

FRANKLY SPEAKING

Olin's unofficial,
student-run news
source.

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FREE, AS IN BEER

Coder In, PM Out

Zach Homas
Contributor

Ah, springtime! The melting of snow! The chirping of birds! The wonderful return of warmer weather and longer days! However, spring harbors a monstrous beast which seeks to disrupt the life I've meticulously built at Olin. Ultimately, it shall succeed. No, it's not room draw this time;* it's something even more terrifying: graduation.

That's right, graduation's just around the corner, and I'm happy to say that I'm well prepared for the transition. Most importantly, I have a wonderful job lined up at athenahealth as a Product Manager. Hmm, but that's strange. I'm majoring in E:C, so why am I taking a job as a PM?

The number of Olin engineers who choose to become PMs after graduation is fascinating. We hear all the time about Microsoft's status as the #1 employer of Oliners, most of which are PMs. Others choose to become PMs at companies such as athenahealth or Facebook. I've heard many jokes regarding Oliners becoming PMs and "leaving behind their engi-

neering skills." I'm sure that at some point, even I have thought along those lines. So what happened? What changed? At what point did I transform from a programmer to a PM? The answer lies within my Olin journey.

But really it starts before that. I'm extremely fortunate to have been coding since 4th grade. Through an enrichment program, I spent several hours a week learning Scheme. By 9th grade, I had finished the program's curriculum, thus making me what I believed to be a fairly proficient coder. Unfortunately, my high school had no programming classes, although that didn't stop me from taking AP Computer Science on my own.

*"An Oliner is
graduating only
to be a PM."*

From the outset of my time at Olin, I saw myself as an E:C. ModSim provided a fun opportunity to reinvigorate my rusty coding muscles, making me excited for what was to come. The next semester, I naturally rushed to be in SoftDes.

Unfortunately, SoftDes wasn't quite the class it is now. Stuck on a roughly 10-person project with an uninspiring visiting professor, I quickly realized I wasn't the coder that I thought I was. In fact, I was easily in the lower half of the team skill-wise. The top half would quickly breeze through writing difficult code, while I could barely comprehend what to do. It was discouraging to realize that my previous skills didn't allow me to keep up, but what made me even more disappointed was my lack of desire to. I felt so behind that I didn't even think it was possible for me to catch up. I recognize now that what I lacked was the "hacker spirit" that drove the others to spend countless hours coding. I just couldn't do it. I'm not saying that I wasn't willing to put in hard work, but it was clear that I simply didn't have that drive.

I've taken many more E:C classes since, and in many I've noticed the same things. For instance, in Mobile Prototyping, I had no desire to put in the 25-hour weekends that my teammates relished. In my heart, I convinced myself that I just wasn't a

continued on next page

coder. It wasn't meant for me. Sure, I was pretty good at it, and sure, I loved a lot of my classes and learned a ton in almost all of them. I didn't regret being an E:C, but just looking around at my friends and fellow E:C's, I knew I wasn't like them. I didn't have their hacker spirit.

My beliefs were cemented by my two developer internships as a rising sophomore and rising junior. One summer, I worked for a large consulting company doing application development, and the other I worked at a startup doing website development. What both had in common was a rather boring and unsatisfying daily work life. It's not that I didn't enjoy coding. I just didn't enjoy coding every day for eight hours in a row with little else. It clearly wasn't the career for me.

And then I took UOCD. To this day, UOCD is my favorite Olin class and easily the most influential. Acting as team leader, every day I used skills that I did not even know I had. Presentation, organization, and design were all things I had done before, but never together like this. It

was a challenging experience in many regards, but in the end, I understood that these were skills I could really use. And that's when it clicked - I could be a Product Manager.

Despite this revelation, the next semester I applied to numerous development internships, none of which came through. I began to feel that I didn't fit into a "true" programming job. But then, one last opportunity appeared. Strangely, it was an interview for PM internship at athenahealth, even though I hadn't applied for one. As it turns out, my recruiter saw my resume and submitted it as a PM candidate based on my experience in UOCD. That was probably one of the luckiest things to ever happen to me.

The interview was extremely successful, with my UOCD experiences proving invaluable, and I got the internship. As for the internship itself? Overall, it was a fantastic experience. Sure, I may not have used all of the technical skills I've gained at Olin, but I did use all of the design, presentation, and organizational skills that Olin helped foster. It was very sat-

isfying, and it made me realize that I could still own and shape a product without coding it. And most importantly, it was both challenging and fun. At the end, I was offered a full-time position, which I gladly accepted.

And now, almost a year later, I'm about to start work. In just one month, I will be a PM. And although it's not what I expected to be when I started Olin, I truly thank Olin for enabling me to discover skills I didn't know I had and helping me find where I think I belong in the world. As I've learned, your college experience and passions don't always lead where you expect them to. Discover the skills you have and enjoy using. Use them and do cool things, even if it's not what you originally set out to do. And the next time you hear that an Olinier is graduating "only to go off and be a PM," understand that Olin does a lot more than just teach engineering. It gives us the skills we need for the future. And I don't think that wanting to use those skills is very strange at all.

*See "Mending a Broken Room Draw," April 2014

OLIN BUILD DAY



2015

10am to 5pm, Olin College

This Year's Projects

Brainstorm with BOW
Discussion on Diversity
Fixing Go Bikes
Easy Welding

Beekeeping
Origami
SERV Kick Ball
Super-Extra Project

For schedule and full description of projects, go to our regularly updated website: buildday.github.io

We Could Be Great

Victoria Preston

*Contributor on behalf of
the Honor Board*

Every year at Olin, a group of 80 people sign a document that is hung by the Wooden Waterfall. And every year at Olin there is at least one Town Hall to talk about what's on that piece of paper. And, inevitably, every year at Olin what is written is used as a means to address concerns or wrongs that occur on campus - and very seldom used to point out what is right.

"If my definition of greatness doesn't align with the Honor Code, am I wrong?"

Can a list of five values really capture what we want this community to be, and should they be used to frame or limit what can be talked about on campus? Some argue that yes, we absolutely need an Honor Code. It gives us a common language to talk about our community, it can reflect perhaps not who we are now but who we want to be, and it sets an expectation - as a member of Olin College, I will be great. But 'greatness' has such a wide variety of meanings to the students at Olin. If my definition of greatness doesn't align with the Honor Code's, am I wrong?

There is no safe venue for students to actively choose not to sign the Honor Code. There is no reaffirming ceremony, the Town Hall vote has slipped into symbolism, and when the question of whether or not the Honor Code should be kept comes up there are still those of us that laugh when the few votes of dissent trickle in. Why are you laughing?

Often, the alternative to the Honor Code is cited to be a rule-based system. A list of conduct, rather than a to-your-interpretation set of values. I propose a thought experiment: what if the values were replaced with....nothing? What would happen if suddenly there were no more values, but the Honor Board Hearing Panel Process was still in place? Perhaps campus would erupt in chaos... I tend to believe that things would likely continue the way they were.

From the Honor Board's perspective, having the values is a neat and tidy way of handling cases and administering a report procedure. But there have been times in history where a report doesn't necessarily fit into a tidy value - its more messy than that, just as real life always is. By having a listed set of values, perhaps we are limiting what we see as 'honor-board-able' actions thus leading to this perpetual state of minimal mediation through the procedure process.

Simply signing a piece of paper does not hold us

accountable to 'follow the Honor Code,' though it is supposed to lend an air of promise to try to 'be great.' Voting to keep the Honor Code at every Town Hall doesn't necessarily make us reflect on why we feel that way. Simply instituting an Honor Code does not fix or regulate our campus climate, but perhaps that isn't the point of the Honor Code. Perhaps the focus on using it as a governing, behavior-controlling document isn't how we should be thinking about it. Rather, perhaps it is a platform for discussing our campus climate. To reflect on personal values, on personal definitions of 'greatness.' To share with our community what makes us 'great.'

"There is no safe venue for students to actively choose not to sign the Honor Code."

The Honor Code is not the end-all be-all. We have the power to change, shape it, demolish it, ignore it, live it. What is the right thing to do?

To see the full Honor Code, (yes, there's more than the paper you signed), go to: honor-board.olin.edu

The Superpower Project

Mikhaela Dietch, Susan Grimshaw, and Hannah Twigg-Smith
Contributors

The most difficult part of acclimating to my life at Olin has been the lack of open and potent communion for ideas, skills, abilities, and thoughts. We are a highly resourced, intelligent, and multi-faceted group, yet our pathways for creating and sharing with one another are impeded by some invisible barrier.

"Why?"

I've been asking these questions repeatedly for months now, each day revealing new insights, but the most powerful shift in my understanding has been that I am not the only one who feels this way. In fact, so many of us desire to have new channels of expression, new spaces for creation, and most importantly new ways to share and learn with each other. Or, shall we say, more skillshare.

There ought to be a stronger medium for skillshare to occur. We are seeing shifts towards this (SLAC perhaps being the godfather of this cultural evolution) but if this is what we want, all the soft mummies must coalesce into something real.

In DREAM (Designing Resources for Empowerment and Making) we have been exploring what these real solutions might look like. Our nebulous thoughts have condensed into a plan.

With our final project we

want to strengthen skillshare culture on campus, by creating means for peer-to-peer teaching. We plan to create new student positions for students who will operate in all aspects of campus learning, to facilitate these interactions beneath the umbrella of the library. The library is an ideal place, as it is morphing into the hub for resources, community, and change. This new role belongs in such a context where the structure and culture we wish to incite are already beginning to exist.

*"Or shall we say,
more skillshare."*

These student facilitators would be in charge of maintaining a database of each student's skills or 'superpowers' that they are willing to teach other students and matching student-learners to student-teachers, as well as serving to facilitate interactions in either capacity. Students would have access to both the student facilitators and the database and could use either/both depending on their need. More loosely, the student facilitator's purpose is to draw out the 'superpowers' of the Olin community, create channels for people to connect with one another, create structure and space for skillshare to happen, protect contributing students from burnout, and form a healthy atmosphere of Make\Share. Ultimately, the student facilitators

would help in slowly shifting our culture towards stronger communion of ideas and a more investigative and creative Olin.

The axial goals of the student facilitators are to promote a culture that supports peer-to-peer teaching, and strengthen our community in supporting and valuing one another for our individual interests and skills. This project, and more importantly culture shift, is intended to specifically empower learners to feel more comfortable asking for help and guidance, and to generally empower everyone at Olin by acknowledging their superpowers, obvious and otherwise. In essence: everyone should feel like they have something to contribute, because they do.

It can be intimidating to be around people who know more than you because you feel that you should know those things as well. We are all here to learn more than just what exists within our majors, or at least we should be. We all have so much to offer the community. Whether your skill is being exceptionally knowledgeable about mechanics, nailing an interview, or drawing unicorns, I can guarantee that there is someone at Olin who wants to learn it.

If you are interested in this project and have ideas, feedback for us, or want to help out, please email us at olinskillshare@gmail.com. We'd love to hear it, and get you involved!

Service Updates at Olin

Kelly Brennan
Contributor

Doctors Without Borders:
Olin Community

The \$9,719.62 from the SERV auction has been officially donated to Doctors Without Borders to help them deliver emergency medical aid to those in conflict, epidemics, and disasters - such as the most recent Nepal earthquake.

E-Disco: *Led by Toni, Doyung, Aditi, & Cecelia*

Have been designing and leading weekly designing activities with JFK Elementary School in Jamaica Plain throughout the semester.

Held engineering workshops: Wellesley STEM Expo, Storybook Engineering, Discovery Museum, Disabilities Design and final Saturday Workshop!

Annabel, Paul, Shreya, and Mary will join the leadership team in the Fall and they are figuring out future activities.

Red Cross Blood Drive: *Organized by Michael Resnick*
Olin community helped around 99 people when 44 community members donated blood late March!

Oxfam Hunger Banquet:
Led by Aaron Greiner and Anisha Nakagawa

Talk by Doug Rauch, Olin Trustee member and former president of Trader Joes, on founding the Daily Table, which will bring affordable nutrition to the underserved

in our cities by recovering excess food and selling it at low-cost.

Hunger Banquet to promote discussion around hunger worldwide

The Food Recovery Network: *Led by Mackenzie Frackleton with GROW*

Partnering with the Food Recovery Network to donate uneaten, prepared food from the dining hall to the Salvation Army to combat both wasted food and hunger.

Currently scheduling the first date for donation!

Reusable Travel Mugs in the DH: *Led by Ruby Spring, Celina Berkins, Anisha Nakagawa and Aaron Greiner with GROW*

Working to have travel mugs available in the DH to reduce the number of disposable cups used.

Blankets for Project Linus
All blankets are completed thanks to EH1's study break and various blanket adopters (Philicia, Celina, and Susie)!

Peer Advocates: *Team of Twelve Students; Led by Ellie Funkhouser and Jessica Diller*

The Peer Advocates team has been busy selecting next year's new PAs, getting training (and some orientation activities!) ready, and planning community outreach and involvement events.

Teaching 5th Graders: *Gabrielle Ewall and Mitch Cieminski*

Finished up teaching fourth grade students cryptography in Math League; lessons covered: Caesar ciphers, RAE encryption, and Scytals.

Vecna Cares Robot Race:
David Elkan, Mitch Cieminski, Alex Crease, Celina Bekins

Built a robot to participate in a robot race hosted by Vecna Technologies. All proceeds benefit Vecna Cares Charitable Trust, a non-profit dedicated to better health outcomes around the world through better technology solutions.

"Earn-A-Bike" at Bikes Not Bombs: *Rosy as an Adult Instructor*

Teaching bicycle mechanics and social justice theory and practice to youth, who build a bicycle from the frame up over the course of the program.

Upcoming Activities to Look Forward to!

Big Brothers Big Sisters College Campus program beginning September and October 2015 - Questions? Please contact Michael Searing at Michael.Searing@students.olin.edu

Do you participate in service-related activity within or outside of Olin? If so and you would like your work to be included in Service Updates in future Frankly Speaking issues, please email Kelly.Brennan@students.olin.edu & Michael.Searing@students.olin.edu.

A Lesson On Giving Well

Kevin O'Toole

Contributor

I.

Last spring I met a man whose mother raised a servant. Hakim, at 24, went home each night, set down his backpack, and put off his school work to feed and care for his mother. This wasn't his only option in life; he'd recently turned down a good job offer on the other side of the city because it would be too far from home. His girlfriend wished he could go out for dinner more nights. But for Hakim, dinner was pork on rice or pork on noodles with his mother, and he made it every night.

*"He didn't just
owe her a visit.
He owed her
everything."*

When I first asked Hakim why he didn't take the better job, he said of course he wanted to. He couldn't take that job because he owed his mother more than that. She had slaved for years through his childhood, feeding him good meals each day. She provided a home with a roof over his head. She taught him to talk and how to behave. She sat through his fits. She put him to bed.

Here was a woman who'd given him life itself. He didn't just owe her a visit. He owed her everything.

This conversation im-

mediately filled me with intense guilt. My own mother, at that moment, was letting me study 9,000 miles away in Singapore. I hadn't called home in weeks.

II.

When I was born I never signed a contract. Everything my parents gave me, they gave me unconditionally. The arm of the law would have no retribution if I packed up right now and never spoke to my parents again.

Familial duty is something beyond that. It is the recognition of the love and care my family gave to me. It's a token of gratitude. It's the realization that I will one day be in their position, upset by the fact that I won't get a moment's consideration among the busy lives of my children.

Thinking about this, though, quickly becomes overwhelming. Attempting to pay our parents back for what they've given us is a slippery slope that ends in the realization that the debt we owe to our parents is infinite. If they gave me two decades of care when they raised me, should I forego the nursing home and give them one decade of care in-home? How far does this go?

There are enormous differences in how people and cultures view the duty we have to those who raised us. But I think most people do agree on a few things:

1. Everyone, by simply being born, has some obligation to spend time with and

help their family.

2. This obligation shouldn't be all-consuming.

3. The only way to answer the question of "Am I doing enough?" is to put yourself in their shoes, and to answer "Am I content to live in a world where everyone does as much as me?"

III.

When talking about charitable giving, I often hear the argument that the only reason anyone gives to charity is to make themselves feel good. It's true that there are dozens of controlled studies that show giving disposable income away makes you happier than spending it on yourself. But this is far and away from the only reason one should give.

*"Am I content to
live in a world
where everyone
does as much as
me?"*

We are only able to live the lives we are living by taking part in a society that's given us so much. Access to clean water, power, internet, and education are benefits we've gained by mere virtue of being born in a place where these things are given unconditionally. When receiving a gift so grand from the world, it seems natural and obvious that we should do our best to pay it back. The act of donation fulfills

a real and necessary obligation.

This line of thinking, I think, is often met with derision because it, too, is a slippery slope. After all, if I *really* wanted to do the most good I could with my money, I would be donating nearly everything, living in destitution as I strive to pay back my infinite societal debt.

*"Those least able
to give tend to be
those who give
the most."*

To this, I can only give the same rebuttal that I gave to Hakim: I should act as a member of the kind of world I want to live in. Perfection, they say, is the enemy of good, and my ideal world is not filled with perfect people who have a crippling need to give everything. But it is a world where we should feel a need to give something.

In trying to figure out what to give in that world we want to live in, it's helpful to look at the world we do live in. In the US, the average person donates roughly 3% of their income to charitable causes. Those least able to give tend to be those who give the most, with the poorest 20% of Americans giving 4.6% of their income, and the richest 20% giving 2.2%. This divide is even more extreme in the Greater Boston Area, where those earning less than \$25,000 per year donate an astounding 14.5% of it, while those earning

\$50,000 to \$100,000 donate less than 2.1%.¹
IV.

Ultimately, the question just as important as "How much should I give?" is "Who should I give to?" This personal question often has personal answers. It is common, for instance, to give money in return to places that have supported you: a donation to Olin College or to the Girl Scout troop in your home town. It is also common to give money in support of issues you feel personally connected with.

A different kind of giving, encouraged by a growing movement called Effective Altruism, simply tries to do the most good for the most people with each dollar. Effective Altruism focuses on charities with evidence of good deeds done, rejecting the notion that all charities are created equal.

The fact is, there are some charities which are hundreds of times more effective than others. Take, for example, the issue of blindness. Many guide dog training schools are funded by charitable donations, and of course they are all doing a good thing. But the cost of training a guide dog and its recipient is about \$40,000. On the other hand, around the world, there are 1.2 million people who are completely blind due to trachoma. Curing a child of blindness from trachoma, including delivery, administration, and overhead, costs less than \$50. Curing an adult can cost less than half that. For the cost of providing a guide dog for

one blind person, the Fred Hallows Foundation (operating in Rwanda, Palestine, Myanmar, and Bangladesh), can fully cure blindness for 800 children.

This reflects a common trend where the charities doing the most good are also the ones helping those who need it the most: those in deeply impoverished areas, often those living on less than a dollar a day.

GiveWell is a juggernaut of an organization which attempts to find the charities who are most effective. Their research is extensive, and all freely available at givewell.org

*"The charities
doing the most
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most."*

They currently recommends four top charities:

The Against Malaria Foundation, GiveWell's top choice, provides funding for long-lasting insecticide-treated net distributions for protection against malaria in developing countries.

GiveDirectly transfers cash to households in developing countries via mobile phone-linked payment services.

Schistosomiasis Control Initiative fights a neglected tropical disease in Sub-Saharan Africa which impacts children's ability to

stay in school, and commonly causes long-term developmental problems.

Deworm the World Initiative fights for the same cause as SCI in developing nations worldwide. DtWI focuses on advocacy and technical assistance to governments.

While I certainly encourage anyone to donate to these particular charities, I more emphatically encourage you to actively dig into GiveWell's discussions of

the issues, find effective causes that you support, and direct your passion toward them.

Giving to charity is certainly not the only way to give back. It's arguably the least personal. But it fills an incredibly important need. These charities are run by people who understand these issues closely. They have proven themselves to be powerful producers of societal benefits. Giving back to these causes is a fundamen-

tal first step.

V.

Hakim now lives with his girlfriend, in an apartment two floors down from his mother. I now call my parents every week. Both of us, I think, are content to live in worlds where everyone does the same.

Citations:

<https://philanthropy.com/interactives/how-america-gives#msa/14460>

Nothing in Particular

Kai Austin

Editor

Here it is. My last article for Frankly Speaking as a student of Olin College of Engineering. What shall I talk about this time?

Maybe I can talk about who I was before Olin, why I came here, and how I changed and developed as a person. That is a very senior thing to do, right? Well, it is not exactly a spectacular story. Those of you who know me have heard some mashed up version of it. Seizures, social isolation, family bullying, imaginary friend, demons, aliens, robots, Frankenstein, Jekyll and Hyde – pick your plot and point of view. Why I came to Olin has very little to do with any of that. I decided to become an engineer because I was building a card tower on an Alaskan cruise and someone said I should be an engineer – whatever that was supposed to be. I decided I wanted to go to a “student made” college because I

saw the trailer for the movie *Accepted*. And since Olin’s college colors were blue and silver, and nicely intersected my previous two decisions, it seemed like a good fit. After I got rejected, I applied again a year later because I simply decided that I would come here.

"After I got rejected, I applied again because I simply decided that I would come here."

So that is it. I came to Olin because I am a shallow, impulsive, stubborn, bored idiot...who thought I could figure out how to be a person. In all my time here, I can tell you that has not changed one bit. I wanted to know what it was like to sit with a friend at lunch. I wanted to know what it was like to have a go-to reputation. I wanted to start a

company. I wanted to know what it was like to be invited to go somewhere. It all happened (at Olin and at another college) and I am still a shallow, impulsive, stubborn, bored idiot who has no idea how to be a person. I only know how to be me.

Maybe I could give senior advice. Grains of knowledge I’ve acquired through the years—which you will likely disagree with. Like how rice crippies are a valid substitute for rice. How you should go for a walk at night and look up at the stars. If you want to understand what love is, talk to a wall. Don’t assume someone is arrogant just because they don’t tolerate your BS. If you don’t like who you are, then become someone you do. Don’t believe anyone who tells you something is bad without telling you what is good, and don’t believe anyone who tells you something is good without telling you what can be better. Only talk to people who listen. Never apologize for your si-

lence or your opinions, only your mistakes – and always admit when you are wrong. Writing a book is easy; publishing a book takes as much effort and perhaps more time than launching a startup.

Maybe I can talk about things some Oliners say which baffles me. Like how “everyone at Olin is the same.” People tend to associate with people like themselves, who share their values, their views, their interests. So how many Oliners have you taken time to know? No one at Olin is the same—I can guarantee it purely on the fact that people argue and clubs have skimpy attendance. Nothing is more indicative of diversity than people who do not agree with you. Than people who do not prioritize the same stuff you do. Than people whose values are different than yours. And they have every right to be that way as much as you have every right to be who you are.

Maybe I can talk about food privilege and how I think both meat eaters and vegans are...no, I should avoid that. As someone who is allergic to everything but rice, eggs, fish, and a select few vegetables - I will revel in my own privilege of being

able to say sushi is the only thing I can really eat at restaurants and not having the burden of other options.

"How important it is not to take something that is easy and safe."

Maybe I could give my shepel on my problem with the word "feminism." How using a gendered word to call for the end of gendered words and language is hypocritical. How anti-patriarchism makes a lot more sense. How it is the linguistic equivalent of saying you are an Islamist because you believe in religious equality, but muslims are an oppressed not-actually-a minority—not because you are actually practicing being feminine or a muslim. How all these reasons are probably why people keep misunderstanding the feminist message—because it is a constructed word intended to mean something people naturally understand to mean something else. Not because of our perceptions of gender, but because of basic brain pattern matching.

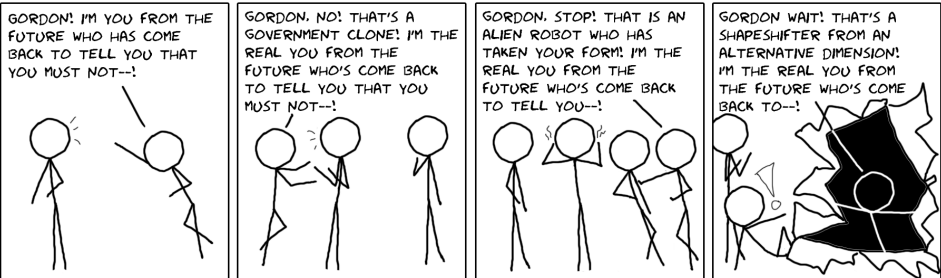
Maybe I can talk about my job choice. How I turned

down the first job offer I got with Scholastic and how easy it would have been to take it. But I turned it down because I did not want to be stuck with a job I could have done 4 years ago and thus would have devaulted everything I have been working toward. How I ended up with another job offer after 2 months of searching which matched everything I did. How important it is to not take something that is easy and safe, while dismissing your capabilities, just because you don't have any other options yet.

Maybe I can talk about Frankly Speaking. How all my offbeat, extremely long, very self-centric and controversial articles were an attempt to inspire people to write and incite discussion. To let people know that it is okay to write about anything. That it is okay to be you and have opinions, no matter how weird or controversial you think they are.

A lot of maybes here. A lot of things to think about. A lot of things to say. And I still have no idea what would make a good "last article." While I am quite obsessed with death in the majority of my writings, endings have never really been my thing.

NOT XKCD by Kai



MISADVENTURES OF GORDON HAAG

(MONDAYS ARE HARD.)

A Letter to Future Shane

Shane Skikne

Contributor

Dear Future Shane,

10 years from now, huh? I presume by now you've figured it all out. Probably gotten that top engineering job at that company that makes that product that helps businesses make more money when working with other businesses. Oh yeah. You probably even have equity and a sweet 401k. And obviously, you're a charitable person giving \$100 a year to Red Cross and even helping out at the local soup kitchen once a year (and by help out, I obviously mean put some groceries in their bin at market, because who actually has the time to drive all the way there - seriously). You probably even tip 20% every time you eat out.

"There is nothing people love more than telling a cool story and having someone else tell an even cooler story."

I do realize however that you may have perhaps gone weird in the head and "tried to be happy" or something like that. Well, even if you have, it is really not too late to change. If you start now, you could land that previously mentioned engineering

job by the time you're like 42. That leaves you 20 years to prep your retirement fund. If we have gotten to this bad situation, I assume there are some changes that need to be made so I decided to write you a whole list of ways you should be a better person.

Ways you could be better person:

Work on that body. By this point, I'd expect you to be at least 6'2" with a six pack. Both of these are 100% necessary to be a successful human.

"Don't despair, but also don't admit defeat."

Have a bunch of really awesome stories. There is nothing people love more than telling a cool story and then having someone else tell an even cooler story. So you can be that guy! Always have a story ready and you're guaranteed to be a hit at parties.

Learn how to dress. You're probably wearing khaki shorts and blue tshirts everyday. I'm disgusted. Throw out the khakis and burn the blue tshirts and we can set our eyes on new horizons. Maybe try a purple tshirt or maybe even a teal one. Match that with red shorts or, maybe, some lighter tan shorts and we're in business.

Always have a plan for

everything. Perhaps, you like "winging it" occasionally or just doing what feels right. Quit that. As they say, the best days are well-organized and efficiently executed.

"Don't take people for granted."

Don't view yourself as static. Of course there are things you could be better at. Obviously you have some flaws. Don't despair, but also don't admit defeat. Just because you're accepting that you're not the best public speaker doesn't mean you shouldn't find ways to improve yourself.

Don't take people for granted. There are probably still so many incredible people in your life. You've probably gotten used to that by now. Having friends who can solve any problems, friends who, at the drop of a hat, would rush to help you or friends who tell you your jokes are bad so you can strive for better material - don't ever get used to that. Look around you and make sure you truly, genuinely appreciate the people in your life. Oh, and tell them that. Yup. It'll be awkward, but go tell them that you appreciate them.

Well, all that should keep you busy for the next little while, but I'll check in soon.

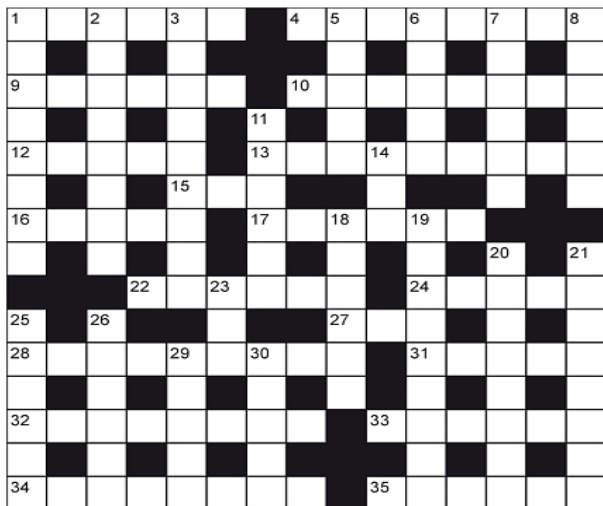
Sincerely,

Shane

Turing's Crossword

Julianne Jorgensen
Contributor

TELEGRAPH CROSSWORD 5,062
13 JANUARY 1942



Across

- 1 A stage company (6)
4 The direct route preferred by the Roundheads (5,3)
9 One of the ever-greens (6)
10 Scented (8)
12 Course with an apt finish (5)
13 Much that could be got from a timber merchant (5,4)
15 We have nothing and are in debt (3)
16 Pretend (5)
17 Is this town ready for a flood? (6)
22 The little fellow has some beer; it makes me lose colour, I say (6)
24 Fashion of a famous French family (5)
27 Tree (3)
28 One might of course use this tool to core an apple (6,3)
31 Once used for unofficial currency (5)
32 Those well brought up help these over stiles (4,4)
33 A sport in a hurry (6)
34 Is the workshop that turns out this part of a motor a hush-hush affair? (8)
35 An illumination functioning (6)

Down

- 1 Official instruction not to forget the servants (8)
2 Said to be a remedy for a burn (5,3)
3 Kind of alias (9)
5 A disagreeable company (5)
6 Debtors may have to this money for their debts unless of course their creditors do it to the debts (5)
7 Boat that should be able to suit anyone (6)
8 Gear (6)
11 Business with the end in sight (6)
14 The right sort of woman to start a dame school (3)
18 "The war" (anag.) (6)
19 When hammering take care not to hit this (5,4)
20 Making sound as a bell (8)
21 Half a fortnight of old (8)
23 Bird, dish or coin (3)
25 This sign of the Zodiac has no connection with the Fishes (6)
26 A preservative of teeth (6)
29 Famous sculptor (5)
30 This part of the locomotive engine would sound familiar to the golfer (5)

Release

Shrinidi Thirumalai
Contributor

Roll Eyes.

Bite lip.

Shake head.

Purse lips.

Smile.

Walk away.

Walk to the bathroom stall, first slowly, then faster and faster.

Run as if the bathroom is your savior, your only friend.

Open Stall Door. Slam. Cry.

Release.

Let the hot tears fight their way out, their fire burning their mark on your face, letting you know they were there.

Letting you know they had been trapped inside of you.

Letting you know they deserved to be felt.

Let the quenched scream escape, declare itself to the world.

Declare that you deserve to be heard.

You deserve to feel.

You deserve.

You.



The Origin of Pokémon Phenomenon

Elizabeth Mahon
Columnist

Back in 1990, few people knew Game Freak. Started in 1982 by Satoshi Tajiri as a video game tip magazine, in 1989 they released their first video game. Called Quinty in Japan, it was for the NES and did well enough that it was brought to the US under the name Mendel Palace.¹ Thinking about what game to make next, Tajiri saw Nintendo's Game Boy and the Link Cable accessory that allowed two people to connect and play together. He envisioned a game in which you could collect creatures and trade them with your friends. He brought a pitch for this game, then called Capsule Monsters, to Nintendo in the fall of 1990. They approved it and agreed to finance development, starting on a half-decade long journey.²

"No one thought Pokémon would be successful at first."

As you've probably realized, Capsule Monsters eventually became Pokémon Red

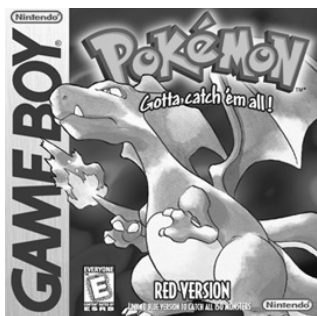
and Green (Blue in the US), which came out in Japan in 1996. Even today, 6 years is considered a long time for a game to be in development – for a game to be in development that long back then was very unusual.³ There were many reasons for this delay. Game Freak released 7 games in addition to Pokémon between 1990 and 1996, of which only two were for Game Boy. Their equipment wasn't great, and they weren't good about backing data up – sometimes they lost as much as a month's of work in a crash.⁴ Game Freak was also woefully understaffed, with only four programmers, two of whom also pulled double-duty with another aspect of the game.⁵ Pokémon underwent a lot of changes during development, with the staff continually asking themselves if a particular concept was as good as it could be.⁶ For instance, the dual game mechanic was not in from the start – it was suggested by Shigeru Miyamoto, creator of Mario, as a way of encouraging trading and letting siblings have something different for each of them.^{7,8}

No one thought Pokémon would be successful at first.

The Game Boy was in its sixth year of life, making it a very old console, and a last minute delay bumped the release to February, one of the worst months for video game sales. Red and Green didn't sell incredibly well at first, unlike most video games that have most of their sales in the first couple weeks. But it kept selling. Sales increased, and a year and a half after the game came out, it made it to the top of the weekly sales charts.⁹ As its popularity became apparent, proposals for tie-ins and merchandise started flooding in. The Japanese Blue version – which had upgraded graphics and bug fixes, both of which were carried over to the English releases, as well as a unique set of exclusive Pokémon – was released as one of these, a cross-promotion with a magazine.¹⁰

"18 months after release, it made it to the top of the charts."

This long development process caused problems in the future. When Nintendo decided to bring over Poké-



mon, it turned out that the code was so much of a mess that they couldn't simply replace the Japanese characters with the English alphabet – much of the code had to be rewritten.¹¹ And when Nintendo wanted to release the N64 spinoff Pokémon Stadium, which would let people battle with their Pokémon on TV, there was no documentation of the battle code, so it had to be reverse-engineered by the team at Nintendo.¹² The first generation of Pokémon games was notoriously glitchy, as well. Mew, which was supposed to be a secret, showed up accidentally in some Japanese copies.¹³ The Missingno glitch in international copies was well known enough that Nintendo Power, the official Nintendo magazine, felt obligated to address it.¹⁴

"The turbulent start of Pokémon did not prevent it from being a success."

The process of taking Pokémon out of Japan was

long and involved, but very interesting. At first, no one thought it would be popular in the United States. Pokémon is a role-playing game, specifically of the Eastern subgenre, which puts it in the company of series such

"Mew, which was supposed to be a secret, showed up accidentally in some Japanese copies."

as Final Fantasy and Dragon Quest. These series had traditionally not done as well in the United States. However, Nintendo believed that kids around the world were similar enough that the series that was such a hit in Japan would do well in the United States as well. To overcome the potential stumbling block of the genre, Nintendo decided to bring over the entire Pokémon franchise in a coordinated fashion.¹⁵ The clever names – a key part of the appeal of Pokémon – underwent at least one revision.¹⁶

The turbulent start of Pokémon did not prevent it from being successful as time went on and its potential was realized. Pokémon today is the second best selling video game series, losing only to Mario himself. The 20th anniversary is coming up next year, and it shows no signs of slowing down. Perhaps we can all see this as a lesson for ourselves – that initial struggles shouldn't make us stop!

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Creating Streams At Olin

**Sharon Grimshaw,
Aditi Joshi, Doyung Lee,
Marco Morales, and
Sarah Walters**
Contributors

Here's a question for you: what did you learn when you sketched bugs in Parcel B with a group of your classmates during the first week of Design Nature? I'd venture to guess that your drawing skills didn't improve much, you didn't learn anything particularly earth-shattering about bugs, and you didn't develop a better understanding of how to build a biomimetic hopping toy. So why was the assignment important?

Less than a week into the design curriculum at Olin, you were exposed to the idea that design doesn't happen in isolation; it takes into account both context and society. You can't just sit in your design studio building Solidworks models; you have to interact with the outside world. That's the contextual part - design interacts with, depends on, and is inspired by the real world. You're also required to work with your peers. That's the social part - design isn't individual; it depends on collaboration and communication even within an individual project.

A year and a half later, UOCD spirals back to the idea that design doesn't happen in isolation. This time you spend the entire semester interfacing with a group

of people to understand them and how to design to help them. You're studying a different part of the design process than you did in Design Nature, but what you're doing is still rooted in the idea that design can't happen solely in the studio.

"It's much healthier to engage a subject at an intermediate level over a long period of time than to have an intense introduction that ends early."

The way design works at Olin is starkly different from the way a traditional engineering education is structured. Ben Linder uses the word "layers" to describe the traditional curricular approach: students start by taking a math class, layer a physics class on top of that knowledge, and eventually have the opportunity to take an engineering design class. He uses the word "stream" to describe what happens in Olin's design curriculum: students take several classes about design, and each subsequent one builds on a set of core ideas.

Ben feels that a layer curriculum focuses on credentials and on authority. In that

kind of environment, students are treated like they are unqualified until they complete the last layer, meaning students often don't identify as engineers until graduation. By contrast, a stream curriculum makes each student a "professional engineer from day one," which University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign refers to as 'The Olin Effect.' You come into the design stream an engineer, you are appreciated and respected throughout the curriculum, and you leave an engineer with more experience.

Ben says it's "much healthier to engage a subject at an intermediate level over a long period of time than to have an intense introduction that ends early." He thinks that streams might be a better model for the way people learn: we probably don't build knowledge in layers; instead, we fit new pieces of information into the framework of what we already know, drawing all of the connections between concepts that we can (if you're curious about this, check out Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Constructivism). If you're learning math, physics, and design at the same time in the same course, you can't help but draw connections between them, but if you take math and physics during your first year and design during your fourth, it might be difficult to see how they relate.

Ben also believes that a stream curriculum facilitates a culture of feedback

- in his words, “if you think experienced people know what’s best, you don’t ask students for feedback, but if [students] have standing, then you can take advantage of the most obvious fact... there is no other group of people who know the experience better than the students who are currently having the experience.”

Most engineering schools don’t cover much design, especially beyond engineering design, which left Olin no choice other than to experiment with how to teach it. By contrast, analysis is traditionally a big part of engineering education, so there’s a well-established, content-driven process for teaching it. Just look at the course titles - any engineering educator knows what you mean when you say you’re taking “Dynamics” or “Differential Equations”. The established way might not be the best way, though: Mark Somerville thinks a stream model could benefit the analysis curriculum.

Mark and other faculty members have been think-

ing about analysis education at Olin. Mark observes that students tend to graduate with more confidence in their design skills than in their analysis skills. He attributes that outcome in part to the design stream, which he views as one of Olin’s real successes - it’s a “set of experiences students have over the course of four years that explicitly relate to each other, enabling them to build a set of capacities”. He thinks there might be a way to do something similar with a different set of courses.

“Our goal is to start a conversation continuing to explore what streams would do to Olin’s curricular experience.”

They hope to run an experiment next year which allows first-years to opt into a 16 credit pilot version of an analysis stream (8 in the

spring, 8 the following fall) to replace Linearity I and II, the physics foundation course, and either Dynamics or Signals and Systems. Ideally, the analysis stream might extend beyond two semesters, but a two-semester pilot makes sense both because it doesn’t interfere with too much of the curriculum and because an experiment with a one-year duration can run every year.

Our goal is to start a conversation about what continuing to explore the concept of streams would do to the way we think about Olin’s curricular experience. Streams might not need to be academic: imagine if you took Engineering for Humanity, Affordable Design and Entrepreneurship, and rounded it off with involvement in SERV. Could that be considered a “service stream”? What streams do you think already exist, even if we haven’t previously thought of them that way? How would the curriculum change if every course was part of a stream?

Farewell Senior Editors

Gigi Chow
Editor-in-Chief

In two short weeks, the Class of 2015 will be graduating, leaving Olin to join the real world. This means that we will be saying goodbye to basically our entire editorial staff. So before they head off into the world, I would like to thank them for their work, and to wish them well in their endeavors.

Thank you to Julianne Jorgensen, Morgan Bassford, and Allie Duncan for looking over the paper before it was published and catching our little mistakes.

Thank you to all of our contributors; your articles and insights will be missed. Special thanks to Elizabeth Mahon for the Video Game Trivia column.

Thank you to Kai Austin for editing, layout, Not

XXCD, and maintaining the website.

Finally, thank you so very much to our wonderful Editor-in-Chief, Lyra Silverwolf, for seeing the paper through its fifth year and for joyously announcing the first weekday of every month.

I’m good at writing neither goodbye’s nor conclusions, so good luck, we will miss you, and thank you for Frankly Speaking.

Editor in Chief Announced

Lyra Silverwolf
Editor-in-Chief

As many of you know, this will be my last issue of Frankly Speaking before I leave you to join the Navy. Frankly Speaking has been an integral part of my Olin experience, and I cannot begin to express how much I will miss it when I leave. However, as I will be graduating in less than a month, I am pleased to announce that Gigi Chow '18 will be taking over my role as the sole editor-in-chief next year. The paper has not only seen a fifth year of existence, but it will also fearlessly enter its sixth year in the fall under Gigi's guidance and leadership.

Gigi joined Frankly Speaking with a wealth of knowledge and experience from her high school newspaper, and she has been heavily involved in all aspects of our paper since she arrived here. During her four years of high school she held the positions of photo editor and website manager, before transition-

ing to be a co-editor-in-chief during her senior year. I am glad to leave the paper in her capable hands.

However, Frankly Speaking can't survive on the editor-in-chief's passion alone. The paper isn't possible each month without the help of our editors, writers, and contributors. Gigi needs your help to keep Frankly Speaking running!

We have several seniors who work on the paper graduating this month, including myself (EIC, 2 years), Kai Austin (editor and website manager, 3 years), and our esteemed Video Game Trivia columnist, Elizabeth Mahon (columnist, 2 years). Many thanks to them for all of their hard work!

Editors - reads, edits articles, helps with layout. Must be able to spell and edit.

Layout Editors - uses InDesign to lay out paper. Must be willing to learn InDesign.

Copy Editors - check the first print copy of Frankly



Speaking for grammatical errors, typos, and layout faux pas.

Staff Illustrators - sometimes we have these awkward spaces and they have to be filled with drawings. Can you draw things at the drop of a hat? Be staff illustrator!

Contributors - the bread-and-butter of the paper. Everyone is a contributor!

Submit articles to:
submit@franklyspeakingnews.com

Want to write for Frankly Speaking?

Send us your articles at

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Or check out the website at

[HTTP://FRANKLYSPEAKINGNEWS.COM](http://FRANKLYSPEAKINGNEWS.COM)

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