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Subject: Update, May 31
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Warm salutations, everyone –

It's already the end of May – rather hard to believe, especially when you think about the crazy weather, with snow one day and heat warnings the next. Still a little on the cool side today, but warming up nicely to summery temperatures this week (and yes, I am reduced to talking about the weather. I'm getting ready for my weekly family Zoom chat later today, where our topics of conversation seem to be hair, Netflix, weather, hair, cooking, and hair, not necessarily in that order).

Much of this past week's activity has been focused on messaging, especially the messaging we want to give our students, both [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#). Confirmation date is tomorrow, June 1, so we wanted the students to know what to expect at least a few days before they had to commit to a decision. By next week, I should be able to give you an idea of the confirmation numbers, although we need to be cautious about assuming that those numbers will stay stable through the rest of the summer. We've also been working on some of the nitty-grittier details of mounting the Fall term – that work continues, and many thanks again to the Associate Deans, the AUO, and the teams in the Registrar's Office and the GSPA. And as you may know, we've begun the phased-in [re-opening of research facilities](#). I'm meeting with the University Librarian this week, so I may have some news for you on that front by next week's update.

As part of a search for something lighthearted and inspiring to do in my spare time – and because I was beginning to get embarrassed about reading nothing but [Jeff Strand](#) novels (*Wolf Hunt*, *Wolf Hunt 2*, *Wolf Hunt 3*) – I have decided to read David Frum's most recent book, *Trumpocalypse*. I haven't been surprised by anything yet (though I am regularly shocked), but I did kind of like his indictment of the Mueller investigation for not going far enough: "If curiosity killed the cat, then any cat owned by Robert Mueller can look forward to a long, full life." Of course, as a tiresome academic, I almost immediately wanted to point out that the terminal curiosity of the proverb is actually an essential property of the feline rather than the alleged "owner" (alleged because no one can ever "own" a cat, although I'm about to attempt it). Naturally I did **not** point this out, * since it would have meant having to contact David Frum. (* I'll refrain from commenting that this statement

constitutes *praeteritio* – wait, I’m doing it again – oh, never mind, I already used this one on you). Anyway, the book is a pretty absorbing read, especially the chapter I’m reading right now, “White Terror”. And tragically timely, considering the events currently unfolding in unhappy America, and also in Toronto.

So the need for something uplifting continues, and I think maybe I have a challenge for you. Every now and then I find myself contemplating the question “what are the best movie moments of all time?”. Judgement on that varies by individuals, I’m sure, but it might be fun to see how much consensus could be reached. Of course, the judgement would also vary depending on film genre, or perhaps according to the emotional response the scene is supposed to evoke. For instance, I think I’ve let you know already that I’m a big fan of horror movies, and one of my all-time favourite moments is when the wall-pounding starts in the 1963 version of *The Haunting*. It still makes my hair stand on end. From my perspective, that is a desired end; from my sister’s, not so much. So for me, that’s a favourite scene – for her it’s not any kind of scene, since she refuses to watch it. Okay, enough blather about that... What I wanted to focus on right now is “the most uplifting moments in movie history”. For me, it’s always been the scene in *Casablanca* where Victor Laszlo leads the crowd in Rick’s Café in [singing the Marseillaise](#). So send me your picks, and we’ll see where it ends up (just remember, this week the theme is “uplifting” – as in, yes, yes, I know we all love that moment in *Die Hard* where Alexander Godunov gets blown away by Reginald VelJohnson, but let’s just stay away from moments like that for now).

My “one good thing to come out of COVID-19” for this week is quixotic, by which I mean that I would love to see it happen, but I don’t hold out much hope that it will. We’re all getting pretty experienced with virtual meetings through Teams and Zoom and Webex, and one thing that’s really clear is that you can’t talk over each other and everyone has to take turns to speak. Even when things get a little fraught at a big meeting like Senate, we can’t all be shouting at once. Wouldn’t it be great if the House of Commons could function that way *all the time*? When I teach my Greek history class, I usually show [a clip from a House of Commons debate](#). I do it in part because I want to let my students know that ancient Athenian democratic processes were at least as raucous (and probably far more); but I also take the opportunity to point out that if they behaved in such a disrespectful and bullying manner, they’d be thrown out of the class. (OK, Canadian parliamentary experts: you can go ahead and throw things at me now.)

My video choices of the week are a bit of a cheat, I’m afraid, in that I already used one of them in the last issue of *Inside Arts* (which of course I know you read cover to cover, just

the way you thoroughly peruse each of these updates). But they're a pair, and I wanted to make sure you got the second one as well:

- Eddie Izzard, [Death Star Canteen](#); and
- Eddie Izzard, [Death Star Canteen, part 2](#).

And finally this week, let me just say that I so much appreciate hearing from you. Every week, after I send the update, a few of you write back to me, and I wanted you to know that, even though I'm not always good about acknowledging your messages, each and every one of them means a lot to me. It keeps me in touch as well, and lets me know something about how people are doing.

So stay safe and well as we head into June (named for the Roman goddess Juno, patron of marriage and of brides, hence the tradition of [June weddings†](#)).

Sheila

† Warning: do **not** click on this link unless you can stomach shockingly politically incorrect 1950s musicals.

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The Faculty of Arts acknowledges that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.