In 1898, Arizona State University (at the time named the Arizona Normal School) built Old Main. For many years, it was the largest building in the Valley. Pen sketch by Mariel Piechowicz.
the normal school review

the labor issue

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The Normal School Review is a semesterly magazine for the members of the New American University. Each issue provokes conversation through the inquisitive and artistic exploration of the complexities of everyday life.

The Normal School Review is student-run. Views expressed in the magazine do not reflect those of the administration. Contact the editors at normalschoolreview@gmail.com.

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Drucker graduated ASU in 2014 with BFAs in drawing and printmaking.
Dear reader,

Welcome to the Normal School Review, a magazine named in jest one December evening, while the editors were sitting on the curb of Normal Avenue and Apache Road. We are here to examine issues, but by no means are we seeking to prescribe answers. We wish to offer a space away from the glowing screen lights—a space where writers can share their views on a topic, and you, dear reader, can put on their glasses for a moment. Choose to break the glasses, keep them on, or find new ones.

Writing about labor is something we know little about. Yes, many of us work 30-hour weeks while studying until early in the morning, but we work with the aim of some other plans. Picking up your dirty dishes and pouring your coffee is not my final place in society—or, at least, that is what we are told.

We are bombarded with fliers to “better ourselves.” Go to graduate school. Go to law school. Apply for that internship. Teach English in a foreign country. Spread the good word. These calls to action create a bureaucratic necessity of more official titles to combat rising inequality.

I may look up at our under-funded programs in the LL building cursing the million-dollar horse statues outside W.P. Carey. Yet, I recognize the irony and privilege of my seat. Make no mistake: I climb the ivory tower; I engage in systematic isolation by way of politically correct phrases and theoretical structures adding justification to the banality of my life.

I recognize the irony in a handful of college students writing about topics that are seemingly disjointed from their own realities. However, these issues—labor unions, prisons, and low-wage workers—are reflections of our own lifestyles. While we feed this system—that is more than easily critiqued—this same system gives birth to art and expression.

Normality is a delusion proliferated by the mass media based on some higher ground of falsified morality. We do not seek to feed you some standard way of life or some answer to the world’s problems. We’re a handful of students (by all means, please join us) asking questions.

Question the norm. Question the practices. Question the system.

Thank you to Barrett, the Honors College at ASU for offering support in such a project. Thank you to the staff, writers, and artists, without whom none of this would be possible. And above all, thank you, dear reader. Please enjoy.

Sincerely,
Shelby Stringer, Editor-in-Chief
At 33.4172° north, 11.9365° west, a paradise springs from the desert. Across a spacious 642 acres, you’ll find lush hidden gardens, rows of palms swaying in the sun, nine coffee shops, expansive lawns, and more! All this can be yours if you apply to Arizona State University.

ASU sprawls across four satellites, but Tempe is our crown jewel. In Tempe, we’ve got a beautiful campus teeming with grand buildings that date back to the 19th century and ones that just opened their doors a few months ago. If you don’t look too closely, you won’t see what’s lurking under the surface. Let’s look closely.

**work in progress**

Our glittering masterpiece is an eternal work in progress. Dust still hangs in the air from the recently erected College Avenue Commons, but within the next year, ASU will tentatively begin work on two new major construction projects—the Student Pavilion along Orange Mall and the renovation of Sun Devil Pleasure Dome—err, Stadium.

The 78,800 gross square foot Student Pavilion, which will take the place of the Undergraduate Student Services building on Orange Mall, is planned to house a 1,500-seat event space for comedy shows, films, speakers, concerts, etc., as well as office space for student organizations and academic departments.

As Patrick Daly, Associate Director and Senior Architect for the Office of University Architect, notes, the Pavilion “really addresses...”
a need that isn't very well addressed on the Tempe campus—which is a flexible venue for events with 1,000 people or so. The porridge isn't just right: Gammage is too big and the lower level of the Memorial Union is too small. This, I think, addresses that need of trying to get the student body to stay on campus, to attend common events, and to congeal into a lively campus environment."

The Pavilion, with an estimated price tag of $36.5 million, will certainly be a nice bowl of porridge. Granted, the project will no doubt achieve the goals of the university to improve freshmen retention rates by giving the university a place to host jazzy events that make freshmen want to hang around. To boot, the Pavilion is the first step in turning that eyesore of asphalt that is Orange Mall into the “main street” of campus and a more pedestrian friendly experience.

The other, more high profile project is the renovation of Sun Devil Stadium. However, that remains somewhat shrouded in mystery, as the vast administrative forces are still talking things over. With an estimated cost of $256 million, it’s no wonder nobody wants to say exactly what the renovation will entail when it’s still so early in the planning stages.

These two behemoths are just the tip of the iceberg. There’s the $129 million Arizona Center for Law & Society underway on the downtown campus and the $22 million ASU will spend on building infrastructure enhancements and academic renovations in the coming years, according to the Capital Improvement Plan (FY) 2016-2018.

ASU’s binge on construction projects keeps pace with enrollment numbers. “It has changed rapidly in the seven years that I’ve been here … it’s extraordinary. Every time I think ASU has been slowing down, I’ve been mistaken; it’s been speeding up,” Daly said.

Such grandiose construction projects will fit in quite nicely with Downtown Tempe’s visions of a more mature, gentrified Tempe of gleaming lofts and wine bars. The rebranding of the Mill Avenue District as Downtown Tempe by a private non-profit, however, is a can of worms we just don’t have time to get into now.

After taking note of all these large, abstract numbers, the obvious question that comes to mind is how the heck is all this paid for? The answer—like anything involving bulking bureaucratic systems—is complicated. To figure out who winds up footing the bill, let’s start with two common modes of financing these projects before we arrive at the inevitable conclusion (hint: it involves large sums of debt and rising tuition).

the buddy system

Old-fashioned corporate partnerships enable a considerable degree of ASU’s expansion. Take into consideration ASU’s recently announced partnership with Catellus—a national real estate development firm—to redevelop the 330-acre University Athletics Facilities District along Tempe Town Lake into The District, an oasis of consumption and luxury apartments. This is not to be confused with The District near Apache and Rural, or any of the other consumer havens called the District that litter the Phoenix metro area. Catellus is privately owned, so they are not required to disclose their profits; however, to give one an idea of what league Catellus bats in, Catellus recently merged with another real estate development firm, ProLogis, in a $5 billion deal whereby Catellus’ industrial assets were added to ProLogis’ already staggering industrial portfolio—valued at $51.1 billion. ProLogis posted $1.6 billion in revenues in 2013. These are not small corporate fish by any means.

Over the next 10-20 years, Catellus will utilize ample resources to erect a massive oasis for consumers and multi-family residences that will “demonstrate the future of creative urban neighborhood design,” according to a brochure handed out during the announcement of the partnership in October. This creative urban design will likely include multiple corporate retail options and at least one Starbucks. That is, of course, all speculation, for ASU and Catellus are just beginning the planning stages of The District.

As ASU President Michael Crow noted at announcement of this partnership, “we need a funding source to maintain fantastic, world-class athletic facilities for Sun Devil Athletics.” By allowing Catellus to build to their heart’s content on ASU land, a stream of revenue will make its way to such projects—like the slated renovation of Sun Devil Stadium. In 2010, Arizona legislators created the opportunity for special revenue districts on land owned by state-supported universities. This legislation allows these districts to impose an assessment, in place of property taxes, to be used to improve and build athletic facilities. Essentially, both Catellus and ASU will waltz away profiting from this deal. This buddy up of profit-making entities and public institutions is by no means a new fad.

ASU cozied up with American Campus Communities (ACC) and Aramark to help shoulder the $140 million cost of building Tempe’s Barrett campus back in 2007. While ASU put up $3.8 million, Aramark—the main food service provider for ASU (and an entirely different Pandora’s box, which we just don’t have time to get into now)—pitched in $5 million for the dining hall and ACC helped out with the rest. ACC is also behind the construction of Vista Del Sol—which, in conjunction with Barrett, provides 3,987 beds to our growing populous.

Partnerships like these are surprisingly helpful for ASU, as corporations like ACC agree to absorb the bulk of development costs in exchange for profit potential. And, boy, do they rake it in at Vista Del Sol—where a four-bedroom apartment costs $2,676 a month (each separately leased bedroom costs $669). The majority of ASU’s construction endeavors, however, are not funded through corporate partnerships like these; they are financed through the creation of debt.
The great spending problem

ASU’s outstanding debt at the end of fiscal year (FY) 2014 was a whopping $1.24 billion, according to the Capital Improvement Plan. New buildings (see: the Student Pavilion) and large-scale renovations (see: Sun Devil Stadium) at ASU are most commonly financed through the issuance of this debt, i.e. through revenue bonds and certificates of participation, as noted by Dr. Morgan R. Olsen, executive vice president, treasurer and chief financial officer at ASU. The typical ASU student’s eyes may widen at such a large number, but allow the picture to expand to the public university system across the United States before pointing any accusatory pitchforks. As you’ll find, ASU is a surprisingly modest player in an arms race of amenities driving public and private universities deep into the red.

In the last decade, public college and university debt near tripled from $54 billion to $151 billion. ASU’s $1.24 billion in debt seems like a paltry sum in the shadow of the University of California system’s $14.5 billion or even Harvard’s $6 billion (as of 2012). But, hey, at least universities have yet to top the debt of students—which continues to balloon past $1 trillion.

The accumulation of debt is no surprise, when the average state funding for public higher education has been cut nearly 10 percent since 2008. Arizona, a national leader in the disinvestment of public education, cut a third of its funding since 2009. Alongside rapid tuition increases, universities attempt to close this gap by borrowing money—a situation no doubt familiar to students faced with signing up for yet another loan to fund their college education.

Unfortunately, a great deal of this borrowed money does not even flow directly into enhancing the academic experience on campus. According to research compiled by Charlie Eaton and Jacob Habinnek from the University of California, Berkeley, this money usually goes to fund “amenities” construction projects—often lumped under the umbrella term “auxiliary spending”—that do not directly influence the quality of education received by students.

Let’s take a quick tour of some of the luxurious auxiliary amenities public universities have been building to shoot down their competition. In June, the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents approved what is estimated to be a $370 million renovation of their Oklahoma Memorial Stadium, which will be furnished with an 8,750-square foot video board and 69 more

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1 System revenue bond: n.
A municipal bond supported by the revenue from a specific project, such as public university construction project. Revenue bonds are municipal bonds that finance income-producing projects. Typically, they can be issued by any government agency (or, in our case, a public university) or fund that is run in the manner of a business. The income generated by these projects pays revenue bondholders their interest and principal—in a certain period of time, which can range from 20 to 30 years (courtesy of Investopedia).

2 Certificate of participation (COP): n.
A type of financing where an investor purchases a share of the lease revenues of a program rather than the bond being secured by those revenues. The authority usually uses the proceeds to construct a facility that is leased to the municipality, releasing the municipality from restrictions on the amount of debt that they can incur (courtesy of Investopedia).
point of sales for concessions. The University of Iowa just completed an estimated $53 million campus recreation center—outfitted with 18 foot diving benches and a lazy river. Not to be outdone, Louisiana State University will open a much larger lazy river that spells out LSU in 2016. In 2015, North Dakota State will break ground on a grand facility, which will include a zip line, a 36-foot-diameter vortex of swirling water as well as a recessed fireplace on an island in the middle of a pool. The recreation center at Auburn University in Alabama just might take the cake, though, with its 45-person paw-print-shaped hot tub. You’ve got to wonder how students study around all this water.

Universities across the country, in effect, are waging the unsafe bet that by building new sources of revenue through the issuance of debt, they invest in future streams of income and growth. This is all part of a cutthroat college arms race, with each university touting its palatial fitness complexes with rooftop pools and accredited business schools in a never-ending game of one-upmanship to attract more talented and/or wealthier students.

Borrowing Against the Future by Eaton, Habinek, Cyrus Dioun, Daniela García Santibáñez Godoy, Adam Goldstein, and Robert-Osley Thomas throws out this illuminating statistic in regard to auxiliary spending: from 2002 to 2012, public research universities inflated spending on auxiliary services by 20 percent. These institutions “are hoping to translate this auxiliary spending into higher rankings or more prestige, which can hopefully bring in money from donations, research grants, and more,” Josh Freedman says in The Hidden College Problem.

A fun example of how such visions of grandeur can go awry is UC Berkeley’s
When the bill for school rises and sources of financial aid cannot pay for the mounting sticker price of an education, students are forced to do the same thing the universities do: incur debt.

who ends up paying for paradise?

The student body shoulders some of the costs of this relentless construction binge. As any economics student will tell you, debt needs to be repaid—with interest. Interest payments on debt incurred by public universities across the country doubled from $6 billion to $11 billion from 2002 to 2012, according to Borrowing Against the Future. As the same report notes, this breaks down to about $909 per enrolled student at public universities in 2012.

One might wonder: where does all this money come from at ASU? Dr. Olsen has part of the answer: “Principal and interest are paid annually on the outstanding debt, funded from a variety of sources, including support provided by the State of Arizona through appropriations to ASU and allocation of lottery revenue, and ASU sources such as tuition and housing revenue.” Thankfully, ASU is only responsible for roughly 20 percent of its annual debt service (which totaled out to $107 million in FY 2014), as Arizona picks up the rest of the tab with state lottery revenue.

At the public universities of Virginia, students are forced to pay a much heftier share of the debt service. A 150-page investigative report on the debt of Virginia’s public universities compiled by Virginia’s Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission reveals that students pay 90 percent of the debt service on $3.5 billion worth of bonds taken out in the past decade—all to fund 207 auxiliary projects. In the race to stockpile fancier dorms and recreation centers, average auxiliary spending at these universities increased $821 a student, while money spent on financial aid, instruction, and academic support actually decreased from 2001-2011. Inevitably, larger portions of tuition at these universities go towards paying for debt.

It’s not like these tuition rates remain stagnant, either. It’s simple logic to draw a link between the rapid rise of debt at public universities across the country and skyrocketing tuition rates—especially in light of the fact that instructional spending across the country has, in fact, decreased 1 percent per student from 2002 to 2012, according to Borrowing Against the Future.

If the price of educating students remains relatively stagnant, why has average tuition and fees at public universities increased 56 percent from $5,011 to $7,824 a year between 2002 and 2010? For the folks at ASU, tuition for the 2014-2015 school year is $9,484, but this figure does not include the bevy of fees slapped on to that bill. The price out of state students pay jumps up to $24,503 a year.

When the bill for school rises and sources of financial aid cannot pay for the mounting sticker price of an education, students are forced to do the same thing the universities do: incur debt. The Institute of College Access and Success notes that student debt at graduation hit an average of $21,605 per student in 2010. It’s a frightening commonality between students and the institutions they attend, especially when neither the rise of tuition rates nor the number of new buildings on campus seem likely to slow anytime soon.

the mirage

Public universities are, technically speaking, not a business. “We don’t seek profits, we don’t seek financial outcomes. We mea-
sure our success based on our knowledge product—the quality of our graduates, the knowledge of our graduates, the quality of our ideas and the impact of our ideas,” President Crow said at the announcement of the partnership that will give rise to The District. However, with all this chit-chat about the fierce competition that has public universities shelling out tens of millions of dollars to build bigger and better everything to attract more students and elbow out the competition, it certainly seems like public universities have at least adopted the ideology of the corporate world—where relentless expansion (frequently funded by corporate interests) is coveted. ASU, while a comparably modest player in this madness, is still a participating member. It seems to be a race with no way out and no end in sight.

Public universities across the country have entered a gilded age, where extravagant fitness complexes and glittering residence halls mask a growing pile of debt—for both the universities and students. This mirage is problematic for many reasons, including the unsustainability of accumulating heaps of debt to finance unending construction projects, especially when this debt often trickles down to the final bill footed by students. When only 38 percent of ASU students graduate within four years, and the ones that do graduate leave saddled with debt, we’ve got a more serious problem on our hands than whether or not our gym has a meditation room. Thankfully, as Daly notes, “we don’t necessarily do things the way they’ve always been done just because they’ve always been done that way. I think that President Crow has provided some space throughout the institution to think differently, to ask questions, to challenge assumptions.” It’s time to ask some questions. This problem is not just ASU’s; it’s an illogical and harmful ideology of keeping up with the Joneses that has become embedded in how universities in America work. Someone has to pay the price for building paradise.
I remember the summers of early childhood with my mother. The sounds of the Cure and Prince still bring back memories of watching her get ready for an evening out. I was fascinated by her grown-up youthfulness, and I wondered what she did after late August when she left for months at a time to attend school.

I was raised by my grandparents but born the daughter of a woman only sixteen years my elder. My experience as her child has compelled me to learn the stories of families that were formed under similar circumstances. For the past year, I have been meeting, interviewing, and photographing women who began motherhood as teens and their families. Through this project, they have offered me descriptions of diverse situations encountered after the birth of their children.

For some, teen pregnancy was confusing and alienating, for others it was an opportunity for new beginnings. I have learned that no one’s story is the same, and that young motherhood brings both difficulty and joy to the families I’ve spoken with. Many women juggle some combination of a career, school, community service, and dating in addition to raising children. Whether married or single, holding a GED or bachelor’s degree, working as a business owner or a homemaker, each mother has a very different story from the next. By bringing together the experiences of mothers that share the commonality of teen pregnancy at different life stages, this project intends to develop a narrative about family that is not yet represented. The following are stories I’ve gathered and photographs I’ve taken of families that began earlier than expected.
She got pregnant at seventeen. I remember I went to high school with her. During the beginning of our senior year she started to show, but we all dismissed it as weight gain—someone as smart as Natalia couldn’t be pregnant, right? Finally, there was no hiding it. She told her friends that she was graduating a semester early, and would have Grace in January.

Natalia wanted to continue school, but in the beginning she was just trying to figure out motherhood. For the majority of the last four years, Natalia has lived with her mother, her daughter, and two younger siblings. Her mother works, while Natalia stays at home to watch the children. Grace is incredibly intelligent, just like her mother. She can carry on conversations with adults with the eloquence of a child well beyond her years. Natalia jokes that she’s worked hard to teach Grace proper grammar and sentence structure because she’s the only one she talks to all day, but her investment in her daughter is apparent.

It’s hard to remember the teenage girl that liked to go out and party with her friends. She says that she doesn’t know where she’d be without Grace, and that her daughter gave her life a direction to go in. Since high school, Natalia has tried to fit in classes that will lead to a nursing certificate. Finally able to enroll Grace in her college’s daycare program, she has had more opportunities to focus on school than in the past.
Mandy expected to deliver her son after she graduated high school, in the fall of 2010. Instead, Izahya came in the last semester of her last year, only 25 weeks old.

For Mandy, being a young mother was the least of her problems. In March, she was flown from Yuma Regional Medical Center to a hospital in Phoenix to deliver her son. He was just over one pound and was not breathing. Although he was revived, she was unable take him home for six months because he was in such a fragile state. Mandy was reminded over and over again to prepare herself for the passing of her son, as his caretakers in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit believed he would not survive. The stress of this made it impossible for her to complete her senior year of high school as planned. Izahya was diagnosed with Hydrocephalus, a condition that causes water to retain in the skull. With the help of a shunt, he was able to finally return home with his mom and grandmother.

Izahya and Mandy are fighters. Both have been through so much to ensure that he is making progress. Even after he contracted Meningitis, again expected not to make it through the illness, they stayed strong. Mandy has been able to care for her son with extensive support from her family. Inspired by the help she received during her son’s time in the NICU, she is returning to school to get her GED in November and hopes to pursue a future in social work. Izahya is continually making progress through physical and speech therapy.
Sarah & Cady

Sarah is a recent ASU graduate, receiving a BFA in Theatre. She works full-time and does freelance modeling and acting on the side. Cady is a chatty six-year-old that started school a year early, and is now in the first grade. She enjoys dressing up as a warrior princess, sometimes trying to wear multiple tiaras at once on top of a knight's helmet. They currently live with Sarah's boyfriend's family, and hope to relocate to Los Angeles, California in the near future to pursue careers in the entertainment industry.

Sarah got pregnant at the end of her sophomore year of high school. Her pregnancy was difficult, and she was out sick for much of the school year. However, she managed to pull through and graduate on time and began attending ASU shortly thereafter. With her strong will and the support of her mother, she completed her degree within four years, while raising her daughter and freelancing to supplement their income.

Both Sarah and Cady have vibrant personalities, and it's fascinating to watch them interact. It is easy to see their similarities, both in appearance and in their character. They enjoy staying busy, and between five golden retrievers, a garden full of fruits and vegetables, beekeeping, traveling, and, of course work and school, they've managed to begin very fulfilling lives for themselves.
Fourteen years ago, Amy had her first daughter, Kameli, at the age of 18. Much of her life before then was spent with her grandmother in California and dedicated to sports, taking care of the house, working, and going to school. At the time, she was not interested in a relationship and had intended to go to college to become a pediatrician, but her life was put on hold. She knew that ultimately she wanted to be a mother, and saw her unexpected pregnancy as her future coming sooner rather than later.

Her first instinct was not to marry her husband, but pressures from her community—a mixture of Catholicism on her mother’s side and Mormonism on her father’s—caused her to follow through with the wedding. After four more children and years of a strained, controlling marriage, Amy found herself in a complicated divorce with few friends, no car, no home, and no way to provide for her family. Carrying the stigmas of young motherhood and divorce, many expected her to collapse under the pressure, but her dedication to her children would not allow it. Around that same time, she was introduced to Justin, a fellow divorcée with three children of his own. Their connection was immediate, and somehow they managed to fit all 10 of them in a three-bedroom house until they could sort out a plan for the future.

Today, they’ve found a bigger house and try to manage a complex network of family. Both Amy and Justin’s children spend time with their other parents, but have a strong support system within their joint family. Amy stays at home to take care of her children, and is an active member of her community. Health and fitness are a crucial part of her life, and she is pursuing a certificate in massage therapy. Now that she has found peace in her new life, she feels like she finally has time to find herself while still devoting plenty of energy to her family.
We used to make shit in this country. Build shit. Now, we're just putting our hands in the next guy's pocket.”

This harrowing quote from Frank Sobotka, the treasurer of the Brotherhood of the Stevedores, a Baltimore-based ship worker's union in season two of critically acclaimed HBO series, *The Wire*, speaks to the reality unions face today.

The erosion of collective bargaining rights for unions and the decay of the union itself is an undeniable trend of the last 50 years. Today, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports nationwide union membership to be a mere 11.3 percent—a sharp decline from the first year union membership data was made available in 1983, which boasted 20.1 percent union membership.

The American business model that focuses increasingly on profits over sustained positive labor relationships has slowly deteriorated union membership. The interests of management and larger corporate interests receive more emphasis, blurring the line between what is best for the worker and the company to an indistinguishable point.

Workers have begun to see unionizing as a threat. Last year, autoworkers at a Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee voted against a United Autoworkers Union proposal. With 89 percent of workers participating, the nays won out with 712 workers voting against unionizing—626 voted yes. This vote went through despite receiving an unprecedented amount of corporate support from the Volkswagen Chattanooga CEO and chairman, Frank Fischer, who wished to set up a “German-style ‘work council’” in the plant, according to *Washington Post* writer Lydia DePillis.

Various interests weighed in on the workers as they were making their decisions. A number of right wing politicians and outside political groups lobbied within the factory to prevent the pro-union
motion from proceeding.
Furthermore, a number of the works voted against the UAW because they did not believe the union had their best interests in mind. Anti-union activists swayed voters by drawing attention to a neutrality agreement made between the union and the company without the consent of union members, which convinced workers that the union heads were in it for their own profits.
When unions work within an economic system that lends itself to sacrificing labor rights for the sake of profit and consumers, it is no wonder that these Volkswagen factory workers decided the way they did.
The infighting brought on by outside politicians and years of anti-union discourse is not a new phenomenon. In 1986, the flight attendants for airline mogul Trans World Airlines (TWA) fought for their rights as employees in the face of deregulation and the invasion of an aggressive investor giant, Carl Icahn.

the airline
Founded in the 1930s, TWA was one of the first commercial airlines in a new industry. TWA was initially run by Jack Frye, a well-respected pilot, but was largely controlled by aviation tycoon Howard Hughes. According to Elaine X. Grant’s history of the company, “TWA – Death of a Legend,” Hughes brought glitz and glam to the company that helped put it on top. This success turned to be fragile, with Hughes’ obsessively secretive personality preventing the company from properly investing in jets that would keep it at the peak of the industry.
Although Hughes controlled TWA through the amount of shares he held in the company, he ran most of the aviation inspections and purchases through another one of his businesses, explicitly withholding the rights to these jets from the airline.
By 1960, Hughes’ management style drove TWA into bankruptcy, when Hughes sold his shares of the company and transferred power to a group of investors.
This would not be the last time the airline would experience financial woes.
The company was taken over by a “group of people who did not really believe in the airline industry,” according to Don Casey, a 1968 TWA marketing department member, in Grant’s account of the company.
The industry experienced a period of success, as the economy of the 1960s expanded considerably, but TWAs financial problems remained. These troubles were only made worse after the passing of the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978 during the Carter administration.
Aimed at withdrawing the government from the industry, the ADA of 1978 eliminated regulations over fares, routes, and market entry for commercial airline companies. The logic behind the legislation is clear: craft laws that embrace a consumer-led economy.
This philosophy negatively affects the lives of laborers—as airlines could place the burden of labor benefits on the consumers with higher fares, according to Ohio State’s law journal. The legislation’s legacy would be cheaper flights, but at the expense of positive labor relations in the airline industry.
The withering away of this relationship would lead to the International Federation of Flight Attendants’ TWA strike in 1986—where the flight attendants fought back for their benefits, salaries, and rights as laborers against shareholders, who were demanding severe concessions from all employees to keep the company above water.

the job
The cultural identity of a flight attendant stretches back to the beginning of the industry. A 1967 Coca Cola ad characterizes the hard-work, eccentricity, and beauty in the life of flight attendant. Following the ideal attendant, Mary Ann Lynch, a beautiful, all-smiles employee, the advertisement portrays the image of an attractive young woman who wants to see the world.
The entire flight attendant industry is predicated on this portrayal, lending itself to high numbers of female employees.
This was no different in the International Federation of Flight Attendants, the leading flight attendant union, where 85 percent of its 6,500 members were female. Female flight attendants were extremely beneficial in terms of labor costs for TWA because of gender-based wage discrimination.

In 1985, when the company faced declining profits, the flight attendants were asked to forfeit 22 percent of their year’s salary and 22 percent in benefits and labor rights to keep the company afloat, but without a set plan for reimbursement. The company also denied flight attendants “snapback provisions,” which would entitle workers to a guaranteed reinstatement of wages and benefits prior to the concessions. These concessions saved TWA $110 million.

Although understood to be a necessity, the concessions the flight attendants were asked to surrender were incredibly disproportionate to the male-dominated unions the company employed.

The International Association of Machinists (IAM), were only asked to surrender 15 percent in total concessions, totaling $49 million, and were guaranteed snapback privileges, or a date when the reductions and work rules that were suspended would be returned, according to Labor Relations in the Aviation and Aerospace Industries by Robert W. Kapel et al.

Because the IAM is almost entirely made up of men, flight attendants saw the new tightening of company policy to be one founded on ageism and sexism, geared toward a demographic of employee that they saw as unable to fight back.

The Independent Federation of Flight Attendants (IFFA) had a different plan than the TWA management in mind when they elected to strike, effective March 17, 1986, following a midnight negotiation deadline that yielded no results between management and labor.

Led by union leader Victoria “Vicki” Frankovich, almost all flight attendants walked off the job, potentially leaving TWA without the proper number of workers to conduct regular business.

The erosion of collective bargaining rights for unions and the decay of the union itself, is an undeniable trend of the last 50 years.

the leader
Frankovich was a college grad when she joined TWA, according to a profile by Rick Gladstone in a 1986 Associated Press article. Growing up, she never felt that she would need to work because she had never seen her mother work for a living.

When she was hired at TWA, she immediately complicated things for the company with her fervent protest against TWAs policy to hire “English-speaking foreigners over minority Americans.” Frankovich went as far as sending letters to the Department of Justice and claims in the profile to have “managed as a sole little causer of problems to get [foreign workers’] visas revoked.”

Frankovich would go on to work for TWA for 17 years, establishing herself as a veteran crew member, eventually allowing her to serve as a chief executive for the flight attendants’ union.

Upon notice of her union’s forced concessions, Frankovich led the charge for the union to strike. In the union made documentary Grounded, Frankovich boasts, “I think Carl Icahn underestimated this workforce. Both in our willingness to resist his demands and in our willingness to continue this struggle.”

Frankovich was not alone, either. The documentary features a number of influential labor activists like Reverend Jesse Jackson and Cesar Chavez, who supported their cause.

The union seemed to be completely united against a single enemy: corporate raider Carl Icahn.

the raider
Carl Icahn is seen as a champion to some, especially on Wall Street, and a representation of all that is wrong with this world to others. Worth $24.9 billion and earning a 10 on Forbes Magazine’s “bootstrap scale,” Icahn is, on paper, the ideal self-made man of wealth.

Icahn is a part of a distinct type of investors—corporate raiders, later known as shareholder activists—who see profit in failing companies. The legal definition of a corporate raider is someone who “offers or executes a hostile takeover [of a company] by buying shares directly from shareholders.”

Essentially, corporate raiders seek opportunity in companies with undervalued stock, but highly valued assets, so that they can drive the company in a direction that sells off assets and rewards investors, namely the raider.

Icahn is one of the most infamous corporate raiders of all-time.

According to Time, in 2011, Icahn purchased 9.98 percent of Netflix shares, signifying he was going to make a move to control the company. Netflix responded by instituting a “shareholder rights plan,” otherwise known as a “poison pill,” which offered more shares to stakeholders at a discounted price if one shareholder held over 10 percent of the company in an effort to dilute Icahn’s ownership.

Icahn carried out a similar tactic with his takeover of TWA.

In 1985, Icahn purchased 20 percent of
the airline's shares, effectively beginning his takeover. After coming to the company, Icahn demanded incredible concessions from TWA employees in hopes of getting the company back afloat. Although Icahn claimed to be doing everything in the greater interest of TWA, most of the employees were still skeptical.

This skepticism would prove to be correct, as Icahn went on to take the company private in 1988, receiving $469 million. Eleven years later, Icahn sold off essential London flight routes, dropping the airline a severe peg down in the competition and earning Icahn an additional $445 million.

the reckoning

On March 7, 1986, the IFFA called for a strike following a failed negotiation period with Icahn and the TWA management. The strike initially involved approximately 6,500 flight attendants walking off the job to join the picket line. The massive departure of the TWA workforce jeopardized the entire company.

Initially, the machinists joined the flight attendants on the picket-line, demonstrating solidarity with their fellow airline employees. The machinists were forced to leave the line, however, because of a court injunction that demanded they return to work.

This was not the first step in a strategy used by Carl Icahn to pit the various airline unions against each other.

An essential part of debilitating an airline is a strike joined by airline pilots. If the pilots’ union was able to join the IFFA strike, it likely would have succeeded. The pilots, however, had a contractual provision that prevented them from striking alongside the flight attendants. In playing all three divisions of labor against each other, TWA and Carl Icahn were able to prevent company-wide coordination from succeeding.

For the flight attendants, the strike would only worsen from its inception. In response to the strike, TWA hired 2,500 replacement flight attendants to fill the vacancies of the
“I think Carl Icahn underestimated this workforce. Both in our willingness to resist his demands and in our willingness to continue this struggle.”

Victoria Frankovich, IFFA Union Leader

strikers. These replacements received a minimal two-week training, but were vital in damaging the effectiveness of the strike by keeping the airline functional.

In the documentary *Grounded*, Icahn talks to the strikers outside his New York mansion. He consistently invokes the classic capitalist logic: why pay more, in this case for flight attendants, for something you can have for less?

As the IFFA struggled to battle TWA, they began to experience internal strife. Referring to those who crossed the line as “scabs,” the senior level union members who maintained the picket line looked on those who crossed the line with disgust and, in the eyes of the senior level union members, betrayed their fellow attendants. The IFFA would be plagued by in-fighting for the remainder of the union’s fight against inequity.

Seeing these replacements, a number of union members saw their livelihood at stake and questioned the rationale and potential success of the strike. After only a few weeks, 1,500 strikers crossed the picket line to reclaim their positions at TWA.

Between the machinists’ court injunction and the scabs who crossed the picket line, the IFFA strike received a harsh blow from which it struggled to recover.

On May 17, 1986 the strike came to a bitter end, with the focus shifting from obtaining lesser concessions to senior level union members desperately trying to reclaim their jobs. Following the end of the strike, the senior level union members took the case to the courts to justify reclaimed employment.

A federal district court ruled against the flight attendants, siding with TWA in their judgment that the company is not required to displace new hires for senior level employees. The case was not over, however, as it went to the 8th Circuit Federal Court of Appeals, where the judge ruled in favor of the striking flight attendants reclaiming their jobs.

Eventually, the case went to the Supreme Court, where the Court would only answer whether or not TWA and Carl Icahn were, by law, required to displace new hires for the sake of ex-employees who lost their jobs while on strike. In the opinion of the Court delivered by Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, the Court upheld the federal district court’s ruling, claiming that the Railroad Labor Act does not protect senior level employees while on strike and that the newly hired flight attendants could not be displaced by TWA if the company did not see it fit.

The decision was a crushing blow to the IFFA and put the labor-leverage mechanism of a strike in an entirely new perspective. What once was one of the most powerful tools the laboring class could wield quickly became a tool that could work against workers’ interests.

Although the IFFA sought to protect its workers benefits and rights from ageist and sexist policy, the strike failed—out of the 6,500 strikers, 4,500 lost their jobs. Suffering from all symptoms of the deterioration of labor rights, the TWA flight attendant strike of 1986 is only another notch in a belt full of labor rights failure.

While the strike did not yield just results for the strikers, Frankovich’s prophesy still echoes ironically today: “So I guess only history will tell whether fighting would yield the ultimate course that we wanted.”
clean

COMPLEXITY

Article by Sedona Heidinger
Photos by Cheyanne Paredes
@cheyp on instagram
Light roasting in contrast with dark roasting is more like “entering into a partnership with the bean, instead of an aggressive act of conquest.”

If I couldn’t, three times a day, be allowed to drink my little cup of coffee, in my anguish I will turn into a shriveled-up roast goat.” (Johann Sebastian Bach)

There is a strange dichotomy present in coffee’s relationship to our world. On one hand, its creation is an intricate, collaborative dance between grower, roaster, and barista; on the other, it has become anchored so deeply in society that its consumption is as frequent and thoughtless as breathing. Imagine a couple meeting for lunch during their busy workday: she’s holding a cappuccino from the coffee house down the street, he has the last dregs of yesterday’s Folgers in a Styrofoam cup from the office lounge. Each beverage can be called coffee, but in the same way that diamonds and lead are both derived from carbon—the treatment of the raw material and the processes by which they are shaped into their final product are incredibly different. We were lucky enough to have conversations with two important representatives of Cartel Coffee Lab: barista Drew Charnitzk, a veteran of Cartel’s rigorous training program, who now assists in its implementation, and lead roaster Paul Haworth, who gave us a glimpse into his corner of the diamond business.

Caffeinated beginnings

We are ushered into Paul’s office, and all feelings of intimidation are quickly overtaken by the scent of the fresh coffee he has just prepared in his Chemex. Paul has been with Cartel for almost six years, but he began his career straight out of high school at a coffee cart in Tucson. It was run by a couple who, after being trained in the Italian methods of roasting and blending coffee, were intent on starting their own roastery. The cart is no longer in operation, and a Starbucks now dominates its former corner of Ida and Oracle. Paul and I—former baristas for the siren—bond over this irony. He and Cartel’s founder, Jason Silberschlag, had been friends since they were seniors in high school. He began roasting for Jason at the first incarnation of Cartel in Tucson in 2009. As we sip the precious Mexican cof-
fee, he gives us a glimpse of the near-Herculean efforts that go into a final product worthy of the Cartel name.

**sourcing**

A large percentage of his coffees—he estimates 75-80 percent—come from the growing regions of Guatemala and El Salvador. From his own visits to the farms where Cartel sources coffee, he experienced the necessity of establishing secure and lasting personal connections with producers. Because it is simply not feasible to visit each farm every time he needs more product, he trusts an importer to maintain their relationships.

“A good importer is worth a hundred farmers,” he asserts, “because the farmer and the grower can be totally honest, but there are people that the coffee has to pass through, and if you are not able to oversee it, it can unfortunately be a very corrupt industry. It’s all about the relationships; it’s just a matter of knowing your place and not wanting to be everything.” This emphasis on relationships reappears many times during our conversation; speciality coffee is an intensely personal industry that relies on the rapport between producer and purchaser in order to thrive.

**processing**

Coffee begins its journey as a product of a small flowering shrub belonging to the genus *Coffea*. The plants are covered in small reddish fruits called coffee cherries, which protect the seed we call the coffee bean. The way in which a coffee bean is processed has a tremendous impact on the final product, and roasters like Paul have to be well-acquainted with how the beans they are considering for purchase have been harvested at their respective locations. James Freeman, one of America’s preeminent roasters, explains the two main processing methods, washing and natural processing, in his book, *The Blue Bottle Craft of Coffee* (which I highly recommend if you prefer your coffee expertise peppered with references to Kierkegaard and “The Myth of Sisyphus”). According to Freeman, washing is the more common method today because the “cherries are sent through a pulping machine [and the] beans are then soaked in water, and often gently agitated during this stage.” After fermentation, the resulting coffees are higher in acidity and more consistent. Natural, or dry, processing is the original approach: the coffee cherries “are dried whole on raised beds, mats, or patios,” and because the beans remain inside the drying fruit, “it results in a very noticeable difference in aroma and flavor [and] coffee with more body and less acidity.” Next comes dry milling, after the beans have been stored for between one and three months, where the roaster removes the parchment and then begins to make preliminary choices based on size and density. Freeman prefers larger
beans because of the assumption that these berries have been harvested from riper coffee cherries and would perform better during cupping, a process explained later. Farmers who demonstrate skill in harvesting draw the attention of roasters who are willing to pay for quality coffee: “if roasters choose to buy excellent, well-harvested coffee, the farmers have an incentive to offer a premium to the best pickers, [so] careful harvesting can directly lead to increased standards of living for both farmers and their pickers.” In contrast to the inefficient and impersonal processes of commodity coffee, the relationships of roasters, farmers, and importers are based on a desire for optimum quality. They remain closely connected for all stages of a bean’s journey to ensure that the best possible product comes from the best possible conditions.

**selecting**

But how does Paul know which coffees are right for Cartel? The selection process is as dependent on group dynamics and relationships as the sourcing process. In comparative tastings, called cuppings, they are offered a dizzying array of coffees to sample—103, in Paul’s last trip to Guatemala—and they must determine which contenders are objectively the strongest. He ended up buying around ten to twelve of those coffees, and after years of cupping he has honed qualities that are necessary to succeed as a roaster: intuition and the ability to read cues from one’s colleagues and the industry at large. When every participant recognizes similar notes in a particular coffee, “you’ll definitely notice and you’ll feel validated when you all experience the same thing,” Paul comments. A coffee that jumps out at him tends to display characteristics such as good acidity and a clean, balanced taste; he’s never sure whether a coffee will strike him because of these qualities or whether they will reveal themselves only after a
Barista training at Cartel can take anywhere from one to six months depending on the skill level of each barista.

coffee has captured his attention, which is part of what makes the process so interesting and why success is difficult to precisely quantify. He credits the development of his current approach to coffee roasting to being part of a community with other roasters and the freedom to put his own theories to test and decide what tastes good because, “if it doesn’t taste good, don’t do it.”

roasting

After the coffee is selected, it must be roasted, and Paul’s methods fuse external guidance and natural internal discernment. He requires coffees that stand up to light roasting because he has tapped into an interesting shift in public taste.

“People are enjoying coffee that is roasted in a way that you would normally roast for a comparative cupping, which is very light because it brings out a lot of the nuance. The darker you roast, the more you develop a sort of universal aromatic coffee, and much of the nuance is lost,” he explains. He advocates the mentality that showcases these subtleties instead of forcing the bean into something it isn’t. To borrow his delightful comparison, light roasting in contrast with dark roasting is more like “entering into a partnership with the bean, instead of an aggressive act of conquest.” He reaffirms this partnership every morning when he turns on the roaster. With the exception of the predictive amounts of espresso for Cartel locations, all of their beans are roasted to order for their wholesale customers. These accounts range from beloved local spots like Ncounter, which serves cold brew, to Kai at Wild Horse Pass, Arizona’s only Five-Star, Five-Diamond restaurant. Kai does pricy tableside pour-overs and features Cartel’s brew with desserts using ingredients such as agave brulée and wattleseed anglaise.

presentation

One of the greatest challenges that Paul faces is ensuring that Cartel can provide an endlessly-changing menu of single-origin bean selections while still ensuring that each customer can find a coffee that they feel is accessible and delicious, regardless of their prior exposure to specialty coffee. He developed a five-slot system that provides a sort of road map into coffee connoisseurship, from most readily available in the bottom tier to the two most exquisite coffees in the top tier that highlight the diversity created by different processing methods. His goal is have coffee differentiated like wine: just as you would not compare a Riesling to a Cabernet Sauvignon, you would judge a washed coffee differently than you would a naturally processed coffee.

“Before we had this advent of single-farm and single-region awareness, people would associate qualities of processing with regions,” Paul explained, “like saying all Ethiopian coffees tasted like blueberries. These flavor characteristics were actually describ-
ing how processing affects the coffee.” Once the processing method is isolated, it allows the drinker to explore how other things impact flavor, such as the genetics of the coffee and the earth it was grown in. After these slots have been filled, the difficulty then becomes finding ways to spread awareness of these fascinating aspects of coffee that were hitherto unknown by the greater public, and helping them realize the value of what they are purchasing. Paul is serious about inviting the consumer to delve deeper into the history and development of their coffee, without condescending to—or completely overwhelming—them in the process.

**fostering public relationships**

Public outreach is absolutely vital for members of the specialty coffee world, and nearly every coffee shop has a Facebook page and an Instagram account. More recently, however, coffee farmers started utilizing social media themselves, making direct contact with consumers across the world and sharing images and insight that until now would never have reached the average customer. Paul worked extensively with the Pacas family (@cafe_pacas) when he was in El Salvador; Maria and Alfredo, the brother and sister in charge of the farm today, are almost the tenth generation of their family to grow coffee, and there is even a variety of arabica beans called Pacas discovered by their grandfather and cultivated in their farm. One of Cartel’s recent top-tier offerings, a semi-washed coffee called Sihuamontá, comes from the Pacas farm (and whose description of that coffee includes the evocative phrase “clean complexity,” from which I took the title of this piece).

“There is really exciting integration happening recently,” Paul says, “because the Pacas family are on Instagram. We’ve had this happen a couple of times where we have a new coffee that we bought from them, and...
a customer will have a question and we can ask, ‘What do you think, Alfredo?’ The farmer himself, talking to a customer!” This kind of richly layered involvement, combined with the superior quality of the coffee itself, puts Cartel at the leading edge of local coffee shops. This is what customers are seeking out more and more frequently, and they are learning the right questions to ask to keep themselves informed of their beverage’s origin day by day.

Paul or the Pacas family are not always on hand to answer these questions, however. This is where the barista comes in: they have to be able to educate, connect, and inspire a guest, all while preparing their coffee in a manner that seems exacting and instinctive all at once. To be a Cartel barista, one has to genuinely enjoy people and really want to connect with them over whatever they are drinking. As they are often the ones to kick-start a customer’s involvement with coffee, the people who are at the point of contact must be good interpreters. Above all, however, Paul made it clear that “they’ve got to be intrinsically motivated to know everything possible about coffee,” and cited the fateful decision made by Starbucks in the mid-1990s to make a point to tell potential employees (called “partners”) that they did not have to like coffee to work there. While this was probably a comfort to many people, it represents a “definite point of departure in their vision; it’s an interesting place to get to in this industry, when coffee is no longer a value.”

**a barista’s perspective**

We were able to snag a barista from behind Cartel’s counter when the morning rush had started to slow down, and it was clear that the love of coffee was shared by all of the employees. Drew Charnitzk, barista and educator for the Tempe location, emphasized the immersive and time-intensive nature of the training program that ensures the quality and consistency of each barista’s process. The full sequence of classes and tests—both written and practical—can take anywhere from one to six months, depending on the skill level and availability of each barista when they are hired by Cartel. Drew values the experience of his customers as highly as the espresso he makes for them; he frequently decides each morning what he wants to emphasize about a particular espresso that day, so “when someone says, ‘Oh, this is really floral today,’” he can say, “That’s exactly what I was going for!”

“A lot of the time,” he explains, “baristas take a very long time to dial in and they are very precise in what they are doing. It’s very nice to have that appreciation and that conversation when someone enjoys a beverage that you’ve prepared for them.” Whether someone comes in every day for an espresso to taste the different flavor profiles produced by each barista, or is making their very first foray into the shop, Drew and his
fellow baristas consistently emulate Paul’s attention to detail and aim to share their love of coffee with each customer.

moving forward

I couldn’t help but wonder, throughout our conversations, how much coffee Paul and Drew are able to drink during the day. They are always surrounded by the crème de la crème, after all, and if I could drink all the amazing coffee I wanted, I imagine that I would die of happiness—or cardiac arrest. “I might max out at 10-12 ounces,” Paul says mildly. “It’s not abnormal for me to only have 5-6 ounces of coffee.” Drew, on the other hand, typically chooses “just an espresso; I’ve actually really toned down how much coffee I drink since I’ve been in coffee for a long time. I get a lot of energy just from small amounts.” As I attempt to inconspicuously shift my dropped jaw back in place, Paul describes the initiative called “common-sense coffee consumption” that he and the other members of his leadership collective are promoting. Their goal is that most people would turn to home coffee-making every day instead of going to a shop. “I think that going into a coffee shop for a beverage is something that should only be once or twice a week, like going out for a beer,” he says. “The most satisfaction and the most value to the customer is when people buy beans and make it themselves.” (This is also the greatest profit for them, lest you begin to worry if his goal was to sabotage his own coffee shop.) He hopes the less-is-more mindset becomes more common, because “when you see how much goes into every bean, you realize how wasteful it can be.” This is a powerful realization for people like myself—who tends to be preceded by my reputation for iced coffee consumption. After following the bean on its journey “from seed to cup,” it is as though I have watched carbon turn to diamonds through the paper filter of a Chemex.
Incentivizing Imprisonment
Shelby Stringer

“...The language of the prevailing Law and Order, validated by
the courts and by the police, is not only the voice but also
the deed of suppression. This language not only defines and
condemns the Enemy, it also creates him; and this creation
is not the Enemy as he really is but rather as he must be in
order to perform his function for the Establishment...”

– Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979)
ish?” published in the Monitor on Psychology, former prison psychologist Thomas Fagan, PhD, argues that “prisons have really become, in many ways, the de facto mental health hospitals. But prisons weren’t built to deal with mentally ill people; they were built to deal with criminals doing time.”

In 1829, Eastern State Penitentiary first experimented with solitary confinement in the United States. These Quakers operated under the belief that providing prisoners with a Bible and solitude would give way to introspection, repentance, and reform. Given that many of the inmates committed suicide, went insane and were no longer able to function in society, the practice mostly disappeared in the United States until 1983. After the murder of two prison guards in Marion, Illinois, the facility confined prisoners to their cells for 23 hours a day in a practice referred to by the warden as “permanent lockdown.” After this incident, solitary confinement began to spread throughout the country.

In 2003, Human Rights Watch estimated that one-third to one-half of all inmates in solitary confinement have some sort of mental illness, which is undoubtedly exacerbated through this isolation. In Arizona, prisoners remain in solitary for an average five years, according to the American Friends Committee. A 2005 Bureau of Justice Statistics census of state and federal prisoners found 81,622 people were held in “restricted housing.” Under the California Code of Regulations Title XV Sec. 3315, “Serious Rules Violations,” a prisoner may be sent into a high-security unit for possessing more than five dollars, throwing liquids or solid substances at another inmate, or tattooing. Additionally, the threat of solitary confinement hangs over those who refuse to work or those who participate in a strike. Prisons force inmates to work by threatening this punishment. When examining the privatization of prisons and the use of inmate labor, it is important to note the lack of agency that prisoners have when voicing dissent. If they cannot strike, who will hear them?

Growing up in the United States, we say “liberty and justice for all” 2,000 times over, but this liberty is an empty promise. Freedom exists for certain people. Legislators and their wealthy banking buddies are free to drive our country into a recession. Despite destroying the savings of many Americans, only one upper-level executive landed in prison. The prison system is not for them. Their closest interaction with the police was probably the time in college when their debaucherous fraternity party was broken up, or when they were caught speeding on their way to drop their kids off at school.

Throughout history, prisons mirror the economic system because prisons effectively control discontented and oppressed populations. Homelessness, mental illness, unemployment, addiction, and illiteracy are hidden, behind bars, from the public consciousness.

In the past 30 years, the United States prison population ballooned 800 percent according to data obtained from the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The obvious correlation leading to this increase is the War on Drugs. However, to identify the problem and the solution in legislation would be too simplistic. Some theorists posit that following the mass social movements of 1960s and 1970s, the government needed a way to divide us and disenfranchise voters. I will not be so radical. There lies a distinct connection between the rise of the prison populations, global capitalism, and our “American way.”

Blame the Reagan administration for mass incarceration, blame the pharmaceutical companies for mental illness, and blame mediocre educators for illiteracy, but as a consumer, surely I am not to blame. I may sit within the confines of my uniformly middle-class neighborhood, playing a car thief shooting up the police and watching problematic episodes of Orange is the New Black. Piper merely fell in with the wrong “crowd,” but let’s look at how she just does not belong in prison. How perfectly relatable!

No.

“Eight hours later: Earned $4.80 before taxes. Still couldn’t even buy this goat cheese at Whole Foods.”
I have not seen the detrimental effects of the criminal justice system on my community. Police may give me patronizing pet names, but they do not profile and search me. The white patriarchy is here to protect me from those menacing others. In court, the attorney tells me “you shouldn’t be here,” because this system does not intend to imprison you, sweetie. You are here by accident; this system is not your reality (yet your complicity in its function is essential). The more you consume, the more we imprison. So by all means, keep consuming. The prison system is a reflection of the society that we live: competitive, materialistic, and individualistic.

money, money, money
In the explosive expansion, corporate interests worm their way into politics and seep their profit-rendering hands into public institutions like prisons. Our culture normalizes excessive consumption and rewards profits at all costs. Until society makes a concerted effort to combat the corporate corruption in our society, incarceration will continue to be a profitable albeit oppressive industry.

The prison-industrial complex is defined as the corrupt relationship between private industry, legislation, and the prison system. In 1980, we did not have one private prison in the United States. By 1990, there were 67 for-profit prisons. Within the next 20 years, the ACLU reports that the number of inmates in private correctional facilities increased by more than 1600 percent. In order for this expansion to take place, legislation, industry, and the people had to welcome these corporate-backers.

In the past decade, the private prison lobby spent more than $45 million backing candidates that are influential in immigration policy. Forget amnesty, we have prisons to handle immigrants. The Federal Bureau of Prisons is paying $5.1 billion under 13 separate contracts with private prisons to house criminal immigrants. Legislators will assure you that they are making the fiscally responsible decision, yet since 2004, the cost to detain an illegal immigrant doubled according to an Associated Press investigation.

Even on a state level, the private prisons are reaching into their coffers for campaigns. 30 out of the 36 legislators that co-sponsored Arizona’s more than questionable immigration law, SB1070, received campaign funds from the private prison lobby or companies that run said prisons. This controversial law enforced racial profiling, which in turn allowed the police to put more prisoners behind bars.

In Arizona, we have three separate contracts with private corporations: Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), Management & Training Corp. (MTC), and the Geo Group. In February of 2012, American Friends Service Committee conducted a report estimating that between 2008 and 2010, Arizona overpaid for these private prisons by $10 million. In 2012, new contracts were drawn up that stipulate beds must be at 100 percent occupancy, or the state will pay for empty beds.

As taxpayers, we pay for these companies to incarcerate our citizens, and only a few people are reaping the benefits. In 2010, CCA and GEO took in close to $3 billion in revenue. That same year, the CEOs of these two companies received close to $7 million in executive compensation. The amount of money allotted to these two men could have funded 300 full-ride scholarships to ASU.

Politicians and industry representatives claim to save the state money, yet not a single independent study substantiates these claims. In fact, the Arizona Auditor General reports that these private prisons cost us more than their public counterparts. However, this year during budget appropriations, Arizona state representative John Kavanagh secured $900,000, which he deemed a “gift” for GEO Group, despite already designating $45 million for the corporation.

Kavanagh procured a completely reasonable explanation as he explained in a taped interview, “If somebody cuts you a smoking deal and helps you when you’re down, and you get more money back, I think you morally have a responsibility to increase the payments.” A “moral” responsibility would be a responsibility to an institution designed to promote social wealth. We have increased funding to prisons by 75 percent in the past decade, while decreasing funds to public universities by 11 percent.

Our government officials remain quiet about this privatization because cheap prison labor helps produce cheap goods for companies that line the pockets of the politicians’ re-election coffers.

In 2010, the government needed purchase an entirely new set of military uniforms because the $5 billion already spent on camouflage was ineffective. Between 2010 and 2015, the government will shell out an additional $4 billion for new uniforms. American Apparel Inc., not associated with the purveyor of overtly sexualized thigh-high socks, pays their workers $9 per hour plus, 401(k) plan, and health benefits. They compete for the federal contract with Unicor, employer of 13,000 federal prisoners. Luckily, Unicor only has to pay workers between 23 cents and $1.15 an hour!
Unsurprisingly, Unicor receives a majority of the contracts to make the military uniforms, which contributes to their $900 million in annual revenue.

Unicor’s slogan: “We’re Life Changing!” Yes, prison is life changing.

**chipping away at social wealth**

In 1998, Angela Davis published “Masked Racism: Reflections on the Prison Industrial Complex” in *Colorlines*. She writes, “Imprisonment has become the response of first resort to far too many of the social problems that burden people who are ensconced in poverty. These problems often are veiled by being conveniently grouped together under the category ‘crime’ and by the automatic attribution of criminal behavior to people of color.”

A significant portion of our voting constituency blame social problems and economic failures on those “types” of people that we imprison, i.e. minorities, immigrants, and the working class. “If they only knew how to pull themselves up by their bootstraps,” proclaim so many individuals who never had to wear boots.

When only one high level employee went to prison for the economic crisis that cost taxpayers trillions of dollars, yet one in three black men will spend time in prison, the time has come to assess the motives of our criminal justice system.

Three years ago, Michelle Alexander, legal scholar from Ohio State University, wrote *The New Jim Crow*. She argues that current criminal justice system is a masked manifestation of Jim Crow laws, which substituted racial discrimination after the abolition of slavery.

While people of color represent 30 percent of the United States population, they represent 60 percent of the prison population. The discrimination that felons face after leaving prison frighteningly mirrors Jim Crow laws. An employer can deny a felon a job, a renter can deny a felon a place to live, and after two felonies in Arizona, voting rights are taken away. 11.2 percent of the African American population in Arizona do not have the right to vote.

Until just a few years ago, the possession of five grams of crack cocaine warranted a mandatory minimum sentence of five years behind bars (the number has been updated to 28 grams due to the Fair Sentencing Act). A person would need 500 grams of cocaine to warrant the same sentence. Sentences should be the same drug for the same drug, but why would the system convict rich, white cocaine-users? African Americans represented 79 percent of crack cocaine convictions, while only 28 percent of powder cocaine convictions.

Michelle Alexander argues that the War on Drugs policy existed before there was a crack cocaine epidemic in poor, black neighborhoods. Reagan fueled these images, and “almost overnight, the media was saturated with images of black ‘crack whores,’ ‘crack dealers,’ and ‘crack babies’—images that seemed to confirm the worst negative racial stereotypes about impoverished inner-city residents. The media bonanza surrounding the ‘new demon drug’ helped to catapult the War on Drugs from an ambitious federal policy to an actual war.”

We have created the enemy. We constructed a system of social control that reinforces a racial and economic hierarchy. Prisons cannot claim to be rehabilitative while punitively enforcing a hegemonic norm. By turning over prisons to private corporations, we are only incentivizing imprisonment.

We should be spending our money on social programs that alleviate “criminal” activity, instead of pouring money into caging our citizens. We should not be placing the mentally ill in solitary confinement, a practice incapable of rehabilitation. However, what we should be doing, and what we will do are two completely different things. We may see this system as an inevitable reflection of capitalism, but at the very least we should be angry about our country’s practices of imprisonment.

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**prison statistics**

- **800% increase in prison population since 1980**
- **11.2% of blacks in Arizona have had their voting rights taken away due to a felony.**
- **1,700,000 children in America have a parent in prison**
- **$998,500,000: prison expenditures for Arizona Department of Corrections**
- **$3,523,012.85: yearly expenditure by the Arizona Department of Corrections on its 119 death row inmates.**

Blacks and Hispanics are 3x more likely to be searched during a traffic stop than white motorists

Numbers from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, The Sentencing Project, & Human Rights Watch

Watercolor Cartoons by Shelby Stringer
The Winding, Convoluted Road to a Higher Minimum Wage

T.J. Radigan

[Discussed: FDR, minimum wage, polarizing politics, think tanks, American Samoa, money, voting, rousing statistics]

The Phoenix metropolitan area is one of the fastest growing cities in America, but it ranks second in the nation in poverty, with 17.4 percent of citizens in the metropolitan area and 24 percent of citizens in Phoenix proper living below the poverty line.

Many of those living in poverty work each day at a minimum wage job. Changing the minimum wage is one of the most talked-about, yet least understood problems facing the Phoenix area today. Ballot initiatives dangle minimum wage increases in front of voters, citing the $16 minimum wage in Australia as an example. According to data obtained from the OECD, when adjusted for purchasing power parity, an exchange rate that helps to eliminate misleading comparisons, countries like Luxembourg, Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Australia’s minimum wage all falls within a few dollars of United States. At the same time, our minimum wage has been stagnant for many years. The federal minimum wage peaked in 1968, and minimum wage increases dwindle far behind the cost of living in the United States.

The discussion on minimum wage reform suffers from the existence of two extreme viewpoints, neither of which accurately portray the truth or complexity of the issue, drowning out thoughtful consideration of the subject. While prominent liberals and conservatives spend time trying to convince the public that the other side is wrong, real people are struggling to make ends meet. Change can only be accomplished by a thoughtful analysis of the issue at hand and a willingness to put aside preconceived notions, reach across the aisle, and learn from the opposing viewpoint. However, with the 113th Congress on track to be the least legislatively productive in modern history according to Pew Research, these changes may have to occur on a state-level.

History

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 enacted the first minimum wage, which was set at $0.25 an hour, or about $4.07 in today’s dollars. At the time, the idea of a minimum wage was revolutionary. In attempts to subdue opposition, Roosevelt argued, “do not let any calamity-howlng executive with an income of $1,000 a day, [. . . ]tell you . . . that a wage of $11 a week is going to have a disastrous effect on all American industry.”

Because purchasing power of minimum wage falls as inflation rises, the government periodically passes increases to try to counteract this effect. From its inception until 1968, federal minimum
wage tended to rise, peaking at $1.60 in 1968, equivalent to $10.56 today. Since 1968, the minimum wage has slid downward to the current federal minimum wage, $7.25 per hour.

Until 2006, the state of Arizona always matched the federal minimum wage until citizens voted on a ballot initiative. The statewide minimum wage provides for automatic periodic increases linked to inflation. Today, minimum wage in Arizona sits at $7.90.

Since its inception, people with polarizing opinions fiercely debated a minimum wage. While they firmly oppose each other, both the liberal and conservative arguments are rooted in some degree of economic theory or empirical evidence.

the conservative argument

Most policy makers claim their position would be paying $99 per hour in wages. Depending on how much money a company wants to spend on labor, this could mean less money in the hands of the workers.

Conservatives often see low-wage workers as generally unskilled and easily replaceable, which means the above scenarios is likely to play out especially with the development of new technology. In addition, they argue, raising minimum wage may hinder businesses and cause them to play safe, which could slow growth.

the liberal argument

On the other end of the spectrum, liberals usually argue that minimum wage’s effect on employment is negligible, and far more people benefit from minimum wage increases. Paul Krugman, Nobel-Prize winning Professor of Economics and International Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, cites a 2013 Center for...
In the City of Phoenix, a “living wage” for an adult supporting themselves and one child is approximately $19.87 per hour — more than double Phoenix’s current minimum wage.

for Economic and Policy Research paper that evaluates modest increases in the minimum wage. In his New York Times op-ed, Krugman argues that on this topic there is “lots and lots of evidence, because the minimum wage is one of the most studied issues in all of economics . . . while there are dissenters, as there always are, the great preponderance of the evidence from these natural experiments points to little if any negative effect of minimum wage increases on employment.” Furthermore, because low-wage workers are far more likely to spend extra cash than they are to save it, the money is almost immediately pumped back into the economy, which actually stimulates economic growth, rather than slowing it.

A 2014 study from left-leaning think tank Center for American Progress asserts that increasing the federal minimum wage to $10.10 an hour would save the government $4.6 billion currently allocated to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. It posits this increase would alleviate over three million from relying on food stamps.

In terms of economic theory, the liberal argument invokes the principle of marginal product: a firm will continue to hire workers as long as what they get from the worker (the marginal product) is greater than what they pay to the worker (their wage). Because competition in an unregulated labor market drives wages down, liberal economists argue the wages paid to low-wage workers in a competitive market are actually far below the marginal product of their labor, meaning there is room to raise the minimum wage before it becomes advantageous for firms to lay off workers in response to minimum wage increases.

**is your head spinning yet?**

The major problem facing productive minimum wage legislation today is that neither extreme viewpoint is demonstrably wrong or right in its description of minimum wage. A productive discussion of minimum wage law should look at both the theoretical economic constructs and the empirical research and evidence garnered from the economy.

While there is much debate about the overall economic consequences of a minimum wage increase, most empirical evidence and large scale studies seem to support the idea that the existence of a minimum wage — at least at a modest level — has a positive impact on the poverty level.

A notable 2012 study by University of Massachusetts Amherst economist Arin Dube predicts that a 10 percent increase in minimum wage would decrease poverty levels by 2.4 percent, which is encouraging for proponents of raising the minimum wage. Additionally, Dube's paper includes a meta-analysis of twelve other representative studies on the same topic in the last few years, and determines that eleven of the twelve reports had similar findings regarding the positive relationship between small minimum wage increases and poverty levels. While some of those papers still argued against a minimum wage increase on other economic grounds, they seemed to have reached a consensus on one fact: small increases in the minimum wage would decrease poverty.

Congress spent some time last year, at the behest of President Obama, discussing a possible raise in the federal minimum wage to $10.10 per hour. If Dube's predictions could be stretched to a minimum wage of $10.10, a 28 percent increase in minimum wage, then we could expect to see 4.6 million individuals raised out of poverty nationwide. While the effects would probably not be this dramatic, the scale at which minimum wage increases have the potential to reduce poverty is formidable.

So, if raising the minimum wage reduces poverty, why not push for larger increases? This is where the conversation gets tricky.

A trend on social media in the last few years has been to discuss raising minimum wage to represent a “living wage,” a concept described by researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology as “an approximate income necessary for a family to meet its basic needs.” Research at MIT suggests that in the City of Phoenix, a “living wage” for an adult supporting themselves and one child is approximately $19.87 per hour — more than double Phoenix’s current minimum wage.

The issue with using living wage as a starting point for efficient minimum wage discussion is that there is no supporting empirical evidence from studies about small increases versus large increases. On a scientific level, the results of spiking minimum wage in Phoenix to such a level would be, at best, unpredictable.

There is some precedence for the effects of an extreme minimum wage hike, which comes from the 2009 economic crisis in American Samoa. When Congress voted to raise the federal minimum wage in 2009,
they passed a resolution to gradually impose this same minimum wage raise on American Samoa, a United States-controlled island territory in the South Pacific. Due to differing economic conditions between the United States mainland and American Samoa, minimum wage in American Samoa was $3.26 prior to the resolution. In purchasing power, $7.25 in American Samoa was equivalent to about $20 on the United States mainland. Therefore, this minimum wage hike represented a huge increase for the Samoan economy.

However, instead of reducing poverty or improving standard of living, the increased minimum wage had disastrous effects. The largest employers in the area began to lay off workers in droves, crippling the economy. By the time Congress finally acted to remove the minimum wage increases, unemployment in American Samoa increased from 5 percent to a whopping 35 percent.

Professor Roberts is quick to point to one of her favorite quotes, by economist Henry Hazlitt, in explanation: “You cannot make a man worth a given amount by making it illegal for anyone to offer him less.”

on the home front

On November 4th of this year, voters in San Francisco approved a ballot measure that will gradually raise the city’s minimum wage to $15 per hour in July 2018. Could Phoenix be next?

Statements about minimum wage from some members of Phoenix City Council are less than enthusiastic about the idea. Sal DiCiccio, from District 6, firmly opposes any minimum wage hikes. In an interview with the Arizona Republic, DiCiccio asserted that a minimum wage increase in Phoenix, in addition to affecting job growth, would cause “prices on goods and services [to] increase to cover additional labor costs.”

Daniel Valenzuela, from District 5, believes it is time for Phoenix to start exploring their options. When asked in a phone interview if he would support a minimum wage increase, Valenzuela asserted that “we need to really run the numbers to find out who pays the price for low-wage jobs.”

Valenzuela says it’s not just low-wage workers that suffer from low wages: taxpayers often have to close the gap left by insufficient wages by funding public assistance programs that could be avoided with a minimum wage increase. Valenzuela reiterates that he firmly supports “a methodical (minimum wage) strategy to ensure the long-term economic health of our city.”

By contrast, Bill Gates, Phoenix City Councilman from District 3, raises concerns about unilaterally raising Phoenix’s minimum wage while wages in the rest of the state remain lower. When questioned by the Arizona Republic, Gates stated he is concerned that “adopting a minimum wage would put Phoenix at a disadvantage, and would likely lead businesses to move from Phoenix.” Even Councilman Michael Nowakowski from District 7, who states he firmly supports an increased minimum wage in general, agrees with Gates that raising Phoenix’s minimum wage higher than Arizona’s statewide minimum wage could put Phoenix at a disadvantage.

So, is the answer an increase in Arizona’s statewide minimum wage? If it is, there is a lot of work to be done before such a plan could be realized. Arizona’s current statewide minimum wage is $7.90 per hour, or $0.65 above the federally mandated minimum. Additionally, it mirrors the Consumer Price Index, meaning that at the beginning of every year, it is automatically increased by the same amount that cost of living has increased. In order for Arizona’s Republican-controlled Legislature to consider taking further action on minimum wage, some more specific, convincing research on its positive effects on the metro-Phoenix area are necessary. As it stands, the Arizona Legislature is not taking the idea anywhere.

A final way for Arizona to attack the issue of minimum wage is through a ballot initiative, where citizens of Arizona bring up a proposition to be voted on directly by the citizens of Arizona. If enough of Arizona’s citizens were educated about minimum wage law and its potential benefits, a ballot initiative might be among the most realistic ways of raising minimum wage law. Ultimately, the future of the law is in the hands of the citizens of Arizona, which is problematic considering only 30 percent of Arizona’s voting age population cast ballots in the 2014 mid-term elections.

conclusion

Minimum wage law is a hot-button issue that gets people fired up. In order to have a productive conversation about minimum wage, a basic attempt to understand the complexities of the issue is necessary. Perhaps more importantly, progress on this issue hinges on the ability of stakeholders—politicians, citizens, and businesses alike—to put preconceived opinions on minimum wage law behind them and allow for meaningful conversation to take place.

When minimum wage law changes, businesses have three options before they allow the change to play out. First, they can lay off workers to bring labor costs back down. Second, they can raise prices on goods and services to cover the added costs. Third, they can eat into their profits. Any minimum wage legislation will force businesses to encounter each of these three options to varying degrees. If the real goal is to help people, then legislation should aim to encourage businesses to front as much of the cost as possible, while discouraging them from letting go of workers in response to changes in minimum wage law.

Every day, thousands of minimum wage earners in the Phoenix area earn less than they can really survive on. A higher minimum wage could be the key to reducing poverty and increasing productivity, but it is not going to come easily. Read and encourage new research. Learn as much as you can. Write a letter to your city council or sign a ballot initiative. The future of minimum wage in Arizona rests in the hands of its citizens, and lifting Arizonans out of poverty will take the effort of as many of us as possible.
escaping the flames

mia aguilera
She gripped the windowsill until her knuckles became white and screamed, “Help us! We’re trapped!”

Down below, Tommaso Albertini prayed fervently that his girlfriend and sister had not made it to work today. He watched his fellow firemen run with the fire hose to the hydrant. A powerful stream of water slammed against the brick. Factory workers were stuck in the building and screaming. Their cries could be heard in Washington Square Park. Prayers flew through their heads, begging God to spare their lives.

Tommaso spotted his girlfriend's face at one of the windows, and felt he was about to vomit. “Marcella, no,” he whispered. She had to make it through this. Their wedding was in two months. She had been working at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory for three years, saving up for the dress and the new flat they would be living in. All the other girls who worked in the factory had similar goals and dreams. Sometimes Marcella felt like they were all one body—occupying the same job and aspiring for the same things. A mesh of poor New York women rolled into one. While sewing and cutting fabric they would chat about their boyfriends and husbands, and tell each other what they were going to do after they left this place. There were worse places to work in the city, but still, nobody wanted to do this for a living.

The eight dollars a week Marcella brought home were like treasure to her, and she carefully bundled the bills into wads of a hundred and stored them in a red leather box in her dresser. Minus the small amount of money she used to help her family with groceries and an extravagance here and there, she had saved a total of nine hundred and twenty-six dollars. When Tommaso would visit her she would proudly show him how much she had accumulated, and along with his earnings, they planned for the future.

“I don't want to be tired anymore,” she had told him. “I want a job that makes me happy to work. I want to be able to choose.”

“You can open a panetteria. You know all your grandmother’s recipes.”

“Yes. I like that,” she said, and paused to look at him. “But you have to promise me you won't get fat from eating the leftovers.”

He smiled. “Prometto.”

Marcella wanted to stay in Greenwich Village, close to the Italian community she had known all her life. She wanted to keep shopping at the local Italian groceries and talk to the store clerks who had known her since she was born. She loved going up to Signor Lazzaro while he stacked oranges into a pyramid and plant a kiss on his weathered cheek, slipping a home baked cookie into his apron pocket. He smelled like the sweet juice of his produce and aromatic fresh herbs. Once Marcella was living with Tommaso she wanted to plant some basil and keep it by the kitchen window, ready to add to her favorite dishes, and to remind her of all the things which gave her a content life.

“Pray for the people who pick the tomatoes from the vine,” her mother would tell her. “Be thankful and recognize all the work that has gone into everything that brings you happiness.”

Marcella met Tommaso two years ago in their Catholic church. He was sharply dressed in a gray suit for Easter service, the muscle he had gained from firefighting noticeable under his sleeves. He was of medium height, and light skinned, something he considered to be an advantage over the prejudice against immigrants. Non-whites were discriminated against in the New York Fire Department, and to disguise his ethnicity Tommaso changed his name to Thomas Albertson. He assured his family only whites would address him in this way.
Marcella couldn’t help staring at him throughout the service.
Tommaso’s sister, Angela, noticed this and nudged his shoulder.
“That girl keeps looking at you,” she whispered. “She’s pretty.”
Tommaso turned his head and saw a young woman in a sky blue dress quickly divert her attention to the priest, her cheeks pink. Tommaso smiled amusedly and looked at his sister, giving her a wink. Angela knew he would talk to her after the vigil.
They had been dating for three months when Marcella suggested Angela come work at the shirtwaist factory with her. She had become fast friends with Tommaso’s sister, and though she liked many of the girls at the factory, Marcella wanted to have the company of someone who knew her nearly as well as her family.
“I know they will hire you,” she assured her. “And you can increase your independence and use the money for whatever you want. Buy some pretty clothes.”
Except on Sundays, every morning they met at the corner of Mc’Dougal and Bleeker Street and walked the block down to the factory, arm in arm.

• • •

“Is he down there?” Angela asked.
Marcella nodded vigorously. “Yes. He’s getting something from the steam pumper.”
On the ninth floor of the Asch building many of the workers had nowhere to escape to. The door to the stairwell was locked, and besides, it was already up in flames. The fabric they used to make the shirts was fueling the fire. Waves of heat washed over them, and the smoke filled their lungs and made them choke. Among the chaos, Angela took Marcella’s hand and squeezed it as she let out a sob. Marcella looked at her future sister-in-law, taking in her frizzy hair and soot on her face, her red lipstick no longer vibrant. She was biting her knuckle, trying to prevent the fear from overpowering her.
“Don’t worry,” Marcella soothed. “He loves us both and will do everything he can to save us.”
A girl named Ruth Polanski rushed up to them. “They say we’ll have to jump if we don’t want to be burned alive!” she cried, her voice raw with hysteria.
All three of them glanced at the windows, praying to God to ease their fall.

• • •
The firemen grabbed life nets and rushed to the base of the building, forming a circle. Tommaso struggled to remain professional. No matter how much air he took in, he could not feel relief. He was choking like Marcella and Angela, choking on fear.
Gases from the spectators made the firemen look up. A man was standing on the narrow ledge. The firemen maneuvered to the best position.
“Shit, he’s not gonna make it,” Stewarts said.
The captain kept his eyes on the man.
“We’ll catch him.”
“We’ve never done it from this high! Five stories at most.”
Tommaso refused to believe the nets wouldn’t hold up. It’ll work.
It’ll work. When Marcella’s safe on the ground I’m gonna kiss her and I don’t care who sees.
The thought of grazing her lips and touching her slim neck made Tommaso’s eyes prick with tears. He imagined her disheveled but still the loveliest thing he’d ever seen.
“He’s gonna do it! Hold on as tight as you fucking can!” the captain shouted.
Tommaso gripped the net until his hands ached. Marcella and Angela’s lives depended upon it.

• • •

“He’s dead,” Angela sobbed. The man who jumped was lying on the sidewalk, his broken body surrounded by newly pooled blood. The firemen stared in shock at the hole in the net.
Marcella covered her face with her arms and wailed, sinking her teeth into the sleeve of her blouse. So it was over then. She was going to die. The image of her soft body hitting the pavement nearly made her puke. It was hard to believe it was at least better than being burned alive.
Marcella ran her hands over her face then stumbled to the window. Angela’s eyes widened with fear as she realized Marcella’s plan.
“Please don’t do it, sorella,” she cried, sinking to her knees and gripping Marcella’s waist.
Marcella pulled her sister-in-law onto her feet, gripped her forearms and stared her in the eyes. “Stay here as long as you can. I got you into this. You shouldn’t have to die.”
“But then why wouldn’t you stay too?”
Marcella looked towards the window. She didn’t want to spoil Angela’s hope. “I want Tomas to see me again.”
More tears streaked down Angela’s face, and Marcella wiped them away. She smiled sadly at the mess it made on her cheeks.
Marcella gripped the edge of the window and pulled herself up. Her legs seemed to be disconnected from her body, and she wondered why she was not falling as she stood out on the ledge. The air was such a relief. So cold.
Tommaso stared at her in disbelief, and yet he knew why she was doing this. She wanted him to know which one was she, not puzzle over charred bodies. Marcella smiled, and he knew she had found him. He hoped she wasn’t afraid, wasn’t agonized.
A thousand images flitted through her mind, and she settled on her favorite. They were on Coney Island and Tommaso was licking a bit of almond ice cream off her lips. At first she had been startled; it felt so foreign to feel his tongue on her skin. But then it became a promise. A hint at married life.
Marcella stood at the altar across from Tommaso and received his kiss. She smiled as she stepped off the ledge.
“to my friend niko”

by Anna Crossland

We are mirrors with attached limbs
passing each other
and glances feel like weekends.
We caress each other’s glass
and kiss our own Narcissus
until conveyor belt life spans
shuttle us off onto our wayward missions.
We dream of our Korean princesses
or mistresses

and hope they read ink blots on paper
as if they mastered Rorschach divination
just by laying down next to us
for longer than one orgasm.
Our mirror faces have not mouths
by which we read out universal transcriptions
so we blindly fondle the ridges
of our fractured facades until the pits of our
stomachs leak blood and
the bare bones of our existence
into the black holes we insist are monstrous.
Yet when we look into them
we discover the vacant stare of our shattered glass beings.
I think, therefore I am nothing
but a smudge on crystal cups
used for show and perceived usage.
I imagine, therefore I am
complacency—a lego block building
being stripped down and built up daily out of pure whimsy.
I am, there you are
in front of me
until our grotesque mirror-bodies
rest on the sides of highways,
waiting to decay into sandy beaches,
hoping for degradation and a storm of winds
to separate us infinitely.
Dubai Wireless Network 2.0
Archival Ink on Paper
8.5 x 10.5 inches
Zach Bootz
On L.A.’s maze of freeways,
cars sing their mantra in short and long falsettos.
People wade not unlike a clump of bodies at sea,
struggling to breathe while
rusted Chevys spew their fumes –anonymous
like litter in the park.

I’m just trying to get by.
Do people normally have panic attacks during rush hour?
The fog encompasses my body and we inch –inch forward.
I keep thinking yesterday is today.

A sprout between two cracks of sidewalk
is stepped on twice,
pecked at by a bird,
and finally ran over by a freckled boy on a bike.
The bike’s tires have splinters in them, their grooves
caked with dirt and a piece of silky hair –like a wisp floating in air,
burning against the asphalt,
kissing the ground with each revolution.

The sweat collects around my neck and finally we are suffocated
by the shade of the tunnel with lights so bright I wonder if
melancholy can be melted by the sun.
It is dark and hot.
I pray for an avalanche, sitting here, in this tunnel,
while when the beeps and honks become my hymn.

Melissa Acevedo
I'm at a point of expansion. No, neither my waistline nor my wallet grows by the day, but my potential to become a real person. Why, then, am I so frightened of my future? Like many people, to combat this fear, I turn to the past. I turn to that which does not represent my current desires, hopes, and dreams. I turn to the popular culture of the year I was born: 1993. What follows is a reflection upon my favorite movies of that year. Enjoy.

10. **Rookie of the Year**: Not much into sports anymore.
9. **The Pelican Brief**: Alright, I haven't seen this one. It's a good one, I'm assuming. There's an episode of *30 Rock* where it's referenced like six times.
8. **Little Buddah**: How could a kid from Seattle be the next Dalai Lama?
7. **Searching for Bobby Fischer**: Wow! Chess!
6. **Free Willy**: Take a look and look a listen at this black-and-white majesty and see how right they were back in the year I was born.
5. **The Fugitive**: While I've never seen this movie, I have seen *Scrubs*.
4. **Cool Runnings**: How could a team from tropical Jamaica go on to win a gold medal for a winter sport? I'll let the great postmodern philosophers figure that one out.
3. **Mrs. Doubtfire**: When I think of that year, more than any other, I think of the cross-dresser we all want to be, Mrs. Doubtfire.
2. **Hocus Pocus**: I am just so in like with Bette Midler.
1. **Jurassic Park**: The lines are campy, especially when delivered by Jeff Goldblum. These days, besides starring in YouTube remixes of his own laugh (look that one up, kids), I've heard he plays a jazz set in Hollywood every once in a while.
Top 10 Quotes from the Seven Nabokov Novels I Read this Semester

Zachariah Kaylar

10. “The oft repeated complaints of poets that, alas, no words are available, that words are pale corpses, that words are incapable of expressing our thingum-my-bob feelings”
—The Gift

9. “Her memory contained a modest, dimly lit gallery with a sequence of all the people who had in any way caught her fancy.”
—The Luzhin Defense

8. “All this sounds like a nudist brochure…”
—The Gift

7. “…it might be wise / Not to expect too much of paradise.”
—Pale Fire

6. “Charlie, who had as much sex appeal as a raw carrot…”
—Lolita

5. “I switched to English literature, where so many frustrated poets end as pipe-smoking teachers in tweeds.”
—Lolita

4. “Solitude is the playfield of Satan.”
—Pale Fire

3. “One is always at home in one’s past.”
—Speak, Memory

2. “…human life is but a series of footnotes to a vast obscure unfinished masterpiece.”
—Pale Fire

1. “For me, a work of fiction exists only insofar as it affords me what I shall bluntly call aesthetic bliss, that is a sense of being somehow, somewhere connected with other states of being where art (curiosity, tenderness, kindness, ecstasy) is the norm.”
—“On a Book Entitled Lolita”

Top 10 Songs of 2014

Jordan Bohannon

1. “The Lord’s Favorite”
   Iceage

2. “Driver”
   Perfect Pussy

3. “Instant Disassembly”
   Parquet Courts

4. “Lemonade”
   Sophie

5. “Content Nausea”
   Parkay Quarts

   Ought

7. “American Horror”
   Speedy Ortiz

   Foxygen

9. “Black Quarterback”
   Death Grips

10. “Open Road”
    Matt Kivel
@PaulBabeuAZ
Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu made national headlines when he threatened his ex-boyfriend with deportation in 2012. Most of his Twitter account is spent criticizing America’s lack of attention to border security. He spends a lot of time on Twitter praising officers for their arrests.

"Bus Coming. This is not compassion. This is the abrogation of the rule of law. #AZ01" with attached picture of yellow school bus containing YMCA kids (deleted at 2:40 PM)

"Last tweet not the bus of illegal immigrant children. Thank God.” 11:40 AM.

“I apologize for the confusion. That was my error” 12:18 PM. Jul. 15

@Adamkwasman
At a protest in July, State Representative Adam Kwasman politicized a bus of YMCA campers as sad, refugee children, who had “fear in their faces.” Thankfully (for us) he not only shared this information on camera, but he took his concerns to Twitter. Notice that it takes him 40 minutes to apologize, and he does not even apologize for his bigotry.

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"Last tweet not the bus of illegal immigrant children. Thank God.” 11:40 AM.

“I apologize for the confusion. That was my error” 12:18 PM. Jul. 15

@Senatormelvin
State Senator Al Melvin is the best government official to follow on Twitter. Most politicians only tweet to publicize events, but Sen. Melvin interjects his running commentary on issues with frequent references to his rowing machine.

“#azright Dems &Duval wud like to limit or eliminate charter schools in AZ. They wud stop open enrollment, tuition tax credits, schl ltr grds” Sept. 2

“#azright Health Tip: Drink a water glass of warm water with 1 soup spoon of apple cider vinegar several times a day before meals is healthy.” Nov. 17

“#azright College students loans in the USa ttl over $1 Tril. We can lower college costs by using more Adjunct Lecturers & more online crses.” Aug. 9

@RepMattSalmon
Representing Arizona’s fifth district in U.S. Congress, Matt Salmon is a strong fiscal conservative who has voted to ban gay couples from adopting children, despite having an openly gay son. In an interview at CPAC (Conservative Political Action Conference) last year, Salmon related his stance on gun control legislation to Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, in that both he and Lincoln must fight against popular opinion. Salmon argues that he must lead with the same “moral authority” that Lincoln did in the face of adversaries. His Twitter is quite boring.

“W/another yr of stagnant incomes & rising anxiety, now is the time 4 the Senate 2 act & pass House #jobs bills” Sept. 22
calling all pen-wielding folks

If you would like to write for us next semester, please e-mail normalschoolreview@gmail.com for more details.