



Daryn Kagan
What's Possible

When you don't like what's on the menu

She lost me at pork.

Pork tenderloin to be more specific.

Before I continue with this story, let me warn you that you will roll your eyes at least once, if I've done my job well.

Back to the pork.

Our sweet neighbors rented a house at the beach for the week and have invited us to come along. We are part of their quarantine bubble.

Here was generous, organized, excellent cook Neighbor sharing the menu she'd put together for our visit.

"I'm thinking pork tenderloin for Wednesday and lasagna for the next night," she texted, inspiring an instant panic flashback to my picky eater childhood.

And by picky, I mean unless it was a hot dog with a single line of mustard down the middle, I didn't eat it.

The fact that I grew to 5'9" is a mystery keeping nutritionists busy well into the next century.

My no drama mother made a rule. "You can be a picky eater," she informed me, "but you can't draw attention to yourself. It's your job to know that you can always find something to eat."

This proved to be true.

I could come to your house for dinner and you'd never know that your meticulously prepared meal was grossing me out.

But four days sharing a house? Therein lay the panic.

My tastes have grown exponentially since my hot dog days. I marvel at all the things I now enjoy. Seafood, curry, anything pickled or smoked get complete and total "Yum!" from me.

In recent years, I've completely dropped beef and pork. Yes, even my beloved hot dogs are gone, as I move toward more plant-based foods.

So, pork tenderloin and cheese anything?

How was I going to fake this for four days?

Insert your eye roll about here.

We have a pandemic, a struggling economy, schools can't figure out how to serve kids and I'm whining about pork and cheese at the beach?

Exactly.

I share this challenge for the sheer delight and nostalgia.

It harkens back to what I recently heard called "The Before Times," as if we're all living in some dystopian novel.

Have you encountered one of these challenges, Dear Reader?

Something that seemed important six months ago, but now seems trivial?

I find a mixture of delight, sadness and little patience with what once occupied my stress.

Maybe that's why I quickly came up with a solution.

"Can I be the appetizer chef?" I asked Neighbor.

She immediately took me up on my offer.

Which is how I found my way with salmon.

Smoked salmon.

I'm preparing it on my grill right now.

Avocados for guacamole and an incredible bean dip will also make the trip.

They're all so delicious.

Roll your eyes back in your head delicious.

To me, at least.

If you're at the beach, we'll have you over. Between Neighbor and me, you'll no doubt find something you can eat.

We'll dine and solve real world problems.

From six feet away, of course.

Daryn Kagan is the author of the book "Hope Possible." Email her at Daryn@darynkagan.com.

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE PERSONAL JOURNEY

Antioch College professor helps during pandemic

By **Beth Anspach**
Contributing Writer

Antioch College has a long and storied history. Originally founded in 1852 as a private liberal arts school, it closed in 2008 due to budget issues. But Antioch alumni, faculty and students didn't want to see their school disappear for good from the community of Yellow Springs.

Michael Casselli was one alumnus called upon to help reopen the school, returning to Yellow Springs after 20 years away.

"I was born and raised in Cleveland," Casselli said. "I attended Antioch, graduated and then spent a year building theater sets before attending the Rhode Island School of Design."

Casselli moved to New York in 1990 and worked as a technical director, production and tour manager for an "experimental" dance and theater company. The company was passionate about doing things differently – experimenting with form and trying to "disrupt the traditional."

"I was contacted about a group wanting to reopen Antioch in Yellow Springs," Casselli said. "They were called 'Nonstop Antioch' and they wanted to hold on to the basic DNA of the college."

This group of faculty, students and of course, alumni, were determined to see Antioch once again offering classes. Casselli decided to join them in the effort to create an educational program that paid homage to the original school and that could continue without an official campus if needed.

"I came to Yellow Springs for my 20th reunion," Casselli said. "There were 700 people there and I met with the new faculty and old friends who wanted my help."

In 2011, after three years, the college opened its doors once again and Casselli decided to stay and teach, becoming an assistant professor of sculpture and installation. And over the years since, he has done installations at local galleries using different objects to help "ramp up conversations."

"I teach some traditional sculpture methods as well as installation," Casselli said. "It's important for the students to learn to use their hands and how to use and change materials."

Casselli's classes have helped his students to build problem-solving skills and to bring their ideas and theories into practices. And never have these skills been more important than this year when the COVID-19 global pandemic shut down colleges and universities across the nation.

"We were very close to the end of the quarter when we had



Michael Casselli is an assistant professor of sculpture and installation at Antioch College. After the school closed during the pandemic, he utilized the school's three-dimensional printers to make face shields and mask clips. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

to switch to remote learning," Casselli said about the closure in mid-March. "Fortunately, we've all been online, and I was teaching a class called 'Poetic Technology,' with the idea of figuring out how to make things happen magically with technology."

Casselli and his students continued to come together using both the Google Hangouts and Zoom platforms and though it was frustrating at times, it was a way they could all share their projects and ideas.

With face coverings suddenly become a huge need in the new COVID-19 world, Casselli and his students recognized an opportunity – using three-dimensional printers to create face shields and clips designed to take pressure from face masks off the ears.

"We started making the shields and clips and someone in town saw what we were doing, and I suddenly had a request for 500 clips," Casselli said. "Everyone jumped in and we quickly pro-



duced clips and shields with three printers. Three-dimensional printing is a process of creating solid objects from a digital model. This is accomplished by laying down successive layers of materials until an object is complete.

"I use all plant based and biodegradable plastic," Casselli said. "The shields and clips can be cleaned with alcohol and reused."

Since the pandemic hit the local area, Casselli has created more than 100 face shields and upwards of 400 mask clips, which has kept him extremely busy while the school has been closed. Antioch College is planning to reopen on Aug. 31 for their first quarter with a safety plan in place for all students and faculty.

"If someone is looking at going to college and wants a more experiential approach to learning, Antioch may be the place," Casselli said. "The school really does prepare you for being out in the world and students can go anywhere and set themselves up for success. That's an important thing. I moved back here to keep the college going and to help it to thrive."

Contact this contributing writer at banspach@gmail.com.

STORIES OF HOPE

Kids create epic stories at pandemic-friendly summer camp

Dayton Live offering weeklong programs.

By **Sarah Franks**
Staff Writer

Marveling at her campers' imaginations while they bring to life everyday objects, Leah Thomas said feeding creativity is more important than ever amid a pandemic.

Thomas, the director of education and engagement at Dayton Live, has been working hard to give Dayton's kids the best version of a socially-distanced summer camp experience.

Monday, nine kids began the weeklong Dayton Live Pop-up Puppet Camp where "campers" in fourth and fifth grades meet every day to construct their own pop-up theater, create their own characters and write an original script to perform in front of their peers. Spots are already filled for next week's Comedy Camp.

Dayton Live is gauging the community's interest with the first two weeks of summer camp, though Thomas said the hope is to add more camp programs as soon



Dayton Live is hosting masked and socially distanced summer camps for kids in fourth through eighth grade at the PNC Arts Annex. CONTRIBUTED

as August. Parents can put their children on the wait list for it, and when, new programs open by visiting daytonlive.org, under the education tab.

"It is hopeful, but it's also challenging," Thomas said. ... "How can we preserve this heart of performance, building ensemble and community – how can

we preserve that in the midst of a pandemic?"

Turns out, kids at summer camp can be some of the best people to turn to for advice.

"Working with kids, they are the best audience to try new things with because they will tell you point blank if it's working or not," Thomas said. "It is challenging but if the artist community doesn't figure it out for themselves, no one else will figure it out for us. I do find a lot of hope in the fact that we're able to have (summer camp)."

Campers decorated their own "camp" or work space they get to call their own for the duration of the week.

"It's important for them to feel at home and feel like they can personalize it a little bit," Thomas said. "That's been the tactic to kind of counteract some of the distance and this idea that everything is sterile and 'don't touch.'"

In each of the nine "campsites" this week, a fantastical narrative is taking shape.

One student, Aiden Thompson, had the idea to cut the finger tips off of a glove to create five unique characters with conflict-

ing hopes and dreams.

"The pinky's biggest fear was losing his throne," Thomas said. "But, when (Aiden) answered the interview questions as the character on his thumb, the thumb's biggest dream in life was to become the king. I was like, this is going to be insane. I have no idea how that's going to happen but I love this story."

Thompson has titled his epic "Pinky King and His Court."

Scholarships were available in the past for Dayton Live summer camps, but because of revenue loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic, tuition, per child, is \$149 for the week. However, Thomas said Dayton Live hopes to bring back scholarship opportunities as soon as possible.

"The sheer amount of personal isolation that comes with COVID-19 – we've heard a lot of different stories in the news just about depression, boredom and screen time being on the rise," Thomas said. ... "Theater naturally combats those things because there's power in knowing you are not alone."

Contact this reporter at 937-610-7452 or email Sarah.Franks@coxinc.com.