

Vitality

Editor: Shellie Taylor

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Department Head Notes



In the most recent meeting of the council of department heads, Interim Dean Weiser introduced Tammy Weaver-Stoike, a marketing consultant who will be working with the College of Liberal Arts. Amy Patterson Neubert will continue to be involved in news stories coming out of the College, but Tammy will also be taking leadership in helping various units (and the College as a whole) create strategic marketing plans, including acting as a consultant on print and electronic media, such as newsletters, brochures, and other forms of marketing and branding. Should you think up something that could benefit from her expertise, please contact her. Her office is in Engineering Administration (ENAD), Room 426. Phone: 494-3716 E-mail: weaverst@purdue.edu.

Also in that meeting, Mark Pagano from Continuing Education and Conferences briefly reported on possible changes in distance learning. He is requesting increased resources from the Office of the Provost to stimulate further distance learning courses. He is working with an advisory committee that includes Mona Holdcraft from CLA. Since 1999 distance learning at Purdue has grown from two students to 8,000. Of the current number, 3,200 are Purdue enrolled students and 4,800 are students taking courses from other universities. The goal is to grow distance learning at Purdue to about 10,000 students, with 6,000 coming from our own students. By the way, 80% of Purdue's distance learning production comes out of CLA courses. Our department has two courses, one of which offers three sections. In addition, Mark said that although on a slower track, he is moving towards creating a new office to stimulate graduate distance learning programs catering to working professionals who would like to continue their professional education. Finally, Mark mentioned that he is also pushing much harder for distance learning courses to be part of a faculty member's teaching load rather than for overloads.

Have you all seen the cover of the new Purdue phone book? The new gateway from across the street and Armstrong Hall are featured. But if you look real close at the lower left hand corner of the cover shot, and if you squint hard you can catch a glimpse of some window air conditioners in the southwest corner of our home, Lambert Gymnasium and Fieldhouse. You can kind of see them if you focus above the roof of the red car and below the tree limbs. So I am proud to now say that we have (inadvertently) made the cover of our highly circulated phone book? Talk about a marketing opportunity!

Have a good weekend and next week. As always, please do the very best you can in everything you do.

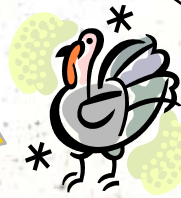
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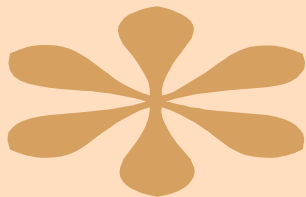


Calendar

November



- ⇒ Nov 19 - Deadline for pending incomplete grades to become failing grades.
- ⇒ Nov 25 thru 28 - THANKSGIVING VACATION for students
- ⇒ Nov 26 and 27 - University Holiday



You are invited to attend

Master's Thesis Defense by **Erica Van Dop**

Monday, November 30, 3:00 pm in LAMB 120

Title: *The Health Belief Model as a Potential Predictor of Willingness to Use Free Medical Care*

PHD Thesis defense by **Marie Fialkowski**

Monday, November 30, 10:00 am in ARMS 3109

Title: *Dietary Patterns of Pacific Northwest Tribal Nations*





HK Halloween Fun!



Presentations



Canadian Society
for Psychomotor
Learning and
Sport Psychology



Société Canadienne
D'Apprentissage
Psychomoteur et de
Psychologie du Sport

Professors Howie Zelaznik and Meghan McDonough attended the Canadian Society for Psychomotor Learning and Sport Psychology conference in Toronto, Canada on November 5-7.

Dr. McDonough presented the results of research done with graduate student AJ Kraemer, recent graduate Jackie Poliseo, and Dr. Sarah Ullrich-French of Washington State University. Their research examined campers' understanding of the impact of social relationships formed at Purdue Athletes Life Success (PALS) camp with peers and staff.

McDonough, M.H., Ullrich-French, S., Kraemer, A.J., & Poliseo, J. (2009, November). Social relationships with peers and staff in a positive youth development program for low-income youth. Presented at the Canadian Society for Psychomotor Learning and Sport Psychology (SCAPPS) conference, Toronto, ON.

Dr. Zelaznik's paper was presented by Laura Forney, an undergraduate in Biology who had worked in his lab for four semesters. Dr. Jessica Witt from Psychological Sciences was also a co-author on this project.

Zelaznik, H.N., Witt, J.K., & Forney, L.A. (2009, November). Individual differences in Fitts's Law performance are not correlated with perception of target width. Presented at the Canadian Society for Psychomotor Learning and Sport Psychology (SCAPPS) conference, Toronto, ON.

The College of Liberal Arts presents:

Faculty Development Center Fellows Presentations

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

3:30 - 5:00pm.

Stewart Center Gallery

Margie Berns, Professor of English
Center for Humanistic Studies

Title: *The Ever Expanding Circle of English: Politics and Priorities*

Mary Leader, Associate Professor of English
Center for Artistic Endeavors

Title: *The Long, Essential Shadow*

Robert Marzec, Associate Professor of English
Center for Humanistic Studies

Title: *Of Inhabitancy: Land Wars in the Age of Environmentalism*

Howard Zelaznik, Professor of Health and Kinesiology
Center for Behavioral and Social Sciences

Title: *Timing in Speech and Fingers*

Light Refreshments will be served

Rhythms and Dance



The HK 103 "Rhythms and Dance" class enjoyed a demonstration and a dance lesson from the Purdue Raas dance group on Tuesday, October 27.

Raas is a folk dance tradition from North Central India that is very lively and quick with a rhythmic jumping step. Some versions of this dance style are done with brightly colored sticks--the dancers tap on their shoulders and tap each other's sticks while dancing. The Raas group taught HK103 a dance in two lines facing each other. The partners facing each other tap each other's sticks rhythmically in time with the music and the dance step. The lines move along as the two people at the end run back down to the opposite end to start with the lines again. The Purdue Raas group invited the HK 103 students to visit the Raas practices held in Armstrong auditorium during the week and on Sundays. Purdue Raas is preparing for the yearly national Raas competition to be held in the spring. For further information about Purdue Raas contact Sam Patel at patelsr@purdue.edu, or the HK 103 instructor Mary Maxine Browne mmb@purdue.edu.



My, How She Loved a Ruckus

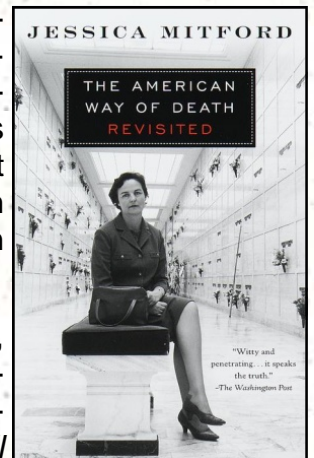


She was far more than a political and social activist, Jessica Mitford was. In 1944 she joined the “party of democratic centralism.” This was the Communist Party—which she dumped in 1958. Decca, as Mitford was nicknamed, was once asked to organize a political fundraiser for the party. She was told that the main course ought to be chicken. The fundraising organizer though, wanted Decca to understand that she needed to purchase the chicken from a friend of the party, a reliable politico. Leaning towards Decca, he furtively looked left, then right, apparently nervous about FBI wiretaps. “There are certain comrades in . . .” He broke off. Then he scribbled a note and passed it to Decca. It read “Petaluma.” When the boss finished his instructions, Decca glanced left, and then right “looking” for bugs. She said she had just one question. “Do you think the chickens should be . . .” She broke off. Then she scribbled a note and passed it to the boss. It read “broiled or fried?”

Classic Mitford (1917-1996). What provoked Decca to join the Communist Party was a youthful rebellion against her own family, the Mitfords (she was the sixth of seven children, six daughters and one son), a privileged British family, her father the 2nd Baron of Redesdale and a fascist, and two of her sisters (Unity and Diana) who became outspoken Hitler sympathizers. Home schooled by her mother (who did not believe in public schooling for girls), at the age of 19 Decca ran away to fight fascists (she established a “Running Away Account” at age 12), and married her second cousin, the nephew of Winston Churchill, Esmond Romilly. Decca became the “red sheep” of the family. At the front end of World War II, Esmond and Decca came to the United States. They opened a bar, but Esmond soon returned to England as pilot for the Royal Canadian Air Force. He was killed in action. During the War years, Decca worked in Washington in the Office of Price Administration. There she met and married (1943) Robert Treuhaff, a Berkeley labor and civil rights attorney and also a Communist Party member. Later, and living in Oakland, California—where they lived permanently—the pair finally resigned their membership in the Communist Party having become alarmed at the rise and dictatorial direction of Soviet Communism.

She resigned from the Communist Party well enough, but Decca Mitford never resigned from a spirit of protest against the party of privilege. She began writing exposés. Her 1963 best-selling *The American Way of Death* turned the funeral business upside down and became so popular that Congress eventually held hearings on the unscrupulous and greedy business practices of the mortuary industry that she claimed took advantage of grieving family members. Reforms followed. With this book in particular, Jessica Mitford was added to a long list of what were then called “muckrakers.”

The term muckraker was a product of the American Progressive era and, it is said, was a term first used by President Teddy Roosevelt in 1906. Today we call muckrakers “investigative journalists.” It is a proud if loud journalistic tradition, and includes such well known writers as Ida Tarbell (*The Standard Oil Company: The Oil War of 1872*), Jacob Riis (*How the Other Half Lives*), Nelly Bly (*Ten Days in a Mad-House*), Upton Sinclair (*The Jungle*), Lincoln Steffens (*The Tweed Days in St. Louis*), and more recently Ralph Nader, Woodward and Bernstein, Rachel Carson, Studs Terkel and Hunter Thompson.



My, How She Loved a Ruckus



Decca Mitford went on to expose the fraudulent practices of the Famous Writers School in Connecticut, a correspondence school (in *Poison Penmanship*, 1979); the terrible conditions in the American Prison system (*Kind and Usual Punishment: The Prison Business*, 1973); and her lively and irreverent indictment of obstetrics and high-tech dehumanizing birth practices in America (*The American Way of Birth*, 1992).

One month before her death of an aggressive form of lung cancer, she was interviewed in her modest Oakland bungalow by Julia Angwin of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Mitford was at the time revising *The American Way of Death*, updating her best-seller after 30 years of trends in the funeral business. Mitford saw herself as a writer focused on what she called off-shoots of American life—not on the main shoots of poverty or nuclear issues for instance. She knew her stuff wasn't world shaking, but her targets did victimize Americans nonetheless, such as the sudden realization that folks couldn't afford to die. When Angwin asked Mitford about her own funeral plans, Decca said "I just want the best. Six black horses with white plumes, and I certainly want to be embalmed, because embalmers claim they can make you look twenty years younger." Irreverent to the end, she was.

The San Francisco memorial service for the "Queen of the Muckrakers," was standing room only at the Delancey Street Foundation and was attended by either 600 or 800 friends and journalism cronies, depending on which account you read. The service preceded Mitford's actual funeral. Directly in front of the Foundation building on the Embarcadero, the eastern waterfront road way, proudly stood six black horses with white plumes, pulling a second hearse, with a 12-piece brass band following along. Her friends thought she would have gotten a hoot out of the irony. But they didn't josh her over the embalming. She was cremated.

One of the eight memorial speakers was Mitford's good friend, Maya Angelou, who shared a story of Mitford, who was white, who spoke with a British accent, who was only ten years older than Angelou, and who accompanied Angelou on a trip to Arkansas for a documentary interview with Bill Moyers. Angelou's relatives had warned her that the Klu Klux Klan would no doubt ride during her visit. "Decca told me that I had to go and that she would accompany me—as my mother." Angelou didn't think Mitford was serious, or if she was that she could pull it off; to which Decca replied that "there were some sad instances where 10-year-olds had given birth." Well, Angelou reported, "she did walk the dirt roads and country lanes with me. She did look into some granite-gray and hard white faces and say: "I am her mother." The lesson, Angelou continued, was that "You don't have to be black to mother a 6-foot tall black woman, only 10 years your junior, but who was sadly, desperately and trembling in the need of mothering."



"Objectivity? I always have an objective." Mitford's code of journalistic ethics, so simply stated. One of her long time friends and colleagues, David Weir, admitted that her brand of journalism was highly personal. He said, "She was not out to convince you, but she was so pure and honest in her voice that she didn't need the pretense of truth which is such a smothering experience in journalism." Nor was she disrespectful of those who disagreed with her views.

My, How She Loved a Ruckus



She once wrote “You may not be able to change the world, but at least you can embarrass the guilty.” But even in embarrassment, it was the combination of her wit, charm, and good manners that sold what she wrote and thought and taught. And what she wrote and thought and taught was an inspiration to legions of writers, reformers, and activists. “My most influential writer, without a doubt, is Jessica Mitford,” wrote the Harry Potter series creator J. K. Rowling. Rowling went on to say that she read everything Mitford ever wrote and even named her daughter, Jessica, after her.

As Jessica Mitford’s July 23, 1996 memorial service wound down (or up, it seemed), the populist syndicated columnist Molly Ivins (1944-2007) spoke of Jessica Mitford’s character, and that while brave she was not fearless. Ivins called her gallant: “Her gallantry was beyond simple courage. It sometimes takes courage to see injustice and then stand up and denounce it. Gallantry requires doing so without ever becoming bitter; gallantry requires humor and honor.” And speaking of both humor and honor, Mitford was once invited to become a distinguished professor at San Jose State University. She was thrilled. But then she learned that the appointment required her to take a loyalty oath. She refused to give the school her fingerprints. She gave them her toe prints instead. And then a really first-rate brouhaha erupted on campus with the upshot a retraction of the invitation. She became, as she explained, “an extinguished professor.” My, how she loved a ruckus.

