

Veterans, Disability, and the Power of Literature

Part 3: Conversation with the Poets

Southeast ADA Center

September 26, 2018 2:00 P.M. EST

Barry Whaley:

I want to welcome everyone who is here today for the third and final webinar of the series, *Veterans, Disability, and the Power of Literature*. My name is Barry Whaley, I'm the Director of Southeast A.D.A. Center based in Atlanta, Georgia. This is a project that, as Marsha mentioned, is part of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University.

We're funded by NIDILRR, the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research, which is a center within ACL, the Administration for Community Living, the Department of Health and Human Services. The Southeast A.D.A. Center is one of ten centers that make up the A.D.A. National Network and our role is to provide informal technical guidance, training, information on all aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University is a leader in efforts to advance the civic, economic, and social participation of people with disabilities in a global society.

Again, I want to welcome you to today's webinar. If you have joined us for the past two installments of this series, you know our hosts today are Steve Kuusisto and Doug Anderson. Steve Kuusisto is author of the memoir "*Have Dog, Will Travel*", "*Planet of the Blind*", and "*Eavesdropping: a Memoir of Blindness and Listening*", and the poetry collections "*Only Bread, Only Light*", and "*Letters to Borges*". Steve's a graduate of the Iowa "Writer's Workshop" and a Fulbright Scholar. He's taught at the University of Iowa, Hobart and Williams Smith Colleges, and at the Ohio State University. He

currently teaches at Syracuse University where he holds a university professorship in disability studies. He's a frequent speaker in the U.S. and abroad, and you can learn more about Steve and his work at his website StephenKuusisto.com. That's StephenKuusisto.com.

Doug Anderson, our other guest today, is the author of three books of poems, of which "*The Moon Reflected Fire*" won the Kate Tufts Discovery Award and "*Blues for Unemployed Secret Police*" a grant from the Academy of American Poets. His play "Short-timers" was produced at theater for the New City in New York City in 1981. He's also written a memoir, "*Keep Your Head Down: Vietnam, the '60s and a Journey of Self-Discovery*." His most recent book of poems is "*Horse Medicine*." His works appeared in the Massachusetts Review, Poetry, Plow Shares, the Virginia Quarterly Review, the Southern Review, Field, and other publications. He has written critical articles for the New York Times book review, the London Times literary supplement, and the Boston Globe. Doug has taught at Emerson and Smith Colleges, the University of Massachusetts, and the MFA programs of Pacific University of Oregon and Bennington College. He's affiliated with the Joiner Institute for the Study of War and Social Consequences at UMass Boston, and he currently is helping to design an institute for refugees and veterans at the University of Massachusetts. Doug served in Vietnam as a corpsman with the Marine infantry battalion.

Our webinar series today, as a manner of note, explores themes of war that some people may find uncomfortable. There may be some mild profanity as well. And, finally, the views that are expressed by Steve and Doug don't necessarily reflect those of Syracuse University or the Burton Blatt Institute. So, Doug and Steve, I have to tell you, in listening to the first two episodes, it's just been fascinating. This is really a unique format. I've likened it to sitting on a front of porch and listening to old friends have a

conversation. So I'm very eager to hear today's episode and with that, I'm going to turn it over to you both.

Steve Kuusisto:

Well, thank you so much, Barry. Hi, Doug.

Doug Anderson:

Hi, Steve. Hi, Barry.

Steve Kuusisto:

I want to thank everyone at the Southeast A.D.A. Center for being our support team and for helping to make this series of talks and conversations possible. It takes a village and we certainly have a remarkable team here. So thanks, again, to all of you. Doug, I want to say thank you for all the extraordinary work that you have been doing now for many years bringing poetry and creative writing into the many veterans communities, because there are many, many in these United States. And also for, I just want to say this, I'm going to embarrass you a little bit, but for the really amazing contribution to American poetry and letters that has been your dynamic. You're a wonderful poet, and for those who are listening, it's a real privilege to be able to offer this kind of podcast with a poet of such distinction. The various publications and honors that Barry listed in introducing Doug are major league American poetry honors. I think that was a sentence.

Doug Anderson:

Thank you, Steve. That is most generous. I appreciate that so much and the admiration is mutual. Being around you is like having my brain sharpened.

Steve Kuusisto:

It is true. I have a very pointy head.

Doug Anderson:

It's good to be here with you.

Steve Kuusisto:

Great. So we've been talking a lot about poetry and the experiences of veterans, and in particular, within the sort of context of veterans who come home from foreign wars or engagements who have experienced either visible or invisible disabilities. And our conversations have been pretty wide-ranging. I've been thinking a lot about this last episode that we're going to do today, and the opportunity that we have to speak with people who want to check in and communicate with us. One of the things that I've been thinking a lot about, and I'll just toss this out there as sort of a generalized way to get started. I'm currently teaching a course at Syracuse University on DNA, and this course is designed for any student, not just science students. It reaches across academic disciplines. We're basically looking at the ways in which we're coming to understand DNA in contemporary culture and how much we're learning. So much is happening so fast in terms of our understanding of human genetics and epigenetics, which is to say the dynamic whereby we understand that trauma, for instance, can be inherited by the children of parents who have been through extraordinary trauma. That's a thing we used to think only Carl Jung believed, but now we know it's true.

I've been looking at a book "*Inheriting the War: Poetry and Prose by Descendants of Vietnam Veterans and Refugees*." There's an extraordinary introduction to this volume by Yusef Komunyakaa, one of our greatest poets and also a veteran, and he said something really interesting. He said, "Recent

research has begun to examine how even trauma may be inherited from a parent. In a TEDx statement, Tori Eggherman recounts these studies. She reflects on laboratory research by neuroscientist Isabelle Monceau and her colleagues at the University of Zurich in Switzerland who have demonstrated trauma is a trait that can be passed on to offsprings. She reports, "that would be Isabelle Monceau at Zurich, "the offspring of mice who experienced high levels of trauma experienced high levels of stress and depression. The scientists showed that the stress and depression were passed on genetically rather than socially by injecting sperm into mice who had not undergone trauma."

So I've been thinking a lot about how, and I want to get your reactions to this, Doug, and maybe the reactions of others who are online or part of our group here today, but I think it's important to recognize that the trauma of war, the injuries of war are not isolated to individuals, but that they are connected to families, to children, and that these dynamics do spread out in multiple ways in the culture. I think that's important to recognize because we tend to think of the wounded warrior as a single patient who needs to be cured, often in an unrealistic expectation, or we think of the individual disabled person as an individual person without understanding that these circumstances radiate out into the broader culture and that these things can, in fact, affect children as well. So why don't I start there with just a very large complicated observation. What do you think about that, Douglas?

Doug Anderson:

I think that's true. Right now I'm thinking of Art Spiegelman's series called Mouse. His book has been written about the Holocaust from having been a child of survivors of the Holocaust. And I'm also thinking about the countries that have been traumatized for years, war after war after war after war, say in the Middle East or even in Vietnam. The consequences of the war continue in Vietnam, not only physically in terms of unexplored ordinance and Agent Orange, but in the psychology of the country.

They still suffer very deeply from this. You wonder how, for example, does a country like Syria ever plan to get well?

Steve Kuusisto:

Or if it ever can get well.

Doug Anderson:

Get well, and if -

Steve Kuusisto:

South Sudan.

Doug Anderson:

Yeah. And PTSD, there's an anger component of PTSD and this plays into the idea that when you continue to bomb civilians, you're creating terrorists. This all works together and the effects of war are accumulative. We have a present Republican administration in Congress that doesn't believe that there's such a thing as PTSD and certain of their members have been trying to get rid of benefits for veterans who have this condition and trying to get rid of benefits from wounded veterans generally by saying that they should no longer get benefits when they become eligible for Social Security. So this is the attitude of the administration toward trauma and it's a very lame one, and a spiritually toxic one. I think it's very much the time to be as articulate as we can about what trauma is, what post-traumatic stress disorder is, and keep the information out there.

Steve Kuusisto:

Yeah, it's interesting that you bring that up, because I was just looking online a little earlier, because I wanted to download "*Inheriting the War*", which is a wonderful book and our listeners may very well enjoy it. As I was looking for the book online, I, of course, entered the search string "Veterans with disabilities" and what popped up on my screen were a number of books that were written by people who were hostile to giving veterans benefits of any kind. And you know me, I'm a blind person. I was never able to serve in the military, though you and I discussed the fact that when I was a teenager, there was nothing more I wanted to do than be in the Navy. Certainly, as a disabled person, I know a lot of wounded warriors, paralyzed veterans, and blind veterans and I used to work at a seeing-eye dog school and this is my culture in many respects. But what I'm getting at here is, once again, I was shocked anew at the descriptions of these books. It reminded me- those descriptions reminded me that even for those disabled who have not been in war, but who have profound disabling conditions, there has been always in the United States, and in other countries as well, a narrative that we're all fakers.

Doug Anderson:

Ah!

Steve Kuusisto:

That we're out to scam the system somehow. Veterans have to deal with this all the time. So do people who have not been in the military, but have cerebral palsy or need to use a motorized wheelchair or what have you? There's every kind of obstacle placed in the way of people when it comes to getting insurance, getting accommodations. This is why 80%, 70-80% of people with disabilities remain unemployed. So just segueing off what you just said.

Doug Anderson:

Yeah, it is. There's a closure of the heart going on on the far-right that is typical of regimes that are about to go off the edge. I think that the restoration of the heart in its deepest sense is imperative.

Steve Kuusisto:

Well, that's one of the things that poetry is aimed at and also autobiographical creative non-fiction. For those who don't know the term, creative non-fiction is essentially memoir or journalism where the writer employs the techniques of fiction writing to get the story across and make it more vivid and readable for the general reader. So you have dialogue and vivid scenes, and points of view shifting, and stream of consciousness and things like that. In the last 25 years, memoir has become very important as an American literary form. I, myself have written three of them. You write about the circumstances that you've lived through, but you aim to do it in a way that is inviting, captivating, and memorable. You, sir, have written a rather wonderful memoir. I know you came today prepared to do some reading from it. You want to talk a little bit about it? As a writer who has been in war, who does have an invisible disability, maybe perhaps how those factors also play into or are reflected in the writing of the autobiography? Any sort of thoughts there?

Doug Anderson:

Yeah, very much so. In my memoir, I kind of spontaneously created a caricature called "Snake Brain" who is kind of my alter ego and also a representation of post-traumatic stress disorder. He gives a little lecture at one point. This is Snake's lecture on the central nervous system.

"It's like a big tree with long roots and branches but at the end of each root and branch, there's an extension, at least the length of the real branch or root that snakes out like ectoplasm way beyond your body. That's your central nervous system, boy. It's been stretched beyond normal. It's huge. And every

time some little thing comes along, some little click or bang, some little fragment of anger from somebody else, you light up the whole tree. Some medieval cat said the soul surrounds the body, contains the body so your soul is touching things before your body arrives on-site. That is why you are so crazy, bro. That is why you follow those people home the other day when they cut you off in traffic. You just stepped off your bike and stood there in their front yard and menaced them big time. You need to find a bridle for your idol. But you don't know that and I can't tell you. You're going to have to run into something that doesn't give. You're going to have to hit your head hard."

So that's Snake Brains little lecture on the central nervous system and trauma.

Steve Kuusisto:

I'm thinking three things instantly. One is that as a blind person, who is often having to advocate for my own accommodations, I need things to be accessible, and the world is not always accessible to me, and I just have to keep pushing. The more you push, certainly in local environments, you can earn the reputation and it's an unfair one of being angry, being a crank. And I know that's one of the problems that veterans have had who have visible or invisible disabilities. You have to keep insisting, and then there's this anger issue.

Doug Anderson:

Well people don't want to deal with it. In the upper echelons of the military, there are people who don't want soldiers to show weakness. You think of Patton and the movie about him chewing out that guy because he was a complete mental wreck. There are people in the upper echelons of the military superstructure who make fun of it, and to me, they're hiding their own PTSD and they are threatened by anyone else's expression of it. They don't want to go there. I'm thinking this may have

something to do with it. People, they don't want to hear about the war. In particular, they don't want to hear about the Vietnam War. They don't want to hear about a guy with both legs and testicles blown off by a mine. They really don't want to know about those things.

Steve Kuusisto:

And they don't want to know about Afghanistan and Iraq too.

Doug Anderson:

Yeah. A war that's been going on for 17 years and they forgot about it.

Steve Kuusisto:

They say "Thank you for your service", but what they're really saying is "Don't talk to me."

Doug Anderson:

Got it. It's a ritual to avoid direct confrontation.

Steve Kuusisto:

I just had a long talk with a soldier in the Atlanta Hartsfield airport, and he admired my dog and we got to talking and I said, "What's the one thing you can't stand hearing?" And he said, "Thank you for your service," because he said it's like "Have a nice day."

Doug Anderson:

Yeah, and sometimes the people mean well.

Steve Kuusisto:

They, do. No, no. And he acknowledged that. But he said it's incredibly difficult. He'd been on three tours of duty.

Doug Anderson:

And then there's- you're talking about the descendants of people who are veterans, and also their families, what they have to deal with, particularly the severely wounded who come home to their wives and children, and it's a whole new world. There's a wonderful new novel called "*Waiting for Eden*" by Elliot Ackerman.

Steve Kuusisto:

I haven't got it but I've read about it.

Doug Anderson:

I like to read a little bit to you. This is his wife with him in the hospital and Eden is burned over 100% of his body and is missing parts of his body, and is only partially there mentally. Okay. Here it is.

"She climbed up on his bed and leaned in, not touching his burns but so close that her smell would linger around him. Before, when they would be in bed together, she'd often wake when he'd bury his face deep into the nape of her neck, covering himself in her dark hair to what she worried was the point of suffocation. One of the first things he ever told her was that he liked her perfume, but she never wore any. Her smell was of soap and water. 'I'll get some pictures of Andy opening the doll house,' she told him. My friend stared across the room, the blue in his gaze running to gray, walleyed and just gone. Then he blinked couple of times. Between the blinks, she thought he looked at her real quick. She stared at him but his eyes were now fixed across the room. She decided that was enough. It was enough of a sign that he understood, she thought. She'd long been warned by the doctors about too much skin on skin

contact with him, especially, on the face, so she kissed the pillow next to his cheek. She left that afternoon. In the morning it'd be Christmas, and over the next three days he'd come awake."

Steve Kuusisto:

Wow.

Doug Anderson:

Yeah, it's a devastating novel.

Steve Kuusisto:

Yeah.

Doug Anderson:

And the exponential grief and trauma that spreads through families and through the population is something to be dealt with, you know? We've come to believe, in a culture, at least the privileged part of the culture, is that suffering is something that we can store away somewhere or medicate.

Steve Kuusisto:

Just get on with it, right?

Doug Anderson:

Get fixed at the shrink or- I think it was Laura Bush who said something like 'why should I trouble my beautiful mind with all these statistics of death and mutilation?' She actually said that. So, that's an incredibly impediment to the truth. There are countries in the world where people have to live with this day in and day out. They have no protection against it. But in our privileged country, we do. We can compartmentalize and we can avoid. We can be in denial about a war that is still killing people.

Steve Kuusisto:

You know the passage that you just read from Elliot Ackerman's novel also demonstrates multiple layers of pain. There's the pain of the burns. There's the pain of the inability to remember precisely what life was like before the war.

Doug Anderson:

Yes.

Steve Kuusisto:

There's the pain of the wife who realizes that she is now, in some respects, forgotten. And, yet, also her pain at hearing she's been confused for someone else. And all of that pain happening in about seven sentences.

Doug Anderson:

Yes.

Steve Kuusisto:

And you know, I think that is domestic pain where because we have no language outside the home where we can express these things, this brings us back to creative writing and to literature. This is one of the places where we can express these things, and that's why it's so important for veterans who turn to creative writing and literature, because it helps the broader culture understand, to borrow a term from the great psychoanalyst Carl Jung, the "depth psychology" of these issues.

Doug Anderson:

Yeah. Yeah. I think literature can put you right there. It can put you right there where it's happening and get inside your head, and in a way that even films can't. It has a form of immediacy. They used to refer to PTSD as delayed stress syndrome. Remember that?

Steve Kuusisto:

Yes.

Doug Anderson:

That's because frequently, the symptoms surfaced long after the trauma. I have a poem I'd like to read in respect of that. It's from my book "*The Moon Reflected Fire*" and it's called "North of Tam Ky, 1967."

You were dead when I got there, managed to drag yourself
Almost to the treeline across the sandy open place
they planned to kill us in, the clearing I would have to crawl
to get to you, and did, the tracers crossing overhead.
The round caught you dropping to the ground, entering longways
between neck and shoulder, taking the artery, the lung.
I had inside me in those days a circuit-breaker between head
and heart that shut out everything but the clarity of fear.
I felt nothing for you then, rolling you over, looking for
the exit wound, nor when I put my mouth on yours and blew,
hearing the gurgle that told me you had drowned in your own blood.

I knew only the muzzle flashes too close in front, the sniper
cracking on my left and I flipped the switch and went cold,
the same whose wires I tinker with these twenty-three years after,
a filament flickering in the heart and then the blaze of light.

Steve Kuusisto:

Wow. Whoa!

Doug Anderson:

You know, anybody who's written about war does this. They have the ability to put you there. Walt Whitman, believe it or not. You don't think of him being a war poet, but he was a medical orderly, he volunteered to help with the wounded. And he wrote movingly about it, both in poems and in prose and this is a bit of a poem that he wrote about it.

On, on I go, (open doors of time! Open hospital doors!)
The crush'd head I dress, (poor crazed hand tear not the bandage
away,)
The neck of the cavalry-man with the bullet through and through
I examine,
Hard the breathing rattles, quite glazed already the eye, yet life
struggles hard,
(Come sweet death! Be persuaded O beautiful death!
In mercy come quickly.)

From the stump of the arm, the amputated hand,
I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough, wash off the matter
and blood,

Back on his pillow the soldier bends with curv'd neck and side-
falling head,
His eyes are closed, his face is pale, he dares not look on the
bloody stump,
And has not yet look'd on it.

I dress a wound in the side, deep, deep.
But a day or two more, for see the frame all wasted and sinking,
And the yellow-blue countenance see.

Steve Kuusisto:

I'm not a Walt Whitman scholar by any means, but I always loved "Leaves of Grass" and one of the things I do know is that Whitman volunteered in the Army hospitals in Washington, D.C. and he was heavily involved over a three-year period helping to dress the wounds of grievously injured soldiers and helped many of them die. He read to them and wrote letters for them to their families, and during that process he himself became ill and that illness then led to multiple strokes that he had. Then later in his life, he wrote an odd book called "*Specimen Days*" which is basically he went back after suffering some paralysis, and he found all of the notebooks he wrote while he was working in the hospitals and he put them together with new observations that he used to kind of piece these war notebooks together. And in effect, it's my contention that he is, therefore, the first person to have written a disability memoir in the United States because he's writing about the wounded soldiers, but he's also writing about how it

affected him. It's really a remarkable book. Even for those of you out there who may not be all that interested in poetry, this is prose, and it's really moving. "*Specimen Days*" it's called.

Doug Anderson:

It's a great book. So it's always there. There is always, through poetry, through literature, a sharper eye, an eye of the heart that can put people exactly there.

Steve Kuusisto:

Tell us a little bit about the work that you've done with others, so it's not just your work, but the work of veterans to extend and introduce poetry to veterans groups in the U.S., because it's really, really very interesting work.

Doug Anderson:

Well, Preston Hood, he's a former Navy SEAL and a poet, and he's the central character in the film "Hunter and the Blackness" which we're going to see in the Film Festival that I'm also in. He's extremely active in giving workshops and forming groups. I've done the same thing from time-to-time. I'm doing a reading on Saturday at the Forbes Library in Northampton with Rachael Bloom that is centered on trauma and loss. I've been over to the VA and ward aid area where they deal with PTSD and they're trying to get therapists and veterans to come over, so it's a full-time job. Also the Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences that I've been affiliated with for many years is always doing stuff like that. We have veterans from all different wars. I was very moved to be in a lecture on Arabic poetry couple of summers ago.

This young man next to me was an Iraq vet and he was getting his Ph.D. in Arabic Studies and this all came out of the war. So you see these creative things happening in people. They are hit with an experience that just tears them apart and the questions that come from that can become creativity. I'm very lucky in having writing and I'm very much in favor of starting workshops for people to allow them to find their own voice and to express this. Writing is not the same thing as talking. This is something I tell my students all the time. Writing is a physical act. You can feel your whole self in the physical act of writing, and it comes down to your arm and out through the tip of the pen in a way that talking doesn't.

Also with the Vietnamese, the Vietnamese are still horribly traumatized. Although they are very proud in having won the war and having brought their country back into economic reality, even after all of the blockades, they have a problem with alcoholism. They don't really have a public that take cares of veterans because it's a "we" culture and families have always taken care of their veterans. They're not a rich country, so they can't really afford a VA. But one of the things that the Joiner Center has been doing over the last thirty years is going back to Vietnam and making deep connections. Veterans, Kevin Bowen and other members of the Joiner Center, when I went back with them in January of 2000, we're helping to build a wing of a hospital near Hue. There's this constant reaching out to Vietnamese veterans, our former enemies. They have helped us a great deal in understanding what they went through and we've helped them get published in English, get translated into English. Many of the great Asian poets that came out of the war, we've helped bring into English. So, we're doing it all the time. We're doing it all the time. And I hope to go back to Vietnam again and make even deeper connections with people and share writing.

It was very moving when I went to Wade University and read for their faculty. It was wonderful. We exchanged books. They asked me pointed questions. Thum Tien Wat has a poem about the moon

and circles and fire and my book is called "*The Moon Reflected Fire*" and at first they thought I had plagiarized his book. So then, that brought on a quite lively discussion. But war is an education. War is my highest degree. War is the beginning of a deeper consciousness. I was a kid when I went over there and suddenly, it was not possible to keep on not thinking. I had to have answers and the writing came out of that, and the teaching came out of that, and the activities with the Joiner Center.

Steve Kuusisto:

Tell us a little bit more about the Joiner Center. They do important work and you've mentioned it on couple of our podcasts now. I think it would be great for our listeners to hear more about them.

Doug Anderson:

It was founded by a man named William Joiner who was a black Vietnam veteran. And then Dave Connelly and other several other vets, Kevin Bowen, Bruce Vigal, came together and it just kept growing. They have made deep connections with Vietnamese right off the bat. There were veterans who had questions that just could not be answered so they reached out to their former enemy. They also tried to reach out to the Vietnamese community in exile, but Vietnamese community in exile are frequently deeply full of hurt and bitterness and were not really willing to talk to people who are also talking with their enemy. It was a very complicated situation. It's eased somewhat now, especially with the younger generations. It began as scholarship. It began as research. It began as a synergy of, really, intellectual vigorous people who happened to be veterans. And it resulted- many things they have done. They have maybe the largest collection of microfilm of captured documents from the Vietnam War in the world. And they are now repatriating these files. They're giving them back to the Vietnamese

because the Vietnamese, in having so much of their country destroyed, have lost them. So ironically here Joiner Center is giving them back their documents that were captured by American intelligence and soldiers, and generally are people just bringing home souvenirs.

And they grew into a writer's workshop. They started a two week summer writer's workshop and over the years, they had not only Vietnam veterans apply, but veterans from other wars, veterans from other countries, from Rwanda, from Ireland. We have Irish Poets. John Dean and Ibu Bork. Countries that have their own experience with war. Middle Eastern countries. Bosnia. I got to meet Adisa Bosage and others, the Bosnian poet and filmmaker came to the center one summer. And it became this, it's this incredible heart of literary activities and growing consciousness. It's a very valuable organization.

And up until recently, it's had a line item in the Massachusetts state budget, but they have lost that and they're now fighting to survive. The new Congress obviously is not as friendly to this type of project as they used to be. They finally just raised enough money to stay open another year. But it's a great organization and it came together because people had to come together. They had to come together. They had to represent. They had to express. They had to question. And they had to plea for a consciousness about war.

Steve Kuusisto:

They used to be at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, right? Are they still there?

Doug Anderson:

No. They're actually at UMass-Boston. That's where they have always been. I know there's an effort that I'm involved with to start an institute for veterans and refugees at UMass, Amherst, but that's still in the embryonic stage.

Steve Kuusisto:

Interesting. Interesting. Well, it is, indeed, very distressing to learn that an organization that does such great profound humanitarian work is struggling to survive. Doesn't that speak to the moment we're living through? Let me just point out, I just got a Zoom webinar chat, couple of interesting notes here. One is from Justin Knott who says 'I'm also a Navy Corpsman vet, 1991-2000. When someone tells me thank you for your service, I usually just respond, it was my honor. It doesn't seem they are really wanting to engage in a more in-depth conversation. Not that I object to it, sometimes I also will then ask if they too had served.' Which is a very good response. B.Silvertri wrote, 'In defense of Laura Bush, it was Barbara Bush. I remember being stunned by hearing about that remark.'

Doug Anderson:

Well I thank him very much for the correction.

Steve Kuusisto:

I wrote him back and said 'I'll correct this in a minute.' I think Justin Knott also. I'm not one of these guys who does multi-tech very well, but those are good comments.

Doug Anderson:

I'm trying to do it right now.

Steve Kuusisto:

I hope my responses went through.

[silence]

Doug Anderson:

Hello?

Steve Kuusisto:

Yeah, I'm just thinking. Justin wrote they just went through. Good. Thank you. It's working!

[Laughter] I've basically spent most of today dealing with different computers and gizmos trying to make them all talk to each other.

Doug Anderson:

Even I am very low tech. It's an effort every time I do something like this.

Steve Kuusisto:

This is off subject, but when I was a little kid living in rural New Hampshire, my family still had a wind up gramophone. You know? So I think of myself as being a comparatively young 62, but I remember winding up the gramophone.

Doug Anderson:

Remember the television the size of a toaster? And remember the radio the size of - a huge standing wooden radio with vacuum tubes?

Steve Kuusisto:

I used to look in the back of the radio and think that there was a whole city in there with little people all dancing and carrying on.

Doug Anderson:

Yeah. Wonderful. Wonderful. I used to think this. It really was mysterious.

Steve Kuusisto:

I actually think radio is still a little mysterious. I was in the woods of New Hampshire this summer and I brought a short wave radio with me so I could listen to baseball games at night. And you just sit there, and you think, 'wow, this is going through the air!'

Doug Anderson:

Yeah. Radio is, somebody once said of radio, that he liked the pictures better.

Steve Kuusisto:

[Laughter] Well, that's true with me. I love listening to baseball on the radio or football or hockey. I do. When I was a kid, I grew up listening to Johnny Most doing the Boston Celtics radio broadcasts. 'He stole the ball!'

Doug Anderson:

Absolutely. Yeah.

Steve Kuusisto:

Well, how about reading us couple of more poems? I love to hear you read.

Doug Anderson:

Okay. I'll read a couple of my own. This is a fairly long one. It says a lot about the homecoming process. "Itinerary."

In Arizona coming across the border with dope in my tires and for months tasting the rubber in what I smoked. With a college degree and a trunk full of the war, working in one place long enough to get the money to stay high for a month, and then moving on. Drinking the cord of whiskey then getting up going to work the next day. A little speed to burn off the hangover. In the afternoon, a few reds to take the edge off the speed and then to the bar.

At the bar, the Madonna in the red mirror, my arm around her waist and the shared look that said the world is coming apart, let us hold one another against the great noise of it all. Waking with her the next morning, and seeing her older. Her 3-year-old wandering in and staring with a little worm of confusion in his forehead. The banner on her bedroom wall that read "Acceptance" in large block letters.

At night going out to unpack the war from my trunk. A sea bag of jungle utilities that stank of rice paddy silt and blood to remind myself it happened. Lost them somewhere between Tucson and Chicago. Days up on the scaffold working gable and trim with Mexicans who came through the hole in the fence the night before. Rednecks who paid me better than them. Laughing at jokes that weren't funny to keep the job. At a new Oktoberfest and getting into a fight with a black Army private who wore a button that read 'kiss me, I'm German.' Don't remember what the fight was about. Back in Tucson, up against the patrol car being cuffed for something I don't remember doing. Leaving the state.

Back with Jill in San Antonio. Finding her in the same bar. Driving her home in her car because she was too drunk. The flashers on behind me then the flashlight in my face. In those gentle days, they drove you home. Stealing Jill's car out of the impound lot next morning to avoid the fee. Later, sitting buck naked across from one another at the breakfast table wondering who we were. This woman who wanted to live with a man who had dreams so bad he would stay awake for days until the dreams started to bleed through into real time and he had to go back the other way and sleep to escape them. Who woke with the shakes before dawn and went to the kitchen for beer.

Later walking down to the Barrio slowly without talking, our hips touching. The Mexican restaurant and pink adobe strung with chili pepper Christmas lights year-round. Inside, the bull fight calendar with the matador's corpse laid out on a slab naked and blue with a red cloth across his loins and the inevitable grieving virgin kneeling at his side. The wound in the same place the centurion euthanized Christ with his spear. Our laughing, then not laughing, because laughter and grief were born joined at the hip. An old Mexican woman fanning herself at the cash register, her wattles trembling. Recordar, to remember, to pass again through the heart. Corazon, caraggio, core.

Steve Kuusisto:

Wow. That's a technical term. Wow. That is a really, really stunning poem.

Doug Anderson:

A little internal Odyssey.

Steve Kuusisto:

Oh, boy. You bet. Well one of the things poetry is about is how to live and what to do.

Doug Anderson:

Yeah.

Steve Kuusisto:

[Chuckles] It seems so simplistic but we don't get instruction manuals on how to live our lives.

Doug Anderson:

No.

Steve Kuusisto:

And we have to make it up as we go along often. If our goal is to be our best possible selves, and to find ways to heal, and to find ways to be good people both to ourselves and others, a poem like the one you just wrote demonstrates this sort of, you know, the kind of mental yoga you have to go through.

Doug Anderson:

Well, poetry is organic. It comes from all different parts of yourself. It's like you can't hide from poetry. It's physical. It comes from body memories. You feel your body- your body becomes an instrument when you read one. That's one the reasons I like to memorize poems, to be able to be the instrument for it. It's a total experience. It touches everything. And it slips under the guard of discursive thought.

Steve Kuusisto:

That's an interesting way of thinking about it. Say more about that. 'Slips in under the guard of discursive thought.' Very smart.

Doug Anderson:

Somebody's always trying to explain something. All the theory about something. Determine its first cause. Intellectualize it. And the more they do that, the further they remove it from the heart. But poetry just sort of under cuts that. There's some people who have so lobotomized themselves that they can immediately go into some literature and start looking at in in a Derridean sense or whatever without actually experiencing the literature. This is one of the things that concerns me about critical theory and how it's taken over English departments. They don't seem very much to be interested in having an experience of the literature anymore. They're much more interested in treating it as artifact which I

think is a serious mistake and may have something to do with the diminishing importance of English departments.

Steve Kuusisto:

[Laughter] Well, it is true that poetry at its best, or art at its best, should in fact be, in my view, apprehensible, appreciateable by everyone and it should bring people together, you know? I hate to sound like a cornball but before World War II, people gathered on their front porches and played musical instruments together. And that's an important and lost tradition, which, I think now poetry groups, reading groups, performance poetry, events, things like this is sort of trying to really kind of bring back this and bring people together and express yourselves. It's a good thing. And you're right. English departments have gotten really interested in theorizing literature like it's a social science, and they have forgotten the keen way in which great writing lifts us up, and that that was always the primary purpose.

Doug Anderson:

Yes. And to allow ourselves to be open to it as a kind of a vulnerability. There's a certain courage to that. Like Robert Pinsky says, 'what's going to happen after literary theory? Literary practice?'

Steve Kuusisto:

[Laughter]

Doug Anderson:

It's like maybe people were just going to start reading again, actually, and having experiences of things and appreciating the sheer lightening of a great metaphor. Yeah, that's what we need. We need whole people not compartmentalized people.

Steve Kuusisto:

Yep. Yep. Yep. This is an aside, but friend of mine who's just written a book and was lamenting to me the other day how he hasn't gotten a review of it. He's feeling blue and I said 'Cheer up. You're living through a moment when the arts are really dying. So you're on the frontlines, dude. Listen, just think of it this way. In ten more years, we'll have no more orchestras, no more opera houses. You're out there in the front.' He wasn't cheered up by this. I don't really believe that's true, but it's easy to think so.

Doug Anderson:

There's a great transformation going on and after a while, people just start looking for what they want, I think. They have to know what they want and then they start looking for it. If they can't find it in all of the appropriate places, they will start looking for it in the inappropriate places, which is probably one of the good stuff that's in anyhow. You see this in publishing. Publishers are really confused. They don't really quite know what to make of electronic publishing and stuff like that. But I think people were hungry. And I think they're hungry for things that light them up, that extend their idea of themselves, extend the language, extend the size of their perceptions. I think they want this. And they're going to get it one way or another. You look at the slam movement. Performance poetry movement. And let's face it, most of it is terrible, but occasionally, you see some serious talent and what I see there is kind of a rebellion against the nice, tidy, sort of wax museum that academia has provided for poetry since the new criticism.

Poetry may have become a little too comfortable in the academy and also reaching levels of abstraction that only please tribes within tribes. If the average person goes to a bookstore and starts looking at poetry, they don't know what the hell they're looking at, you know? Academics know what

they're looking at. 'Oh, look at this! This is a language poet.' Whatever. But I see this and I see people like Ruby Cowar and people who have a reputation outside of mainstream poetry and represent a movement for a demotic poetry that speaks to emotion rather than ideas. For all of the sloppiness and lack of craft in this, we need to take seriously the desire that it represents. I see ultimately, the performance poetry and academic poetry approaching each other carefully, like a deer and a horse in a field. Carefully, oh, so carefully, until they finally find a way to be together. So I'm hopeful about it. I used not to be, I used to be cynical about it but I'm hopeful about it now. And this need to have one's soul fulfilled, to have- to experience emotion, to experience love, to experience one's fear, to be able to parse one's memory. This is deep in people and my writing is about responding to that as well as I can. I think a lot of people, Elliot Ackerman, certainly, is writing into this hub. He wants to look at you in the face and say, 'look, see this. See this!'

Steve Kuusisto:

You know, it's interesting, I'm remembering after the attacks of September 11, 2001, many, many people reached for W.H. Auden's famous poem "September 1, 1939" which was, of course, written as Hitler invaded Poland and started the ghastliness of World War II. It is a very powerful poem and talk about a poem that holds up well.

Doug Anderson:

It's making a reappearance on Facebook. It's been posted several times.

Steve Kuusisto:

Yeah, it's really one of "the" great poems of the 20th Century. And it struck me that we still reach for poetry, even in a culture where everybody is on Instagram and caught up with the Bachelor

and all that stuff. Poetry answers a deep need. I even saw an article recently some place, though I don't remember now where, that people read a lot of poetry right now in the contemporary society. It's just, of course, the delivery systems are very, very spread out and wildly various and all of that. But there is a lot of interest in poetry still.

Doug Anderson:

There was a study done by the Poetry Foundation that was surprisingly hopeful that argued that people are reading more poetry now. It's always the fear among poets that poetry is becoming more and more recondite and smaller and smaller and smaller and disappearing into something like clog dancing.

You know, --

Steve Kuusisto:

[Laughter] That's funny.

Doug Anderson:

Well, according to this article, it's not the case at all and that poetry is thriving. I very much want to believe them.

Steve Kuusisto:

Yeah, Morris dancing, right?

Doug Anderson:

Yeah. Every April.

Steve Kuusisto:

Yep. So, I think we're supposed to go until 3:30? Is that correct? I want to make sure.

Barry Whaley:

Yes, we have until 3:30. There we go. I had my mic in a different place. Yes, we go to 3:30. What I would like to do is maybe quarter after, see if there are questions from our listeners. Does that sound like a plan to you guys?

Doug Anderson:

Sounds good.

Steve Kuusisto:

I love that idea.

Barry Whaley:

Alright, great.

Doug Anderson:

I'm trying to find the Odin poem and it's, believe it or not, it's not in this book.

Barry Whaley:

I was going to say I would love to hear you read that Doug.

Doug Anderson:

Okay I'm looking for it. Steve can you talk more while I find it?

Steve Kuusisto:

Sure. So “September 1, 1939” starts the way any good poem should start. He’s in a bar.

[Laughter] A poet walks into a bar. You know? That’s back in the day when in New York City, in the sort of Midtown Manhattan in the 50s, which is now very cleaned up and very prosperous. Back in those days, you could go a few blocks from corporate 5th Avenue and find some really questionable public houses, as it were. And he says at the beginning of the poem, he says ‘I sit in one of the dives.’ I’m going to remember, misremember the name of the street, off of 53rd or something like that. And because, of course, the news has come out that World War II has indeed started and, really, it becomes-- the poem becomes a cry out to all of humanity. It’s a much larger vision than one individual saying, ‘wow, this is bad.’ He basically concludes the poem by saying memorably, we must love one another or die.

Doug Anderson:

Yes and show an affirming flame.

Steve Kuusisto:

That’s right.

Doug Anderson:

What can we do? Which is something I hear people say over and over again today, given the political situation when everybody is seriously worried about fascism and people are feeling helpless to do anything about it. What can they do? Vote within a system that is rigged? I see this and I see the appeal of the poem still. H. Auden... Looking, looking, looking. I do not see this in the anthology.

Barry Whaley:

Doug, I just sent you a Zoom chat message with a link to the poem online.

Doug Anderson:

Beautiful. Let's see if low-tech Doug can pull this off.

Steve Kuusisto:

[Laughter] You're not so low-tech.

[Silence]

Sounds to me like you're getting somewhere.

Doug Anderson:

I lost the link. I'm going to have to find my way back to Zoom. It's a good thing they can edit this, right?

Barry Whaley:

No, no. We're live actually. [Laughter]

Doug Anderson:

[Chuckles] Are we?

Barry Whaley:

Yes. This is what in radio we would call "really dead air."

Doug Anderson:

I'm having trouble having the link and the poem and Zoom at the same time. Okay. I click on the link, it disappears.

Barry Whaley:

Oh, dear.

Marsha Schwanke:

Barry, since you have access to it, maybe you can read it.

Barry Whaley:

Oh my goodness, you're asking me to try to--

Doug Anderson:

Wait a minute. Here it is. Can you hear me?

Barry Whaley:

Yes.

Doug Anderson:

This is quite a long poem. September 1, 1939.

On Fifty second-Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade:
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;

The unmentionable odour of death
Offends the September night.

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god:
I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.

Exiled Thucydides knew
All that a speech can say
About Democracy,
And what dictators do,
The elderly rubbish they talk
To an apathetic grave;
Analysed all in his book,
The enlightenment driven away,
The habit-forming pain,
Mismanagement and grief:
We must suffer them all again.

Into this neutral air
Where blind skyscrapers use
Their full height to proclaim
The strength of Collective Man,
Each language pours its vain
Competitive excuse:
But who can live for long
In an euphoric dream;
Out of the mirror they stare,
Imperialism's face
And the international wrong.

Faces along the bar
Cling to their average day:
The lights must never go out,
The music must always play,
All the conventions conspire
To make this fort assume
The furniture of home;
Lest we should see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good.

The windiest militant trash

Important Persons shout
Is not so crude as our wish:
What mad Nijinsky wrote
About Diaghilev
Is true of the normal heart;
For the error bred in the bone
Of each woman and each man
Craves what it cannot have,
Not universal love
But to be loved alone.

For the conservative dark
Into the ethical life
The dense commuters come,
Repeating their morning vow;
“I will be true to the wife,
I’ll concentrate more on my work,”
And helpless governors wake
To resume their compulsory game:
Who can release them now,
Who can reach the deaf,
Who can speak for the dumb?

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain

Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.

Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:
May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.

Steve Kuusisto:

Yeah.

Doug Anderson:

That poem is getting a rerun.

Steve Kuusisto:

So, yeah it is. And, of course, the offense that happened at Linz, that's, of course, the birth of Hitler.

Doug Anderson:

Yes.

Steve Kuusisto:

For those who aren't up on their German history. Yep.

Doug Anderson:

What does the average human being-- what does the poet unarmed do? What does anyone do? What does any individual do in the face of a jack-booted nationalism?

Steve Kuusisto:

That's the thing. The helplessness one feels and then you factor that into the dynamics of daily struggle with all the things that can the way of equality, life, healthcare, getting the accommodations you need if you've been injured or wounded. And then you look at the larger state of the world and what was it Lou Reid said? It takes a bus load of faith to get by?

Doug Anderson:

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Steve Kuusisto:

Ain't that the truth?

Doug Anderson:

One of the things that both King and Gandhi said is that you've got to rest. You've got to take care of your soul. You've got to take a time out. Coming from people who apparently never took a time out, this is really an interesting statement.

Steve Kuusisto:

Yeah. Yep. So this might be a good moment to engage with our listeners. Barry, are you still there?

Barry Whaley:

I am. That was the perfect punctuation point for this entire webinar series. That was great. Thank you, Doug, for sharing that.

Doug Anderson:

You're welcome.

Barry Whaley:

Yes, we have one comment so far. Steve, are you going to moderate these? How do you want to do this?

Steve Kuusisto:

Maybe you could do it.

Barry Whaley:

Okay, I'm happy to.

Steve Kuusisto:

It's a little hard for me to read the screen.

Barry Whaley:

This is from Justin and this is a comment to you Doug.

“I appreciate the hope/faith you expressed with regards to veterans developing a lifelong learner mentality. Developing a reading and writing skills and self-expression. I feel you're right in that veterans and people with disabilities would definitely benefit with the catharsis, which becomes available through the writing and reading of poetry. I do feel there exists a stigma associated with that sort of external expression of internal vulnerability, a stigma which may very well be seen further engrained by the machismo mindset of the military. This presents quite the hurdle to get a damaged soul to open themselves up to the scrutiny of their peers or family as theirs being the soul exhibiting weakness.”

That's very powerful, if you want to comment on that.

Doug Anderson:

Oh yeah. There was a guy- there was a marine stationed in Camp Hamilton who was trying to get help. He was just having a terrible time. This was during Iraq 2, and he was going crazy and they wouldn't talk to him. I mean, there was just, at the time, there was no place for a marine, who was supposed to be made out of steel, to admit this terrible vulnerability that something had driven him almost crazy so he went AWOL. He flew to Florida to an Air Force Base where they did listen to him. The Marines threatened to dishonorably discharge him for this which I don't think they did. But, yeah, you know, and like I said, there's a lot of denial in the military about what people feel.

People who have made their careers by suppressing their feelings are particularly frightened by the idea of people opening up about their war experience. Even people who've seen combat at one time, say, somebody from a colonel on up who hasn't seen it in while and seems to have forgotten what it was like. It's unfortunate. It's unfortunate. And I look at Iliad and other literary representations of war and I see men sobbing. I see men falling on their knees and cursing the heavens. I see all of this. And where did that go? Maybe it's just the hangover of our wasp culture. But that needs to be included in the vision of being human, the opening of the soul like this. And the deeper people go into themselves, the more they're like everybody else. The more they show their vulnerability, which is kind of an honor. So I no longer honor the military's stiff upper lip. It's just not -- it just doesn't help. In fact, it's unamicable to us learning about ourselves and healing ourselves. Hopefully that answers the question.

Barry Whaley:

It's very true. We have, hold on, I just lost it. Give me a sec. This is from B. Silvestri.

"I found this to be endlessly fascinating. I think it would be helpful for you to give advice for A.D.A. coordinators about building empathy within the community. Perhaps a great emblematic poem that would add to the discourse."

Doug Anderson:

Yeah. You mean write a new one? Or create a spectrum of poems that speak to these things? I'm not sure.

Barry Whaley:

I presume then that you've been engaged to start writing something.

Doug Anderson:

Yeah. Well, I write all the time.

Barry Whaley:

[Laughter] Guys, we have another comment from Stephanie Beragamo.

“I wish that I could have shared thoughts, observations, experiences of having a World War II veteran father and of my having been born with congenital physical problems. And about my father’s ferocity and fury, vulnerability, and writings and about my writings had I known that the opportunity might have arisen, I would have offered to Barry and Doug a poem written by my father, published in one of the 95th infantry division newsletters, a poignant poem which might have been read during the webinar today.”

Doug Anderson:

Does she have it in front of her? And how long is it?

Barry Whaley:

That’s a good question. We have six minutes. I don’t think we’re going to get to that today because it would be a bit complex, but if you would like to send that on to us.

Doug Anderson:

I would love to see it.

Barry Whaley:

I would love to see it as well, Stephanie.

Steve Kuusisto:

Me, three.

Barry Whaley:

That's three of us. So if you could send that on, we would love to see it. Just as an aside, it's startling, I was following someone on social media who was a friend of my brother's and he told a story, and I never realized his father was a paratrooper and had jumped on June 5th into Normandy. And the man had been in my house growing up a million times and it was story, obviously he never told and I never knew about him. So that was a little startling to me. For whatever that's worth.

Doug Anderson:

I think the mode in those days was to not talk about things. And it caused people to drink, they beat their wives, and they did other things, but they didn't talk about it. I saw this in members of my own family, World War II veterans. A very wonderful guy drank himself to death.

Steve Kuusisto:

Oh shit. Sorry.

Doug Anderson:

Yeah.

Barry Whaley:

We have a question here from Deborah Cotter.

"Gentleman, thank you for reading the poetry, particularly "Itinerary", which was vivid. You have ideas of how to get these folks who are making themselves blind with the screams in their faces and deaf with

earbuds in their ears to liven the flesh and fresh in person and in public regardless of their views. The groups are a start.”

Doug Anderson:

Thank you. That’s a wonderful thing to say.

Steve Kuusisto:

Well, I don’t know how to get people off of their screens. I teach at Syracuse University now and I see students everyday walking across campus. They don’t look at each other anymore. They’re all looking at their phones. And that’s a real problem at this moment. Everyone is hooked into kind of a virtual reality. How to get people to put those things down and pay attention to each other is actually a very important question. I wish I had an easy answer, but I don’t. Maybe we need to bring back front porch music.

Doug Anderson:

I would think so. Latino culture still has that. But this idea of being plugged into a big electronic nervous system and missing life at the same time is really a problem. One of the things that teachers talk about, and I know they do where I teach, is the lack of affect in students.

Barry Whaley:

Right.

Doug Anderson:

The lack of you say something, you read them something powerful, and there's absolutely no response.

Steve Kuusisto:

Yeah.

Doug Anderson:

And it's astonishing. It doesn't mean nothing is going inside them, it's just that they seemed to be conditioned into this, as if it's uncool to respond.

Steve Kuusisto:

Yeah. Yeah. It's also a way- looking at your phone like that all day long is a way to protect yourself from being wounded.

Doug Anderson:

Yeah, very much so. In freshman writing, I'm having them write out autobiographies and write about real things. They find it really threatening, a lot of them. And, of course, my statement about that is that the deeper you go, the more honest you become, the more you're able to be like everyone else and thus have empathy which is the point of it. And the point of a lot of literature. Literature moves empathy. They did a study years ago- I used to teach in the prison- I read a study that said that prisoners who had studied the humanities in prison had a much lower recidivism rate than those who didn't. And they attributed this to the capacity for empathy and the ability to shift their point of view and engage. And I think that's absolutely true. People talk about empathy a lot these days. And particularly, in regards to the administration that apparently doesn't have any. It's an issue. It's an issue. It's a national illness.

Steve Kuusisto:

I don't know if you remember this story, we're going to run out of time in a nano-second here, but the Beatles lead guitarist George Harrison, in his later years, actually did this rather fantastic thing. He would go around driving a minivan and go to small towns and give people that he would meet at the local public or street or what have you and give them ukuleles. Then he would teach them how to play them. And, of course, he had a lot of money. He could just do this. He would just sit around and teach everybody how to play the ukulele and they would sing old-timey songs together.

Doug Anderson:

Wonderful.

Barry Whaley:

That's fantastic.

Steve Kuusisto:

He was kind of like, in his later life, the Rip Van Winkle. No, the Johnny Apple seed of the ukulele.

Doug Anderson:

That's great. What a wonderful idea.

Steve Kuusisto:

Let's quit our day jobs, Doug, and just give people ukuleles.

Doug Anderson:

Absolutely. Maybe we can get a great grant for it.

Barry Whaley:

Gentleman, let's wrap this up. I want to thank you for such a fantastic conversation. You guys are- it's just been wonderful. This is probably one of the most interesting things I've ever had the opportunity to experience and, hopefully, our attendees agree. As a reminder to those who joined us today that if you need a certificate of participation, we will offer those, I believe. Marsha and Celestia, is that correct?

Marsha Schwanke:

That's correct. After completion and verification of attendance of all three webinars, you may request a verification of completion and we'll send the information with instructions on how to get that.

Barry Whaley:

Thank you so, contact us at the Southeast A.D.A. Center. Additionally, your feedback is very important to us, folks. We learn a lot from what you tell us on evaluation forms. We spend a lot of time with those. So please take a minute to complete the evaluation form that's found here at these links as you can see on your screen right now. And we want to thank you for being with us today. I hope you've enjoyed this as much as I have, and as much as we've enjoyed bringing it to you. And we look forward to the next time we get together for another webinar series. If you have questions, finally about the Americans with Disabilities Act, I remind you that you can call your Regional Center at 1-800-949-4232 or if you're in the southeast region, you can call the Southeast A.D.A. Center directly. Our number is 404-541-9001 or you can also email us ADAsoutheast@law.SYR.edu. And as always, reminder should you call us, those calls are free and they're confidential. So with that, Doug and Steve, thanks again so much and I wish you all a great afternoon.

Doug Anderson:

Thank you. We'll see you soon in Syracuse for the film festival.

Steve Kuusisto:

You bet. Can I call you after we get off the air here?

Doug Anderson:

Yeah.

Steve Kuusisto:

Great. All right. Bye-bye, everybody.

Doug Anderson:

Bye-bye! Have a good day.