

## Unbelievable... Really?

RAY SMILOR

My friends--In the midst of our self-isolation, I have been watching reruns of most any sport I can find on cable. I'm desperate. And, in listening to the announcers, I have discovered the most overused word in all of sports and perhaps in the English lexicon: "Unbelievable!"

Watch and listen, and you will hear: That throw was "unbelievable." His catch was "unbelievable." That shot was "unbelievable." That ball was "unbelievably" close to the line. That was an "unbelievable" ricochet off the bocci ball. (Yes, I watched some of that too before I dosed off.) I'm desperate.

Are all those throws, catches, shots, and ricochets really "unbelievable?" Could the announcers simply have more accurately described each as "nice" throw, "good" catch, "fine" shot, "helpful" ricochet, or just "close" call?

Maybe, they don't know what "unbelievable" actually means. Kind of like the kidnapper in *The Princess Bride* who didn't seem to know what "inconceivable" meant. "Unbelievable" actually means "not able to be believed." Something so unusual and so improbable that it defies belief.

I heard an announcer describe a Tiger Woods putt. Woods had about a 30-foot slightly downhill putt that broke a bit left over a mild ridge. He



sank the putt. The announcer could not contain his enthusiasm. "That putt was unbelievable! He had an unbelievable downhill, slightly left-breaking lie over an unbelievable ridge. And unbelievably, the ball dropped squarely in the center of the hole. Unbelievable!"

No. Woods has made a career of sinking putts like that. He has done it so often in so many circumstances that we now expect every putt of his to go in and are a tad surprised if he actually misses one. Couldn't the announcer simply have noted, "Nice roll for another birdie," and gone on to the next hole?

Save "unbelievable" for something that truly is so iconic, so spectacular and so memorable that it actually is "unbelievable."

For example, there was Woods'

shot at the par 3, 16th hole of the 2005 Masters--perhaps the most iconic shot in golf history. He pitched his second shot from the rough, landed it above the hole so that it could roll back down the slight hill, then watched as the ball hung on the edge of the cup, the swish on the ball almost smiling as it seemed to defy gravity, before falling in. Birdie. A shot so improbable and surprising that it even defied Woods' prodigious talents with a golf club. That shot deserved to be called "unbelievable."

But what else does?

I decided to test the word at home. The other night, we had hamburgers for dinner. I told my wife, Judy, "The way you flipped that hamburger was unbelievable."

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She looked puzzled. "You have such unbelievable flex in your wrist." "What?" she said. "I have never seen such unbelievable speed and accuracy in burger-flipping." She told me to get out of the kitchen. I did.

Couldn't announcers think of a range of synonyms to more accurately describe the reality of a situation? They do after all have a lot of choices that they could apply.

Words like useful, effective, timely, and workmanlike are available at one level of accomplishment. Or how about outstanding, impressive, and excellent for a higher level? And then there are other descriptors for more unexpected moments like stupendous, awesome, and amazing. Then, for those more exceptional moments, there are phrases like "circus" catch, or "answered-prayer" shot or "Houdini-like" move. So much to choose

from given the actual quality of the throw, catch, hit, run, shot, block, move, or drive at the actual moment. Instead, we get "unbelievable."

The English language is so rich, multi-layered, varied and beautiful. That is, there are a lot of ways to say something other than "unbelievable."

Consider literature. Take Shakespeare. Hamlet wonders, "To be or not to be: that is the question." Instead he could have lamented: "Oh, when will I stop this unbelievable dilly dallying? I have such an unbelievable decision to make."

Or Lady Macbeth, instead of crying, "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!" could have simply said, "This unbelievable spot is so unbelievable to try to clean."

Or Portia reflecting, "The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven on the

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## ONWARD TO THE FALL

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



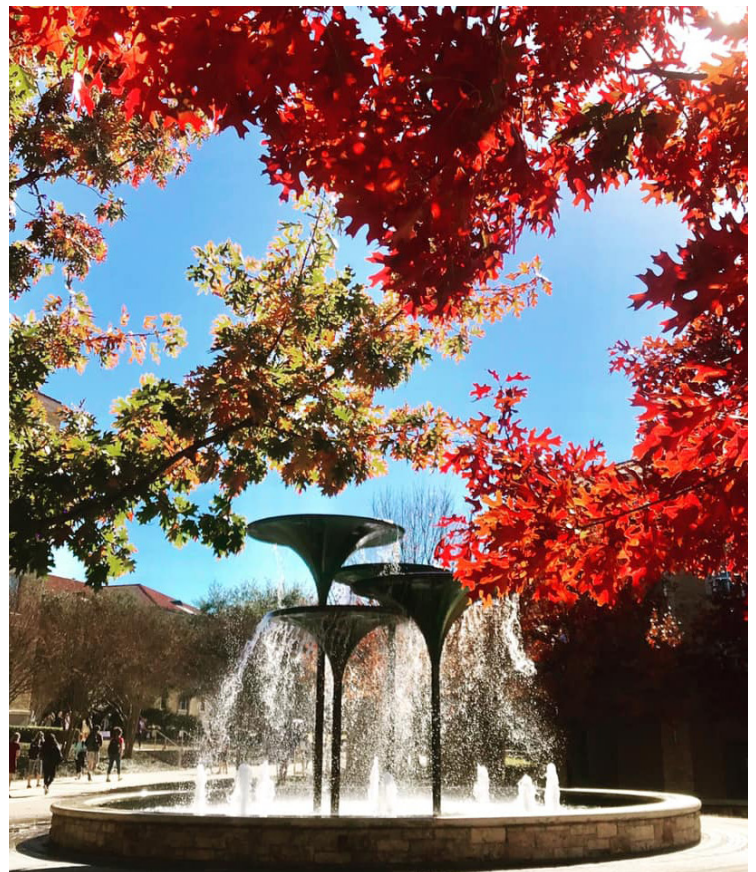
**LINDA MOORE**

Well folks, we are still quarantining (although many TCU students seem to be comfortable partying and going without masks). The new semester that seems to be going well (except for that postponed football game because of a COVID cluster). We are praying for football while we worry about the health

of the players and staff. I, for one, didn't mind the lack of fans while watching football or the US Open Tennis matches. It was amazing to see athletes being safe (to some extent) while protecting the public.

Our last newsletter had a lot of information about summer happenings. However, there has been a subtle silence on the issues we have been following. As the semester began, attention moved from governance and benefits to normalization of activity. We are in contact

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place beneath.” She could have said, “Mercy is just so unbelievable. It’s like unbelievable rain falling on us.”

Consider classic lines from movies. Asked for the truth, Colonel Jessup yells: “You can’t handle the truth!” Just think if he had said, “The truth is unbelievable. You just don’t know how unbelievable.”

Or the Don, warning, “I’m gonna make him an offer he can’t refuse.” Instead, consider, “I’ll make him an unbelievable offer. He can’t turn

down something so unbelievable.”

Or Detective Harry Callahan daring: “Go ahead. Make my day.” He could have noted: “You could make my day so unbelievable for me.”

There are those rare, unprecedented, extraordinary events and circumstances, however, when the word is not only appropriate but necessary.

Consider:

- Nurses and doctors caring for COVID-19 patients at the risk of their own health and lives.
- First responders ignoring

the danger of infection to themselves as they rescue and transport virus-infected people to hospitals and clinics.

- And others, like grocery store personnel in masks and gloves, some behind plastic shields, working to provide you and me with some sense of what normal used to be like.

Now *that’s* unbelievable!

Good Health and Good Luck,  
Ray

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with the Race and Reconciliation Initiative task force to share our expertise and experience. We have shared information and concern about cuts in pay and benefits. We are in a holding pattern as the semester progresses and problems are addressed but will keep our fingers on the pulse of the university. As a colleague recently noted:

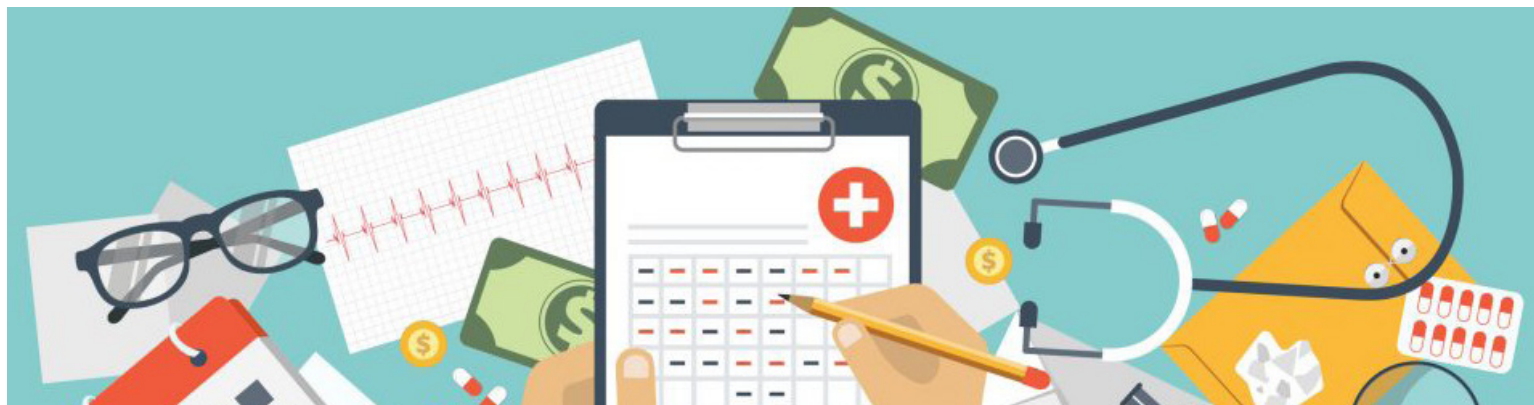
*I’ve had a hard time coming to grips with my disappointment in TCU’s steady reduction in support for retirees over recent years, which this spring, under pretext of coronavirus, has reached petty and insulting levels. First, there is the issue of medical insurance benefits. When the Bridge Program was in effect, my wife and I were able to cover our Medicare copays (over \$500 a month between us) and at least a small portion of our prescription medications. With the TCU benefit now reduced to \$2,600 a year, it covers our Medicare payment for five months only. The rest of the year, amounting to over \$3,500, is on us. Then there are our prescription drugs, somewhere in the neighborhood of \$10,000 a year — with no help from TCU now that we’ve long since been dropped from the university’s insurance plans and the Bridge Program funding has dwindled. It is especially galling that I was led to believe at the time I retired that participation in the TCU insurance plan was assured.*



The biggest issue right now is the removal of retirees from the Rickel. I want to share part of an email I recently received:

*Like one of the other respondents, I, too, had been a member of the Rec Center since the day it opened. I used it faithfully at least every other day for years—until this spring, when I was summarily dropped. I understand the need for social distancing and limiting traffic at the Rec Center during this Coronavirus moment. But, why is it necessary to bar retirees entirely. Why can’t a low traffic time period—early morning perhaps—be set aside for us. (Not long after I was told I could no longer use the facility, the Center sent out an email complaining that members were not keeping appointments, suggesting too little traffic*

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## INSURANCE OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR 2021

TRACY THOMPSON, TCU HUMAN RESOURCES

The annual enrollment period for insurance is almost upon us. Below is general information on the different insurance plans and enrollment periods.

### VIA BENEFITS PARTICIPANTS

The Medicare Annual Enrollment Period for Medicare Advantage plans and Prescription Drug plans runs from October 15 through December 7, 2020. Contact Via Benefits at 1-888-429-8490 if you want to explore 2021 Medicare coverage options. It is a great time to review your Prescription Drug plan with a Via Benefits Benefit Advisor to determine if a change is needed for 2021.

**Important:** Please be sure that any changes in your Medicare

*plans are handled through Via Benefits. Enrollment in a Medigap (Medicare Supplement) or a Medicare Advantage plan through the Via Benefits platform is required to maintain your Health Reimbursement Account.*

The TCU contribution to the Health Reimbursement Account for 2021 is \$2,700 per person, per year.

### UNDER 65 RETIREE MEDICAL

Open Enrollment for retirees under the age of 65 who participate in the TCU medical plan runs from November 2 through November 13, 2020. You will NOT need to submit an enrollment form unless you want to change your coverage. Information from Human Resources is scheduled

to be mailed to your home mailbox the week of October 26.

### DENTAL AND VISION

Open enrollment for dental and vision plans is November 2 through November 13, 2020. No action is required unless you wish to make changes to your current coverage. Information from Human Resources is scheduled to be mailed to your home mailbox the week of October 26.

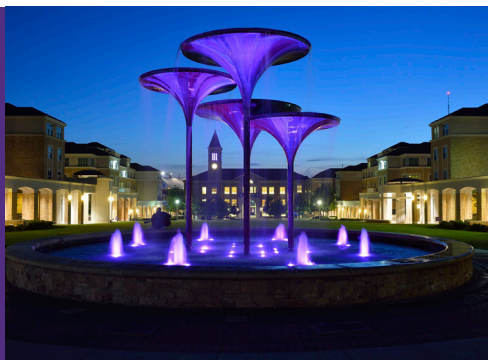
### QUESTIONS

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Tracy Thompson  
Retirement Program Manager  
817-257-5017  
[t.thompson@tcu.edu](mailto:t.thompson@tcu.edu)

### NOTE

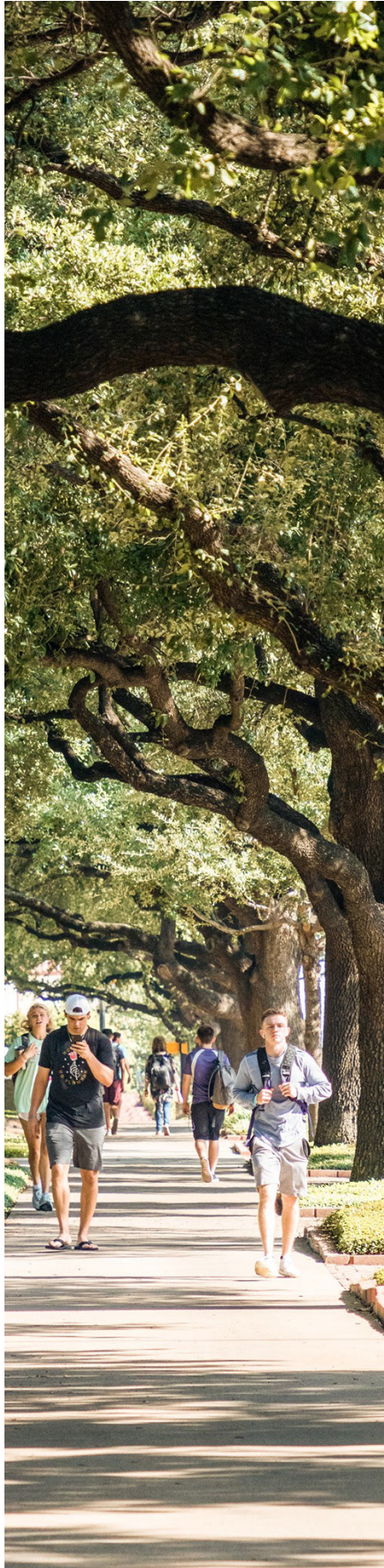
If you do not wish to continue receiving this newsletter, notify the newsletter editor or any of the others listed as contacts here.



### FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Search "TCU Retirees' Association" in the search line, and filter by groups. Click the "Join" button.





## HEADLINES OF INTEREST

KEY TCU NEWS TO KEEP YOU INFORMED

### VIEW TCU'S VIRTUAL FALL CONVOCATION ONLINE

The term 'convocation' comes from the Latin word convocare, meaning 'to call together.' Fall Convocation is a joyful tradition at TCU. We gather together to celebrate the start of the new academic year, recognize our outstanding thought leaders and mentors, and formally welcome our newest faculty members.

**CLICK FOR MORE...**

### \$25 MILLION GIFT FOR TCU AND UNTHSC SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The late Anne Marion and the Burnett Foundation, a charitable foundation based in Fort Worth, have made a \$25 million gift to establish The Anne W. Marion Endowment in support of the operations of the TCU and UNTHSC School of Medicine in perpetuity.

**CLICK FOR MORE...**

### INAUGURAL DIVERSITY DAY CONFERENCE OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT, REIMAGINE AND RECONNECT

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion will host the first TCU Diversity Day Conference on Thursday, Oct. 1. "We have been working painstakingly to bring a diversity conference to TCU, and we are elated that our work is coming to fruition," said Leslie Ekpe, graduate assistant in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and a doctoral student in Higher Educational Leadership.

**CLICK FOR MORE...**

### COVID Q&A: MENTAL HEALTH DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

You don't have to test positive to feel stress or anxiety from the coronavirus pandemic. Eric Wood, director of counseling and mental health at TCU, shares tips about staying mentally and emotionally fit during the COVID-19 crisis. The best remedy: connection.

**CLICK FOR MORE...**

### FROM TCU MAGAZINE: SAVING HORNED FROGS FROM EXTINCTION

Genetics expert Dean Williams is aiding the lizards' reintroduction to Texas wildlands.

**CLICK FOR MORE...**

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: CONGRATULATIONS, LINDA MOORE!

Linda Moore received an award from the NASW Foundation for being a Social Work Pioneer. The award is one of the profession's highest honors and is chosen by her colleagues. Congratulations Linda!

## ONWARD TO THE FALL

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*at the facility!) Exercising at the university's fine fitness facility was a benefit I cherished and made ample use of. I could hardly exaggerate the mental health, as well as physical health benefits I received. I feel that I earned those benefits having taught at TCU for 40 years! During my tenure at TCU the department was very popular and not only were our classes full but our advising assignments were prodigious. I (and my colleagues) routinely advised 30 to 40 students per semester in addition to teaching three courses and publishing. We loved what we*

*did, but we were workaholics who made TCU a better place. Winning every teaching award TCU had to offer was a hallmark of our department. I say this not to brag but to bring attention to the commitment we all shared to the university, and to the benefit the university received from it. In light of this history of dedication and contribution, imagine the hurt I (and no doubt many others) felt at being told "we can't afford you on our insurance plan", "we don't have room for you in our recreation center"!"*

We will be addressing this with the Chancellor after our board meeting.  
The saddest part for me is this

common refrain from retirees who have been so committed to TCU:

*For all the years I was at TCU, including the early years when I couldn't really afford it, I contributed money to TCU. I devoutly want to see the university thrive in the years ahead and to do my part to support future students. But, what has felt like a systematic rejection by the university since my retirement has led me to re-think these commitments.*

So we will continue to address issues and develop strategies for solving problems. We have been and continue to be TCU. Let's work for mutuality.

## A NOTE ON VOTING

LINDA MOORE

One exciting event this fall was the League of Women Voters helping register the entire football team to vote. I believe this is crucial to their future investment in the mission of TCU to become global citizens and ethical leaders. I hope all of you are ready to cast votes whether by mail or in person at this important time during a difficult pandemic. I'm not endorsing a candidate here but feel free to contact me for any pointers on how to vote if you are unsure! Just vote!!



## TCU RETIREES' ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2019-2020

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## CALL FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICANT MMI RATERS

OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS AND OUTREACH - TCU AND UNTHSC SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

### DEAR SCHOOL OF MEDICINE (SOM) COMMUNITY:

We are experiencing unprecedented national interest in our medical school and have already received a record-shattering number of applications – with two months still left to go in the cycle! While this is very exciting news and is a source of pride for us all, the Office of Admissions and Outreach needs your help!

### WE NEED MULTIPLE MINI INTERVIEW (MMI) RATERS

The TCU and UNTHSC School of Medicine is committed to the holistic review of applicants. The MMI is an essential feature of this process and cannot be accomplished without your support.

The MMI is a wonderful opportunity for you to meet and interact with aspiring future physicians and actively participate in the future of

our medical school. We would love for the whole Fort Worth community to get involved and help select our next class of Empathetic Scholars™, so please feel free to share with anyone you know who might be interested. MMI Raters come from a variety of backgrounds, and no prior training or experience is necessary to serve; just bring your enthusiasm, compassion and desire to be a part of the SOM admissions process!

For the 2020-2021 season, MD Applicant Visit Days will be an entirely virtual experience. Applicant Visit Days will take place from 1-5 p.m. every other Monday afternoon from September 28 through April 5. There is a maximum time commitment of four hours for each date. The four-hour time frame includes virtual training, the MMI experience and completion of the MMI scoring. No prior training or expertise is needed!

### SIGN UP TO PARTICIPATE

We are currently still in need of raters for all dates. **No prior training or experience necessary!** If you are interested in participating, please visit:

<https://fwfacultyaffairs.wufoo.com/forms/mmi-rater-signup>

### QUESTIONS

Office of Admissions  
mdadmissions@tcu.edu

Thank you. Our school's ability to admit students that we believe best fit our vision occurs during the MMI so please sign up for a date (or several) and play a CRITICAL role in selecting the physicians of the future.

Stuart D. Flynn, M.D.  
Dean, TCU and UNTHSC School of Medicine

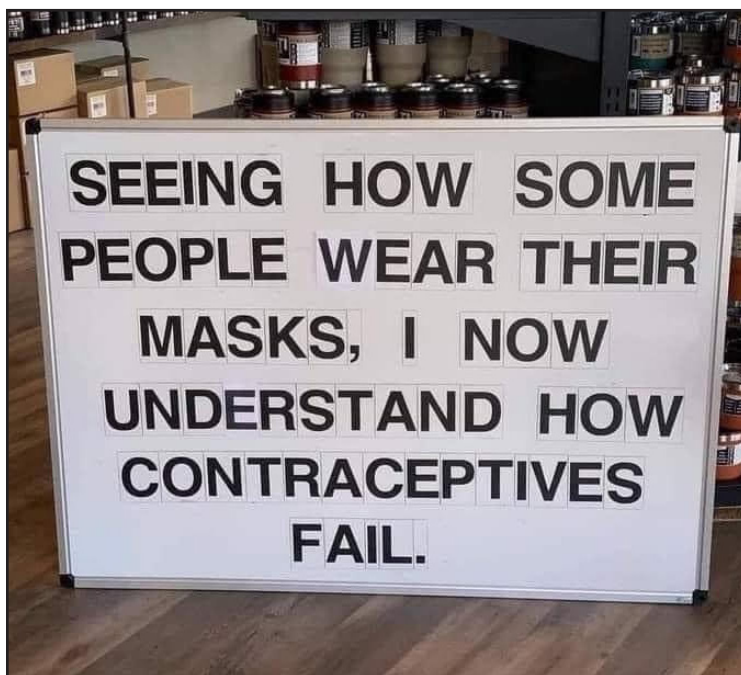


## WHAT DO YOU MEME?

CORONAVIRUS COMEDY FROM THE INTERNET



Don't you think Lucy's facial expressions explains how our year has been?







## *In Memorium*

**Larry Gene Garrison**

Physical plant

August 29

### MISSION STATEMENT

The TCU Retirees' Association exists to provide opportunities for fellowship, to promote lifelong learning, to advocate for fair benefits, to recognize the accomplishments of its members, and to strengthen the relationship between the retirees and the University.