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# Consumer Connections



*Consumer & Patient Health Information Services*

## Message from the Chair

Claire B. Joseph, MS, MA, AHIP, Chair, CAPHIS 2021-2022  
Director, Singh Medical Library  
Mount Sinai South Nassau  
Oceanside, NY



I'm thrilled that my first column as the Consumer and Patient Health Information Caucus Chair is for this exciting special edition. We're honored that Matthew Noe & MK Czerwec, prominent players in the Graphic Medicine field, agreed to coordinate a special issue on a topic of great interest and significance to our Caucus.

First, some caucus business! To begin with, many thanks to Dana Ladd for her outstanding leadership as Caucus Chair for the last year.

It's official: all caucus members that participated in our poll (61 out of 61) voted to change our caucus name to *Consumer and Patient Health Information Services Caucus*, so we can keep our beloved CAPHIS acronym and still follow it with the word "Caucus."

In this special issue you'll find some of our regular features: a member spotlight, member news, book reviews, the "SPARKS" column and the "You Might Be Interested In" column, but no CAPHIS member authored articles (all members who submitted articles have graciously allowed us to postpone their publication to our next issue). Instead, we are excited to present you with a very special issue on Graphic Medicine.

**(Continued Next Page)**

### (Message from the Chair Continued)

Graphic Medicine, to paraphrase the definition of the site [graphicmedicine.org](http://graphicmedicine.org) (more on that shortly!) is “the interaction between the medium of comics and the discourse of healthcare.” As consumer health librarians, we welcome information on this innovative and creative medium that is a vitally important means to reach patients and help them understand health-related information. With health literacy a pervasive problem throughout the healthcare continuum, Graphic Medicine can serve as a partner for consumer health librarians’ outreach projects.

As I mentioned, this special edition has been coordinated by two prominent players in the Graphic Medicine field. Matthew Noe, Lead Collection & Knowledge Management Librarian at the Countway Library of Harvard Medical School, is very active in MLA and ALA, and is a member of the Website Team of Graphic Medicine ([graphicmedicine.org](http://graphicmedicine.org).)

MK Czerwicz, RN, MA, aka the “Comic Nurse” ([comicenurse.com](http://comicenurse.com)) is a nurse who uses comics to contemplate the complexities of illness and caregiving. MK is also a member of the Website Team of Graphic Medicine. Some fortunate CAPHIS Caucus members may have heard her speak; she was the Keynote Speaker at the 2019 Midwest Chapter/MLA, WHSLA, and SWHSL Annual Meeting in Milwaukee, WI.

Matthew and MK have outdone themselves in writing and compiling contributions from Graphic Medicine colleagues. And a special thank you to our newsletter managing editor, Karin Bennedsen, and the entire Newsletter Committee. So please sit back and enjoy!

The entire Executive Board joins me in hoping that you all stay safe and well!

## News & Announcements



### **CAPHIS Caucus Election Results:**

Congratulations to Margaret (Maggie) Ansell, MLIS, AHIP, Nursing & Consumer Health Liaison Librarian; Associate Chair, Health Science Center Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, our new caucus chair-elect! Her term as chair-elect will be June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022. And.....more good news for Maggie.....

### **Tenure Approved!**

The University of Florida Board of Trustees approved Margaret Ansell’s tenure, and UF President Fuchs has determined that she meets the criteria for promotion to the rank of Associate University Librarian, effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

Learn more about Maggie in this issues Member Spotlight!

### **Congratulations to the 2021 RTI Fellows!**

Congratulations to all the 2021 RTI Fellows, but especially to our own CAPHIS members Shawn Steidinger and Jessica Callaway!

### **MLAConnect Welcomes New Hub Editor**

Kimberly MacKenzie has been named as the Clinical Support Hub column editor for MLAConnect. Congratulations! Send your submissions to her at [kimberly.mackenzie@umassmed.edu](mailto:kimberly.mackenzie@umassmed.edu).

## **CAPHIC Members Win Awards!**

### **Consumer Health Librarian of the Year Award**

Shari Clifton, AHIP, Robert M. Bird HSL, University of Oklahoma HSC, Oklahoma City, OK

### **Ida and George Eliot Prize**

Bethany S. McGowan, AHIP, Library of Engineering and Science, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, along with coauthors Laureen P. Cantwell, Jamie L. Conklin, Rebecca Raszewski, Julie Planchon Wolf, Maribeth Slebodnik, Sandra McCarthy, and Shannon Johnson, for their article, "Evaluating nursing faculty's approach to information literacy instruction: a multi-institutional study."

### **T. Mark Hodges International Service Award**

Bethany S. McGowan, AHIP, Library of Engineering and Science, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN

### **Lucretia W. McClure Excellence in Education Award**

Jodi L. Philbrick, AHIP, Department of Information Science, University of North Texas, Denton, TX

### **Marcia C. Noyes Award**

Beverly Murphy, AHIP, FMLA, Duke Medical Center Library & Archives, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, NC

### **Research, Development, and Demonstration Project Grant**

Annie Nickum, AHIP, Library of the Health Sciences, University of Illinois-Chicago, IL

### **2021 President's Award**

#### **MLA COVID-19 Resource Authors**

COVID-19 Resource page authors:

- ★ Ellen M. Aaronson, AHIP, Mayo Clinic Libraries, Mayo Clinic
- ★ Jess L. Callaway, AHIP, Shepherd Center, Noble Learning Resource Center  
(+2 non-CAPHIS authors)

Spanish-language COVID-19 Resource page authors:

- ★ Kathryn M. Houk, AHIP, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, UNLV Health Sciences Library
- ★ Brenda M. Linares, AHIP, University of Kansas Medical Center
- ★ Ruby L. Nugent, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, UNLV Health Sciences Library
- ★ Mirian Ramirez Rojas, Indiana University School of Medicine, Ruth Lilly Medical Library
- ★ Amy Reyes, AHIP, Eagle Valley Library District  
(+4 non-CAPHIS authors)

#### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force**

- ★ Kelly Akin, Indian Health Service, Phoenix Indian Medical Center Library
- ★ Jane Morgan-Daniel, AHIP, University of Florida, Health Science Center Libraries
- ★ Matthew Nicolas Noe, Harvard Medical School, Countway Library  
(+10 non-CAPHIS members)

## **2021 Research Caucus Research Awards**

Jane Morgan-Daniel, AHIP, Community Engagement and Health Literacy Liaison Librarian, University of Florida, along with coauthors Matthew Daley, Mary E. Edwards, Lori H. Eubanks, Hannah F. Norton, and Nina Stoyan-Rosenzweig

1<sup>st</sup> Place for MLA'21 vConference contributed poster: Developing and Conducting a DEI Language Inclusivity Assessment on a Health Science Library's Website.

Kelsey L. Grabeel, AHIP, Assistant Director of the Health Information Center, University of Tennessee, along with coauthors Alexandria Q. Wilson, Courtney Wombles, and Robert E. Heidel

2<sup>nd</sup> Place (tie with another poster) for MLA'21 vConference contributed poster: The Status of Scholarly Efforts of Librarians in Health Literacy: A Bibliometric Analysis.

## **Member Presentations at MLA '21**

**DeRosa A.** Exploring health literacy interventions and understanding the experience of shared decision-making from the perspective of women with breast cancer. Paper presented at: Transforming our diversifying communities. MLA '21: Medical Library Association Annual Meeting; 2021 May 10–27; Virtual.

**Duggar DC, Ware EE.** Immersing students in graphic medicine! Bringing a new elective to life. Poster presented at: Transforming our diversifying communities. MLA '21: Medical Library Association Annual Meeting; 2021 May 10–27; Virtual.

**Grabeel KL, Moore JC.** Confronting the opioid crisis with consumer health information: a look at East Tennessee. Paper presented at: Transforming our diversifying communities. MLA '21: Medical Library Association Annual Meeting; 2021 May 10–27; Virtual.

**Irish E, Burke K, Geyer E, Allard I.** A video is worth a 1000 words: creating videos to support a consumer health information page. Poster presented at: Transforming our diversifying communities. MLA '21: Medical Library Association Annual Meeting; 2021 May 10–27; Virtual.

**Kepsel A, Kovar-Gough I.** Health and wellness in uncertain times: supporting students through the creation of a physical and digital consumer health information center. Paper presented at: Transforming our diversifying communities. MLA '21: Medical Library Association Annual Meeting; 2021 May 10–27; Virtual.

**Ladd DL.** Development of a health literacy workshop. Paper presented at: Transforming our diversifying communities. MLA '21: Medical Library Association Annual Meeting; 2021 May 10–27; Virtual.

**Linares B.** Librarians to partner with the Juntos Center advancing Latino health to provide credible health information. Live lecture presented at: Transforming our diversifying communities. MLA '21: Medical Library Association Annual Meeting; 2021 May 10–27; Virtual.

**Morgan-Daniel J, Ansell M**, Adkins L, **Harnett S**, Rethlefsen M. Using little free libraries to transform access to quality health information in rural communities. Lightning talk presented at: Transforming our diversifying communities. MLA `21: Medical Library Association Annual Meeting; 2021 May 10–27; Virtual.

**Slonosky A**. Books to bedside: developing a direct delivery system to bring library services to patients during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Lightning talk presented at: Transforming our diversifying communities. MLA `21: Medical Library Association Annual Meeting; 2021 May 10–27; Virtual.

**Steidinger S**. I start rounding tomorrow. Do I need to know Greek? Lightning talk presented at: Transforming our diversifying communities. MLA `21: Medical Library Association Annual Meeting; 2021 May 10–27; Virtual.

**Volk R**, Munro K, **Hyde A**. What can we do about Dr. Google? Utilizing the electronic medical record (EMR) to prescribe reliable online patient education. Paper presented at: Transforming our diversifying communities. MLA `21: Medical Library Association Annual Meeting; 2021 May 10–27; Virtual.

#### **“I Am MLA” Ambassadors**



[Ellen M. Aaronson,](#)  
[AHIP](#)



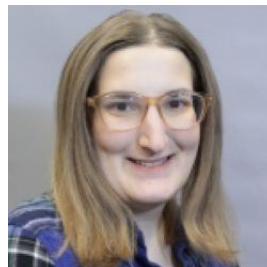
[Helen-Ann Brown Epstein,](#)  
[AHIP, FMLA](#)



[Julia M. Esparza, AHIP](#)



[Emily E. Petersen](#)



[Tenley Sablatzky](#)



[Darlene G. Ward, AHIP](#)

## **Upcoming Events: July – December 2021**

### ***Conferences:***



MCMLA/Midwest Joint Chapter Annual Meeting. Together Again! The meeting will take place virtually from October 13-15, 2021.

<http://midwestmla.org/conference2021/>

MAC/Mid-Atlantic Chapter. Pivot! Resilience and Unity in the Face of the Unknown. Virtual meeting October 25-27, 2021, with CE courses the week of October 18-22.

<https://macmla.libguides.com/MAC2021>

NAHSL/North Atlantic Health Sciences Libraries, Inc. Starting from Scratch: Taking Charge of Change. Virtual meeting October 25-26., 2021.

<https://www.nahsl2021.com/>

Liberty Chapter Meeting. The merger of the Regional MLA Chapters of NY-NJ and Philadelphia into the new LIBERTY chapter was official as of April 1, 2021. Information to the Rescue, the first Annual Meeting of the MLA Liberty Chapter will be held virtually on Oct 18 and 19, 2021.

<https://libertymla.org/2021-Annual-Meeting>

SC/MLA Southern Chapter annual meeting will be virtual on October 4-7, 2021.

SCCMLA/South Central Chapter meeting will be virtual October 12-14, 2021, with CE classes offered on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

<https://www.sccmla.org/Meetings/2021>

UNYOC/Upstate New York & Ontario Chapter Meeting will be virtual, October 27-29, 2021.

<http://unyoc.mlanet.org/annual-meeting/date-location/>

### ***Select MLA CE Opportunities:***

MLA CHIS recorded webinars available until 12/31/2021. Registration fee – 1.5 credit hours each.

[Helping Patients and Health Care Consumers Understand Precision Medicine](#)

[The Consumer Health Library: A Site for Service, Education, and Hope](#)

MLA New self-paced courses available on-demand. Registration fee – 1.5 credit hours each.

[Building Your Brand: Becoming a Successful Health Information Professional](#)

[Game On! Using Games to Engage and Teach](#)

[Survey Design: Reporting and Displaying Survey Results](#)

For a list of upcoming live webinars scheduled through December 2021 see: <http://www.medlib-ed.org/> and choose 'LIVE WEBINARS' in the middle of the page under "6 Ways to Earn CE."

Registration fee – 1.5 credit hours each.

For a list of FREE courses see <http://www.medlib-ed.org/catalogs/scheduled-courses> and choose 'Free' in the tag list on the right-hand side of the page. \*



### **Select NNLM Classes of Interest:**

For information about NNLM classes visit: <https://nnlm.gov/training> \*

\*NNLM is in the midst of restructuring – many of their web pages are not available at this time and classes are not scheduled as of the publication of this issue.

*Have a conference, meeting, webinar, workshop, or other event you'd like to promote? Contact Nancy O'Brien, AMLS, AHIP ([Nancy.obrien@unitypoint.org](mailto:Nancy.obrien@unitypoint.org))*

## **Member Spotlight**



### **Margaret (Maggie) Ansell, MLIS, AHIP**

Associate Chair, University of Florida  
Gainesville Health Science Center Library  
Gainesville, FL

Margaret Ansell, was awarded her Master of Library and Information Science in 2012 from the Information School at the University of Washington. She is currently the Nursing & Consumer Health Liaison Librarian at the University of Florida Health Science Center Libraries, providing instruction and research collaboration and support to students, staff, and faculty with an interest in nursing, consumer health, patient education, or health communication topics. She also works with local community organizations to provide consumer health information services to the general public. She recently submitted her packet for tenure, so wish her luck!

Her research interests include health information competency assessment, health information promotion via social media and creative arts, and the professional development of novice researchers. She is actively involved in MLA as current Secretary of CAPHIS and Co-Chair of the Governmental Relations Committee, and is leading the organization of membership-wide virtual visits with legislators in Spring 2021, to advocate for issues related to health sciences librarianships and health information. She is a provisional member of AHIP, and has attained the Consumer Health Information Specialization Level II credentials.

## **A Sincere Thank You**

The CAPHIS Connections managing editor, as well as the Original Articles section team, would like to express a sincere and whole-hearted “Thank You” to the authors of the invited articles in this special edition issue on Graphic Medicine. In addition, we would like to thank our new caucus chair, Claire Joseph for coming up with the idea for the special edition issue and being the contact person for the authors. This issue wouldn’t have happened without you.

## Special Edition on Graphic Medicine Invited Articles

1. Overview
2. Graphic Medicine and Librarianship
3. Graphic Nursing
4. A Collection of COVID Comics Reviews
5. Book Review: Let's Talk About it by Erika Moen and Matthew Nolan
6. Recommended Resources
7. Graphic Medicine Pitches

### 1. Overview

*By Matthew Noe*

In late 2020, Claire Joseph approached MK Czerwec and I to see if we would be interested in contributing to a special issue of *Consumer Connections* with articles dedicated to graphic medicine; clearly, we said yes! What follows are two longer pieces, one on graphic medicine and librarianship and one on graphic nursing, two book reviews that we think are of particular relevance here, and finally a selection of recommended resources for starting or continuing work with graphic medicine in libraries. While we had hoped to include more voices here – from medicine, comics studies, and more – our work to secure contributions has been stymied at every step by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The bandwidth people would normally have to take on additional writing like this has evaporated for the time being. It is our sincere hope that we can present those pieces to you in the future, as every field and voice adds something unique to the conversation in graphic medicine. For now, we hope that you find the information here interesting, helpful, and encourages you to begin (or continue) your own journey in graphic medicine!

### 2. Graphic Medicine and Librarianship

*By Matthew Noe*

“Graphic medicine resists the notion of the universal patient and vividly represents multiple subjects with valid and, at times, conflicting points of view and experiences.” This quote, seemingly said by Susan Squier in her cartoon chicken form, from the *Graphic Medicine Manifesto* is my favorite way to conceptualize graphic medicine and why it is so vital today. It seems sudden to begin an article like this, but it is important to lay this down upfront as something to keep in mind while discussing integrating graphic medicine into librarianship. It is important because while our field, like medicine, seeks normalization and clarity, a primary driver for using comics like this is to shift away from these kinds of generalizations. How I approach graphic medicine, then, is simply one approach and perspective and it may well be in conflict with other approaches and experiences with graphic medicine and librarianship.



Graphic medicine, as coined by Ian Williams in 2007, refers to the intersection of the medium of comics and the discourse of healthcare, which is simultaneously a field of study, a (sub)genre of literature, a community and organization, a practice, and, perhaps, a method unto itself. Attempts to pin down exactly what “fits” within the scope of graphic medicine are ongoing and vary widely. To be sure, defining what counts as a comic is a seemingly unanswerable question all its own and what we consider as part of health depends a great deal on how large or small a scale you are looking from (not to mention your politics). In general, though, it is safe to say if it involves comics and health at any scale (including climate health, there is a place for it in graphic medicine.

One growing attempt to aid in capturing the scope of the field is the [Graphic Medicine Liaison Program](#). While at present there are only 10 disciplines represented (more are coming), even here the breadth of who is involved can be seen, with liaisons to art therapy, public health, librarianship, and more all represented. To truly get a sense of how open the community is, my best recommendation is to attend a future graphic medicine conference – there are always new, first-from-their-discipline folks in attendance and it is not limited to academics. All this to say: librarians are a major part of the graphic medicine community – welcome! Now let’s talk about a few ways libraries might interact with the field.

### Collections



The Graphic Medicine Collection at Countway Library

Perhaps the most obvious and most-straightforward way libraries engage with graphic medicine is through the building of collections including comics that fall within the genre. For public libraries, comics have been a key part of their collection efforts since at least the early 2000s, but for those of us in medical libraries, comics have largely been absent (archives and the odd cartoon in some scholarly journals excepting). Over the last few years however, as graphic medicine has gained ground, and in a world where even the National Library of Medicine is acquiring comics, things have begun to change.

Pictured above is the graphic medicine collection at Countway Library, which is one of two collections I have built in the last few years, the other being one I started at Lamar Soutter Library

at UMass Medical School. In both cases, the collection has its own catalog location code, its own shelf space, and is shelved in such a way as to be easily browsed. Comics are a visual medium and deserve to be shelved with that in mind! It is also key that they have their own, separate shelf space or there is every possibility they will be lost among the massive textbooks that populate most health sciences library collections. Even when shelved all together, it is recommended to have some display stands so that thinner comics can be front facing and more easily found.

Determining the primary purpose and scope of the collection is also key. For the Countway collection, we not only want the titles to be browsed, read, and of use to programming and courses, but we are seeking to create a research collection for studies into graphic medicine. This means acquiring anything and everything relevant to the field, including memoirs, superhero comics, monographs on comics studies, mini-comics, and so on. To date the collection has been limited to English language items but a proposal is in the works to expand into other languages, beginning with Spanish (see the related sites section of the graphic medicine website for more language coverage). On the other hand, the collection at Lamar Soutter was smaller in scale, serving primarily as a reading collection and a programming/course resource. Hospital libraries may want to curate a specific selection of titles for an even smaller collection – such as cancer narratives or comics suitable for pediatric audiences. And, as always, don't forget the question of how broad the definition of health is – that's an answer that might change based on your library's community and purpose.

Other considerations for these collections include cataloging decisions, physical versus electronic acquisitions, and the difficulties of health literacy and making clear to readers that (most) of these comics should not be taken as medically accurate advice. To that last consideration, I am not saying the comics in this genre are full of inaccuracies, though some do have them, but rather, we must be careful to not present (most of) these titles as equivalent to a medical textbook.

If you're looking to get started with graphic medicine collecting, two places to start include the [Essential Graphic Medicine: An Annotated Bibliography](#) developed by Alice Jagers and myself and the chapter on graphic medicine in [The Library's Guide to Graphic Novels](#) coauthored by Alice Jagers, Ariel Pomputius, and I. Together these provide suggested first purchase titles, as well as more detailed advice on approaching cataloging and shelving decisions. That said, I want to reiterate something I have said at several conferences now: just as graphic medicine resists the idea of a universal patient, we must resist the idea of a canonical graphic medicine collection.

## **Programming**

Programming opportunities for graphic medicine in libraries are numerous and include everything from book clubs to author talks to library-led classes. Which programming is right for your library will depend on a few factors, including budget or a lack thereof, but the main factor is always the needs and interests of your patron communities.

I recommend starting with author talks if you are able because they give you an opportunity to engage directly with the attendees – which are likely to be your patrons who are invested in having *more* on graphic medicine. An example of an author talk in this space is one held with [cartoonist Rachel Lindsay at Countway Library](#) in partnership with the MCPHS Center for Health Humanities.

The event drew in participants from both institutions and the feedback gave us important information about what future events to hold. Whenever possible, work with local creators and **pay them** for their time!

Book clubs are a favorite programming option of mine, so much so that I initiated the [NNLM Graphic Medicine Book Club Kits program](#) during my time working there. These kits, while currently not circulating due to the pandemic, and geographically limited when they are, nonetheless provide a good starting point for your own clubs regardless of location. Each kit includes not only the comics to read, but also a quick guide on reading comics, a discussion guide for the comic in question, and consumer health resources from NLM on the health topic the comic centers on. These guides and resources are available digitally for anyone, for free, and can be a quick way to get a discussion going. Here at Countway, we have had success holding discussions on the always popular *Hyperbole and a Half* by Allie Brosh with students as part of mental health programming. We have also held staff only book clubs with comics in the past – something I hope to restart once we are able.

On the library-led class front, I've found success holding one called "Comics and Medicine: An Introduction." In it, I present briefly on graphic medicine, what it is and why you should care (attendees are typically medical and public health students and faculty), and then switch off lecturing for fun drawing activities. These activities include things like jam comics, drawing your self-portrait with crayons (one of MK Czerwicz's go-to activities), and other low-risk, no-artistic-skill-required drawing. The goal is to help those attending feel comfortable flexing their creativity and stepping away from the high-stakes, failure-is-not-an-option world of medicine. A future event idea I'd like to try out is to make use of the [Drawing Together Archive](#), where guest creators walk participants through drawing exercises and reflections. These are just some ideas – the opportunities are endless!

## Community

Our definition of graphic medicine talks about comics and healthcare, but it should really include another word too: community. Those of us heavily invested in the field are always talking about the "graphic medicine community" – that group of folks invested in the field as an idea, as a gathering place, as a hub of support when our home fields and workplaces aren't always supportive. Community is the thread that is woven through library work, in collections and in programming, and without it, we would be nothing. We shouldn't be building so people will come; we are building because our people already have come and we want to meet their needs!

While community building is more than outreach, many of the activities involved in community building for libraries are those activities we call outreach. For example, making smart use of the collection by integrating comics into classroom visits, library tours, and other displays is a key piece because it helps normalize comics as part of the health sciences library and shows a willingness to engage on the topic. Comics have spent decades being marginalized as childish or harmful or "not real books. In many cases the library helped perpetuate these misguided claims and so we must make efforts to show that we no longer cling to these views.

The last piece of advice I have, and perhaps the most vital, is this: cultivate champions for graphic medicine at your institution and within your library. While it is important for you to champion comics and the field, it cannot be just one person, especially in our large, hierarchical institutions that don't always put a premium on librarian expertise. Seek out – or help create – faculty champions for the field. Help them integrate comics into their courses (maybe medical students could draw their reflective essays instead of write them) and into their research (what if that communication tool would work better as a comic). Do the same for students, who are often eager and ready to dive into graphic medicine as soon as you introduce them to it and show them it has worth. Just as the graphic medicine website serves as the hub for the global graphic medicine community, the library can be the hub for your institution's own such community.

### **About the author:**

Matthew Noe ([matthew\\_noe@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:matthew_noe@hms.harvard.edu)) is Lead Collection & Knowledge Management Librarian at Countway Library, Harvard Medical School, and a part-time instructor at the University of Kentucky in the School of Information Science. Matthew reviews and writes lesson plans for comics at Diamond Bookshelf under the column [Noe's Comics Nook](#) and provides reviews for nonfiction comics with Booklist. He is the 2021 President of ALA GNCRT, a 2020 ALA Emerging Leader, and serves on the Worcester Public Library Board of Directors. You can often find him overcaffeinated, screaming about all manner of things on Twitter, or curled up with two dogs, a book, and not enough hands. Find Matthew on Twitter @NoetheMatt.

### **3. Graphic Nursing**

*By MK Czerwicz and Esther Saltzman*

Whether it is about patient care or one's own experiences with health, illness, disability, or caregiving, graphic medicine has resources from a variety of disciplines of interest to nurses in many specialties. Nurses can benefit from integrating graphic medicine into their nursing practice, teaching, and personal reflection.

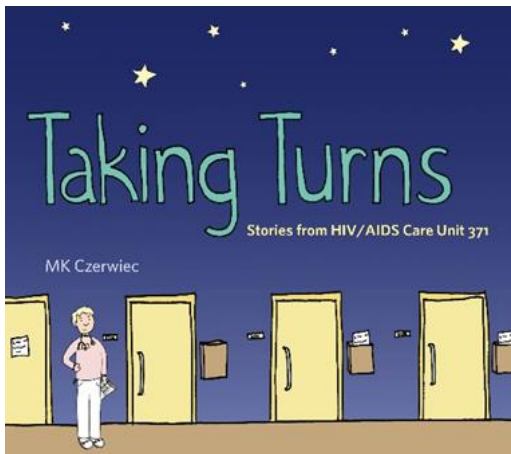
We are two nurses who are also graphic medicine enthusiasts. 'Graphic Medicine' refers to the use of comics in healthcare, but also to the vibrant community of academics, healthcare providers, and artists who work in this field. The community of graphic medicine has been a continuing inspiration for both of us. From the many practitioners who share their work at conferences and on social media, we learn new and exciting ways to implement comics and graphic narratives in the healthcare field and in the classroom. Graphic medicine is a supportive, creative, and international community bringing together diverse perspectives to address many issues in healthcare relevant to nurses.

## Benefits of graphic medicine for nurses

Graphic medicine can contribute to the profession of nursing in many ways, and its subjects and contributions are as varied as the many arenas of nursing practice. Opportunities for graphic medicine to benefit nursing practice that we will discuss include:

- reading comics and/or graphic narratives for self-education
- using comics as a patient education tool
- making comics to reflect on and problem solve in nursing practice
- using comics in nursing education to encourage reflective practice and promote professional identity formation
- comics and nursing research
- comics for improving patient care

## Reading Comics



For reading graphic medicine, a great place to start would be with co-author MK Czerwiec's graphic memoir, [Taking Turns: Stories from HIV/AIDS Care Unit 371](#). MK is a nurse and also a co-founder of the field of Graphic Medicine. Her book is a combination memoir and oral history. It tells the story of Unit 371, one of the earliest dedicated AIDS care units in the United States. Nurses will relate to her need to process difficult experiences, and she explains how comics became her method of coping. As soon as the nurse-reader sees the depiction of her nursing station, they will immediately relate, and share a sense of community. You can read an excerpt from the book [on Pen America](#).

Other resources are available in the book review section of the Graphic Medicine website. These mostly non-fiction, book-length, comics aimed at adults are often referred to as "[graphic pathographies](#)." Most of them are created by the very people living with health issues, caregiving, and/or disabilities that the book discusses. The insights they provide about their experiences offer us insight us as care providers. They also allow us to reflect on our own practice, to learn how our patients and families are impacted by our interventions in their lives.

Issues addressed include patient responses to illness, family responses to caregiving, experiences within the healthcare system, the provider experience, and social justice. Some terrific examples include:

- [Tangles: Alzheimer's, My Mother, and Me](#)
- [My Degeneration: A Journey Through Parkinson's](#)
- [Cancer Vixen: A True Story](#)
- [Mom's Cancer](#)
- [8 texts about reproduction, pregnancy, and birth](#)
- [5 texts about eating disorders](#)
- [Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant](#) (elder care, advance care planning)
- [Last Things](#) (ALS, caregiving, family response to illness)



- [Rosalie Lightning](#) (loss of a child)
- [Things to do in a Retirement Home Trailer Park When You're 29 and Unemployed](#) (COPD, hospice, family caregiving)

In March 2020, the editors of the graphic medicine website began [curating emerging COVID comics](#) and provided an [initial analysis of them](#). There are now also [anthologies of COVID comics](#). In addition, mainstream comic producer Marvel also published an online [tribute to nurses dealing with COVID](#).

In addition to graphic pathographies, more information on the scope of graphic medicine can be found at the [National Library of Medicine exhibition page](#).

### Patient Education Comics

Comics are a powerful intervention for patient education, especially when the learner is stressed, needs to learn a great deal, and that learning is critical to decision making and caregiving. Comics are at their best in this situation because they present information in a stepwise fashion, bring attraction and appeal to information, and can potentially transcend language and literacy challenges. One terrific example among many you can find on this website is [Diabetes & Me: An Essential Guide for Kids & Parents](#).

### Making comics to reflect on nursing practice

Making comics can also help nurses process difficult experiences. It is not necessary to consider oneself an artist; comics can be done with very basic visual language. MK Czerwiec explains the benefits of drawing as part of one's experiences in caregiving in her chapter "The Crayon Revolution" in [Graphic Medicine Manifesto](#). The benefits of making comics apply to experienced nurses, nursing students, and at all stages in between. Comics about our experiences as nurses give us an opportunity to examine unconscious influences on our caregiving, process difficult experiences, and parse challenging situations.



### Possibilities for implementing graphic medicine into a nursing curriculum

One way to incorporate graphic medicine into a nursing curriculum would be to have students read graphic pathographies. Stories of patient experience can help with understanding the patient's perspective; they can also help to maintain empathy. Graphic medicine texts can be integrated into existing curricula or offered as electives.

In addition, it would also be helpful to have nursing students make comics. Some medical schools have implemented comics courses to help medical students process their training experiences with the intention of fostering empathy, preventing burnout, and examining professional identity formation. Michael Green and others have been teaching comics courses in medical schools. Examples of medical students' comics can be found at [Michael Green's University of Pennsylvania site](http://Michael Green's University of Pennsylvania site). A similar approach would also benefit nursing students. If you are interested in how you might consider teaching comics to nursing students, please be in touch!

### Esther's personal experience: teaching graphic medicine to college art students

In Memphis, it was a joy to teach courses on graphic medicine to visual art students at the Memphis College of Art, and to introduce my students to the graphic medicine community. My students read graphic medicine comics and graphic narratives and produced their own personal graphic narratives about health or illness.

For a project with LeBonheur Children's Hospital, the studio art professors and I worked collaboratively to have our students produce patient education materials for the diabetes and high-risk asthma clinics at the hospital. First, the students read materials already available for patient education. The following are some of these materials: Iggy and the Inhalers, Diabetes and Me, and Suzie & Ray: Just another Tool for the Toolbox.



Our graduate student, who acted as liaison between my background course and the studio course, produced a zine about a teen with asthma going to a rock concert.

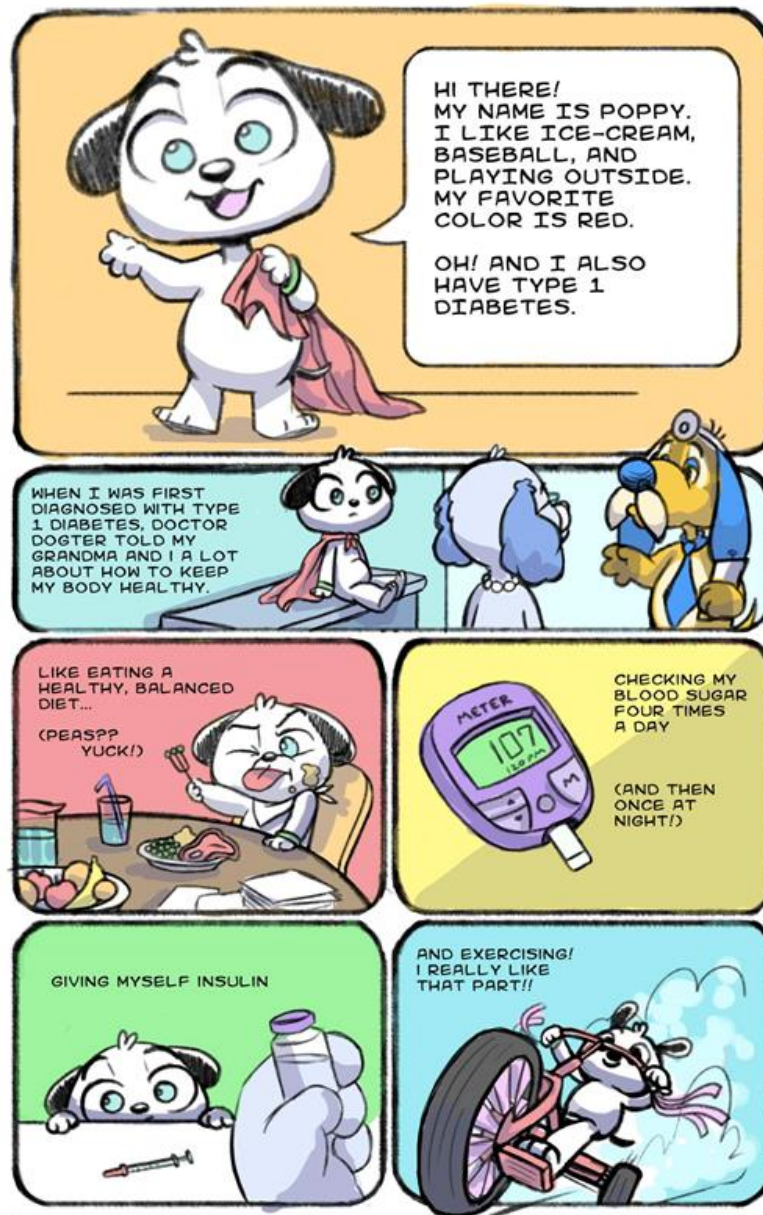




After reading patient education materials professionally developed, my students worked with clinic staff to produce materials addressing concerns of each clinic. Some examples, provided with the permission of the hospital, are below.



Another class produced patient education comics for the LeBonheur diabetes clinic. Topics were aimed at different ages and included nutrition, driving, and identity. Below is the first page of "Poppy the Loudest Puppy," a comic book designed to make young children comfortable with asking for help if they don't feel well because of an increase or drop in blood sugar. This example course is just one way that nurses can integrate graphic medicine into their teaching and collaborate with artists or other disciplines to improve patient care.



### Comics and Nursing Research

Comics can be very useful interventions in nursing research. For more on this topic, see this [post by MK Czerwiec](#). For even more on this topic, see Chapter 5, “Graphic Medicine” in [Research Methods in Health Humanities](#), edited by Craig M. Klugman and Erin Gentry Lamb, Oxford University Press, 2019.

### Comics as a tool of activism to improve patient care

Comics have a long history of enabling and promoting social activism. Health care can certainly use interventions to explain and/or share stories of issues that need improvement. One powerful example is this comic by Susan Simensky Bietila, [“An Unshackled Birth.”](#)

Do you have other ideas for how graphic medicine can improve your nursing practice? We would love to hear them – as well as your questions or concerns! You can find us using the contact information in our bios or using the contact us form on the Graphic Medicine website.

### About the authors:

**MK Czerwiec** ([comicnurse.com](http://comicnurse.com)) is a nurse, cartoonist, educator, and co-founder of the field of Graphic Medicine. She is the creator of *Taking Turns: Stories from HIV/AIDS Care Unit 371* (Penn State University Press, 2017), a co-author of *Graphic Medicine Manifesto* (PSU Press, 2014) and editor of *Menopause: A Comic Treatment* (Penn State University Press, 2020). MK is also the comics editor for the journal *Literature & Medicine*. She co-manages the website, podcast, annual conferences, and online community of GraphicMedicine.org.

**Esther Bendit Saltzman** ([msaltzman.es@gmail.com](mailto:msaltzman.es@gmail.com)) graduated from the nursing program at California State University Los Angeles. She has a background in pediatric and post-partum nursing and lactation education. She is currently a PhD Candidate in Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Memphis and is specializing in graphic medicine. She is currently working on her dissertation, “Graphic Agency: Teaching Graphic Medicine in the Liberal Arts Classroom.” She co-edited, with Stephen Tabachnick, *Drawn from the Classics: Essays on Graphic Adaptations of Literary Works*, and she contributed to his edited volume, *The Cambridge Companion to the Graphic Novel*.

## 4. A Collection of COVID Comics Reviews

*By Kevin Wolf*

I’ve heard it said that journalism is the first draft of history, because it’s writing about events that are currently happening and doesn’t have the hindsight that time provides to try to figure out how all the events fit together and global look of its causes and effects. This review covers the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. The most recent events mentioned are from about October or November 2020, so the vaccine rollout is not part of this story. And the stories range from the very personal (e.g., what it’s like to be or have a family member sickened by COVID-19), educational pieces like a public service announcement, some history of past pandemics (and how it relates to the present), among other topics. **The Comic News** (aka, *Santa Cruz Comic News*) with editorial cartoons is the most “current” for its time from the very early days (around March 2020) of COVID-19 in the U.S.; while Boileau’s and Johnson’s editing of the **COVID Chronicles Anthology** provides the most stories of various perspectives and artistic styles as an excellent introduction of how COVID-19 has affected people’s lives, their culture, activism, and their countries.

Some past pandemics have been misnamed after a place (e.g., the Spanish Flu which began in the United States; see graphic medicine review of [Fever Year by Don Brown](#)); and such place naming has led to xenophobia and assaults. Such assaults are never justified. The current pandemic has gone by several names: novel coronavirus, SARS CoV2 and COVID-19. The CO is short for corona, VI for virus, D for disease, and 19 for 2019, the year this virus was found in humans. It was initially called SARS-CoV-2; standing for severe acute respiratory syndrome, coronavirus version 2 because it appears to be very similar to the 2003 SARS virus (version 1). And that name was replaced with



COVID-19 to avoid panic that SARS might engender. [Coronavirus](#) are RNA-related virus' that can cause serious respiratory and other problems in some birds and mammals.

The Graphic Medicine website has [links](#) devoted to COVID-19 under these categories: Vaccine-Specific Comics; COVID-19 Comics: Educational, Ethics/Social Justice, By/About Caregivers, By Patients, Coping & Humor, Historic; Comics Publications & Presentations; and Non-Comic Resources. Other pandemic-related books reviewed at [graphicmedicine.org](#) include [The Great Hanoi Rat Hunt](#) by Michael G. Vann & Liz Clarke (illustrator) and [Plaques](#) by Fallynn Koch.

After reading the works under review here, I have found some shortcomings. There were not enough examples of what's been working in other parts of the world. Some countries (e.g., S. Korea, Australia, New Zealand) with very low case/death COVID-19 rates are mentioned, but those stories don't go into detail of what those countries did to cause their better outcomes. Likewise, comparison of countries with detrimental outcomes isn't detailed. The United States has the worst outcomes followed by Brazil and the United Kingdom. There was one story about Brazil (see *The Nib: Pandemic* issue). The U.S. is emphasized in these graphic works. Some statistics are provided in these works, and brought-up-to-date as of June 17, 2021 for several countries later in this review.



***COVID Chronicles: True Stories from the Front Lines of COVID-19*** by freelance writer [Ethan Sacks](#), drawn by Dalibor Talajić, and colored by Lee Loughridge provides ten powerful stories of suffering under COVID-19 with some successful counterweights. This is volume 1 (of a presumed series) which has also been [posted at NBC News.com](#) “in partnership with Upshot Studios, an Imprint of AWA,” the publisher of ***COVID Chronicles***. The ***COVID Chronicles*** move from the early days with a specific health care practitioner in a specific setting when the transmission method was unknown (“A Nurse’s Anguish in the ICU”) to the science behind this pandemic (“Three Scientists Race to Track Deadly Pathogen in Their City”); and from Wuhan China (“Locked Down in Wuhan During COVID’s Peak”) to a refugee camp in Mexico (“Doctors Without Borders Trauma Doc Needed Closer to Home”). I recommend ***COVID Chronicles***.

Though Sacks did the writing from interviews, all stories are in the first person from the perspective of each story’s protagonist, such as health care providers, patients, scientists, among others. For example, a reporter writing about COVID-19 stories in April 2020 doesn’t see his own family for fear of getting them sick (“A Journalist Gets Too Close to the ‘Mayhem’”). One story (“A Street Medic Struggles to Keep Protesters Safe”) shows 2020 racial and social justice demonstrations in Tulsa and Oklahoma City; and COVID-19’s impact on “street” medic volunteers, who do their best to make street protests not “super spreader” events. But this story also fails to mention racial disparities of COVID-19 disproportionately sickening and killing Black, Brown, and Indigenous people.

One story, “I think this virus is trying to kill me,” is of a patient who has many of the COVID-19 symptoms, including: exhaustion, entire body hurts, lost sense of taste, unable to eat solid food for days, high fever (106.7°), agonizing, throbbing headaches and waking delusions. It takes five days for her to get tested and she **never** gets results! Early on, COVID testing was based on certain criteria (e.g., essential worker, preexisting condition, travel to specific country or had contact with COVID-positive person, or being over age 60; and symptomatic) because of limited testing supplies. Low oxygen level sends her to the emergency room; while a later test shows she has COVID-19. After three more days her “kidney function dropping,” she’s given Hydroxychloroquine (before such treatment was known to be unhelpful) causing violent vomiting and diarrhea; and Job-like she believes “God is putting in my path [these obstacles] to keep me going;” and after five more days she’s finally released from the hospital.

In another story, sadly and somewhat commonly—as a stand-in for all frontline health workers—a respiratory therapist, who was treating COVID-19 victims, sickens, learns what his patients go through with respect to treatments, frustrations, and terror (“From Fighting to Save Patients to Fighting to Save Himself”). Severe cases are intubated and require respirators to breathe for them. A different respiratory therapist tells him, “I don’t want to have to intubate you ... I’m going to do my best to prevent it [i.e., fellow respiratory therapists know there are few who come back to recover after intubation and being put on a ventilator].”

There’s no pagination, so I don’t provide page numbers for any quotes I’m using. Each of the ten stories is about ten pages; often presented in staccato fashion, reaching a crescendo with positive or negative resolution. One scene (from “Virus Testing Becomes a Test of Character”) almost makes the reader the patient by showing a scared symptomatic, young diabetes patient’s face reflected in the plastic face-shield of the assessing doctor—who’s deciding if the patient should be tested because of limited testing supplies.

Each story provides an important perspective from a reporter chasing leads to those being treated or doing the treating in various locales or infectious disease scientists seeking the source of COVID-19; under the aegis of the Seattle Flu Study (“Three Scientists Race to Track Deadly Pathogen in Their City”). The scientists’ dialogue is interestingly shown in three boxed colors for the reader to know who’s speaking though the scientist is often not present. And federal (CDC—Center for Disease Control—and FDA—Food & Drug Administration) restrictions slowed the communication process. In Seattle, the first known positive test was a high school student.

At the conclusion of **COVID Chronicles**, the author writes a sometimes hyperbolic article (“A Letter from the Writer of **COVID Chronicles** by Ethan Sacks”) claiming the well-known slogan, “The City That Never Sleeps,” for New York City is because of NYC’S work during COVID-19, but [versions of this slogan](#) had been around since 1892 (and [other cities](#) have carried that moniker as well); that pandemics are part of “speculative fiction” in comic books, like the publisher’s (AWA Studios’) titled *The Resistance*. But obviously there have been numerous pandemics in history (e.g., see review of [The Great Hanoi Rat Hunt](#) by Michael G. Vann & Liz Clarke (illustrator); and that AWA’s Chief Creative Officer, Axel Alonso, “decided the world needed to see and hear” the stories of “real-life healthcare workers ...” but TV news stations and newspapers have been providing personal narratives since the start of this pandemic.

As is sometimes provided at the end of such works, to help writers and artists understand the creative process, there are page-by-page, panel-by-panel instructions for Chapters #1 & #9 with selected photo references, and the art process for specific panels by the artist Dalibor Talajić and colorist Lee Loughridge. Ethan Sacks did a great job in selecting persons and chasing down their stories, while they're nicely rendered by Dalibor Talajić's artistry and color with shading by Lee Loughridge.



## ***The Nib #7 – Pandemic Issue***

Matt Bors, Editor & Publisher of *The Nib*, opens Issue Seven (*Pandemic*), with interim mortality statistics: “As I begin writing this [late September 2020], 200,000 Americans have died from COVID-19” and Bors’ introduction was finished [early November 2020] with a 235,000 dead; and demonstrating how much worse mortality has become **only three months later**, [according to Johns Hopkins University as of February 14, 2021](#) (when I developed this part of the review), with 484,721 deaths in the United States [and 117,386 in the United Kingdom]. Because of COVID-19, *The Nib*’s California office was permanently closed, while

those editors who could, moved to healthier climes (e.g., Bors, married to a Canadian, moved to Canada (21,251 COVID-19 deaths); while Eleri Harris, Features Editor, moved to her home country, Australia (only 909 deaths!). Adjusted for 2021 [population](#) size, the cumulative COVID-19 mortality per 100,000—so far—is 146.4, 172.9, 56.3, and 3.6, for U.S., U.K., Canada and Australia, respectively. As in prior *The Nib* issues, ***Pandemic*** is a collection of personal stories, statistics, and comic strips. The stories herein show COVID-19 incidence disparities between the wealthy and poor; between those who can work from home and the essential workers who are more likely to become infected because of difficulties social distancing; and people of color vs. white persons illness incidence and severity. I recommend ***Pandemic***.

The COVID-19 stories in Issue 7 of ***The Nib: Pandemic*** include many locales such as South Korea (“Human Resources” by Meg O’Shea, 20-21), Lebanon (beautifully color-penciled; “Unstoppable Force: the pandemic explodes Lebanon” by Yazan al-Saadi and Omar Khouri, 60-69), Brazil (“How to Mishandle a Pandemic” by Laura Athayde, 8-9), Navajo Nation (“The Navajo Nation Has Been Ravaged by COVID-19” by Arigon Starr, Kalle Benallie with Eleri Harris’ adaptation, 14-15). Some very personal stories of life during COVID-19 are provided, like Whit Taylor’s giving birth (26), Ryan Alexander-Tanner’s wedding (27), Meghan Turbitt’s Zoom funeral (28), and Elizabeth Haidle’s drive-by high school graduation (29).

Caitlin McGurk, Associate Curator & Assistant Professor at *The Ohio State University's Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum* provides a historical perspective and cartoon images from the 1918, Spanish—though it started in the U.S.—flu pandemic (“Public Service Announcements from the Last Greatest Pandemic,” 34-37). This history shows how we are today relearning some of the lessons from 100 years ago. Worldwide, there were about 50 million deaths in 1918-1919; while currently we’re at [2,612,644 deaths](#) from COVID-19 as of March 10, 2021. And 100 years ago, we had no ability to find the cause nor create a vaccine against this flu.

The Lebanon story covers the ammonium nitrate explosion causing death and injury and wreaking havoc during this pandemic. It uses a mythical/cultural tale of an invulnerable shield and penetrable spear as metaphor reinforced with political history. The Brazilian tale—with a similar leader (President Bolsonaro) as the U.S.’s President Trump downplayed the COVID-19 destruction—is an example sadly, similarly repeated in many places (“One of the first people diagnosed [in Brazil] ... was a wealthy woman ... and the very first person to die ... was her maid (9))” of the disparate impact on the haves vs. the have-nots or systemic racism.

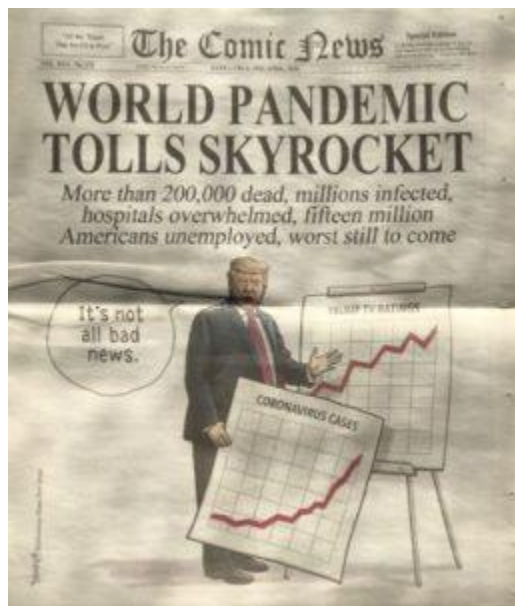
There are several longer stories (7-12 pages in length); including rediscovering comfort food from one’s youth as counterpoint to anti-Chinese racism (“Comfort Food” by Victoria Ying, 40-46); the economic disparities and vulnerability of essential workers (“In/Vulnerable” based on interviews with *Reveal from The Center for Investigative Reporting* and wonderfully illustrated by Thi Bui, 48-59; note that Thi Bui also illustrated a story in **COVID Chronicle Anthology** reviewed below); and organizing food and shelter for homeless LGBTQ in Portland Oregon U.S.A. during the pandemic (“The Emergency We’ve Accepted,” 71-78). “According to a U.S. Census Bureau survey 1/3 of American households could not pay their August [2020] rent or mortgage [73].”). And life between Singapore & Malaysia (“Love in the Time of Corona” by Max Loh, 79-86) separating newlyweds and persecuting foreigners (sound familiar?). Powerful and satirical single page comic strips come from Gemma Correll, Joey Allison Sayers, Pia Guerra, Matt Lubchansky, Charis JB, Ben Passmore, Mike Dawson, Jorge Gonzalez, Matt Bors, Kendra Wells, and Emily Flake. Xulin Wang drew out the Letters to the Editor (“I lost my job as ...,” 106-107).

Beyond what we’ve generally learned about COVID-19, there are some educational pieces. For example, one medically anxious person learns that their past successful treatment for their anxiety made them less anxious during this pandemic (“Practicing for the Pandemic (10-11” by Molly Brooks). Another story gives the impact on hospitals, especially in overcrowded communities (“The First Epicenter” by Niccolo Pizarro, 12-13). And Andy Warner’s statistics in “The Nib Bureau of Statistics” (32-33 as 8-page foldout) provides a lot of information in readily understandable format for those who can read pie graphs, bar charts, calendar line graph of daily cases/deaths with a timeline of significant events from March through September 2020. There are quotes from President Trump, who’s imaged as a red-white negative. One chart shows that most countries—but not the U.S. and U.K. —approve of their governments’ actions during the pandemic. And the daily cases/deaths in the U.S. are a lot greater now than they were last September (end of **Pandemic’s** time line) with the penetration of more aggressive mutations. Back in September 2020 COVID-19 was the third leading cause of death in the U.S.; while now it’s the leading cause of death!



Overall **Pandemic** provides a good variety of stories, storytellers, and artists. However, I would've liked at least some of the stories to be longer (e.g., the South Korea and Brazilian tales are only two pages each) to provide more information and personal events.

In 2019, *The Nib* won the [Ignatz Award](#) for Outstanding Series, awarded at the [Small Press Expo](#); and Matt Bors won the Transformative Work Award at [Cartoon Crossroads Columbus](#) (CXC).



### ***Santa Cruz Comic News – April 2020 Issue***

[Santa Cruz Comic News](#) states it was the “first newspaper of its kind” beginning in September 1984 and showing primarily left-leaning syndicated editorial cartoons. It has since spawned numerous similar publications, such as [We’re Living in Funny Times](#). **Comic News** comes out monthly and usually covers current events with a few featured articles, like [Earthweek: Diary of a Changing World](#), and [News of the Weird](#) by the editors at Andrews McMeel Syndication. **Comic News’** current tagline is “Now Celebrating **35** Inexplicable Years!” The comics in **Comic News** are annotated with satirical commentary by its publishing editors: Thom Zajac or John Govsky.

Periodically, **Comic News** emphasizes one topic in an issue.

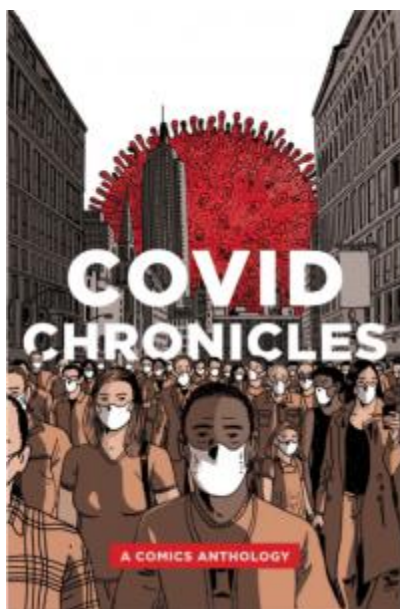
That was the case for the April 2020 issue (No. 673) with the topic being COVID-19. Because the editorial cartoons are published within weeks of their creation, **Comic News** provides greater immediacy than typical graphic works which often takes many years to research and make. However, since we are currently in the middle of this pandemic, all works reviewed here provide fairly current documents of what’s going on. I recommend subscribing to [Comic News](#).

Thom’s introduction to the April issue satirically included, “Unfortunately, many of the cartoons are terrific ...the more unfortunate the circumstances, the better the cartoons.” And John prophetically added, “the [President, now ex-President, Trump] seems to think this virus will ... take care of itself, and that we can re-start the country very soon, all indications are that this will be a long-term situation.”

Almost every page of the April issue had a title beginning with the word “Not” (e.g., “Not to Worry,” “Not.Paying Attention,” etc.). There are 106 COVID-related editorial cartoons with ten in color, ten election-related, and seven “In Other News.” Over the years the publishers chose their cartoons from over 120 cartoonists. There are a few cartoonists that have appeared fairly regularly, including Tom Toles (1990 Pulitzer Prize; Washington Post), Tom Tomorrow (This Modern World; self-syndicated), Clay Bennett (2002 Pulitzer Prize; Christian Science Monitor), Darrin Bell (2019 Pulitzer Prize; King Features; creator of comic strips *Candorville* and *Rudy Park*), M. Wuerker (2012 Pulitzer Prize; Politico), Mike Luckovich (1995 & 2006 Pulitzer Prize; The Atlanta Journal-Constitution), and Ted Rall (Andrews McMeel Syndication; author of numerous books).

Some of the types or specific examples of the editorial cartoons follow. Some cartoons covered shortages of personal protective equipment (PPEs; e.g., N95 masks and ventilators); others covered politics, and others were about misinformation. The publisher provides satirical commentary for each cartoon, such as “... the enormity of the threat is well hidden ...” goes with a Darrin Bell editorial cartoon (page 3) of gravestones that show such epitaph’s as “It’s a hoax,” “COVID-19 is ‘a little like the regular flu,’” and “States should figure this out,” among many more. There’s a two-panel Tom Toles cartoon (4): A short-squat flat-haired, small-handed, pursed-lipped President Trump, saying “I’ve been so proactive I canceled unnecessary White House meeting,” beside empty conference table, with second panel showing the President leaving conference room—labeled U.S. Pandemic Response Team—and saying “... before the Coronavirus even started!” And cartoon closes with Toles’ small-signature-self at his drawing board saying “It’s like a climate you’re creating.” This Toles’ cartoon combined President Trump’s ending President Obama’s Pandemic Response Task Force, and hinting that Trump isn’t dealing with climate change either; and was matched with the publisher’s sarcastic announcement, “...the president had been taking bold action in preparation of an outbreak long before the first person was infected” (4). Peter Kuper provided (12) a subtle mixed metaphor piece with masked, gloved Alfred E. Newman (Mad Magazine’s mascot) walking in a cafeteria with other maskless people watching him, and one saying “That settles it. Next time we have to shop, we wear masks and gloves.” The cartoon might be better understood if Newman’s tagline phrase comes to the reader’s mind; namely, “What me worry?” so even Alfred E. Newman is worried enough to wear a mask and gloves! Clay Bennett, who’s frugal with words, provides a globe and written on the base “The Coronavirus Effect” ... and the world is upside-down (24).

**Comic News** provides biting, bite-sized commentary which can help the reader make sense of current events.



### ***COVID Chronicles: A Comics Anthology***

A new publishing imprint, Graphic Mundi (“Graphic Worlds”) is making its debut with ***COVID Chronicles: A Comics***

***Anthology*** edited by Kendra Boileau and Rich Johnson. Graphic Mundi is an offshoot of the [Graphic Medicine Series from Penn State University Press](#). The GM Series imprint will remain primarily for academic-related graphic works, while [Graphic Mundi](#) (tagline: “Drawing Our Worlds Together”) will be for more general audiences. According to Boileau at ***COVID Chronicles’*** book launch, Graphic Mundi will include, in part, narratives and experiences from other countries (in translation). To distinguish this book from Sacks’ et al book (reviewed earlier) of the same title, herein I’ll call this book ***COVID Chronicles Anthology***. In the book publishing world, a book title can’t be copyrighted. I recommend this work.

In the Preface (dated October 2020, pages ix-xi), Kendra Boileau writes, with perhaps intended pun “What can we draw of this moment, when words fail us? ... *COVID Chronicles* was compiled ... from mid-April 2020 to mid-October 2020. ... [they] run the gamut in perspectives and style; some are true, deeply personal stories; others are invented ones, either based on real events or inspired by a vivid imagination. ... There are comics about getting COVID-19 and recovering from it, about losing someone to it, adjusting to home schooling, being furloughed, working the front lines, getting evicted, reliving past trauma, witnessing police brutality, and protesting for social justice. ... In short, these comics reveal the pure fear, anxiety, and grief so many of us are experiencing ... And there is hope in these pages ... in all the ways these comics show people managing to stay connected during lockdown, keeping businesses open, keeping kids busy, maintaining rituals, starting families, [and] supporting one another. (ix-xi)” Some proceeds from this book will go to Book Industry Charitable Foundation for bookstores and their staff.

***COVID Chronicles Anthology*** has 64 stories from 1 to 17 pages; 42 stories were written and drawn by a single person; 22 were created by two or three people; there were 75 contributors altogether with some providing several stories. I’ll discuss a few of the stories here and provide impressions for the flow of the anthology. A list of contributors is provided at the back of the book (pages 269-279). Award-winning contributors include: [Ned Barnett](#), [Thi Bui](#), [Zack Davisson](#) (as Japanese manga translator), [Peter Dunlap-Shohl](#) (as editorial cartoonist), [Sarah Firth](#), Mike Garcia, [John Jennings](#), [Rob Kirby](#), Rob Kraneveldt, [Janet K. Lee](#), [Lee Marrs](#), [Terry Moore](#), [Eli Neugeboren](#), [Tim E. Oglie](#), [Arigon Starr](#), and [Sage Stossel](#) (as editorial cartoonist). National perspectives from outside the United States include: Australia (Ken Best, [Eiri Brown](#), [Jason Chatfield](#) based in NY, current president of [National Cartoonists Society](#); [Sarah Firth](#), and [Ben Mitchell](#)); Switzerland (Roland Burkart); United Kingdom (Joe Decie, and [Ian Williams](#)), France ([Jack Deloupy](#)), Argentina (Ignacio Di Meglio), Mexico (Mike Garcia), Turkey ([Hatiye Garip](#)), Canada (Mark Heinrichs, Rob Kraneveldt, Tom K. Mason, and Shelley Wall), Germany (Natascha Hoffmeyer, Richard You Wu, and [Annie Zhu](#)), and Singapore (Kang Jing, and Pavith C.(colorist)). Some are immigrants to the U.S. (e.g., Thi Bui (from Vietnam), Lilli Chin (from Malaysia/Australia), and [Kay Sohini](#) (from India)). One is Indigenous (Arigon Starr (Kickapoo), also included in ***The Nib: Pandemic***).

There are several Graphic Medicine writer/artist’s works represented here who had been published in [Graphic Medicine Series](#) and/or previously reviewed at [graphicmedicine.org](#). They include: [Maureen Burdock](#) ([Menopause](#), and [Pathographics](#)), Roland Burkart ([Twister](#)), [MK Czerwicz](#) ([Taking Turns](#), [Menopause](#), [Graphic Medicine Manifesto](#)), [Jack Deloupy](#) ([Algériennes](#) with Swann Meralli), Peter Dunlap-Shohl ([My Degeneration](#)), Natascha Hoffmeyer (translator of [Twister](#)), [Janet K. Lee](#) ([Sea Sirens](#) & [Sky Island](#) as illustrator), [Ajuan Mance](#) ([Menopause](#)), [Shelley Wall](#) (organizer of 2012 Comics & Medicine (now called Graphic Medicine) Conference), and [Ian Williams](#) ([Bad Doctor](#), [Lady Doctor](#), [Graphic Medicine Manifesto](#))

***COVID Chronicles Anthology***’s stories fall into several major categories; namely personal (some as diaries), historical, cultural, or social/political with many being a mix of categories. Several are fictional (or even science fiction) and many provide public service announcements: wash hands, don’t touch face, wear mask, socially distance, quarantine if symptomatic, get tested, pass this

advice along. About one-third are in color and very few uses metaphorical imagery. The stories included provide a nice variety of drawing styles. Though the sequence of stories has no section labeling they do follow an edifying pattern. With the early stories emphasizing the author's own lives, and the later moving toward national and political commentary. Since some stories cover a period in time—and we unfortunately don't have the benefit of being able to look back at the entire history of this pandemic—we often do not know the outcome or resolution of these stories.

"How to Have a Powwow in a Pandemic" (105 – 111) by S I Rosenbaum (words) & Arigon Starr (art and color) indicates Indigenous people are disproportionately hurt by COVID-19 due to "poverty & oppression [110];" and all but one Powwow was cancelled. For Indigenous populations, historical epidemic/pandemics include: Childbirth Fever (1792), Smallpox (1811), Whooping Cough (1813), Measles (1818), exacerbated by governmental relocations. The 1900 census count had 237,000 Indigenous people whereas before Europeans arrived there had been millions in what's now the U.S. Powwows began from wild west show world tours. "[U.S.] Authorities saw the new dances as 'fake' and therefore harmless. But then as now Powwow gave people a way to connect to something deep and real—a healing." (108) Over the weekend of March 21-22, 2020 there was a virtual Powwow and every weekend thereafter for two months.

"Past Pandemics" (40-45) by Ned Barnett provides some history. It defines epidemic (affects lots of people within a small area up to a country) vs. pandemic (crosses country or continental borders); and "novel influenza virus" is easily infecting people and sustainably spreading to others. This story gives four other pandemics since the 1900s: Influenza of 1918-19 (H1N1) ~ 50 million died; Influenza Pandemic of 1957-58 (H2N2) ~ 1.1 million; vaccine rapidly produced thereafter in U.S. annual flu shots resulted; 1968-70 Pandemic (H3N2) ~ 4 million died mostly age 65+, those exposed in 1957-58 still immune but this virus was highly contagious, part of seasonal flu today; 2009 Swine Flu (H1N1) ~ 575 thousand died mostly children, still circulating seasonally; and current COVID-19 2019+. And provides very positive news that by August 2020, Vietnam, Fiji, and New Zealand had 100 days of no new cases.

"Sort of Together & Mostly Apart" (60-67) by Brenna Thummler provides an excellent personal but fictional tale of various characters living in these times: with a retailer in "the belly of the 'Rona 960);" yellers literally spitting out their contempt for masks; a senior helping a family with an unemployed head-of-household; a drive by party; wedding plans interrupted; and virtual connection with a hospitalized parent. This tale feels like, but with opposite outcome, the movie Babel where virtually everyone misunderstands each other. Ajuan Mance's piece (31 – 33), "Sheltering in Place: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" ironically includes one page with three panels stating "You are not alone" as good (kith & kin), bad (COVID-19 spreads across country), ugly (global spread)! "State of Emergency" by Sarah Firth (177-183) has 7-months isolation from pandemic piled on by devastating Australian wildfires; with cartooning, nature returning, and reconnecting to others as therapy; as on Japanese roller coasters "Please scream inside your heart." (183)

There's some comic relief (and don't we need some?) in "Librarying During a Pandemic: Library Comic Strips" (129-133) by Gene Ambaum & Willow Payne and many of Rivi Handler-Spitz's one-page pieces sprinkled throughout **COVID Chronicles Anthology**.

"Between Two Worlds" (190-195) by Julio Anto, Jacoby Salcedo, & Hassan Otsmane-Elhaou provides a fictional tale inspired by real events of racial bias during this pandemic in New York City. Several stories have political and/or social commentary. There's a beautifully drawn story ("The Right to Breathe" by Maureen Burdock with Joanna Regulska; 203-211)) with scientific speculation and anger at how we treat each other with greed and social injustice, and our environment with nature having its inevitable revenge. And on top of this were some political leaders (mostly men) doing little or worse to fan the pandemic flames; while other leaders (mostly women) provided concern and solutions all before any vaccines were available.

In "**State of Emergency**" (177 – 183) by Sarah Firth the pandemic happens on top of Australia's wildfires with 417 people killed, 9,352 buildings burned, 12 million acres gone, 306 trillion tons CO<sub>2</sub> released, 408 billion animals killed. In "Pandemic Precarities: An Account from the Intersection of Two Worlds" (211 – 219) by Kay Sohini; the author's grandmother died from COVID-19 soon after NYC Coronavirus lockdown. Her Grandmother lived in Calcutta, India which was also locked down. As an immigrant the author feels she's on the edge of two worlds. As of August 8, 2020, U.S. had 5 million cases with 161,921 deaths, while India had 2 million cases and 43,000 deaths; and India has population over 3 times the U.S.

"Hardball" (245-251) by Rich Johnson (script) & Eli Neugeboren (art & lettering) provides statistics as of October 20, 2020 & historical commentary as metaphorical baseball cards for 7 countries. I provide a table below comparing these 7 countries then and now with deaths per 100,000 in parentheses.

#### **Coronavirus Cumulative Deaths (and per 100,000 population)**

	Population*	As of 10/20/2020*	As of 6/17/2021**
<b>Brazil</b>	209,469,000	154,176 (73.6)	493,673 (235.7)
<b>Germany</b>	83,124,000	9,844 (11.8)	90,197 (108.5)
<b>New Zealand</b>	4,822,000	25 (0.5)	26 (0.5)
<b>Singapore</b>	5,757,000	28 (0.5)	34 (0.6)
<b>South Korea</b>	51,172,000	447 (0.9)	1,994 (3.9)
<b>Taiwan</b>	23,426,000	7 (0.3)	478 (2.0)
<b>U.S.A.</b>	329,878,000	222,651 (67.5)	600,653 (182.1)

\*Source : **COVID Chronicles Anthology** Pages 245-251 (and Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center)

\*\* Source: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html> (Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center)



Beyond COVID-19 other medical issues arise, including mental health (e.g., isolation, grieving alone), having asthma, remote learning for a child with Down syndrome, politicizing public health in many countries, ignoring or downplaying science, pandemic denial, postponing funerals, public health beyond COVID-19 precautions (e.g., homelessness, unsafe work conditions), telemedicine (connecting to healthcare provider via phone or internet) can carry frustrations; and births without family in attendance. **COVID Chronicles Anthology** closes with “Lonely 2020” (281) by Jay Stephens which are funny and satirical comic book ads; but I’m closing on a more hopeful note from COVID Chronicles in Switzerland “as of Sep 7, 2020 39,400 babies have been born during this pandemic” (“New Life” by roland burkart (natascha hoffmeyer, translator), 238- 243).

I have trouble choosing my favorite among the books under review. I find them equally compelling. If you want different stories written by the same voice and in the same artistic style, then choose **COVID Chronicles** by Sacks and Talajić. If you want a variety of voices and artistic talent then pick **COVID Chronicles Anthology** and *The Nib’s Pandemic* issue. Or as current events and editorial cartoons, then subscribe to **The Comic News**. Better yet, get all of them to read valuable COVID-19 stories from a variety of perspectives. Unfortunately, there are many more stories—sad, painful, frustrating—to be published; fortunately, counterweighted with hopeful tales; at least moving on to the times of vaccines. And optimistically, I hope we learn some lessons from these pandemic’s stories so any future ones won’t be as devastating or prolonged.

#### About the author:

**Kevin Wolf** is the Book Review Editor at [graphicmedicine.org](http://graphicmedicine.org). He’s a health consulting actuary, a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries, and a Member of the American Academy of Actuaries. He’s loved comics – the mix of words and pictures – since he learned to read.

### 5. Book Review: Let’s Talk About it by Erika Moen and Matthew Nolan

*By Mae Czerwicz*

Co-authors and spouses Erika Moen and Matthew Nolan are perhaps known best for their over-18 sex education and toy review website, [Oh Joy Sex Toy](http://OhJoySexToy.com). Moen and Nolan have been in the sex education field for years, publishing their graphic novel [Drawn to Sex: The Basics](http://DrawnToSex.com) in 2018. *Let’s Talk About It* is their first publication geared specifically towards a younger, adolescent audience.

Much of Moen and Nolan’s style translates extremely well to this audience. Their cast of characters is as diverse as any I’ve ever seen in any sex education publication, specifically with respect to disabled, transgender, and intersex bodies. Their writing style is direct and no-nonsense, but emphasizes the need for consent and self-reflection when participating in sexual activity. Obviously, their background makes Moen and Nolan incredibly sex-positive in their instruction of sensitive topics, effectively erasing the shame many teenagers and young adults come to associate with sex in current education practices.

One aspect of Moen and Nolan's message that will resonate especially well with adolescent audiences is the statement in the author's note that "sex education is relationship education". The authors, unlike other sex educators, do not isolate sex from other aspects of teenage relationships, and emphasize the necessary room for confusion and questioning when starting out. This welcome departure removes sex from its pedestal of inaccessibility to younger audiences and alleviates much of the mystique surrounding it. It also allows room for the value of relationships that are purely sexual while maintaining the proper respect and honesty by all involved parties.

Besides talking strictly about physical intercourse and the mechanics of it, Moen (an out-and-proud queer woman) and Nolan provide a concise introduction to some of the personally confusing aspects of sex, including sexuality, gender, and self-expression. Due to their typical line of work, Moen and Nolan are also capable of presenting one of the best adolescent guides to masturbation that I have come across, once again presenting the topic as a guide educating both the body and the mind, while not placing any judgement on the experience.

One concern that may arise due to the explicit nature of this work is its "appropriateness" in a school or library setting for teenagers and young adults. While the illustrative style of *Let's Talk About It* is anatomically correct and occasionally in-your-face, truly comprehensive sex education must include a grasp of one's anatomy- and that of others. Penises, vaginas, and vulvas are all rendered in an explicit if artistic style, but none border on pornographic; Moen and Nolan's book is meant to be educational, and their explicit and uninhibited expression of anatomy only contributes to that aim.

Overall, *Let's Talk About It* by Erika Moen and Matthew Nolan provides a fun, judgement-free guide for teenagers and adolescents to partake in responsible, consensual, and realistic relationships, both sexual and sex-free. The diversity and apprehension of their characters makes their storylines relatable, and their explanations reduce the shame and stigma that can often accompany adolescent sex education. While the guide may not be entirely modest, it provides the sort of explicit and unflinching graphics that ultimately contribute to a more complete sex education, something teenagers and young adults desperately need.

#### **About the author:**

**Mae (Maddie) Czerwiec**, 19, is a rising sophomore studying biochemistry and neuroscience with a minor in Health, Humanities, and Society at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, IN. She was born and raised in the suburbs of Chicago and has spent many summers working at the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, formerly the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. Mae hopes to one day have a career in medicine, with her primary interests in medical devices and drugs, as well as biomedical humanities and ethics. She has her aunt, MK Czerwiec, to thank for the introduction to and education in the field of graphic medicine.



## 6. Recommended Resources

Broadly speaking, graphic medicine simply refers to the meeting of the comics medium and any topic relevant to healthcare. That means getting involved is as easy as picking up a comic that touches on health or picking up a pen and doodling your own health experience. That said, the field is ever-growing and integrating comics into librarianship, especially in the health sciences, poses questions, challenges, and the need for expertise. To that end, we recommend exploring the webinars, websites, and other information sources below as a way to get started. And please note: this is far from an exhaustive list!

- **Website:** [Graphic Medicine](#) is the home to all things comics and health and has been since Ian Williams launched it as a blog in 2007, coining the term. Here you will find book reviews, spotlight posts from creators, the Graphic Medicine Podcast, information on the annual conference, the graphic medicine liaison program, and all other manner of resources.
- **Website:** The [Graphic Medicine Initiative](#) of NNLM Region 7 includes a loanable Book Club Kits program, webinar trainings, and a listserv.
- **Collection Management Tool:** [Essential Graphic Medicine: An Annotated Bibliography](#) is your best friend if you are looking to start a small graphic medicine collection. It recommends 30 comics to get started with and was developed by Alice Jaggers and Matthew Noe using an ALA Carnegie-Whitney Grant.
- **Programming:** [The Drawing Together Archive](#) contains recordings of nearly every session the Graphic Medicine International Collective has hosted since April 2020. Drawing Together sessions invite participants to get their creativity flowing with comics drawing exercises and are a perfect tool for library or classroom events.
- **Programming:** [Graphic Medicine III-Conceived & Well-Drawn](#) is the National Library of Medicine's traveling exhibit and online exhibition on graphic medicine. While the traveling piece of the exhibit is, regrettably, unavailable at present, the exhibit and education resources are great!
- **Continuing Education:** [Drawn to Graphic Medicine: Bringing Comics into Medical Librarianship](#) is an MLA CE awarding webinar from librarians Kathryn Houk and Ariel Pomputius.
- **Recommended Reading:** Rounding out our recommended resources are three books that we think are of particular interest for library work in graphic medicine:
  - *Graphic Medicine Manifesto* by MK Czerwicz et al is **the** foundational text for the field of graphic medicine and isn't just recommended reading, it is required reading.
  - *Comics and Critical Librarianship* edited by Olivia Piepmeier and Stephanie Grimm includes a chapter on graphic medicine, but really the entire volume is worth reading

- *The Library's Guide to Graphic Novels* edited by John Ballestro also contains a chapter on graphic medicine, but several of the chapters are of interest to health sciences libraries

## 7. Graphic Medicine Pitches

### THE 2021 GRAPHIC MEDICINE UN-CONVENTION: WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?



Hopefully we've piqued your interest in graphic medicine! Looking to get more involved in the community? Look no further than the upcoming 2021 Graphic Medicine UnConvention, being held virtually August 13 – 15, 2021. While out call for videos has closed, everyone is welcome to attend the event! While registration is free, we encourage attendees to consider donating to the Graphic Medicine International Collective, the registered nonprofit organization dedicated to guiding and supporting the use of comics in health. Find all the details about the conference on the [2021 UnConvention webpage](#).

## Share Your Work with a Spotlight Post!

Working on or completed your own graphic medicine project and looking to share it with the world? Consider submitting a Spotlight post to the Graphic Medicine website! We welcome blog posts on events, programs, comics, research, and more related to comics and health from everyone in the graphic medicine community. To pitch an idea to us, please contact the website team at [contact@graphicmedicine.org](mailto:contact@graphicmedicine.org).

## Sparks



The Sparks column highlights Consumer Health Websites, Organizations, Apps, Databases and other links of Interest to the Consumer Health community. If you have any submissions, please send them to [Pamela Rose](#), MLS, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY, USA. In keeping with the theme of this special July issue, our focus is Graphic Medicine.

## Websites

[Graphic Novels & the Humanity of Mental Illness: An Annoated Bibliography](#)

*Submitted by [Pamela Rose](#), MLS, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY, USA*

**A unique project funded by ALA, focuses on mental illness.** Developed with patients & caregivers, medical professionals, and librarians in mind, users can browse by title or diagnosis.

## Finding images of underrepresented groups

*Submitted by [Shawn Steidinger](#), AHIP, Eccles Health Sciences Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT*

Do you create patient education materials? Do you collaborate with folks who create patient education materials? Check out these resources for finding images of underrepresented groups from the [IHA health literacy listserv](#):

- <https://www.blackillustrations.com> has icons and images of Black people in themed 'packs' - some packs you have to purchase, but some are free to use (commercial use included). A really great resource
- Another great photo site is the "Gender Spectrum Collection: Stock Photos Beyond the Binary" by Vice <https://genderphotos.vice.com/>
- <https://nappy.co/> – “Beautiful photos of Black and Brown people, for free.”
- This blog recommends some other diverse image sites as well <https://www.comfygirlwithcurls.com/2019/08/05/17-diverse-stock-photo-sites-you-need-to-know-about/>

## LibGuides on Graphic Medicine

Submitted by [Pamela Rose](#), MLS, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY, USA

- University of Washington Health Sciences Library – [Graphic Medicine](#)
- Thomas Jefferson University Scott Memorial Library – [Graphic Medicine](#)
- University of Michigan Library – [Graphic Medicine & Comics in Healthcare](#)
- Virginia Commonwealth University VCU Libraries – [Graphic Medicine for Patient Education](#)
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas University Libraries – [Graphic Medicine: an introduction to the genre of comics as health narrative and medical commentary with links to webcomics and a list of graphic novel titles in the UNLV libraries](#)
- Upstate Medical University Health Sciences Library – [Graphic Medicine](#)
- Dartmouth Library – [Graphic Medicine](#)
- University of Arizona Phoenix Health Sciences Library – [Graphic Medicine](#)
- Tufts University Hirsh Health Sciences Library – [Graphic Medicine](#)
- Oregon Health & Science University Library – [Graphic Medicine: description of graphic medicine and the graphic medicine resources at OHSU](#)
- Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences University Libraries – [Graphic Medicine](#)
- University of Southern California Libraries – [Graphic Medicine](#)

## You Might Be Interested In...

Selections submitted by Shawn Steidinger, AHIP, Eccles Health Sciences Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

### Colleagues as authors

I'm sure this is already on many members' reading lists, but I'm amplifying it here – perhaps you recognize these authors? (Subscription required.)

Grabeel KL, Heidel RE, Oelschlegel S, Rudd R. Collaborative updating of an organizational health literacy tool confirms medical librarians' leadership roles. Health Info Libr J. Epub ahead of print 2021 Jul 17. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/hir.12390>

### Valuing Libraries

This was mentioned by our Hospital Librarians Caucus on their listerv, but it bears sharing here as well.

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). Library return on investment: review of evidence from the last 10 years [Internet]. 2020 Jul 16. Available from: [https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/library\\_roi.pdf](https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/library_roi.pdf)

### Social Media and the distribution of Health Information

Add this white paper from the National Academy of Medicine Principles for Defining & Verifying the Authority of Online Providers of Health Information Project to your reading list.

Kington RS, Arnesen S, Chou WS, Curry SJ, Lazer D, Villarruel, AM. Identifying credible sources of health information in social media: principles and attributes [discussion paper]. NAM Perspectives. 2021 Jul 16. 37 p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31478/202107a>

## Selected Graphic Medicine Articles

Submitted by [Pamela Rose](#), MLS, Health Sciences Library, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY, USA

- Green MJ, Wall S. Graphic medicine—the best of 2020. *JAMA*. 2020;324(24):2469–2471. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.19479>  
*Focuses on comics-based material related to COVID-19*
- Venkatesan S, Murali C. Graphic medicine and the critique of contemporary U.S. healthcare. *J Med Humanit*. 2019. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10912-019-09571-z>
- Lawson E. Graphic medicine: humanity in cartoon rats. *Br J Gen Pract*. 2013;63(615):541. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp13X673793>
- Williams IC. Graphic medicine: comics as medical narrative. *Med Humanit*. 2012;38(1):21-27. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/medhum-2011-010093>

## Book Reviews

Yasmin, Seema. **Viral BS: Medical Myths and Why We Fall for Them**. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021, 263 p.

ISBN: 9781421440408. \$24.95

In this time of “fake news,” “alternative facts,” and “post-truth,” Dr. Yasmin tackles head on social media’s most widely circulating medical myths and pseudoscience, (what she so aptly refers to as “Viral BS”) in an engaging and thought-provoking way. This is a book that belongs in all libraries.

Dr. Seema Yasmin is an Emmy Award-winning health reporter, epidemiologist, and medical doctor; she is currently serving as the director of the Stanford Center for Health Communication. A gifted writer, Dr. Yasmin states that she combines her “training in medicine and journalism to track the spread of contagious misinformation about health as well as the spread of disease,” and asserts that the “two go hand in hand.” Misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation “spread alongside disease epidemics,” and are “collectively...known as information disorder” (p. 242).

Dr. Yasmin debunks 46 medical myths with clarity and purpose, and, in addition, offers insight into why so many swallow whole, and without critical questioning, these often seemingly outlandish concepts.

Myths range from exploring whether vaccines cause autism; if drinking diet soda is linked to Alzheimer’s disease and stroke; if it’s safe to eat your baby’s placenta; if e-cigarettes are helpful or harmful; if there is lead in your lipstick; if bad teeth cause heart disease; if a pill can make racists less racist, and if your zip code can predict when you will die.

In the final chapter, Myth 46 “Does debunking a myth help it spread?” Dr. Yasmin offers an incisive, thoughtful, and engaging examination of why people believe false and often dangerous information and cling to their beliefs even after presented with irrefutable evidence to the contrary, and if “Debating a false claim might give it legitimacy and oxygen,” (240) should she have even written this book? It’s been shown that “...we come to conclusions using information that’s

easiest to find" (p. 241) and, more importantly, accept the "information" that agrees with our own pre-existing convictions.

However, there is hope! Dr. Yasmin relates "a theory from the world of social psychology" which "uses a biological analogy to think about protection from rumors," namely "prebunking." "Preempting the fake news and neutralizing it is called prebunking" (p. 243). We can use "inoculation messages," "messages that promote accurate information without mentioning the misinformation" (p. 244).

For those deeply concerned about the disheartening proliferation of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, Dr. Yasmin's work not only offers debunking of widely held medical myths, but also insight into why such myths perpetuate and how to find an antidote to "information disorder."

This book is highly recommended for all libraries.

*Reviewed by Claire B. Joseph, MS, MA, AHIP, Director, Medical Library, Mount Sinai South Nassau, Oceanside, NY*

Fawcett, Robert G. **Calming the Bipolar Storm: A Guide for Patients and Their Families.** Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021, 201 p.

ISBN: 978153845647. \$35.00 hardcover

This is a comprehensive work on a difficult disease, and it's well-written and thoughtfully presented. However, the work does not live up to its sub-title. Unfortunately, Dr. Fawcett is part of the ranks of physicians who are not aware of the very real problem of health literacy in patients and their caregivers. Anyone without a high level of health literacy--not to mention regular literacy--would find this work daunting. And that is disappointing, as there really is a wealth of information here.

In thirteen chapters, Fawcett, with more than forty years as a practicing psychiatrist, covers everything from answering the question "What is bipolar disorder," including the history of its understanding, to discussing its cause, treatment, and therapy, both psychotherapy and pharmaceutical treatment. Chapters also include "Pregnancy and Bipolar Disorder," "Suicide and Bipolar Disorder," "Disorders Associated with Bipolar Disorder," and "Bipolar Youth." Included throughout are case vignettes from his experiences with patients.

Fawcett ends with a 2-page summary for patients, "Eight Steps toward Stability." Along with notes and a bibliography, "Resources for Further Study" and a list of "Internet Resources."

Overall, an excellent work, but each individual library would have to decide if it fits in to its collection.

*Reviewed by Claire B. Joseph, MS, MA, AHIP, Director, Medical Library, Mount Sinai South Nassau, Oceanside, NY*



## Publication Information

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### Statement

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## Call for Submissions

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***Do you have an interesting consumer health initiative or project taking place at your Library? Have you been spearheading innovative work with consumer health librarianship and want to let the world know? We want to hear from you! Consider submitting a brief article (500-1200 words) to Consumer Connections!***

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*Consumer Connections Newsletter* considers for review books of interest to librarians, patients, caregivers, and the general public. This column will concentrate on reviews of recently published books about consumer healthcare information available in print and/or electronic formats. General interest titles related to healthcare and medicine may also be considered. It is the purpose of each review to provide a detailed description and critical evaluation of the work. Recommendations for purchase are also included. Book reviews should be 200-400 words. Reviews reflect the opinions of the reviewer, not of the *Consumer Connections newsletter* editors.

Persons interested in becoming a book reviewer or suggesting titles for review in the *Consumer Connections Newsletter* should contact the Book Review Editor: Claire Joseph [Claire.Joseph@snch.org](mailto:Claire.Joseph@snch.org).

**Deadlines for submissions to the managing editor are January 1 for publication in the Winter issue and July 1 for the Summer issue. Section editors may set earlier deadlines.**

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