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REPORTER

01.18.13 reportermag.com

THE FOUNDATION OF
AN EDUCATION
BUILDING A BETTER FACULTY

SUCCESSING WITH
STYLE
HOW DO YOU LEARN?

RIT DEBIT IN
TRANSITION
ADMINISTRATION SEEKS
STUDENT INPUT



REPORTER

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Hidden deep within RIT's web site, there's a page called the RIT Archives Photography Collection. An online photo archive spanning the past century, it documents student life and education at RIT and its predecessors. In most of the collection's photographs, RIT's history as a vocational school is evident; classroom settings are shown much less frequent than images of machine shops and laboratories. Many images show students working in labs filled with complex machinery — the tools of their trades.

This week, Reporter's subfeature discusses learning styles, or the idea that people learn in different ways. In some circles, the topic is hotly contested — and rightly so. While learning styles may have some effect on how a student absorbs information, it's the wrong focal point. Students should be much more focused on what sort of experience they're getting. And unfortunately, the current obsession with a traditional lecture format teaches students less than hands-on education can.

Experience is perhaps the greatest predictor of success. In his book "Outliers," writer Malcolm Gladwell proposes the idea of a "10,000 Hour Rule." Simply put, he states that it takes 10,000 hours for one to master a topic or skill. The idea is simple: persistence, not talent, determines achievement.

The theory has its roots in history. Traditionally, the benefit of a comprehensive formal education was limited to the upper classes. Many learned trades through some form of apprenticeship. This was partially out of necessity, as most had few job options, but it also meant that artisans got a hands-on approach early in the game.

With the current advancements in technology, many tasks that once required specialized tools can now be performed on the average computer. But even so, time in the field is essential; the more time students spend in the classroom, the few hours they're putting in out in the field. A 10,000-hour journey is one that lasts a lifetime. In order to succeed, one must lay the foundations as early as possible.

A lecture-heavy education can impede this. Even at career-focused schools such as RIT, however, lectures are still the predominant teaching method. However, they do not fit into this 10,000-hour mold. In many cases, it is an outmoded style of learning, derived from a time when books were a luxury.

Fortunately, RIT incorporates plenty of apprenticeship in the form of lab classes and co-ops. But further integration of hands-on learning will improve students' real-world skill. This fall, RIT discussed plans to expand online learning so that more physical classes can be dedicated to teamwork and collaborative projects. It's certainly a move in the right direction, and hopefully one with innumerable benefits.

Alexander W. Rogala

Alex Rogala

EDITOR IN CHIEF

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Members of RIT Vis Viva Dance Company surround fellow member Rebecca Nolan as they perform the opening number from their first annual show "Dont Wake Me Up" on Friday January 11. Vis Viva Dance Company was started in May 2012 by RIT students who are inspired by their passion for dance to perform for RIT. | photograph by Elizabeth Stallmeyer

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Cover illustration by Elisa Plance

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FORECAST

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FRIDAY

RIT'S BEST DANCE CREW COMPETITION

Clark Gym. 8 - 11 p.m. Let's see how you move! Join RIT's College Activities Board and Velocity for a dance competition that will surely get you moving. Come watch teams perform all styles of dance as they compete to be crowned RIT's best dance crew. *Cost: Free.*

by Juan Lachapelle

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SATURDAY

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE WINTER GALA: IT'S A RED CARPET AFFAIR

Fireside Lounge. 8 - 11:45 p.m. Get your best outfit for this wonderful event! Come dance the night away and enjoy food with your friends. Bring someone along and you even get a discount! *Cost: \$8 for single, \$15 for couples.*

20
SUNDAY

FUDDY MEERS

Ingle Auditorium. 2 - 4 p.m. Join the RIT Players as they perform the comedic play "Fuddy Meers." Follow Claire, an amnesiac trying to rediscover herself through interactions with her family and the world around her. *Cost: \$5 for students, \$8 for everyone else.*

21
MONDAY

POETRY SLAM QUALIFIERS

Ingle Auditorium. 7:30 - 11 p.m. Want a shot to represent RIT at some poetry competitions? Show off your poetry prowess to prove why you deserve that spot! Don't want to get on stage? Come to support and be in the audience! *Cost: Free.*

22
TUESDAY

LASTNOTE WITH TYPEWRITER AND ADAM CLARK

The Bug Jar, 219 Monroe Ave. Doors at 8 p.m.; show begins at 9 p.m. Nothing sparks up a night like a concert. Join LastNote and more as they rock your world with their electrifying tunes. Who knows, they might add some new songs to your playlist. *Cost: \$5/\$7.*

23
WEDNESDAY

WALK THE MOON WITH PACIFIC AIR

Water Street Music Hall, 204 North Water St. Doors at 7 p.m. Come see an electrifying show and re-energize your slow mid-week. Indie rockers Walk the Moon are sure to grace your ears with some fresh material. *Cost: \$18-20.*

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THURSDAY

CAB THURSDAY NIGHT CINEMA PRESENTS: "TOY STORY"

Ingle Auditorium. 10 - 11:30 p.m. There's nothing like starting off your weekend with an oldie but goodie. Bring along some friends and enjoy this classic tale of toys come alive, as they try to get along in the face of jealousy and danger. No toy is left behind. *Cost: Free.*

CORRECTION

The Friday, January 11 issue incorrectly stated CAB's Thursday Night Cinema would feature a showing of "Happy Feet" on January 17. "21 Jump Street" is being screened that night instead.

SGUPDATE: FOOD DEBIT CHANGES DISCUSSED

by William Hirsh

At the Student Government (SG) Senate Meeting on January 11, Kory Samuels, the associate director of Dining Services, spoke about the recent changes to RIT's food debit. As it stands, RIT students can now only buy food and beverages with their remaining debit. Williams, having just been promoted to the position on November 1, began looking into dining services contracts when it appeared RIT's practices were in conflict with the New York State regulations and the Dining Services contract. Food and beverage are items that are not taxed whereas non-food items are, creating a rift that RIT needed to close immediately. The result was a nearly instant change that left many students feeling that prior notice wasn't given.

When the floor was opened to questions, a variety of concerns were raised from representatives.

When asked why the change was so urgent, Samuels stated that RIT Dining could have lost its tax-exempt status as a non-profit. On the topic of alternatives, a multitude of ideas emerged. Students suggested an allotment of Tiger Bucks be given to students to tide them over this quarter, or that Dining Services could install a Tiger Bucks-only vending machine to supply students with essentials, like toiletries, while a transition is in process.

Nothing is set in stone, and while some students are just getting a handle on the issue, both SG and Dining Services are working to better inform students. Dining Services hopes to receive more input from the Debit Town Hall Meeting Monday, January 14.

RIT DEBIT IN TRANSITION

by William Hirsh
illustration by Ethan Thornton

Near the end of winter break, RIT students with Dining Services accounts received a memo with distressing news: RIT debit can only be used for buying food and drinks on campus following January 5. Abrupt and seemingly out of nowhere, students felt that the change was unwarranted and was just another way for RIT to limit its students. However, this is far from the truth.

RIT debit had to transition quickly in order to avoid negative repercussions for the Dining Services program and for students. According to Kory Samuels, Dining Services associate director, the problem was first identified a week and a half before the start of Winter Break. “We were just digging through our food services contract and found we weren’t doing something correct,” said Samuels.

Samuels, a member of the RIT community since 2002, remembers limitations on debit purchases in the past that were briefly ignored over the past decade. The problem stems from a misinterpretation of the Dining Services contract, which allowed for students to buy necessities. As students’ needs vary so widely, this caused a black hole of non-food spending. Only food and beverages are not taxed at RIT, and the ability to buy non-food items while not taxing them is a serious violation of these laws.

Following the email, students began to vent through various means such as through their social media profiles or the RIT subreddit. Then, a new popular post appeared. Ben Centra, the president of the Residence Hall Association (RHA), had begun to inform students on the inevitability and asked for student feedback regarding what RIT could do to improve this setback.

Centra, a third year New Media Interactive Development major, was one of many affected by the transition, since RHA staff required to live in the dorms and possess

a meal plan. He first heard of the incident through the preliminary memo sent out to all students who are served by Dining Services and later through an expanded email sent from RHA advisor Bill St. Jean. “I first went onto Facebook and then someone pointed me to the RIT subreddit, where people were all up in flames asking, ‘How could this happen?’” said Centra.

Although RHA is mostly a service organization, according to Centra, there has always been a representative function of the group that has been rarely used in recent years. RHA is currently working on arranging a meeting with Dining Services and is helping plan a Debit Town Hall with Student Government (SG). Thus far, these groups have received a myriad of responses from students pertaining to the issue. Reflecting a wide spectrum, students are concerned on a variety of problems that now work against them. Now, regular students are left with a large amount of debit with very little to spend it on. Whereas many students used this surplus of debit to buy necessities

such as toiletries, medicines, condoms and other essential goods, now they’re saddled with gratuitous amounts of money and no spending outlet. In addition, some residents depend on RIT debit to buy supplies and currently have no alternate source of funds for purchasing them. These students, including residence advisors, who are compensated in debit, now have little applicable funds for the basics.

SG President Taylor Deer and Vice President Sarah Thomas have been working to mitigate issues since the Friday before break. “The reason that this was so sudden was because this was a legal and ethical issue, said Deer. “They [Dining Services] identified that the program was not following the contract they had worked out with the food debit program. And once they identified it, they had to address

it.” If the issue was left by itself, this would have opened RIT to intensive litigation according to Deer. He recognized that the scenario is not ideal, especially when students are heavily disadvantaged because of the problem. “Our job is to work with administration to make the [debit] plan more appealing in the future.

“It wasn’t like administration had known about this since September,” said Thomas. “This is not something that RIT was planning for months. It was just dropped on them and students.”

SG has independently been considering a few options of their own although they don’t take into account the financial and legal factors that would hamper approval. Some of their suggestions included converting debit into Tiger Bucks, creating lower-priced tiered meal options and taxing all debit purchases.

One positive improvement to RIT Debit that has been made is the removal of the \$50 rollover cap. Instead, all leftover debit at the end of winter quarter will roll over to spring which will give students less to stress about in terms of finding ways to rapidly spend their money. Williams, while troubleshooting the current contract, felt that the rollover limit was arbitrary and lacked justification.

Nothing is set in stone at the moment as Dining Services is trying to create a plan that will appeal to most students. Samuels did not want to have a “kneejerk reaction” to an already delicate situation. Data on past trends has been collected, but Williams is still waiting to gather more student feedback.

Going forward, Samuels wants students to know that he is willing to approach the situation and wants to hear

students concerns on the task at hand. Both SG and Samuels are accepting feedback via email and at Debit Town Hall. Dining Services’ main objective is to maintain student satisfaction and seek to improve in the future.

Samuels, who has worked in Dining Services for 11 years, wants students to understand that he is just as concerned as students about the issue. “At this time there are no changes to report, but after talking with students we hope to create a solution,” said Samuels. “It’s personal for me.”



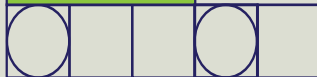
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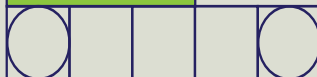
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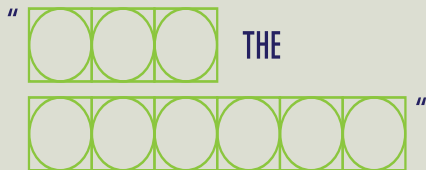
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WITH QUESTIONS & INQUIRIES

REVIEW

WHAT'S YOURS LIKE?

by David Keith Gasser

Eyes narrowed in suspicion, I lean over to my roommate, seated to my left, and ask, "What's yours like?" Giggling in anticipation of her misleading but truthful answer, she replies, "Mine is sticky." I'm not sure what I've gotten myself into tonight.

"What's Yours Like" is a board game produced by Patch Products. Released in 2007, it's neither new nor well known, but not for lack of amusement. Spending an evening this past weekend playing the game, it has jumped up into my list of favorites.

The gameplay is simple and easy to learn, which is definitely a plus when you're trying to sit four or more players down for a fun Saturday evening. Participants read a word or phrase on a card, passing it around so everyone knows what it says except for the player whose turn it is. With paper in hand to keep track of the clues, that remaining player now listens carefully as each of the others gives a description of the word. When he guesses the word or phrase, the round ends. Each turn, players earn one point for each clue they were given. Continue playing until every player has had a turn. You can play as many rounds as you like; in the end, the player with the lowest score wins. Simple. It's not overly creative or strategic, but if you're playing with a good group of friends, you're sure to have a lot of laughs.

I'd suggest the game to anyone. Being a lesser known title it will probably be a novelty for everyone involved, and you can easily play in a casual setting with breaks for conversation or whatever debauchery you might have in mind.

Oh, and it was the "kitchen floor" that was sticky; I had spilt a bowl of cereal earlier that day. Come to think of it, that may have been a subtle hint to clean up my mess. **R**

\$17 | Social | Board Game

4/5

At Your Leisure

by Michelle Spoto

"There's no point in being grown up if you can't be childish sometimes." -The Fourth Doctor, "Doctor Who"

QUOTE

REPORTER
—recommends—

STREAM OF FACTS

On **SEPTEMBER** 19, 2012, a world record was set for the most number of people inside of a soap bubble. With a height of four meters, the bubble contained 181 people.

In **SEPTEMBER** there are over 30 monthly observances, including Apple Month, Be Kind to Editors Month, and Ethnic **FOOD** Month.

A newly popular **FOOD, GREEK** yogurt contains 15-20 grams of protein per serving. That's nearly twice as many as regular yogurt, which has about 9 grams.

The shortest word in the English language that contains all five main vowels is Eunoia, derived from the ancient **GREEK** word for "beautiful thinking"

30 Before Thirty

About this recommendation, there's one thing I have to admit: It's not entirely my own. Recently, my sorority, Alpha Sigma Alpha, listened to a presentation given by a young professional and ASA alumna. She gave us tips and tricks for being successful after graduation. Although she had an arsenal of experience she spoke about, I thought that one of her suggestions was too important not to share with the rest of RIT. Enter the "30 before 30" list. It's exactly what it sounds like: a list of 30 things to accomplish before you say goodbye to your 20s.

The list can — and should — be filled with variety. It can include goals ranging from academic to fitness to financial accomplishments in addition to smaller, fun ideas that recapture your childhood. The speaker, for example, talked about two goals she had on her list: an ambitious aim to pay off all of her student loan debt and plans to build a snowman, something she (and most of us!) hasn't done in years.

The 30 before 30 list is an awesome way to finally write down everything you've wanted to accomplish within the next 10 or so years. By putting pen to paper, the list will force you to think about goals that might have just been vague ideas floating around in your head. Publishing your list somewhere, posting it on your blog or even just taping it to your wall, will help keep you accountable. Because the last thing you want is a list of 30 awesome goals that you never accomplished. **R**

WORD OF THE WEEK

Phalanx n. - an organized body of persons

Even the *phalanx* of highly specialized doctors couldn't identify what was causing Katie's vertigo.

Definition taken from by <http://merriam-webster.com>

COMIC



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The Perks of Being a College Student

by Nicole Howley

The new food only debit policy can make students think about how incredibly, ridiculously expensive things are: textbooks, food on campus, tuition — it seems like everything just costs far too much. However, during these dark times when you look at those receipts with far too many digits and our nearly empty wallets, it can be nice to remember that the entire world is not trying to pickpocket you all at once.


While you're in college, companies love you. Many bring you discounts every day! And the best part: in exchange, they want nothing more than for you to pay the discounted price they offered to you in your time of need and for you to return their love now and forever. Instead of taking all your money now, they merely want your money gradually, from now on, all the time, for the rest of your life.

Why did they pick you specifically? Possibly just to see the beautiful face on your student ID card, which they ask to see nearly every time you visit their store. Or you could say it is because they assume that you are highly vulnerable to compassionate, "we understand your limited money situation" marketing techniques.

Companies want people to form brand loyalty in college because people generally adhere to loyalty formed at this time. In a New York Times article on Target's attempts to gain customer loyalty, Charles Duhigg wrote, "Once consumers' shopping habits are ingrained, it's incredibly difficult to change them."

"There are however," writes Duhigg, "some brief periods in a person's life when old routines fall apart and buying habits are suddenly in flux." The article focused primarily on customers who Target predicted to be pregnant from the products they bought. However, customer loyalty is also likely to change during some of the major transitions college students go through including graduation and even first entering college. In fact, many Targets hold "Exclusive After-Hours Shopping Nights" when students begin moving into the nearby colleges.

Sadly, Target does not offer in-store student discounts beyond their super cheap student-intended products at the beginning of each school year. But lucky for us, plenty of other companies do! According to MarketingProfs article "Five Tips for Effectively Marketing to College Students," "Student discounts do not discount the brand; they drive loyalty and produce a positive brand experience." Since it is so difficult to change brand loyalty once it has been formed, companies are constantly trying to it at any opportunity. And as cash strapped college students just recently starting to pay our own way through the world, we are the perfect candidates for new, loyal customers.

Although it may feel a bit crappy for our college situation to be so obviously taken advantage of by many companies, we can still get some pretty awesome perks! This is pretty much the last times companies will be clawing to get to you for at least the next three decades until they start offering you senior discounts out of respect or something. Why not take advantage? 

Where to get discounts with your Student ID

BJ's Wholesale Club **lends RIT students a membership card in exchange for their student ID** when they go to the store less than a mile from campus. This deal is **exclusive to RIT students** at the location near campus.

Goodwill has even cheaper prices on Tuesdays: **15 percent off for students**

Apple, Dell and HP **offer student pricing** on certain products **year-round**.

Banana Republic, J. Crew and the Limited all feature a **15 percent student discount**.

Ann Taylor offers a **20-percent-off discount** for students.

West Elm offers **10 percent off furniture purchases**.

*Some limitations may apply



THE FOUNDATION OF AN EDUCATION | BUILDING A BETTER FACULTY |

by Ali Coladonato and Angela Freeman | illustration by Katherine Dayton

As RIT gears up for **spring enrollment** there's a question every student should pause and consider: **What makes a teacher good?** Having a good professor can make all the difference in a course, whether by helping you to merely **survive a prerequisite** or by **encouraging your interests and educational exploration.** To ensure that students have every opportunity to learn and learn well, dozens of measures have been put in place to ensure that RIT's faculty is chosen with students' needs in mind.



Hiring the Right Person Essential Qualities

Each of RIT's nine colleges contains several committees dedicated to hiring new teachers. The deans leading these schools are very involved in the process, always looking to ensure potential hires will support RIT's culture and goals.

Dr. H. Fred Walker, dean of the College of Applied Science and Technology, and Dr. Harvey Palmer, dean of the Kate Gleason College of Engineering, both know the value of hiring good teachers and hope that students understand the same thing. "You compromise on teaching, you compromise the whole basis of what university is supposed to be," says Palmer. With this mindset, the importance of hiring well-qualified teachers is immense, and the hiring process reflects this.

According to Walker, many of the colleges within RIT consistently hire those with industrial experience and not necessarily much teaching experience, stating that industry workers are very beneficial in such a career-focused school. The process of hiring new teachers involves a phone interview and a face-to-face interview as is standard nearly anywhere.

But what is most telling for both Walker and Palmer is when they invite finalists to campus. "When you invite a finalist here, there are two things you're trying to achieve: You're trying to hire them, and you're trying to sell your school. And our students are great salespeople," says Palmer. "If they don't like our students, we don't want them anyway," he adds. Once on campus, potential hires will spend the day interviewing, meeting with students, and getting the opportunity to teach a class.

During this last part of the interview, candidates bring plenty of documents, worksheets and PowerPoint presentations, employing many different instructional techniques to show their ability to be prepared as well as to adapt to different subject matters. Even if a candidate struggles some with this practice, Walker doesn't disregard them: "We still know one of two things: We know we have to do a crash course on teaching, or we have good ingredients for a new teacher."

As part of the process of obtaining new teachers, all new hires are connected with the educational center in the Wallace Library where they meet with an instructional designer and planner and are matched with a mentor. Both Palmer and Walker spoke of the level of professional accreditation RIT's teaching staff has, and that these practices must be kept in place to ensure that level is maintained. "We don't just hand them a textbook and say 'go teach,'" says Walker, "To maintain accreditation, we provide a very clear roadmap and our minimum level of expectation."

Palmer added that one expectation for the faculty is to be engaged in lifelong learning. "It is absolutely required for our accreditation that we educate students to be lifelong learners," emphasizes Palmer, "and that can only be done if the teachers we hire are themselves lifelong learners."

When asked what they remember valuing in a teacher when they were students, Walker and Palmer had similar qualities that they found most admirable in a teacher. Walker, remembering his military upbringing, explained that the instructors that identified with a similar value set were the ones he held in highest regard. He further claimed, "I don't think my values differ much from the student's here. I think that what happens in the classroom has to happen around a true respect for the student, which means being accessible, firm, fair and clear."

Palmer's initial response was simple: a person who cares about others. He went on to include "a person who isn't particularly egocentric. Because in my personal opinion, in order to be able to explain something to someone in a way they can understand, you need to see the material through their eyes. You need a certain level of empathy and an ability to see things from multiple viewpoints."

Being able to recall their time as students is a comforting reminder that at every level of a university the student perspective is being taken into account. "When we're asking ourselves [who the good professors are], we place a lot of weight on what the students say," reassures Palmer.

Recognizing Good Professors

For those professors who go above and beyond in ensuring their students learn, there are many awards to recognize their efforts. While there are three main awards that exist across RIT, there are even more awards given within individual colleges. The three most prominent awards are the Outstanding Teaching Award for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty, the Richard and Virginia Eisenhart Provost's Award for Excellence in Teaching, and the Eisenhart Award for Outstanding Teaching.

Deciding who will receive these awards is a relatively extensive process that lasts most of the academic year. In the case of the Eisenhart awards, there exist two committees for each award to facilitate nominations and selections.

Paul Tymann, the chair of the Computer Science Department, serves on these committees. Like many other committee members, he greatly values the input of students. This year, there are approximately a dozen up for the award this year; approximately two-thirds of those nominations came from students. Each committee is also required to have some sort of student involvement.

The nominations committee is responsible for reviewing nominations to see if selections meet the minimum criteria to win. Each award has different requirements, but if a nominee isn't eligible for one award, often times he will instead be considered for one of the other awards. When the nominations eventually get to the award committee, evaluations are made based on the presentation of the nomination committee's case.

All candidates are expected to have made demonstrated contributions toward student's educational and professional development, as well as served to better the RIT community as a whole. Individuals will look over various evaluations of the nominee from peers, students, deans and department chairs, as well as conduct classroom observations and interviews with candidates. Tymann can remember sitting in on classes following up on a nomination and simply being "blown away." "[It was a] really eye-opening experience — to watch a really outstanding teacher, to see how that teacher conveys information — that's special. That's why I like serving those committees." Laughing, he added, "It's professional development in a way."

When asked about the incentive for teachers to contend for these awards, Tymann explained that the awards are very prestigious. "Yes, there's some money that comes along with it, a little medallion or something to put on your desk. I don't think that's why the teachers do it though. It's the acknowledgment from their peers and students that really rewards [professors]."

Student Input

The Online Course Evaluation program (OCE) is RIT's tool of choice for electronically gathering student opinions on their teachers at the end of every quarter. OCE compiles data from the student body through an online survey system, and then generates a report of the results. Students are given the opportunity to rank teachers on various aspects of their teaching, answer questions about their experiences, and leave feedback. While the program allows professors to view which students on their class rosters have completed the survey, they are unable to connect comments or ratings to specific students. After final grades are posted online, RIT department heads are granted access to the OCE results.

However, many students will take the evaluation purely by teacher-implemented incentive such as an extra few points on an exam. Says Walker, "A lot of students think they're not listened to; that's my job!"

Both Walker and Palmer agree that the comments section of the evaluation is the most telling, and unfortunately the least prevalent. According to Palmer, the most common criticisms are that the teacher is disconnected from the student or just seen as "going through the motions." Another is a reported gap between what would be reasonable to expect and what the professor actually expects from students. Walker acknowledges that teachers may simply be presenting overly-difficult material or explaining it in a way students don't understand, but he adds, "We offer a challenging curriculum. If you're not being stretched and pulled, the amount that you're benefiting is notably smaller."

Student advisors within each RIT college are also a valuable resource in the class selection process. "We don't give advice for courses based on specific teachers. That would be ... tainted," explained Michelle Washburn, an academic advisor in the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences. Advisors do, however, consider factors such as class format — that is, in person or online — and students' preferred time of day for academics when helping students create workable schedules.

In addition to the formal advice of student advisors, popular website Rate My Professors is a popular tool that aids in selecting professors. The website itself is simple; students opt to search either by professor surname or the name of their college, and find student ratings, comments and recommendations. Although various aspects of the website are humorous, such as the 'hotness' rating symbolized by a chili pepper, and the allotted space for teacher rebuttals, its contents can be useful.

When looking at ratings, it is important to keep in mind that students can value any number of different qualities in a teacher; some people prefer a more engaging, social classroom environment, while others seek out professors that adhere to a no-nonsense, by-the-book curriculum. And as much as students appreciate the efforts of individual teachers, there are some professors that just won't click with certain students.

Of course, teaching methodology is not merely the whim of the professor. Certain classes are better suited to group work or independent learning. It is important to remember that the educator only has so much to do with the course material delivered. While not everyone appreciates the same characteristics in their college professors, certain qualities, such as humor or technical savvy, can arguably make for a better learning experience.

With so many systems in place to examine, report and reward good teaching, every student at RIT has the chance to experience truly **quality teaching** in their time here. It's important to **be involved in one's own education**, and in making sure **good teachers are rewarded and poor teachers are told how they can improve**, we're ensuring a better quality education not only for ourselves but for every student afterwards. Walker ended his interview by saying "I would really like our students to know that **we've got a great faculty who make their life's work providing an education**. All of our professors are here because **they want to be here.**"

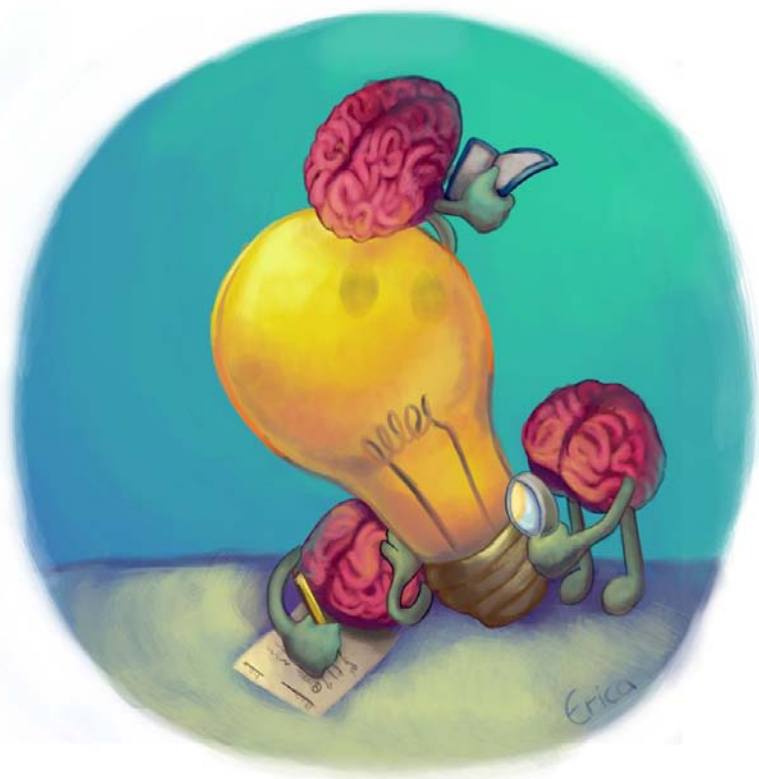
SUCCESSING

with style by Nicole Howley | illustration by Erica Landers

The classroom was filled with a feeling of resignation and a low level of grumbling. It was five minutes after class was supposed to let out, and my teacher was about half way through his stack of papers. Slowly, he called each student in our 80 person class up to the front of the room, one at a time. It was a tedious process, but at least it kept everyone else from seeing the papers he was handing back to us: our midterm, consisting of a multiple choice test and a paper. Big red numbers were on the front page of each one, indicating how doomed we were to failure, at least in this class.

When my name was finally called, the teacher handed back my exam with its border-grade numbers. “Your essay was excellent,” he said. “Just study more for your multiple-choice.”

Many people, including myself, struggle with multiple choice tests. Others struggle with writing essays. And sometimes, a person may struggle with any form of an exam. There are many theories about the reasons behind these tendencies. Many cognitive and education psychologists have supported the idea that learning styles are the primary factor in these differences; however, some experts dismiss learning styles as completely irrelevant. Either way, knowing about what affects learning is extremely important, especially in a school setting.



THE CONTROVERSY

Even with the amount of time that has been dedicated to the study of learning styles, there is still a great deal of controversy over the topic. Dr. Roger Harnish, a professor of psychology at RIT who has been studying learning styles for over 30 years, acknowledged in a phone interview that, “learning styles are not generally accepted... The concept isn’t even in many introductory psychology textbooks.” And if the idea of learning styles was generally accepted, Harnish estimated that there are over fifty different styles that have been proposed thus far and it is difficult to say which, if any, is the most accurate: “As many studies say learning styles are valid as say they are invalid.”

Daniel Willingham, a professor of psychology at University of Virginia, posted a relatively popular video on YouTube about how learning styles don’t exist. Harnish has a different view on the topic.

HOW LEARNING STYLES CAN HELP

Harnish sees that students have different styles of learning during his time teaching in the classroom. For instance, “some students think, learn and perform in a sort of summary style,” says Harnish. They have a harder time remembering details but they are able to remember the overall concepts. There are also students who learn the details but have a harder time with concepts. Harnish has also noticed students who add information, assumptions or interpretation to the information they are presented with.

His knowledge about his own personal learning style helped him to succeed after originally struggling in college. Over the phone, he shared that, “I flunked out [of college] originally,” but after looking into his own learning style, “I learned how I performed and looked for teachers who wanted that performance.”

After earning a Ph.D., Harnish hoped that he could help others figure out their own learning styles and how to succeed by writing a book on the subject. However, he later stopped working on it since then because he did not feel that he could make a strong enough case for learning styles. “Human beings are so adaptable that they learn whether it’s within their learning style of not,” says Harnish; learning in accordance with their style just makes their learning more effective.

LEARNING STYLES AREN’T EVERYTHING

Harnish still believes in learning styles since discontinuing work on his book, but has decided to approach his future studies from a different angle, an angle with more focus on performance. From observing his classes, he estimates that about 50 percent of students have performance issues. For example, the students that learn in a summary style may do well on an essay but they may have a harder time on a multiple choice test. More detail oriented students might have the opposite problem. They both learn but they have difficulty demonstrating what they know. In Harnish’s experience, helping students learn to perform has led to more success than helping with learning styles.

Nicole Boulais, the assistant vice president of Student Learning, Support and Assessment (SLSA), oversees a number of departments within the Division of Student Affairs aimed at helping students succeed in the classroom. Learning style assessments are part of many of their support programs but they only play a small role in the overall picture: “[Learning styles] are not the only thing we use; it’s just part of the bigger discussion.”

“We use learning styles as one of the things that we teach students when we are working with them individually, in workshops or in classes,” says Boulais, but she cautions that they are not meant to be used as an excuse for failure. “We try to teach students to know what their strengths are,” but she adds that they must also learn how to cope with situations that don’t play to their strengths.

WHAT MATTERS BEYOND STYLE

Boulais agrees that learning styles are not as important as many factors contributing to student success. “Some students are very highly motivated,” says Boulais. “They go to class; they buy their books; they read their books; they study.” SLSA has a noncredit class specifically for these highly motivated students who may know the material well but who still need to find strategies to help them perform better in class.

Some students who come to SLSA may know all the strategies they need but have different struggles. For instance, the more prominent problem can be finding motivation. In the other noncredit class specifically designed for these students, Boulais explains that the goal is more focused on helping students “figure out why they value that 9 a.m. class that they don’t want to get up for.”

Boulais also oversees a program where students can see a student support specialist for individual academic coaching. Over the course of the two to four meetings with the specialist, students learn their strengths, their weaknesses and what they must change to succeed.

Harnish went through a similar process during his time in college and knows from the students he has helped simply by giving them suggestions, that having a mentor can make the process easier. Both Harnish and the people at the SLSA want to help students succeed in a similar way. Knowing your learning style is about knowing yourself and your strengths, but if you want to do better in school, it is more important to know your weaknesses than your strengths: “If you know what’s wrong,” says Harnish, “you are motivated to change.” **R**

FITNESS

• FOR THE •

NEW YEAR

by Alyssa Jackson | infographic by Theresa Garritano

We all know how it starts off; you make your New Year's resolutions that involve being a happier and healthier you, and usually going to the gym. You go for a week or two, or maybe even a month, and then you get busy. You skip a day, maybe a week, all the time promising yourself you'll get back into it as soon as you have the time or motivation. Before you know it, it's 2014 and the cycle starts again.

Staying fit is important, especially at a time in our lives when so much of what we do now influences our bodies and mentality later in life. No matter if your ultimate goal is to build muscle, increase your endurance or stay indoors, Bill Brewer, the director of exercise here at RIT, discussed the benefit of doing just a few simple exercises every day.

"If you commit yourself to saying, 'on a regular consistent basis I am going to do these squats and these pushups,' you will find that your capacity will be sustained for decades," Brewer stated, he stressed the long-term benefits of working out, including being able to easily stand up when you're in your older years.

The short-term benefits are important as well. Through exercising regularly you can relieve stress, boost your self-esteem, reduce your chances of getting sick and put yourself in a better mood because of the endorphins that are released while you are working out, according to an article on Livestrong.com. These chemicals that are released while you exercise will make you feel good and give you an endorphin rush.

Exercising can be good, but you can also sustain injuries if you're not careful. Harvard HEALTHbeat recommends taking time to warm up and cool down in stretches, drinking plenty of water and wearing the correct clothing. Health site Greatist recommends that, if you plan on working out for an hour or more, you replace your electrolytes through sports drinks that don't contain too much sugar, because electrolytes regulate your bodily fluids. While you're exercising the level of electrolytes in your system can shift, increasing your fatigue and muscle cramps.

Perhaps the most important tip to remember as you begin your workout routine is to be realistic about how much time you have to actually exercise. Exercising will not aid you in your goals if it is not done consistently. "All of us are time-challenged," said Brewer of finding time to exercise. "To believe that you suddenly have an hour,

two hours, three hours that just popped into your day is not really being truthful about the situation. For most students they need to look at it like scheduling a class or scheduling work."

Brewer suggest that a great way to get accountable for working out is to find a friend who works out as well and make each other responsible for finding time. Brewer advised each individual putting a dollar in a jar for every day that he worked out, and doubling the money in the jar every day that he didn't. This makes each individual accountable because the more often he skips a day, the more money he loses.

For those of us who just don't have the time to devote an hour a day to working out, Brewer advised adding activity in your day in as many ways as possible. Be creative! "If I can't go in and exercise, I'm definitely going to take the stairs, I'm definitely going to walk, or take the long way to get somewhere." Brewer stated.

There are a lot of great resources on campus that can help students get motivated to stay fit as well. Brewer works with the fitness lab, a place where students can go to get evaluated on their fitness levels and get a personalized plan for their goals, whether it is to build muscle, increase your cardio endurance, or burn fat. RIT also offers wellness classes, which are required for students and can help motivate and teach the correct way to work out. Finally, we have a gym on campus open to all students from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Sunday. **R**



What is your exercise goal?



If you are in no mood to leave the comfort of your room to go outside or walk to the gym, you can still get some exercise in. We all dreaded the squat thrust from gym class, but this exercise is great for getting your heart going if you don't have much room. Another great way to stay indoors is to look up some yoga videos on your computer. While this isn't the easiest method — it can be a little hard to see the screen at times — yoga is an effective way to tone yourself in the comfort of your room. Buying your own medicine balls, elastic bands, and home exercise videos are other common tools you can use to build muscle and avoid going to the gym, according to Brewer.

According to Brewer, the most important thing to remember when attempting to build muscle is to challenge the muscle you are working. Use something to build resistance, whether you use a weight or your own body. Try doing some squats with a weight. This is a great way to build up your legs and work in your arms as well. Just make sure you are doing the squats correctly to prevent injury: Your feet should be a little wider than shoulder width apart, your chest should be out, and your back should be arched. You should move as if you are about to sit in a chair. A great way to build muscle in your chest is through the bench press. Some simple rules to a bench press work out are to make sure that your butt does not leave the bench and try to lift for a while — avoid pushing yourself to press a lot of weight and tiring yourself quickly.

Whether you are a walker or a jogger, you can strengthen your cardio endurance. If you prefer to walk, be sure to keep a fast pace so you can get the best results. If you are on a treadmill, try for somewhere between 3.5 or 4.5 miles per hour. Jogging can burn more calories while building your cardio endurance, but may also be more painful on your joints. Just be sure to increase the distance or speed that you are running by no more than 10 percent each week. Exercise machines, like the treadmills and ellipticals offered at RIT's own gym, are great tools for a cardio workout. These machines will help keep track of your workout. For the best results, switch which machines you use at your workouts to keep your body guessing. Brewer suggests that, if you are interested in increasing your aerobic capacity for a sport or marathon, be sure to raise your heartbeat to over 150 beats per minute for at least 30 minutes.

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RIT HOSTS THREE-WAY SWIMMING MEET

× ×

by Danielle Delp | photograph by Josh Barber



Members of the RIT women's swim team cheer for teammate Rachael Mallory as she competes in the 400 yard individual medley during the second day of a tri-meet against SUNY Geneseo and SUNY New Paltz Saturday, January 12, 2013 at Judson Pool.



Between January 11 and 12, the Judson Pool was filled to the brim. Three teams were gathered for a massive competition featuring the men and women of RIT, SUNY Geneseo and SUNY New Paltz. Spanning two days and 40 events, the meet would be a struggle for everyone involved. By the end of the first day, things were not looking good for RIT. In the swimming competition, the men were trailing behind Geneseo and the women had not won a single event. Both teams had fared better in diving, with the men taking first place in three yard diving and the women dominating every place below first.

The Saturday competition opened with an acknowledgment of the graduating students on RIT's team. With the end of the season drawing near, the tri-meet would be their last chance to swim in home waters.

Despite the difficulties of the first day, RIT's swimmers and divers arrived at the pool ready to keep fighting. RIT's men took to the water strong, but were unable to win any of their first few swimming competitions. Though spirits remained high amongst spectators, it was clear that things were not looking good for the men. Though they consistently placed high in each of their events, first place eluded the team. Particularly notable among the swimmers was fourth year Manufacturing Engineering Technology major Cory Deacon, who scored second in both the 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard freestyle. Additionally, the men's one-yard diving competition saw John Tellgren, second year Advertising and Public Relations major, obliterate all of his opponents. Though the men ultimately lost to Geneseo 231-124, excellent performances from Deacon, Tellgren and their teammates helped the tigers to obtain victory over New Paltz 276-74.

The women saw a significant improvement in their performance on Saturday. Stepping up their game, the ladies of RIT were able to emerge victorious in several events. No longer was first place out of their reach; third year Industrial Engineering major Katie Baldwin managed to take first in the 50-yard freestyle and second in the 100-yard freestyle. The results of the three-yard diving competition, however, were largely similar to those of the previous day; Geneseo stole first, with RIT's women trailing behind in all of the remaining places. Though doing better overall, the women were not able to recover from their difficulties the night before. When the scores were tallied, the results were disappointing; RIT's women had suffered decisive losses against both Geneseo 273-83 and New Paltz 251-102.

After the meet Tellgren, who was recently honored diver of the week at the Liberty League competition, expressed his happiness with the men's success: "I came into this meet knowing that there was a guy here who was really competitive, and would be some good competition for me. I just focused on each dive one at a time, first on the three-yard and then on the one-yard. I just tried to keep my composure and it worked out in my favor." Baldwin, who has broken RIT's records for Women's swimming three times over the past few months, addressed the team's difficulties during the tri-meet: "I think this was a tough meet for us. The two teams were really good, and it was a really good competition. I think we're all pretty tired after our training trip last week, so we're all just trying to get back into it."

The men and women will have a few weeks off to recover before their next meet later this month. This week's tri-meet was their last match hosted on home waters, however, for the remainder of the season. **R**



MOTIVATING LEARNING AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

by James Lecarpentier
| illustration by Emily DeVault

"SAT reading scores for the high school class of 2011 were the lowest on record, and combined reading and math scores fell to their lowest point since 1995," the College Board reported according to a CNN article. The 2009 scores for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show the United States ranking 14th in reading, 17th in science and 25th in math. A less educated population is a less competitive population, and as the world is becoming more globalized, the competition is only getting harder. So in the face of this reality, what is being done to help motivate and promote academic success here in the United States?

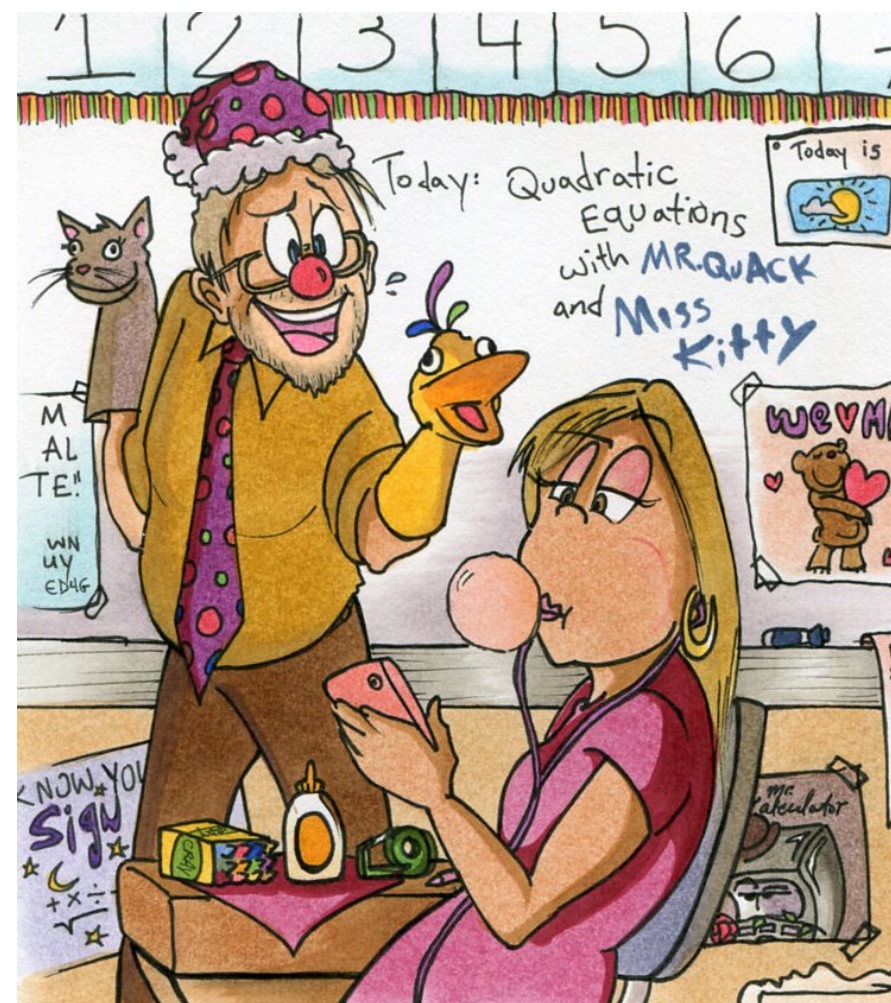
There have been a few attempts at raising the test scores and performance of U.S. students. The Obama Administration has implemented the Race to the Top initiative, which awards money to states that show that they have a viable plan for school reforms, with winners able to receive hundreds of millions of dollars in grants.

There have also been more novel approaches. A Time Magazine article by Stephanie Banchero describes the efforts of Harvard economist Roland Fryer Jr., who in the fall of 2007 conducted an experiment with 18,000 kids in 143 low performing schools in four cities. Fryer was looking to see if monetary reward would incentivize kids to achieve better academic success. The results? Yes and no. Schools that had a reward system based solely on test scores found little difference in performance, while those who had a reward system based on other dimensions of school performance such as attendance and behavior seemed to fair better. The article states that "the students were universally excited about the money, and they wanted to earn more. They just didn't seem to know how."

What Fryer's team found was that most of the kids had little idea of how to actually study or raise their scores, even if they wanted to. "No one said they were going to stay after class and talk to the teacher," Fryer says. "Not one." This leads to the conclusion that many students need guidance on not only what to learn, but how to learn in the first place and how to implement that into good academic performance. It's a troubling situation when students don't know how to succeed even if they have the will.

Underperformance is relative, and answers to higher academic achievement can be found by looking at the high achievers worldwide. Finland's PISA scores have constantly been very high, often taking the number one ranking in science, reading and mathematics. According to Tom Burridge of the BBC, this success has to do with the Finnish philosophy of education that "everyone has something to contribute", with an additional teacher in class to help students that are struggling with particular subjects. Burridge also says that the learning atmosphere is relaxed and that Finnish children "spend the fewest hours in the classroom in the developed world." This is in contrast with the OECD's other top scoring nation, South Korea, whose pupils spend long hours in class and commonly have tutors outside of school. A common thread between the two countries is a culture of learning that prizes education and has great respect for teachers.

If we as a country want our kids to achieve great success in education, we have to make it cultural and start at home. Pumping billions of dollars into a system does little if the people that the system is there to support aren't motivated. Experimentation of different teaching methods and incentives in schools should be encouraged, as Roland Fryer Jr. said of his experiment, "This is exactly the kind of R&D education needs." **R**



WORD ON THE STREET

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE TEACHER AND WHY? PHOTOGRAPHS BY SETH ABEL



1



2



3



4

5

"Professor Leonard, because he evaluates your work as if you're working for a company which helps you learn what the field is all about and prepare for an actual job."

1

Ian Maloney
Third Year Mechanical Engineering Technology

"Graham Carson, because he is a wizard in every single sense. He is a hilarious man and very innovative and he likes alpacas."

2

Thea Chesney
First Year Medical Illustration

"Professor Wolf, and because I really like the class, he always gave great criticism, and also gives and offers suggestions that really help the thought process."

3

Mick Bartholomey
Third Year Mechanical Engineering Technology

"Chad Grohman. I took digital illustration, and he took a lot of time teaching one on one, he was very helpful, and was able to teach me Illustrator."

4

Lianna Potrikus
Third Year Illustration

"Kirby Pilcher, because he's full of good advice that's very beneficial, and always makes time to meet and discuss with students."

5

Nikki Walker
Second Year Fine Art Photography **R**

RINGS

All calls subject to editing and truncation. Not all calls will be run. **REPORTER** reserves the right to publish all calls in any format. compiled by Brett Slabaugh | illustration by Ethan Thornton



SUNDAY, 1:40 p.m. (from text)

I WISH I WAS A BIRD
I could be sitting on power line all like [flamingos].

SUNDAY, 11:10 p.m. (from text)

Just found out that Sol's **no longer accepts food debit for nonfood items**. So RIT needs to **take more of my money** as I pay for **their ridiculously-priced shampoo? Bullshit.**

WEDNESDAY, 10:13 p.m. (from text)

One fact about RIT... We **never** run out of **free pens**.

WEDNESDAY, 3:04 p.m. (from text)

My **New Year's resolution** was going quite well, until SG decided to **hand out free waffles with Nutella, peanut butter and powdered sugar...**

THURSDAY, 11:24 p.m. (from text)

Just took an hour nap in the hallway outside a practical, finished it and left to go take another nap. **Rings**, I found out what it means to be a college student.

THURSDAY, 8:02 p.m. (from text)

First they take our **lounges**, now our **spending options...** If I didn't know better, I'd think Housing is **trying** to ruin dorm life! **R**

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charming living room
Now only Sale

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bath.
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