I will not serve as editor in chief after that time. There will be a national search for the next editor, lead by an Editorial Policy Board to be formed this year by our Director, Cathleen Lewandowski.

Cleveland State University is working hard to provide able stewardship to this journal, which we see as belonging to its readers, to its authors, and to those in the helping professions who are motivated to write meaningful narratives of practice and activism.

Well, it seems as if I have almost used my allotted space without so far providing commentary on each article in this issue. I have already touched on the art work of Christina Geerts which graces our cover. I would like to thank Christina for her patience, as

we postponed using her art work and accompanying article. Her compelling art work of a rhinoceros reminds me to a couple of things.

First, it reminds me of the hippopotamus, which was the graphical mascot of Michigan's Human Rights Party, which elected Michigan's first openly gay male and lesbian public officials in Ann Arbor back in the early 1970s. More recently, remembering Matthew Shepard, Chris Kolb, at the time an Ann Arbor City Council member and later the first openly gay Michigan State Representative, said something which is memorable at this time of national determination to express principled moral outrage as we work to fundamentally reform the nature of police-community relations. Chris said, "Turn your anger into resolve." He repeated, "Turn your anger into resolve." Narratives of efforts to do so will be published in an upcoming Special Issue on Dismantling Social and Racial Injustice. If you are involved in these movements, please consider contributing a narrative.

Second, it reminds me of a giraffe. *Reflections* has a long history of animal imagery in its art work. Twice published *Reflections* author, Cleveland State University Professor Emeritus Lonnie Helton drew upon such imagery to support his article, "Riding the Giraffe: A Social Worker's Nine Year Journey," in V5#4.

But reading the wonderful narrative written by Christina and her co-author Carol Langer reminds me of more. It reminds me of what it is like to have an 18 year-old first year college student show up in my introduction to social work or social welfare courses. Christina and Carol's narrative shows how central journal writing can be for first and second year college students, if only we will ask the students to write and if we take what they write seriously. This is their chance to learn in the process of writing, and it is our chance to learn as well, from the opportunity to communicate across generations. The article by Christina and Carol isn't the only compelling article about student/teacher relationships in this issue.

In what is an excellent example of how narrative can be paired with strong theoretical reflections, Felicia Washington Sy traces her background as the daughter of an African-American social activist, her

undergraduate experience as an artist and in the theater, and her life as a queer identified academic. She found that her entry into social work produced the receding and the disembodiment of much of what she was about. As much as, she points out, the profession makes enhancing human well-being and addressing human needs central to our practice, somehow we often end up with classroom activities that are not always consistent with the urgency called for by the conditions our clients and communities are facing. She uses an autoethnographical approach to discuss how performance art can be integrated into the social work classroom. Short of travelling to her classroom, reading this narrative is next!

I would like to make one additional point about Felicia's narrative. It is an excellent example of how narratives in this journal can make a conceptual and theoretical and methodological contribution, rooted in the rich description of the interaction and context on which the reflections are based.

In the article, "The Resilience of Community," two social work educators, Kelly Ward and Theresa Hayden, and four students, tell of teaming up to do their best to respond to the devastation which came in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. This is must reading for those interested in disaster relief work, as well as for how to move beyond garden variety service learning to experiences which can transform the lives of both students and faculty.

Claire Bee and Paul Johnson, another student/instructor pair of authors, share their experiences in the social welfare policy classroom. Claire, the student, tells of taking risks in presenting to the class in depth about her own experience of bipolar disorder. Paul, the instructor, places this in the context of his teaching philosophy.

In future issues of this journal, contributions such as these will be encouraged by the new Teaching Reflections section. This section is a place where authors whose narratives concern teaching and learning can contribute to this journal. Please see the Call for Narratives and for Teaching Reflections, Historical Reflections and Research Reflections on our website. *Reflections* has always published such narratives. Starting with two articles in this issue, however, narratives concerning these subjects will

appear in the Table of Contents in one of these special sections. This is partly motivated by a desire to reserve General Submissions for narratives of professional helping and activism with clients and communities. The articles in these special sections, including those in the Special Section on Field Education, are fully peer-reviewed like all other articles published in this journal.

The article in the new regular Historical Reflections section is by Larry D. Watson. In it he inaugurates this section by telling the history of his work at a 100 year-old adoption agency. Seeing a film prompted in the author an emotional return to the memory of his early work as an adoption administrator. *Reflections* narratives often stem from our recollections of our past practice, in light of our subsequent careers. In the process, they can often relate important material for the history of social work and social welfare, as does Larry's narrative. Such narratives are encouraged for this Historical Reflections section. There are several more coming soon.

The first article in the new regular Teaching Reflections section is by Marilyn S. Paul. She discusses university-community partnerships established by Adelphi University. The partnerships produced two conferences on social work with veterans and military families, and a certificate program on military social work, commencing in 2013, with a follow-up conference in 2014.

James H. Williams, author of "A Day in Chicago's Narcotics Court," was previously the author of a narrative about his contributions to union activism (Williams, 2010). In that narrative, Jim didn't mention that he was one of the two dozen participants in the Frankfort Hunger Strike of 1964, one of the most significant events of the civil rights movement. But he had already told this important story long ago (Williams, 1965).

In his contribution in this issue, Jim (of the same name down to middle name as James Herbert Williams of the University of Denver) tells more of his story. This time he tells not of his work as a rank-and-file trade unionist and later union organizer, but of his rank-and-file work in the dungeons of Chicago.

Rarely has a narrative provided as much detail of a social work workplace. His workplace was a place of confinement where social worker and client are thrown together in a mutually constraining environment.

In her account of how her work with people facing addiction took her to an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, Penelope Moore provides three examples of her interactions with her clients. In those sessions, AA was a fact in their lives, and soon in hers. She concludes by stressing the value for professionals to attend open AA meetings, even if they do not have a problem with alcoholism.

True, the same thing might be said of Al-Anon, which Penelope also discusses. Al-Anon is for the friends and families of persons having problems with alcohol. Do social workers working with clients with alcohol problems qualify? Well, odds are they do, since according to some accounts half of all social workers are relatives of alcoholics to start with. True, our clients may not formally be our friends, but the narratives in this issue show how much our lives are tied up with those of our clients.

Reading narratives like these, as this editor had the privilege of doing on this long, cold weekend in February, reminds me of why this journal must continue to grow and develop in the months and years ahead.

References

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