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## Quotes by Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Martin Luther King, Jr., who was born in 1929, was a Baptist Minister. He became the foremost activist for the cause of civil rights from 1955 until his death in 1968.*

*I would recommend to you the 2017 book: Kennedy and King: The President, The Pastor, and the Battle over Civil Rights, by Steven Levinston. This book documents the complex and complicated relationship between these two leaders. The author details how they influenced each other while both having to deal with the conflicting and contentious constituents that disapproved of the pace and focus of both of their actions.*

*The reality that their lives were both cut short by assassination (JFK in 1963; MKL in 168) shows the seriousness of their endeavors and the challenges ahead for the United (not so United) States of America.*

- *You can kill the dreamer, but not the dream.*
- *Let no man pull you so low as to hate him.*
- *Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.*
- *If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl, but do whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.*
- *Ultimately a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.*
- *We must walk in the days ahead with an audacious faith in the future.*
- *Forgiveness is not an occasional act. It is a permanent attitude.*
- *Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.*
- *The time is always right to do what is right.*
- *Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will.*

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Get involved - submit articles for the Owl Newsletter! We want to hear from you! Let us know what you are up to, how you're doing, and more! Please send materials to [mdrell@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:mdrell@lsuhsc.edu). The deadline for the next issue is February 15.

Martin Drell, MD

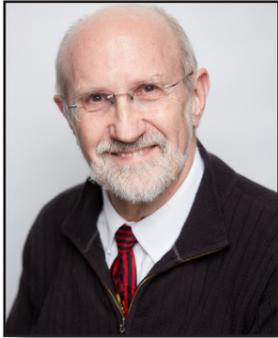
- *A right delayed is a right denied.*
- *The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice*
- *Life's most persistent and urgent question is "What are you doing for others?"*
- *In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends.*
- *Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.*
- *We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.*
- *If we are not careful, our colleges will produce a group of close-minded, unscientific, illogical propagandists, consumed with immoral acts. Be careful, 'brethren!' Be careful, teachers!*
- *The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.*
- *We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed.*
- *I am not interested in power for power's sake, but I'm interested in power that is moral, that is right, and that is good.*





## Undoing Racism - Modest But Active Efforts

Martin Drell, MD



Martin Drell, MD

*“We are all asleep in the same bed, dreaming different dreams.”*  
-Chinese Proverb. Or is it different nightmares?

In the early 90s, I was the Clinical Director of a large state hospital that was in the process of downsizing and being reconfigured into a “modern” system of care modeled on the CASSP principles.

Our “patients,” who reflected the demographics and unequitable realities of New Orleans, were predominately African-American. At the time, we were just beginning to call them “clients.” This new term proved very uncomfortable for me as a doctor. To me, “patient” did not have a bad connotation.

This was so long ago in Louisiana that there was state money available for consultations. One such consultation I was asked—no, requested—to attend as part of the hospital’s leadership team, a group that still exists named Undoing Racism: The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond. The group put on a weekend retreat which I never quite comprehensively understood. I do not remember many of the details of the workshop. I do, however, remember very clearly one exercise in which the attendees were asked to describe their cultural backgrounds. I had no problems in describing what turned out to be my Jewish, or should I say, my Jewish/Russian heritage. Even though I have never been to Russia and no one would ever mistake me for being an observant Jew, I do enjoy many of the rituals of the two, and most of all the food (potato latkes, blintz, brisket, bagels, kugel matzo, matzo ball soup, stuffed cabbage, rugelach, etc.). This exercise led to a discussion of what was “white” culture. There were jokes about this culture including that its foods were white bread, Jolly Green Giant

frozen vegetables, and jello molds with mixed fruit. There was a mention about how whites were part of the dominant culture so that they didn’t have to think about it. Being white was therefore taken for granted. I sort of got that point, but I was not quite sure. I do not remember implementing any major changes due to the experiences of the retreat.

Fast forward almost 30 years to the US in 2020, which seems, of late, to be a giant ongoing societal workshop on undoing racism. There is not a single day that goes by without multiple media stories on the subject. As a dynamically trained therapist, one of my goals is to understand some of the many forces bombarding our country. I am somehow now more ready or interested in learning more. Perhaps this is because I’m older? To learn more, I have employed my usual methods which I call my “intellectual bulimia.” This is when I read and learn until I am full and have had enough to sate my hunger as to what’s going on or come up with an acceptable theory that assuages my curiosity. In this case, I have been reading, attending lectures, grand rounds, and watching TED Talks and other pertinent YouTube videos.

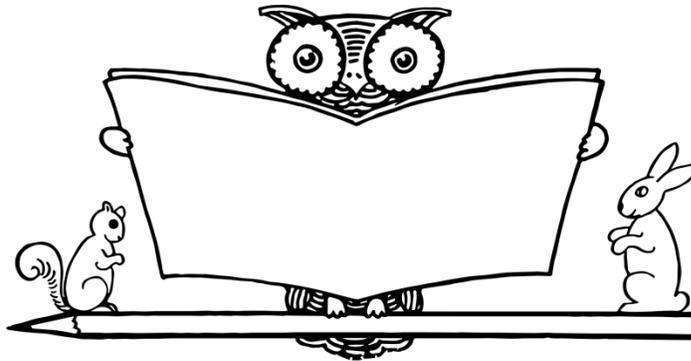
My ultimate goals for this self-directed journey have not been completely established. I don’t know enough to create a truly coherent plan. Along the way, I have acquired many new concepts, vocabulary, and feelings. Although I don’t know enough to create a truly comprehensive plan, I thought that I might share some of what I have learned.

As I have been trying to introduce the idea of having book summaries in the Owl, I thought I might do so by writing numerous short reviews on the key best-selling books I have been reading. I hope the readers will learn from my endeavors and will share other articles, books, and commentaries that have captured their interest, as John Dunne did in the October 2020 issue with his review of the book *The Hate U Give*,



## *Undoing Racism - Modest But Active Efforts* Martin Drell, MD

by Angie Thomas, I further hope that such efforts will allow me to be an active “antiracist racist” as Ibram X. Kendi describes it. He makes it very clear that passivity in such important matters leads to the active maintenance of the status quo. In this issue of the Owl, you’ll find the first of my reviews: How to be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi (2019).



### **SCREENSIDE CHATS**

with Gabrielle A. Carlson, MD, President AACAP



AACAP is pleased to present **SCREENSIDE CHATS**, a brand new product created to share timely information from member-experts on key topics during the COVID-19 pandemic we currently face from AACAP President Gabrielle A. Carlson, MD.

Stay tuned each Wednesday for new episodes on the latest topics with experts in the field!

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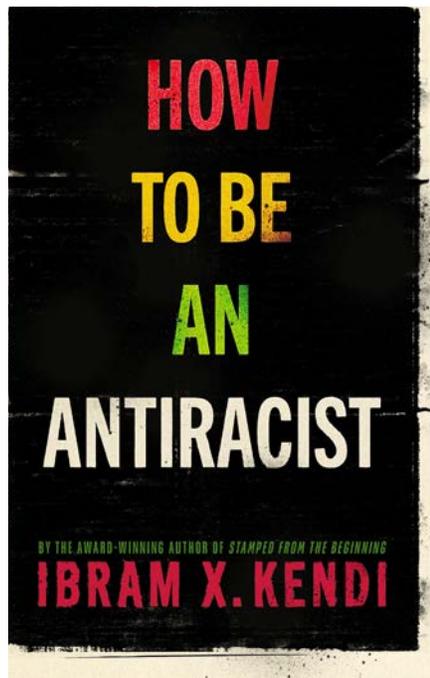


## How To Be An Antiracist, by Ibram X. Kendi - Book Review

Martin Drell, MD

*“The tragedy in the lives of most of us is that we go through life walking down a high-walled lane with people of our own kind, the same economic situation, the same national background and education and religious outlook. And beyond those walls, all humanity lies, unknown and unseen, and untouched by our restricted and impoverished lives.”* – Florence Luscomb, architect and suffragist (1887-1985).

As a followup to his 2016 book *Stamped from the Beginning*, which won the national book award, Ibram X. Kendi has written this book on how to be “antiracist.” It is built on definitions and premises that are seemingly easy to understand. He starts with a definition of racism that states that it is based on the illegitimate and false notion that one group is superior or inferior to another, and then proposes that these false notions are used by policies created by these groups in power to maintain their supremacy. It continues that these notions are reinforced by policies, which, over time, become basic tenets for the culture. He continues that these tenets became the pervasive unconscious societal norms that are internalized by all that live in it. It is like the air we all breathe regardless of whether it is polluted or not. This metaphor highlights that we all suffer from “implicit biases” that we are unaware of and which need to be understood and challenged. Kendi sets forth the premise that we can’t help but be racists, as we live in a racist society. Because we are all racists, one cannot, by definition, not be a racist. He contends that the opposite of racist, which we all are, is to be anti-racist, which describes a dedicated effort to understanding the realities he has set forth and actively trying to confront and change one’s racist



society. He differentiates himself from many other theorists when he clearly states that Black people can be racists. He disagrees with those who say that Black people can’t be racist as they have no power. He feels that this is a conceptual dead-end that speaks to the immense power of the culture to depower those being discriminated against. Clearly, he says, Black people and other people of color need to be empowered and dissuaded from their internalized biases.

Kendi poignantly explains that his ideas have evolved over time during a personal odyssey in which he has changed over the years from being anti-black, to anti-white, and finally to being anti-racist. Kendi highlights those policies that promote the societal status quo. It is clear that these need to be challenged and changed. He insists that they were created and therefore they can be changed. The goal is to work towards creating anti-racist policies that will address long standing and institutionalized systemic racism.

He believes that there are “bigots” who knowingly promote and accentuate the status quo for their conscious and unconscious self-interests. He believes, however, that most with implicit bias can be educated and made conscious of their biases. He reminds us to hate the policies more than the people. He admits that such attempts at such education are fraught with difficulties that occur when anyone messes with someone else’s unconscious. To be accused of being a “racist” is considered by most to be a horrible thing. Such accusations generally shut down discussions before they can potentially be helpful. We psychiatrists are certainly aware of the feelings, resistances, and defenses (denial, anger, rationalization, projection, identification with the aggression to name but a few)



## How To Be An Antiracist, by Ibram X. Kendi - Book Review

Martin Drell, MD

involved and the amount of time, sensitivity, and tact needed to create lasting change. Nobody is saying that this, however defined and instituted, will be easy.

Kendi proposes that the end game is the creation of “anti-racist racists” who understand the larger issues involved and attempt to implement change. He calls for action and alludes to the sense that just being aware of one’s biases is not enough, as passivity seems to promote the status quo. Activity is necessary!

The devil is in the details when it comes to what activities should be included, how drastic they need to be, and what the time frame is defined as. This leads

to many controversial and contentious means-ends debates on myriad issues such as affirmative action; reparations; the “calling out” of persons and “cancel culture;” the defunding of the police; which forms of protests are acceptable; as well as questioning capitalism, science, religion, and the uses of government. Trying to change a culture that has evolved over the centuries is not an easy task.

*Ref: Kendi, I.X. (2019). How to be an antiracist. New York, NY. One World.*

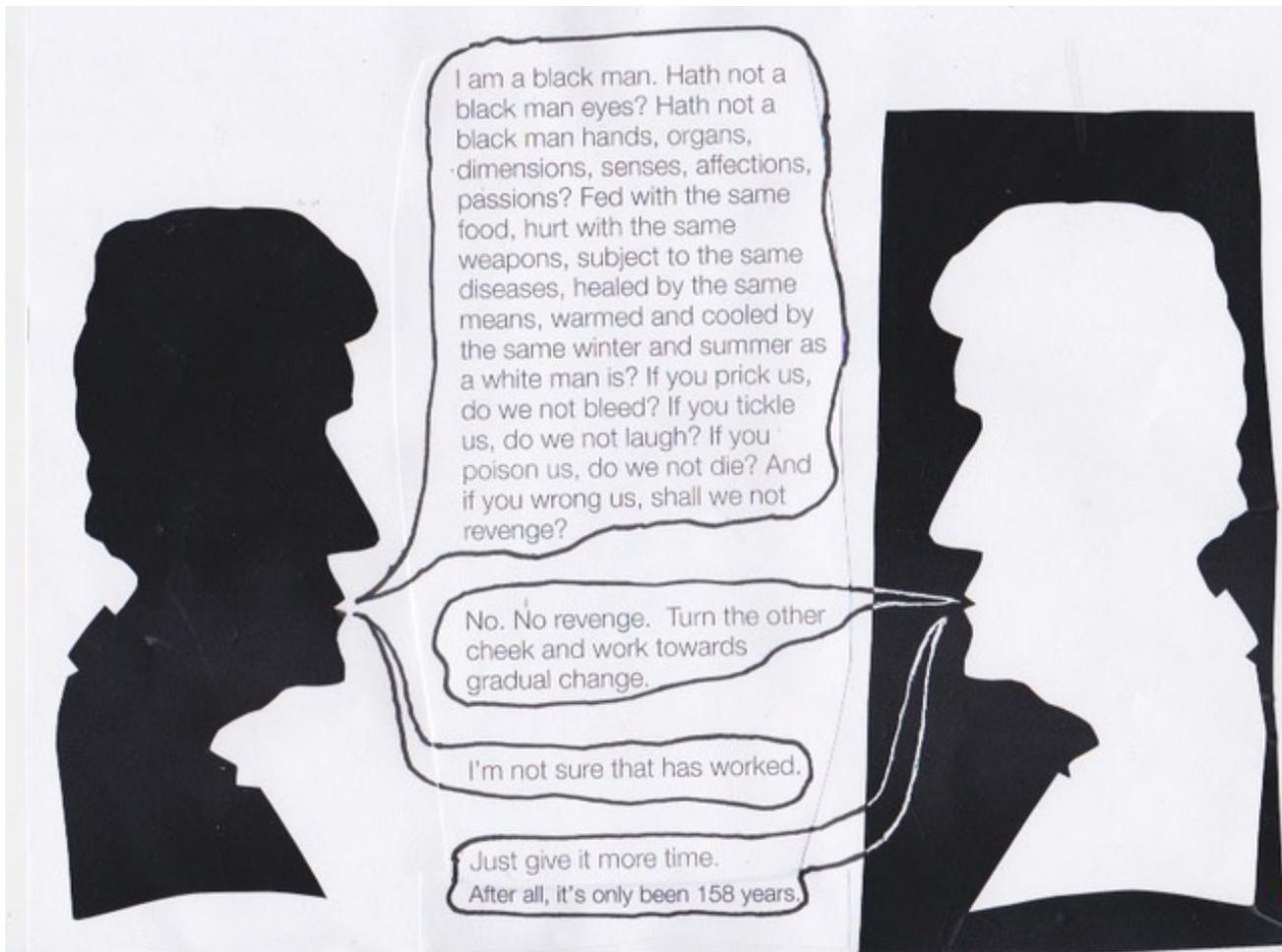


Illustration by Stu Copans, MD



*The Plague*  
Richard Gross, MD



Richard Gross, MD

The end of 2020 is fast approaching and it is difficult to write anything at this time without contemplating what has been happening in our country and in the world this past year: Covid, Covid, Covid, Covid; political advertisements and emails ad nauseum; not to speak of TV ads, recession/depression (economic and mental); food banks;

approaching 300,000 deaths from Covid-19; “fraud/rigged elections;” pandemic; and on and on. What a year! 2020! A year to be remembered for a long time. I do wonder what future historians will write about 2020, which is now ending.

Since we are all “seniors”, I am sure someone you know, a friend or a family member, has died in 2020, succumbing to the virus or from one of the myriad of the illnesses of aging. It has not been a year of celebration for many of us.

Carol and I spent six months at our second home on Martha’s Vineyard in order to avoid Covid-19 in the DC/ Maryland area. On the vineyard we could sit outside on our deck and walk on our road without masks and without encountering another person, which made life much more safe and much much more pleasant. Otherwise, we would be confined to our condo and avoiding others.

One morning this Autumn, Carol and I were sitting over our breakfast coffee in the late morning. It was a very windy, chilly, but sunny fall day. Voluminous amounts of leaves were being scattered from the trees and I suddenly found myself intensely focused on a lonely leaf on a tree where all the other leaves had been blown off that tree except this one. It kept rocking and rocking in the wind but held on and held on. It was a beautiful sight. I admired that leaf for its tenacity, its strength, and its ability to hang on,

persevere, and survive its environment.

We should all admire and appreciate ourselves for staying safe and surviving this pandemic year and look to better years ahead. Some of us were not so fortunate. The vaccine for Covid-19 will be coming into general use; the pandemic will subside and we can hopefully get rid of our masks; cease being socially distant, and be able to hug, kiss, and socialize with our families and friends again—especially the grandchildren.

Because of the pandemic, I decided to read *The Plague* by Albert Camus, a novel which I had never read. I have been aware of this novel as an allegory of the French capitulation to the Nazi occupation of France during World War Two. I had not been aware that it was also an incredible description of, among many things, a pandemic that is so similar and relevant to the past ten months and that we continue to experience. Camus accurately describes our experience of today. Camus began writing *The Plague* in 1940 and it was completed and published in 1947. He was a French Resistance fighter, a novelist, an “intellectual,” and an existentialist. He was killed in a road accident in 1960 at the age of 47.

I found the novel to be extraordinary. It is a morality tale at many levels. The novel has been variously categorized as absurdist, as existential, and as an allegory of the capitulation of France by General Petain to The Nazis during World War Two. It is about an epidemic of plague in a large Algerian city. The rats disappear and citizens begin falling ill from a strange fever and dying. Dr. Rieux (Camus) recognizes it as the Bubonic Plague and he and his doctor colleagues attempt quick decisive action.

The authorities resist for political reasons and finally when it becomes impossible to deny, the authorities enact strict sanitation measures and quarantine the city. The public reacts, from intense longing for absent loved ones at first, to indifference to the suffering of



others, to anger about their life situation. The main characters are Dr. Rieux (the protagonist, the narrator, and a person who probably represents Camus); Dr. Castel, who develops the serum antidote; Dr. Richard, who dies from the plague; Rambert, a Parisian journalist who is confined to the city he was reporting on and prevented from returning to his wife; Tarrou, who befriends and helps Dr. Rieux, and who dies in a very tragic and emotional scene; Grand, a would-be writer who obsessively rewrites the first sentence of his novel and can never make it perfect so he never gets beyond it; and Cottard, who is suicidal in the beginning of the novel and who becomes smuggler. He is beaten to death by angry crowds at the end (a French “Collaborator”?). There is also the Catholic priest who preaches that the plague is retribution for the sins of the people of the city.

His piety changes when he observes the death of a child which is described in excruciating detail. I cringed and gulped in horror throughout the several pages of that scene. It is an incredibly moving scene.

Rambert the journalist tries to escape the city by criminal means in order to join his lover in Paris, but eventually feels shame and joins the group helping the victims of the plague.

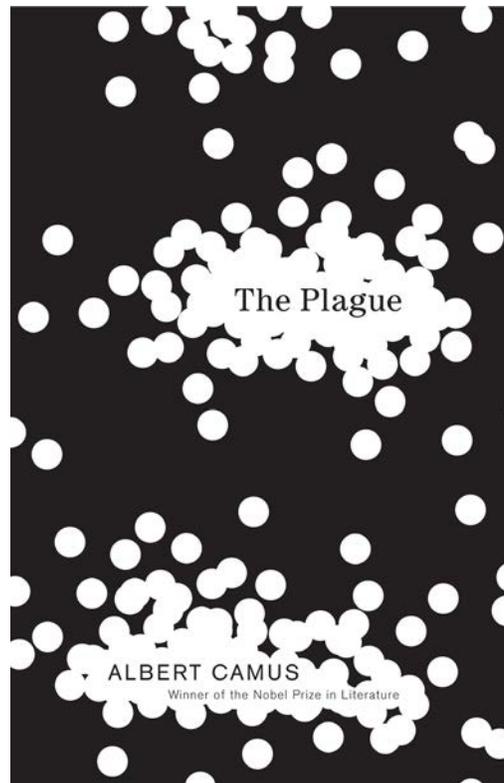
When the plague ends the people rejoice; they

kill the smuggler/ “collaborator,” but quickly return to their old routines. Rieux knows that the battle against the plague (totalitarianism) is never over; it just becomes dormant.

Camus ends the novel with a powerful closing paragraph that I will quote, “Indeed, as he listened to the cries of joy that rose above the town, Rieux recalled that this joy was always under threat.

He knew that this happy crowd was unaware of something that one can read in books, which is that the plague bacillus never dies or vanishes entirely, that it can remain dormant for dozens of years in furniture, or clothing, that it waits patiently in bedrooms, cellars, trunks, handkerchiefs, and old papers, and that perhaps the day will come when, for the instruction or misfortune of mankind, the plague will rouse its rats and send them to die in some well-contented city.”

If you read this novel in high school or college, read it again. If, like I, who never read this in the first place, I encourage you to read it! The Plague is an allegory about Vichy France and a universal tale about plagues, but it transcends political labels; its target, dogma, conformity, compliance, and cowards.

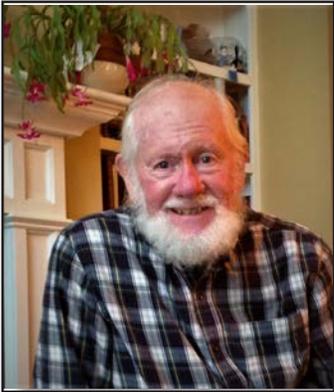


STAY WELL! BE SAFE! Support AACAP!

-Dick Gross



# UP AGAINST THE WALL! (My recipe for success) John McCarthy, MD, DFAACAP

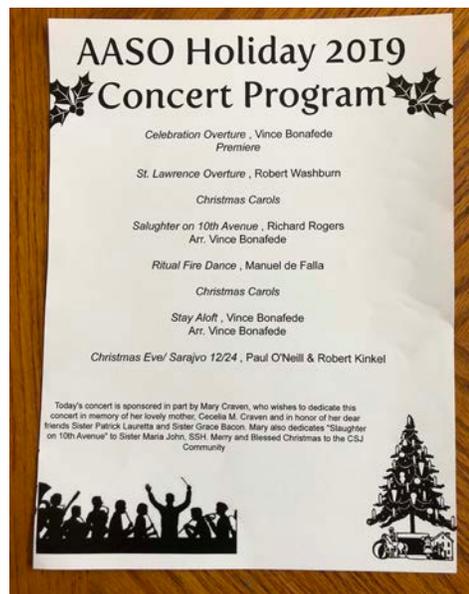


John McCarthy, MD,

When my wife, Jane, and I retired from Medicine in 2011, and moved to Troy, New York, we were clueless as to where all that free time would lead. Shortly after we moved into our new home, we found out. When our grandchildren visited us, one of them piped up, “Nana, is that your violin?” pointing to a dusty corner. “Yes” she confessed. “Well, can you play it?” Nana picked up her violin, dusted it off, tuned it and asked, “what tune would you like me to play?” “How about ‘Row, row, row your boat,’ or ‘She’ll be coming round the mountain’?” Amazingly, Nana played both flawlessly without hesitation. It had been nearly 50 years since she last played violin in College. Then Jane’s cousin, Jimmy, also a retired physician, who played tuba in the Albany Area Senior Orchestra (AASO), invited her to join, saying “We really need another violin, and you would really enjoy it! “Do not worry, it’ll be just like riding a bike!” Skeptical about not having the necessary skills, she joined AASO in early 2012,

*“For virtually all of us, music has great power, whether or not we seek it out as particularly or think of ourselves as particularly musical”*

Oliver Sacks,  
Musicophilia, Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.



at the beginning of another AASO Spring season of providing classical and original music to the capital region. Cousin Jimmy was right, and she never looked back.

As a lifetime lover of classical music, I often attended AASO’s rehearsals and concerts. The dedication of the players impressed me as well for their musical passion, but I noticed that each section of the orchestra seemed mainly to interact among themselves during the well-deserved and eagerly anticipated coffee and popcorn break. I suggested that we take a picture of each musician with their instrument and print a booklet of pictures and

names for each of the 60 members. Every Tuesday morning, AASO holds its rehearsals (practice) in an Albany Church in a large auditorium, and I chose a well-lit area of the brick wall there to take those photos. When a member approached to have their picture taken, I would jokingly say, “Up Against the wall!” as an icebreaker to help them relax. It worked, even for the most reluctant camera shy! After they each had a booklet of their own identifying everyone, I saw that there began to be more schmoozing between the sections at break time. New players would be “subjected” to the same, “up against the wall” routine. The camaraderie between the players

grew and coincidentally their concerts significantly improved, as well. Simultaneously, I personally felt a warm acceptance into the musical family and became an ex-officio member.

In 2019, AASO celebrated its 50th anniversary of providing quality wide-ranging and classical music concerts Tuesday afternoons to a variety of

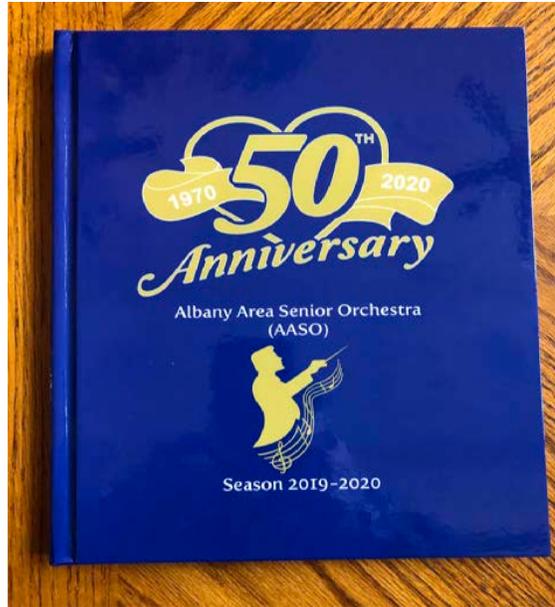


*UP AGAINST THE WALL! (My recipe for success)*  
John McCarthy, MD, DFAACAP

venues within the community, all free of charge. Their brilliant and beloved maestro, Vince Bonafede, composer, and conductor since 2012, had a knack for bringing out the best in each player in the orchestra, and often brought his newly composed pieces for the orchestra to try out. Then, like a thunderbolt, COVID-19 struck in early 2020 and AASO had to shut down all activity indefinitely, dropping a pall over the entire orchestra family.

Months before that happened, I had wanted to do something to celebrate AASO's incredible 50th year milestone and had already begun plans to publish a quality yearbook for each member. More determined than ever, I continued my project, with the help of my wife, for the next 6-8 months. I felt that this yearbook should be about and for each orchestral member. Historically, it would contain a few pictures from the limited archives of the old orchestra with some of the current long-time members, one still here, almost 30 years later. The heart and soul, though, would contain a page for each musician to include their current "up against the wall" photo and, in their own words, their musical history starting with childhood through AASO, to be very minimally edited by me. What I received back from virtually every musician astounded me, not only for their passion and lifelong commitment to music but that they came from all walks of life. Only a few were full time musicians or teachers. Many members played in other orchestras or musical groups.

Since I also wanted to honor some long-time members who had passed on during the last five years, I created the AASO Hall of Fame which contained their photo, a brief relevant excerpted obit and quotes from active members who knew them. Entourage



Yearbooks, who published this golden jubilee yearbook, provided significant tech support in organizing its contents. This yearbook would be my gift in appreciation for the great pleasure both Jane and I received from their selfless contributions to the community, especially for those without any access to live full orchestra music. Worried about losing the limited number of books during the postal cutbacks at that time and more importantly, looking forward to seeing their joyful reactions, I avoided mailing them out like the plague. When the yearbook finally arrived in early October, I wanted to make sure everyone had their copy delivered personally by volunteer members of the orchestra, carefully masked and distanced due to Covid-19, of course. Locating the next of kin of those in the Hall of Fame proved challenging, but my mantra to "leave nobody behind" really paid off. Only one next of kin, a flute player's son, who lived in a suburb of Montreal, Canada, needed mailing and when he received the very last copy, he immediately emailed me how moved he was.

The outpouring of grateful, enthusiastic, and heart-felt thanks from the members of AASO was immensely rewarding for me. Many members felt the timing of this yearbook really helped fill some of the void left by the empty Tuesdays by covid-19, and a surprising number said that they were absorbing it in small doses to savor it a bit longer. One of the violinists in the orchestra summed it up this way:

*"The book is beautiful and the thoughtful care that you devoted shines throughout. From the dedication to the credits, the content is engaging and beautifully presented. Each individual musician's page provides insights about the role of music in their lives. These*



**UP AGAINST THE WALL! (My recipe for success)**  
*John McCarthy, MD, DFAACAP*

biographical sketches also convey how very much the orchestra means to its members and the sense of community it provides. The additional graphics and quotes add to the enjoyment of reading the entries and they support the content very well. Having the yearbook to look at during this time is especially nice since we cannot see each other in person. The yearbook is something that we all can be proud of and will be a keepsake for years to come.”

We all are hopeful that the next season will start soon in 2021 and lead to the next 50 years of quality music.

*Below, a page taken from the yearbook*

**Jane Falkenstein**  
**First Violin**

I grew up in downtown Troy in a home filled with the sounds of my mother playing Chopin on her ebony baby grand Steinway and often accompanied by my aunt on her violin. In 4th grade in Public School #10 when we were offered a choice of instruments, I selected violin. Initially, I was so awful, my father only allowed me to practice when he was in his office. I gradually improved, taking lessons until early high school. While attending RPI, I continued with violin in the Orchestra and once we performed at the Troy Music Hall. But then I put the violin aside, too busy attending medical school, getting married, and having four children (none with a drop of musical talent). After graduation from Medical School, I worked 42 years at Beth Israel Hospital in Manhattan. I retired in 2011 in part because I had been diagnosed with Parkinson's. But in a kind of foreshadowing, one of my grandchildren asked, pointing to a dusty violin in the corner, "Hey Nana, is this yours and can you play it?" I had not played in 40 years, but surprisingly, several nursery rhymes came easily. Soon, my cousin Jimmy (Tuba) said "Hey Janie, we really need more strings in my senior orchestra!" He reassured me that it would be just like getting back on a bicycle and much to my amazement, it almost was! I joined AASO in early 2012, followed by Averill Park Community Orchestra, Megaband, and Fiddler's Tour Albany. It was one of the best decisions of my life. When I picked up my violin and played it, all my aches, pains, and tremors evaporated. Now Tuesdays are THE "look forward to" day filled with friends, challenges, beauty, and of course popcorn. What a surprising reward!

"One good thing about music, when it hits you, you feel no pain."  
 -Bob Marley



Conductor Vince Bonafede leads AASO during its usual Tuesday morning rehearsal at the First Methodist Church of Albany in preparation for an afternoon concert

**A Few Words From Our Maestro: Vince Bonafede**

I have always loved conducting. I started out conducting major orchestras on my Grandmother's phonograph when I was 12. In college I had a few chances to conduct the wind ensemble and symphonic band. I found that if I composed something the directors of the groups would let me try it with their bands. After graduation, my teaching career consisted of directing middle school and senior high choral groups, the pit bands for the yearly musical and sometimes the school bands. During this period of about 33 years, I directed church choirs and orchestras for local community musicals. My wife Joann, had joined the Delmar Community orchestra and told me they were looking for a new conductor. Being retired I had the time, so I joined Delmar in 2007 and found that I really enjoyed directing a community group. I also discovered that I could compose large scale works and have the group play it! I joined AASO around 2010 when my wife, who was already playing with them, told me they needed a keyboard player. So for about a year, I sat in the back of the orchestra and got Charlie and Bob in the French Horn section. The opportunity to conduct came to me in fall 2011 when I shared the job with Victor and Janine, and I have been here ever since. Conducting the AASO gives me great pleasure both in making music and in fellowship with the musicians. When everything is working it is a great joy to stand in front. When things are not working it still is because I know that everyone is trying their best to accomplish what I have in mind and usually we all get a few laughs out of it. I am impressed that most of you practice the music on a regular basis and hugely impressed that you still take lessons. Your dedication to rehearsal and performance attendance is very impressive and makes a directors job extremely easy. It is a pleasure to write for this group because by this time you know most of your abilities quite well, so I know what to write (and what to not write). However, no matter what I do compose or arrange you play it anyway...and without too many complaints! Finally I tried to convey to the many groups I have directed over 45 years, that music is supposed to be enjoyable and a fun experience and that is what AASO makes it for me.

*Above, AASO rehearses at the First Lutheran Church of Albany*





## The Christmas Present (With Apologies to O Henry) John Dunne, MD



John Dunne, MD

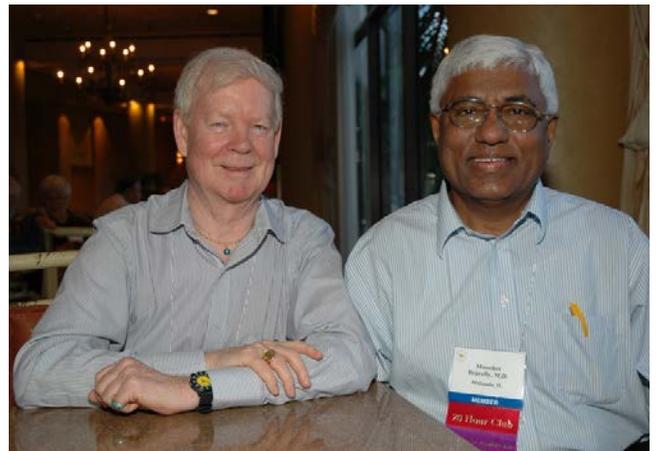
Dave's steely eyes stared at Sarah, piercing her with his fury. He had just discovered \$1000 missing from their checking account. Christmas was coming and now there was nothing. He had

been hoping to get her something special. He had been eyeing a diamond ring at a pawn shop, the engagement ring he hadn't been able to afford. Sarah had been addicted to cocaine when he met her but she had been clean for a couple of years. But he knew from experience with a few of his buddies that the risk of relapse hung over her like a heavy anvil that could fall and crush her at any moment. He knew what the missing money must mean. "You've started using again," his voice a mixture of angry accusation and dejection. She looked at him and smiled. "You'll need to wait until tomorrow," as she calmly turned and walked back to the kitchen.

All day he struggled with his emotions, fluctuating between anger, worry and confusion. As Dave approached the door of their somewhat shabby rowhouse, his feet were sore, his back ached, and his neck was stiff from looking up at oil pans all day at his job at a quick-lube shop. The creases in his hands seemed permanently etched with oil. He had always loved working on cars as long as he could remember: toy cars, push carts, buddies' cars. The lube job wasn't ideal. He desperately wanted to be a mechanic but couldn't afford to go to school. His father had abandoned the family when he was quite young. He rarely saw his father and barely knew him. Actually, he didn't really

like him. He knew his mother loved him but she was always too tired to have much time for him or his little brother. She worked two jobs to keep their family together. Working on cars was the one thing that brought him real joy.

Sarah cleaned houses all day and was frequently home before he was. When she met him at the door, she was smiling and had that mischievous twinkle in her eyes. Her mischievousness was one of the things that made her so attractive to him. It made their relationship fun. "Follow me." She led him through their small kitchen to the back alley. There, parked between two trash cans, was an old Nissan Sentra. "It's ours. Merry Christmas". It definitely needed a new paint job and the engine might need some work. But it was ours; our first car! Tears started streaming down his cheeks. He turned and hugged her tightly, overwhelmed with love for her and shame at his accusation. Through the flood of emotion, he barely heard her say "We can save that \$1000 again in a few months if we both work weekends. Then you can enroll at the technical college. We'll make it". Through his sobs, he could barely squeeze out "I love you. Merry Christmas."





David Freeman, MD, and wife Constance

## Grief

Wave after wave of grief washed over me,  
sadness so profound  
the world seemed desolate and forlorn,  
like being exposed to the stinging rain  
and blistering wind  
on wave crests at the height of a storm

Between bleak crests were moments  
of consolation offered by caring friends,  
or comforting memories,  
perhaps a joke to soften the pain,  
like valleys between waves  
give some respite  
from the bitterness of a storm.

But sadness always lurked nearby.

More waves swept over me,  
half drowning in tears  
the brief times of relief.

Every now and then a soothing calm  
came between the waves of sadness.

A part of me, a very dear part of me,  
was lost, but preserved in memories  
in the inner, unchangeable relationship  
that remains after the loved one is gone.

Yet through the tears  
I knew the pain would someday ease,  
but never really leave;  
the sun would shine again,  
almost as bright as ever.

*May, 2009*





**Melancholia**  
**or**  
**Clinical Depression**

*Suggestions to reader: Read silently.  
Then read aloud slowly, with long pauses .  
Let the misery show.*

The day is cold with foreboding.  
Dark clouds fester and burn my soul.  
Nights offer no respite of sleep.  
I can barely remember good times;  
they were meaningless and hollow.  
I'm never hungry, but I must eat  
to try to satisfy a deep emptiness,  
a bottomless pit of nothing. Dermott sequestered in  
Bordeaux, France!

I have lost no one.  
No friend has died or gone away.  
What weighs so heavily on my heart  
is losing me, my self, my own being.  
I'm slipping into despair.

Life is an endless dark tunnel  
going down forever.  
There's no light at the end of the tunnel.  
The tunnel has no end.  
It presses me from all sides,  
relentless, oppressing darkness.  
Misery, Misery, Misery,  
Misery and endless deep sadness,

like drowning in the oppressive,  
dark depths of the ocean –  
not knowing which way is up to the light.  
Even deep ocean creatures make light,  
but even they have gone out from my sight.

Misery, gloom, black empty nothingness.  
Dank, dark dungeon of despair.  
I wring my hands in sadness.  
I cry without end. No one can comfort me.

I can't think well and I move like a snail.  
There could be no relief except death.  
I have too little energy to kill myself,  
my self and the inner tormenter.  
Even then, I might go to Hell.

No one could ever care about me.  
I am so bad.  
I keep brooding on  
what a miserable wretch I am.  
I can think of nothing else.

This endless dark tunnel  
goes down forever.  
There's no hope to end  
this unrelenting misery.

*June, 2014*





# Through The Years...

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