



# The Amplifier

Plug into news that informs and encourages

March 2017

## Call of Duty

On January 12, we held our Spring Convocation, centered on the theme of “Cultivating Critical Climate.” Our fellow students voiced the necessity of being aware of how our actions and thoughts affect our learning environment. Many of the speakers analyzed EJP’s current condition and expressed disappointment with it. Presenters recalled the EJP climate when they first joined, and voiced their concern over the detrimental effect apathy, selfishness, and cynicism are having on our program.

However, each speaker communicated hope for restoration. They issued a challenge to all those present. They challenged us to move with purpose, to protect the integrity of the program, to produce actions and attitudes that promote the evolution of the EJP universe.

So what does this mean on a practical level? David Hensley urged us to “DO SOMETHING! GET INVOLVED! WRITE A SPEECH!”

I completely agree with Mr. Hensley about getting involved and contributing a speech for future convocations, especially because for many that requires getting out of their comfort zone and confronting their fear of public speaking. We are capable of actions that will create tangible and lasting works that will have far-reaching implications.

There is a call for manuscripts for a special edition of the journal *Critical Education*, titled “Radical Departures: Ruminations on the Purpose of Higher Education in Prison.” If you don’t know what to write, they offer suggestions.

Manuscripts may examine, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- What does it mean to teach and/or learn inside prisons?**
- How can educational theory inform possibilities inside prison classrooms?**
- What does/should education mean inside prisons during hyper-incarceration?**
- What should be the purposes of higher education in prison?**
- How can/do various educational theories take root inside prison classrooms?**
- Which theoretical bodies are useful in (re)imagining and (re)engaging higher education in prison?**
- How do examples in practice provide potential for retheorization?**

The deadline for the manuscript is May 1, 2017. Completed submissions should be sent to:

**Professor Castro**  
**Department of Education, Leadership, and Policy**  
**University of Utah**  
**1721 Campus Center Drive SAEC#2220**  
**Salt Lake City, UT 84112**

Ultimately we are being asked, “Why should inmates keep receiving a free education?” We are being given an opportunity to defend our right to receive an education. Regardless of the paradigm shift in corrections concerning education, we will always face the same obstacle: a high percentage of the American population will never fully accept that convicted felons *deserve* an education. This assignment may be a little intimidating, but consider this: incarcerated students have a significant amount of experience in this matter, because of the hours . . . years . . . spent receiving instruction inside a classroom, and we have been exposed to various instructors and methods of instruction.

Since 2009 EJP has offered at least five classes centered on educational theory—most recently the *Funds of Knowledge* class. Many students have even grown weary of the topic, because someone will invariably start pontificating about critical pedagogy, quoting Paulo Freire. In no way am I trying to disparage Mr. Freire’s work—I doubt anyone who finds themselves in an oppressive condition can disagree with his theory of liberation through critical thinking; I am, however, challenging you to prove you know what the hell you are talking about. Let’s replace those hollow words, those shallow regurgitations, with the ability to apply these concepts in our lives. Show the world how EJP is applying educational theory. Show the world that even though many feel that we don’t deserve an education, we are certainly working hard to earn it.

*The Amplifier* provides us all a venue to showcase our knowledge and talent. Suspend all your preconceived notions about the newsletter, its staff, and the editorial process. Many EJP students will miss out on an opportunity to do some significant writing because of some unsubstantiated or misinformed impressions. I won’t paint an idealistic picture of what or who is involved with the newsletter. As a writer whose work has been subjected to harsh yet constructive criticism and multiple redrafts, I know it takes considerable resolve to endure the editorial process. But you either have the determination or you don’t.

We are all accountable to the many generous volunteers who sacrifice their time and effort for this program. We are all accountable to those hoping to join EJP, and to the millions of incarcerated men and women who will not receive a college education.

At the convocation Orlando Mayorga boasted about the “Golden Era” of EJP—from the stories I’ve heard, it sounded great. But I also take exception, because I believe the Golden Era is the one that I and all the new members are forging. I believe we carry the new era of excellence within us. We cannot allow our creativity, intelligence and resourcefulness to remain dormant. We can and will usher in EJP’s renaissance, but we must all answer the call of duty.

—Angel Pantoja



# WORDPLAY: A Short Introduction

The discussion of wordplay in "Weeds, Wood, and Words" (Dec. 2016 *Amplifier*) elicited interest from some EJP members. Thus this explanation of a few of the most common genres of wordplay.

Virtually all forms of wordplay originated soon after the construction of alphabets. Early on they were generally used in more serious contexts, but now they appear most often in playful or humorous applications. This is especially true of the **anagram**, which is the rearrangement of the letters in one word or phrase to construct another. So "padres," "drapes," "spared," and "parsed" are all anagrams of each other. The more logical the connection between the

arrangements, the more interesting the anagram is:

"Florence Nightingale" = "Flit on, cheering angel"

"The nudist colony" = "No untidy clothes"

"Jim Morrison" = "Mr. Mojo Risin'"

"Astronomers" = "Moon starers"

"Alec Guinness" = "Genuine class"

In the 16th and 17th centuries, religious orders found solace in hundreds of pious transformations from the Latin phrase for "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." Each of the fourteen lines in an 18<sup>th</sup>-century sonnet was an anagram of its title "Washington Crossing the Delaware." Many authors (e.g.: *Ashwin Sanghi*) have anagrammed their names into pseudonyms (*Shawn Haigins*). Today, anagrams are sometimes used as clues or answers to crossword puzzles, or as tactical tools in Scrabble. As a liberal, I find amusement in my personal discoveries: "Sarah Palin" = "Sharia plan," "Donald Trump" = "Dolt and rump," and Kellyanne Conway's phrase, "Alternative facts" = "Craft vast neat lie." Conservatives may retort "Joe Biden" = "I need job," or "Obama" = "aboma."

A phrase spelled backward is a common anagram type. A laxative touted for its gentle action got its name, "Serutan," by the spelling of "natures" in reverse. When Michael Richards ("Kramer" from *Seinfeld*) went on a racist rant at a comedy club, several wags noticed that "Kramer" is a backward "remark." Phrases that are spelled exactly the same backward as forward are **palindromes** ("a," "dad," "civic," "denned," "deified"). The best known palindrome in English refers to President Teddy Roosevelt's obsession with building the Panama Canal:

"A man, a plan, a canal, Panama!"

And here are three that are grammatically correct sentences:

"Go hang a salami; I'm a lasagna hog."

"Rats live on no evil star."

"Ma is as selfless as I am."

Numbers work too ("1991," "2002"), as does reversing the order of words (rather than letters) in the phrase:

"You can cage a swallow, can't you, but you can't swallow a cage, can you?"

Some phrases read the same upside down ("pod," "NOON," "986"), or when reflected in a mirror, either from the side ("bid") or from above ("HOCKED," "308"), but these are not true palindromes.

The phrase "Chicago Anti-Violence Education" has "CAVE" as its acronym. The phrase and its acronym together, displayed crossword-style, is an **acrostic**. Several Old Testament psalms

(including 111, 112, 119, and 145), were constructed as acrostics in the original Hebrew, and the same is true of a good many poems. And when Lee Iacocca was named chairman at Chrysler, someone noticed this: "I **A**m Chairman **O**f **C**hrysler

**C**orporation, **A**merica."

Puzzles are often made of acrostics. Clues are given for the horizontal words only. When those are entered, their first letters form a vertical word which answers the puzzle. Sometimes, two or more vertical words are formed (see the **triple acrostics** in the box at left and in this issue's Enigma).

**Pangrams** are sentences that contain every letter in the alphabet at least once. All practicing typists have encountered this one:

"The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog."

At twenty-eight letters, maybe the shortest pangram in English is:

"Waltz, bad nymph, for quick jigs vex."

And then there is this marvel, which took a fellow named Lee Sallows months to calculate:

"This pangram contains four a's, one b, two c's, one d, thirty e's, six f's, five g's, seven h's, eleven i's, one j, one k, two l's, two m's, eighteen n's, fifteen o's, two p's, one q, five r's, twenty-seven s's, eighteen t's, two u's, seven v's, eight w's, two x's, three y's, & one z."

The **double entendre** is a phrase with more than one reasonable meaning. Newspapers desperately try to avoid them, especially in the form of unintentionally ambiguous headlines. Here are some of their amusing mistakes. If you don't see both interpretations immediately, it is worth your time to look again:

"Man Eating Piranha Mistakenly Sold as Pet Fish"

"Woman Off To Jail For Sex With Boys"

"Nineteen Feet Broken in Pole Vault"

"Tuna Biting Off Washington Coast"

"Prostitutes appeal to Pope"

Published after the U. S. Supreme Court stayed a serial killer's execution, this headline is a personal favorite:

"Bundy Beats Latest Date With Chair"

Lastly, **writing with constraints** is a catch-all class of wordplay containing an infinity of varying stipulations such as rhyming all word pairs, avoiding all long words, using only unusual words such as "zax" or "qi," and so on. In this group, **anglo-saxon** is an uncommonly difficult constraint to maintain for long. Without divulging just what anglo-saxon is, I am now constructing *this paragraph* within its bounds. If you know that, you should look for curious phrasing or unusual grammar. Without that tip, though, you would probably dismiss any oddity you found as an artifact of my idiosyncratic way with words. Usually, writing bound by constraint has *invisibility* as its tacit goal. Words should flow smoothly so as to avoid prompting any suspicion of untoward things occurring out of sight. How am I doing so far? Upon arriving at this paragraph's closing words, do you know what constraint anglo-saxon is imposing on my writing? In short, what is anglo-saxon?

The answer to that question will be posted on the bulletin boards with the answer to this month's Enigma.

—Edward Viens

Most examples in "Wordplay" are from Douglas R. Hofstadter's *Le Ton beau de Marot* (EJP library), with a few from *Ultimate Reference* (on EJP computers). Acrostic psalm examples come from Prof. Anema of the Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary.

↓ ↓ ↓	<b>ACROSS CLUES:</b>
R O W E R S	← Galley Power
O L I V E S	← Small Fruits
N U L L A H	← Ravine
A S S I G N	← Earmark
L O O F A H	← Sponge Type
D I N I N G	← Eating
(The bold columns name a president.)	



# What's in the Box?

"WHAT THE FRACK!"

Literal Lawless screams in his head with the piercing sound of a spoiled and angry teen. It's late afternoon, turning dark early, and the mailperson hasn't arrived yet.

Lawless is more than nervous now; he's scared, scared like a toddler who wandered away from her parents in a crowded mall during the Christmas holiday season. The only difference between the child and Lawless is that his face is absent of any tears and dried up snot bubbles. But their anxiety levels match in full proportion.

As he paces back and forth from the window pane, sweat oozes from his pores, his mouth dries, and his lips become super-white as if he kissed an elementary school chalkboard. He pulls the curtain back once more and observes the mailman parking a worn-down US Postal Service vehicle at the end of the block. Lawless smiles weirdly, rubs his hands together, then removes from his body an extremely tight Hooters t-shirt that has been saturated with sweat and worry.

"AAAhhhh!!! Why didn't I try harder!" He yells out loud as the postman nears his home.

If you thought those words applied to the coming package you'd be dead wrong. He looked down at his stomach and squeezed about ten pounds of pork meat with his left hand.

"Ding Dong"

The bell rings and Lawless runs to the kitchen counter and grabs his house keys.

"What do I need these for?!" He bellows out loud as he places them back on the island and bolts for the front door.

He snatches the door open with the strength of two men, startling the hoary-headed mailman.

"Son, is you alright?" Mr. Mailman says as Lawless attempts to catch breath.

"Yes... UUUhhaaa, UUUhhaaa, I'm fine... UUUhhaaa, UUUhhaaa..."

"Are you Mister Lawless?"

"UUUmmmhuh... UUUhhaaa, UUUhhaa."

"Then sign right here."

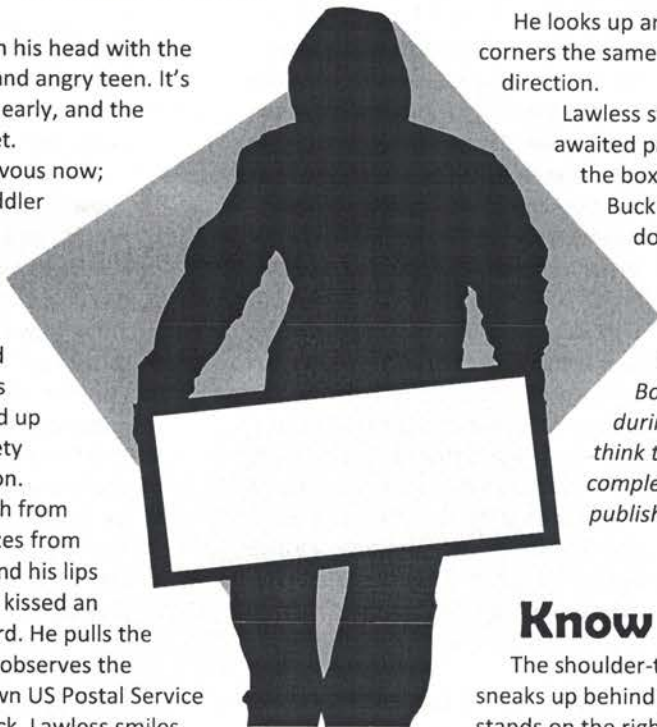
The mailman places an electronic clipboard on top of a 3' by 3' box wrapped in aluminum-colored paper.

Lawless grabs the box, slams the door in the man's face, then bites down on his teeth and screams "THANK YOU!" through the keyhole, attempting to nullify his rudeness.

"It's not as heavy as I thought," Lawless thinks out loud to no one in particular.

He places the box at the head of his mother-of-pearl Victorian style dining-room table. He pulls out the cushioned chair, sits down, and rests his body before the package.

Exhaling, Lawless bows his head and mumbles something, as if a prayer of thanksgiving was being made for the Theory of Evolution.



He looks up and rubs his special delivery, caressing the corners the same way a blind man uses the wall in his home for direction.

Lawless stands at attention while opening the long-awaited package with gentle care. He pulls off the top of the box. Simultaneously, his eyes go big like a white Buck Wheat, and his mouth gapes open as he stares down upon the contents.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

—Raylan Gilford

*Mr. Gilford's flash-fiction piece, "What's in the Box?" was developed from a writing exercise during an Amplifier staff meeting. Readers who think they know what's in the box are encouraged to complete the tale and submit the conclusion to be published in a future edition of The Amplifier.*

## Know What I'm Tired of?

The shoulder-touching joke. You know, the one where a guy sneaks up behind you and taps you on your left shoulder but stands on the right side of your body. So naturally, you'll look over your left shoulder and no one is standing there. Then you will rightfully gaze over to your right and there's the culprit smiling like,

"AAAHa I got you."

How is that funny? And why is there an unwritten social rule which stipulates that I have to laugh or smile in kind, even if I am annoyed by the shoulder-touching comedy?

This joke is not funny any longer, and it hasn't been for some time now, So Stop.

Now for those of you who continue to engage in such vexing buffoonery after being forewarned of its irritation, I'ma start me a joke. The next time you tap one of my shoulders I'ma swing back with my elbow to the opposite side of my body as hard as I can and maybe cluck you in the top of your head. 'Cause you was supposed to be on the other side. Now that's funny, ain't it?

I am not advocating pseudo-violence in any way; actually, I'm attempting to pursue peace with my sarcasm. So please stop touching my shoulder, it's not funny any longer. If you want to get my attention just call my name.

—Angry Aaron (R.G.)

## Attention

The Chicago/Community Anti-Violence Education Initiative (C.A.V.E.) is looking for EJP students interested in joining group discussions about trauma and violence, aimed toward individual and community healing. Interested students should submit a 250-500 word essay explaining their interest and relevant knowledge, experience, and qualifications they believe support their application. Since we ask for a two-year commitment as a C.A.V.E. facilitator, applicants should have at least that much time remaining on their sentence. We also ask for an additional one year or more using the skills honed in C.A.V.E. after release from prison. Applications are due in the EJP suggestion boxes by March 17.



NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

## REALITY IS BROKEN



Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World

JANE MCGONIGAL

Jane McGonigal has a PhD in Performance studies from the University of California at

Berkeley and is a Research Director at the Institute for the Future. *Reality is Broken* is a result of ten years of research in game design, more specifically how well-designed games can have an impact in the real world. In each of the fourteen chapters, McGonigal gives a reason why games are better than reality. She uses examples of real games—from *Tetris* to *World of Warcraft*—to better illustrate her arguments. But she doesn't just skim the surface, she delves into the psychological and physiological reasons why games are so rewarding. And like all good research, she links her ideas to the works of others—whether they are simply someone writing about the unexpected impact that a game had on their life, or a serious evaluator of some particular aspect of the game industry. You can't escape the sense that McGonigal has really done the research and knows what she is talking about, which makes it all the more compelling.

In the first part of this book, McGonigal explains why games are so alluring, and why we collectively spend billions of hours a week playing them. What do we get out of them? Most people would answer, "entertainment." But we get significantly more than that. According to McGonigal, "all of the neurological and physiological systems that underlie happiness—our attention systems, our reward center, our motivation systems, our emotion and memory centers—are fully activated by gameplay." Furthermore, "when we're in a concentrated state of optimistic engagement, it suddenly becomes biologically more possible for us to think positive thoughts, to make social connections, and to build personal

strengths." But those are really side-benefits, not the main reason we flock to games in droves. Two of the main reasons we play games are the opportunity to work at the limit of our abilities, and the sense of accomplishment we get when we achieve something. McGonigal calls these things "flow" and "fiero." We experience flow when we're "in the zone," when we're single-mindedly focused on some task to the extent that the rest of the world seems to disappear and time has no meaning. Fiero is that feeling of triumph over adversity—that moment when you throw your arms over your head and yell. These intrinsic emotional rewards we get from games are something we are not getting from real life. This is why we are spending so much time playing games.

In Part 2 of the book, titled "Reinventing Reality," McGonigal shows how games are being brought into reality in order to give us a different perspective and make life a bit more interesting. Her first example is the alternate-reality game *Chore Wars*, which is brilliantly designed to get families and roommates to compete with one another to do chores. More examples of games are provided throughout this section of the book—games designed to motivate us to do things we know we should do, but lack motivation for. McGonigal also talks about how one of her ideas inspired not quite a game, but what she says is "more like a *gesture* toward a game." Her idea: what if we could level-up in real life like characters do in games like *World of Warcraft*? This idea was presented at a speech she gave at SXSW\* on the topic of "the failures of the real world to be as engaging as a good game, and what we could do to fix it." This idea inspired Clay Johnson, director emeritus of Sunlight Labs, to create the website [plusoneme.com](http://plusoneme.com), which allows people to give other people +1s for things like strength, creativity, intelligence, generosity, listening, and dozens of other personal strengths. For anyone who creates a profile on the website, it tracks all their +1s, allowing them to accumulate over time to show how they're leveling-up in

life. (It has also inspired me to do something similar in our computer lab—look for a program called PlusOneMe soon.)

The last part of this book is titled "How Very Big Games Can Change the World," and this is where McGonigal presents some mind-blowing ideas. In this part of the book, McGonigal talks about how gamers are already highly socially collaborative people on the Internet, and how they regularly tackle epic-scale projects. She then argues that finding ways to put their efforts to use in a way that has real-world impact can produce truly epic results. The first example of this is a game that was created to use crowdsourcing to investigate a massive political scandal in the UK. Following that is a game called *Free Rice* which is designed to help feed hungry people across the world and shows how good game design and real-world results can move mountains (of rice). Some of the examples of games in this part of the book are not just inspiring, they're *moving*. In particular, the story about the latte wish is a beautiful anecdote about a game designed to bringing people together to selflessly help one another in times of need. McGonigal goes on to detail how games today are training a new generation of people with beyond master-level abilities and how those abilities could be put to use to solve daunting problems like climate change and world hunger. What is needed are well-designed programs that incorporate all the motivations and rewards that we get from good games. This is already happening with games like *Free Rice* and others; now we need more of them, and more ambitious ones.

—Josh Walbert

\*SXSW (South by South West) is a collection of artists, musicians, technologists, and media-makers. It is a non-mainstream event where people give speeches/presentations on new ideas.



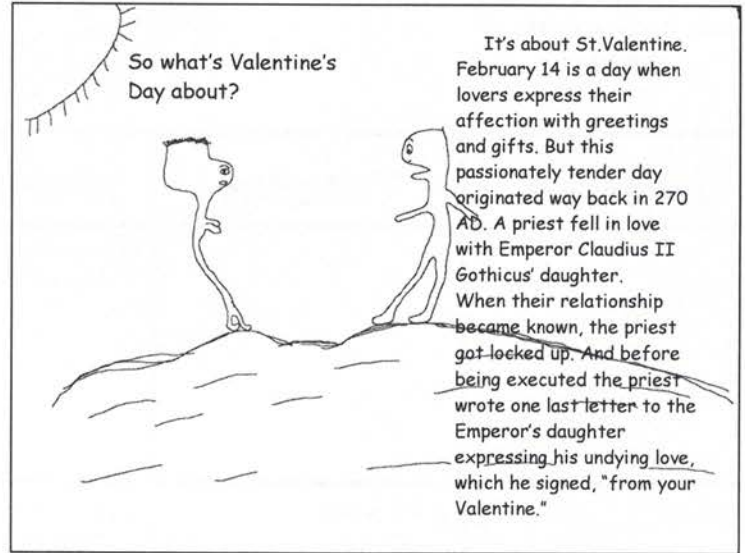
## Erk and Jerk By Raylan Gilford

*The Amplifier* is a publication by the students of the Education Justice Project, a unit of the University of Illinois, at Danville Correctional Center in Illinois.

Managing editor: Michael Lawless  
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 Copy editor: Terrance Hanson  
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 EJP advisor: Copenhaver Cumpston

Letters to the editor may be submitted within Danville to the Suggestion Box in the EJP library; or submitted by mail to EJP, 403 E. Healey Street, Champaign, IL 61820.

Text is typeset in Microsoft Word in Calibri, designed by Lucas De Groot in 2002. Headlines are in Berlin Sans designed by David Berlow for Font Bureau. Printed in the EJP computer resource room, and scanned for electronic posting on the EJP website.



## Submission Guidelines

Comments and submissions may be addressed to *The Amplifier* and placed in the EJP suggestion box or handed to Ms. Cumpston or a member of *The Amplifier* editorial staff.

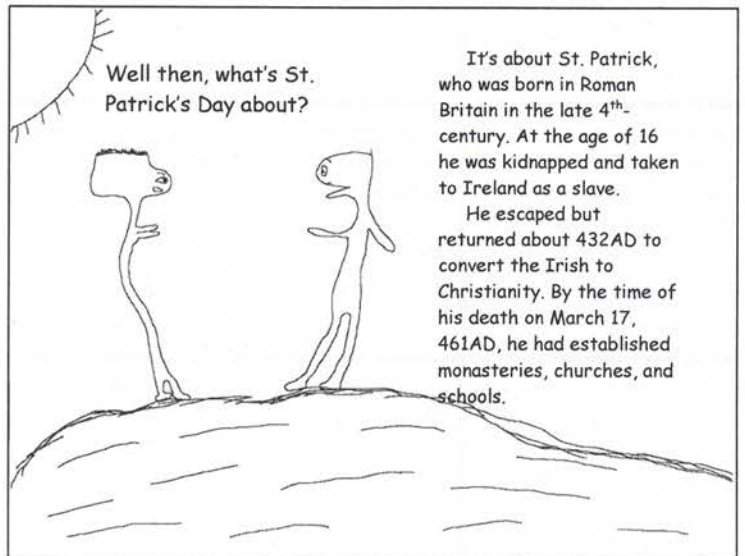
Submissions may be in any legible format.

Submissions will be selected for publication according to:

- 1) EJP values and standards as outlined in the EJP handbook
- 2) Editorial needs

Submissions will be edited for clarity, length, and technical issues, using the *Chicago Manual of Style* and AP guidelines as authoritative. When possible, editing will be done in cooperation with the author, and greater latitude will be given to creative/personal pieces.

The deadline for the May issue is March 31.

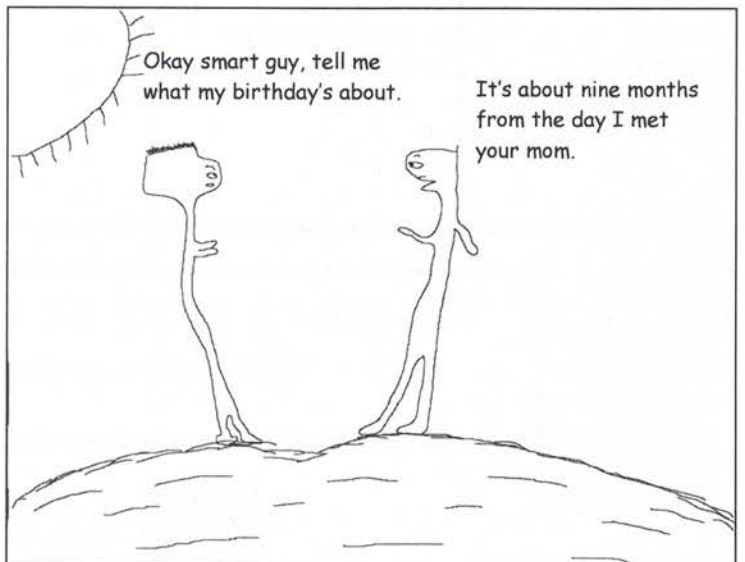
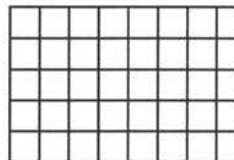


## EDDIE'S ENIGMAS—EJP ACROSTIC

A clue is given for each across answer to the left of its row. When the answers are entered correctly, the **first column** will contain a name, and the **fifth and sixth columns** will contain an attribute of the named person (the other columns will not necessarily contain words). All across words, except for one contraction, are in the *Scrabble Dictionary, 5th Edition*.

Rating = ●●●○○

Imposed A Tax  
 Rootlike Structures  
 Malnourished  
 Spike Lee's "\_\_\_\_\_ Blues"  
 Celebration Gear



# March

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		5p Workshop: Soils & Plants	1 8:30a Workshop: What Makes You Tick 11:30a Workshop: Engineering 5p Mindfulness	2 9a Newsletter 9a CAVE 5p For-credit courses: 396 Russian Revolution 350 Intro to African Art 420 Journalism 486 Linguistics
5p WAMP	6 8:30a Python 11:30a SRR 5p Language Partners 5p WAMP 6p Advising	7 5p Workshop: Psychology	8 8:30a Workshop: What Makes You Tick 5p Language Partners 5p Mindfulness	9 9a Newsletter 9a CAVE 5p For-credit courses: 396 Russian Revolution 350 Intro to African Art 420 Journalism 486 Linguistics
5p Teaching Partners Training 5p WAMP 6p Advising: Financial Aid	13 8:30a Pit Crew 11:30a SRR 5p Language Partners 5p WAMP	14 5p Workshop: Psychology	15 5p Language Partners 5p Mindfulness	16 9a Newsletter 9a CAVE 5p For-credit courses: 396 Russian Revolution 350 Intro to African Art 420 Journalism 486 Linguistics
6p Library Work	20 11:30a SRR 6p Advising	21 5p Workshop: Psychology	22 8:30a Workshop: What Makes You Tick 5p Mindfulness	23 9a Newsletter 9a CAVE <b>SPRING BREAK— NO CLASSES</b>
5p Teaching Partners Training (Classroom) 5p WAMP 6p Advising	27 11:30a SRR 5p Language Partners 5p WAMP	28 5p Workshop: Small Business	29 8:30a Workshop: What Makes You Tick 11:30a Python 5p Language Partners 5p Mindfulness	30 9a Newsletter 9a CAVE 5p For-credit courses: 396 Russian Revolution 350 Intro to African Art 420 Journalism 486 Linguistics
				31 9a Newsletter 9a CAVE 5p For-credit courses: 396 Russian Revolution 350 Intro to African Art 420 Journalism 486 Linguistics

EJP ACROSTIC HINT:  
Some across answers are  
two-word phrases.

Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes  
from one generation to another.

G. K. Chesterton (1874 - 1936)