

“Being Careful Kills the Soul” Saroyan

Friends, a good friend of ours, John Cairns, Jr. shared this beautiful quote with us. The Supercourse has never been careful, and our soul is still alive.

We wanted to thank you. We did it. There was an amazing surge of lectures that came in for Thanksgiving and Eugene’s birthday. We crushed the 5000 lecture barrier with 5003 lectures by Thanksgiving, and 5019 by Nov. 29, Eugene’s birthday. We are so pleased that you entrusted us with your lectures, so that we could give Eugene his best birthday present ever, 5019 lectures. This warms Eugene’s heart in the midst of Winter in Siberia. The lectures will also warm the brains of 1000s of students worldwide. It is indeed a wonderful achievement. There has never been a global health collection of lectures as large and such good quality as this. We are so proud to have you all as friends. Thanks for giving us your precious knowledge.

Business Cards: As we said in the last newsletter, we sent to you Supercourse business cards with your name on them. We have been very pleased with the response and many of you have printed these out and are sharing the Supercourse business cards with friends, neighbors, children, and students. Please feel free to make as many business cards as you want. It was great fun for Eugene, Meredith, and I to think about what we could give to 50,000 people that would make them feel a part of the Supercourse, and which costs nothing. We played around for 2 weeks. There is a map of the world on the cards that is color coded by the numbers of people who visited the Supercourse from each country. It is amazing that there are almost no place that people have not visited the Supercourse. We are a little concerned, however, that the cards which were sent as an attachment might not have reached you as they might have been filtered out by the spam catcher. Please write to us if you would like to have the business cards, and we will send these to you.

Disasters: Walter Hayes, Eric Noji, and Ali Aladran are working with us to create an Academic Disaster network. We will be fishing the academic programs in the world to identify all faculty engaged in disaster education. Please join us if you are interested in fishing to build a broad scale disaster network.

History: There were at least 50 people who are interested in joining our history group. This will evolve as I get closer to retiring. Eric Marler and I thought that it would be most cool to build a history Supercourse where we harvest the lectures of history. Eric has been finding the lectures for the past few weeks and Eugene has been making these available in the Supercourse. Soon you will be able to find every possible PowerPoint lecture on history. Several of you have identified your favorite history book. We will include these into our web page. If you have suggestions for history books for us to read, let us know. One recommendation is Walter Holland’s book on the Evolution of Modern Epidemiology. We hope to put up a web page of the recommended books. I was pleased that some one of our team also read the History of Salt, the author also wrote the History of Cod and the History of Oysters. All these books were quite fascinating.

“In the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed (Charles Darwin)

During the past few months we have been evolving at warp speed with many new exciting projects. We have collected 100s of lectures and dove into new directions such as History, the definition of health, JIT lectures, Mobile Global Health and business cards. Life has definitely not been boring and we are pleased with how much we have succeeded.

“If you want to succeed, double your failure rate” Watson

We go into these high risk, high gain areas with the recognition that we are likely to fail, but also with the concept of “what is the worst possible thing that can happen if we fail?” Typically people do not remember failure. Babe Ruth was the “home run king” in the 1930s in the US. Most people do not know that he was also the Strike out king, and set a record in his time for the number of times he failed. The Supercourse does the same, it has been amazing, however, as to how much of the Supercourse has actually worked. We will continue to strive for the impossible, thanks for joining us on this ride. In 1999 we started the Supercourse with the goal of collecting 200 lectures in 4 years and 100 collaborators. We could have never dreamt that we would have 5000 lectures and 50,000 collaborators from 180 countries.

Best Regards,

Ron, Faina, Eugene, Francois, Nicholas, Gil, Mita, Ismail, Eric, Kawkab, Vint, Ali, Meredith