

Natural Selections

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Photo courtesy of NASA

Dear Readers,

These are unprecedented times. Across the world, communities, cities, and countries are taking measures to scale down the dynamic social interactions that defined our modern world. Social distancing, self-isolation, and quarantine have become a necessity.

Many research institutions in the United States have entered a shutdown, ceasing lab operations for all work except that which is directly related to SARS-CoV2, in an attempt to stymie the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 18th, The Rockefeller University joined this effort.

While the changes in our daily lives may be unsettling, we are strong as a community. We have already seen lab donations to supply our local hospitals with personal protective equipment, community volunteerism to provide support services to Rockefeller community members, and guidance from our university leadership.

No one struggles alone. We are all in this together. And we will persevere.

-Natural Selections Editorial Board

Help us Prevent the Spread of Colds, Flu and Other Viruses

Take precautions to avoid catching or spreading viruses. Follow these steps to stay healthy:



Available Resources:

- [Rockefeller University COVID-19 Updates](#) (contact: prepare@rockefeller.edu)
- [March 15th University Communication](#)
- Occupational Health Services and psychiatrist Dr. Nisha Mehta-Naik (contact: ohs@rockefeller.edu; (212) 327-8414)
- [COVID-19 Support Request](#) (contact: RockefellerCOVID19Team@gmail.com)
- If you have recovered from the novel coronavirus infection, you can [participate in a study](#) conducted at Rockefeller to better understand ways to block coronavirus infection.

Struggling with social distancing?

Here are some ideas to keep you stimulated, active, and engaged with your community:

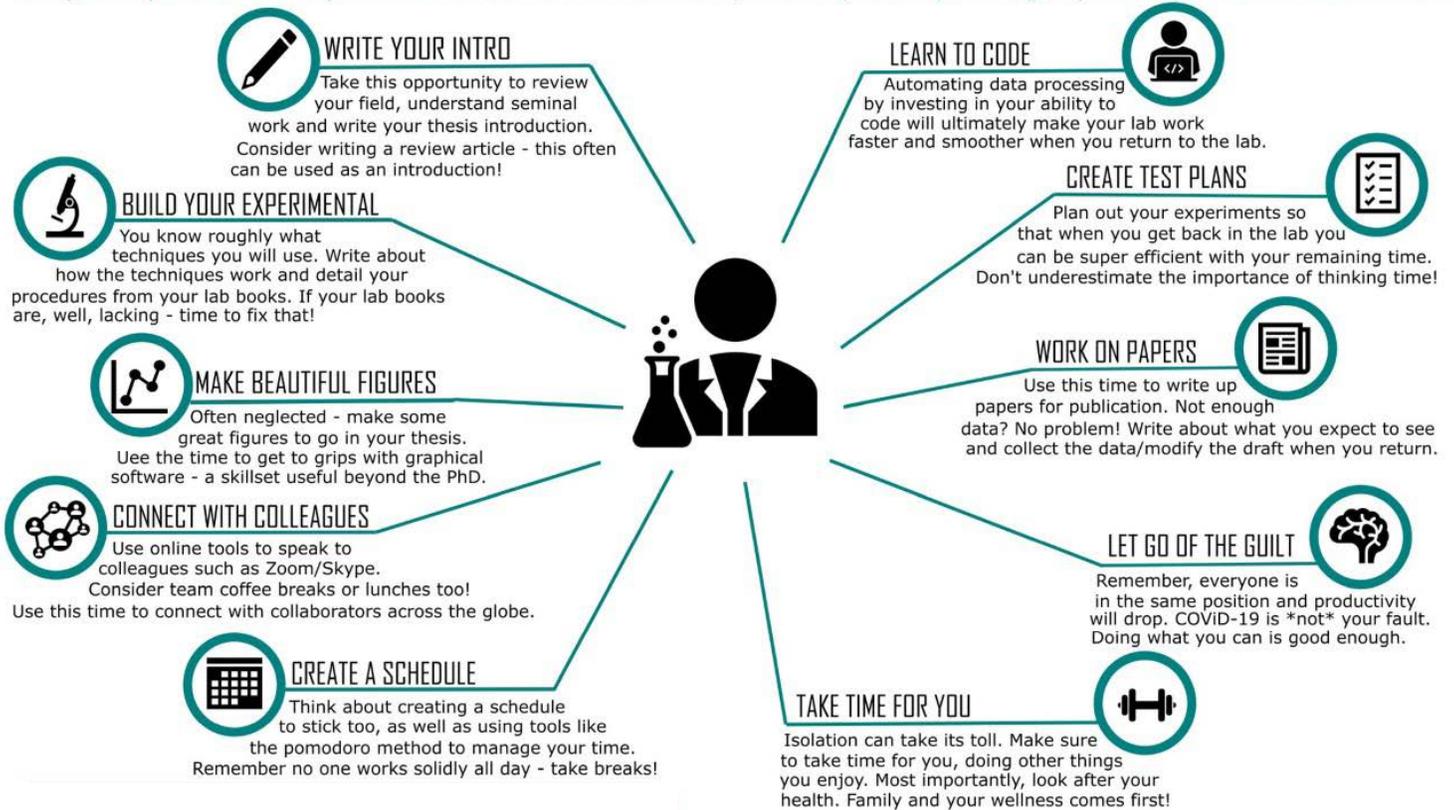
Stay engaged in science

- *Write a review article.* Preparing a review article is a great way to get a lot of reading done and also gain ideas for next steps for a project.
- *Host a journal club.* Use [Zoom](#) to connect with your lab and discuss up-to-date literature.
- *Focus on an old project.* Do you have an old project that you collected data for, but it fell by the wayside? Reconsider

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SCIENTIST WITHOUT A LAB? A PhD RESEARCHER GUIDE TO COVID-19

In these unprecedented times, many of us are finding ourselves without the ability to perform lab work and are having to self-isolate. This poster explores some of the options for PhD researchers in these uncertain period to help alleviate pressure, guide productivity and maintain mental wellness.



Part of the #mentalhealth series by Dr Zoe Ayres (@zjayres). Free to distribute.

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writing up your data and determining if it is publishable.

- **Apply for funding.** Consider applying for both governmental funding and smaller private grants.
- **Think about career plans.** [MyIDP](#) is a great platform for scientists to determine their strengths and weaknesses and explore potential career choices.
- **Promote your scientific work.** Update your [LinkedIn](#) and [ResearchGate](#) profiles. [Tweet](#) about your work. Make sure your CV is up to date.

Stay active

- **Hold a remote fitness challenge.** Encourage your family, friends, and colleagues to get 30 minutes of activity a day.

• **Work on your push-up game.** Stay strong by working on those exercises that require minimal equipment—think push-ups, planks, wall-sits, squats, and crunches.

• **Take online yoga classes.** There are many platforms online and you can join Rockefeller's listserv by contacting acampbell01@rockefeller.edu. You can also join [Rockefeller's yoga group](#) on Facebook and get access to regular videos of yoga classes.

• **Go for a walk.** If you are feeling healthy, it's ok to get outside and take a walk. Just make sure to social distance—stay at least 6 feet from others and wash your hands regularly.

Stay connected

• **Video chat with your friends and family.** Now is the time to connect with your favorite people that you are normally too busy to sit down and have a long conversation with. Try cooking a meal or sitting down for a cup of tea together.

• **Pick up a new hobby.** Now is the time to focus on your knitting, instrumental, and baking skills. [YouTube](#) has tutorials on everything!

• **Play games remotely.** [Steam](#) is an online gaming platform that has a [play with friends function](#).

• **Watch a movie together.** Use the [Netflix Party](#) extension for Google Chrome to watch a movie with a friend. The extension will synchronize playback and includes a chat function while you watch.

• **Blog.** Write about your experiences, your science, or anything else you care about and share it on the web.

And above all, **give yourself a break.** It's normal to feel anxious, and stress can make it difficult to concentrate. Don't expect to be as productive as you would be in the lab. Do what you can and leave the rest. ■



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A Different Kind of Outbreak

ANNA AMELIANCHIK

Before the novel coronavirus resulted in travel restrictions, event cancellations, and toilet paper shortages, The Rockefeller University community faced a different kind of outbreak: The Outbreak challenge. The Outbreak is a team-based six-week step and fitness challenge that syncs real-life steps and physical activity data recorded by a fitness tracker and translates them into virtual actions that you can take to survive a zombie outbreak. The app-based game tells an immersive story and offers six (and, as we recently discovered, very realistic!) scenarios in which players have to reach safehouses to escape the zombie horde and progress through the challenge. Like many other workplace fitness challenges, The Outbreak helps employees build a community around a healthy lifestyle and foster behaviors that improve one's health and reduce healthcare costs. The Rockefeller University's leading team—"No Shorz Too Short"—is a great example of what the challenge was set to achieve with the average of 15,176 of team steps per day and the total of 637,395 steps over the sixweek period. In addition, No Shorz Too Short put their steps to good use killing 1,055 zombies and reached all six safehouses in time. I had a conversation with the team leader, Zina Rogers, a Unit Clerk in The Rockefeller University's Hospital, about The Outbreak challenge and its impact on her fitness and overall health.

Can you describe your fitness regimen during the challenge?

My regimen was nothing too crazy to me, just had to go back to my old habits. I used to walk all the time anywhere and everywhere until I started working here. I have been taking transportation anywhere and everywhere and would cry about how 30 minutes was too far of a walk.

On day one of the challenge, I walked to work, then come week three, I walked to AND from work every day. If I had any errands to run, whether it was to return an item to a store, food shopping, pay bills etc., I made sure to walk

there rather than hop on a bus or train.

Yeah it's cold outside but once you get moving, trust me you will be stripping in the middle of the street when it gets hot. Playing Pokémon GO helped me a lot when I needed to get steps in. There were Pokémon I needed, and I would walk all over the city to get them before I headed home.

I went to the gym every day during my lunch break or went for a walk outside, depending on how my body felt that day. Hop on the bike for a few minutes then lift some weights.

Did you notice any changes in your mood, energy levels, or general health while you were completing the challenge?

I will say after week three, I was exhausted physically but alert and happy. I had trouble sleeping before. During the challenge I was knocked out at night and had a restful sleep.

I was pushing my body to the limit every day but I wanted to keep going. So I made some adjustments to still reach my goal but not tire out (lift weights less and less cardio during the week). I felt stronger each day nonetheless and was happy to see the numbers on the scale go down each week, too. My mood improved. I was able to focus on the challenge and I became very competitive. I felt the need to outdo the other team. My team ("No Shorz Too Short") and I would encourage one another to lead the race. Normally I am very lackadaisical.

Are you able to keep it up now that the challenge is over?

When the challenge started, I had to tell myself every day, "got to go to the gym or I got to work out." Now that the challenge is over I wanted to take a break for a week and start again (don't recommend it, you get lazy fast).

This challenge created a good habit that I will say I still keep to this day. I am still active and maintain the minimum step goal of 30k and daily walks/gym visits. I am going to wear my short shorz...eventually. HA! ■

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Natural Expressions

Music

On Sunday, April 12th, Guadalupe Astorga of The Rockefeller University's Laboratory of Neurobiology was scheduled to play with her band SugaGold (previously featured in *Natural Selections*, [A New Encounter on Stage: SugaGold](#) by Alice Marino) at the New York Beer Company. Although this event will likely be cancelled, you can support her and SugaGold by checking out their music on [YouTube](#) and visiting their [website](#).

Email Megan E. Kelley at mkelley@rockefeller.edu to submit your art/music/performance/sporting/other event for next month's "Natural Expressions" and follow @NatSelections on Twitter for more events. Digital and online events/releases are welcome! ■

Culture Corner

Best of the Boston Music Scene, 1979-1981: *The Neighborhoods*

BERNIE LANGS

I lived in Boston from 1979 to 1981, spending time as an active participant in the local rock music scene as a musician and songwriter playing in a short-lived band. The time period is now considered a "golden age" of local New England music talent. I can attest to the truth of that label. My bandmates and I would frequent club performances displaying astonishing musicianship and singing, powered by a brutal adrenaline rush of energy that I believe has vanished from current popular music.

Several Boston clubs boasted an extraordinary vitality, walled in ragged punk decor, including some of the venues we performed at—Cantones, The Club, Jonathan Swifts (in Cambridge), The Channel (more upscale), and especially the center and hub at the time of the local music scene, the Rathskeller, nicknamed "The Rat" and known as "Boston's CBGB's."

One of my favorite acts was the group The City Thrills, and I enjoyed speaking and joking with their lead guitarist, Johnny Angel. Their dynamic lead singer, Barb Kitson, dated the soundboard tech at The Rat, "Granny," whom we were all in awe of. Another of my favorite groups was The Lyres, led by the golden-haired, powerhouse performer known as "Mono Man" for his style of playing a vintage organ using one finger at strategic moments to hold a long, solitary high note for dramatic effect. The Lyres did a version of the sixties hit *96 Tears* that was sublime, and my band was graced with a request to open for them for a show at a small club. A band called Robin Lane and the Chartbusters was tight and precise in their sound and often played the larger venues to sold out crowds.

There was one undisputed leader of the pack during this period of fabulous live music, a trio named The Neighborhoods. They are still active as a band, with only their leader, David Minehan, remaining from the time I was a devoted fan. Through mutual friends, my band got to know the drummer, Mike Quaglia, an amiable fellow known as "Careful Mike" for the way he maintained a steady beat as his bassist and guitarist inflicted their wall of sound on the audience. His tenure with The Neighborhoods was from 1978 to 1990. We'd also chat at the clubs with bass player John



The Neighborhoods in 1979, left to right, "Careful Mike" Quaglia, John Hartcorn, and David Minehan.



Hartcorn who was with the band from 1979 to 1981. But I would never have presumed to approach the lead singer, guitarist, and composer, David Minehan. There was no musician or personality like him in Boston, not one player/composer/singer in his league. He would have been a presence in any music scene from New York to London. I'd venture to say that most of the band members from the Boston area that had made it on the national charts didn't have Minehan's natural star power, not only as a performer, but as a personality offstage (the one notable exception being Aerosmith's front man, Stephen Tyler).

Everything about The Neighborhoods was unique. Their songs were centered around basic rock compositional form, but had great twists in their complex melodies and chord structures. The lyrics were poetic, minimal and displayed the rare sweet spot of intellectual, yet approachable subjects and expressiveness. Minehan played his blue Stratocaster hard and with sustain, but never overly distorted. You could hear each power chord and lead note ringing out from floor to ceiling at the clubs where they played, but not at a blistering volume at the threshold of pain. His guitarwork was not an attack on the ears but more like the comfort of a demonstrative cathedral bell ringing out in majesty. Minehan moved about the stage in a trance-like, troubled dance of tough emotions, and his demeanor was otherworldly, as if he existed in his own parallel universe of sound and vision. His hair was col-

ored red rooster crimson in the style of early David Bowie, and piled up high in the manner of members of the English band, The Faces.

Minehan's act was no act at all, it was completely honest and unassuming. There was also no self-consciousness in any of the other band members as they created their joyful music. All serious rock enthusiasts long for a pure experience of music, something untainted by commercialism, consumerism, and a compromise of values for the sake of monetary success. The greatest bands never change their core sound or message to increase their audience, thereby polluting artistic vision. The Clash is the only other band I know of in a brotherhood with The Neighborhoods in terms of unwillingness to be anything other than true to music and the intellectual values held precious in the hearts of its members.

There were times in my own band that we'd kick off our rehearsals by playing a rocking version of The Neighborhoods song, *No Place Like Home*. Our guitarist Dave would rip into the guitar and vocals and our virtuoso bassist Bill duplicated Careful Mike's high harmonies. Our magnificently talented Keith Moon-style drummer, Dermot, brought a power and danger to the song that Careful Mike would never have attempted. *No Place Like Home* is a tale of a teenager's withdrawal into a private world of music, with the reassuring tagline chorus shouted to the listener, "Little boy I know what

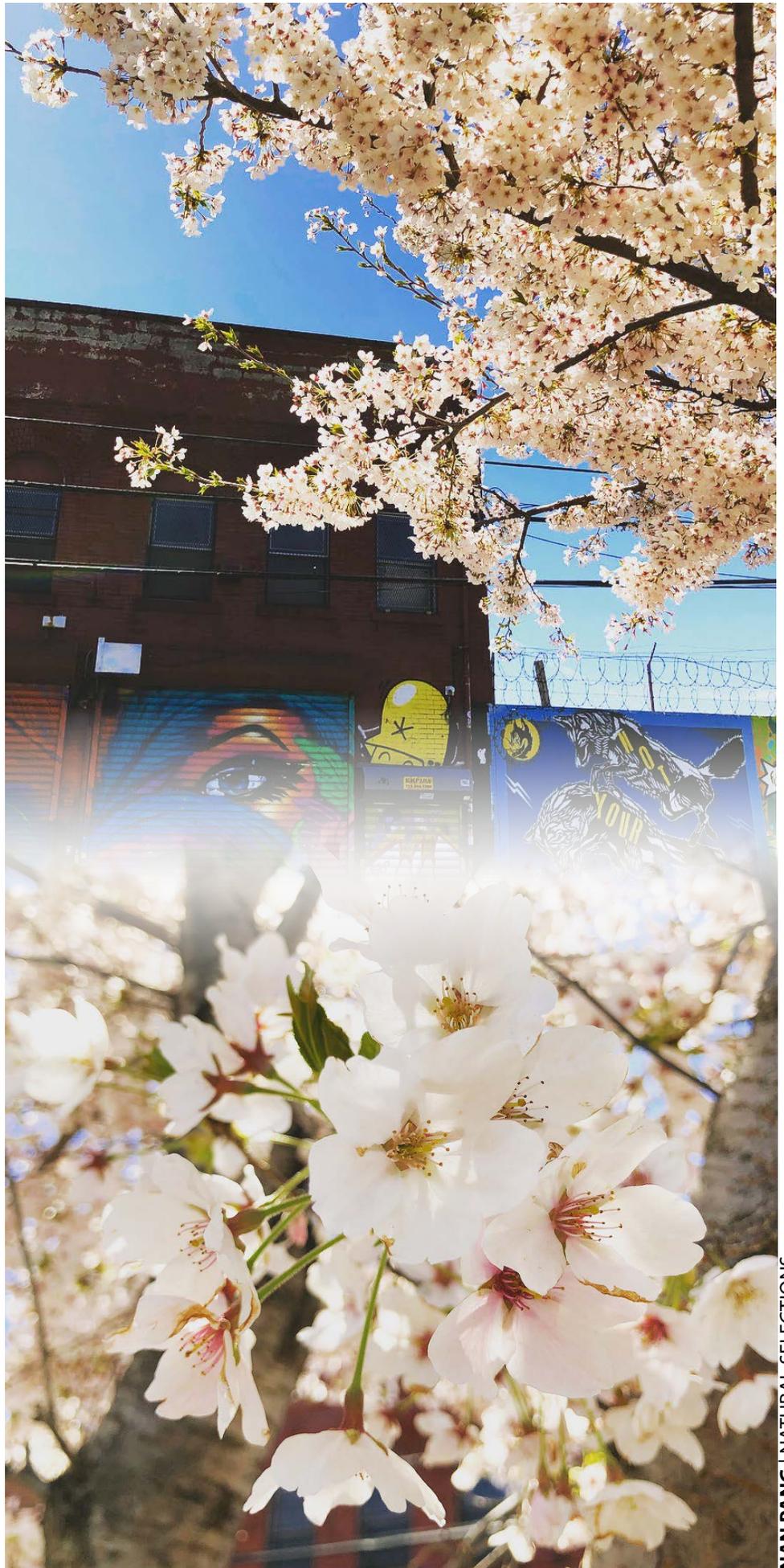
Photos courtesy of THE BOSTON GROUPIE NEWS

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you are going THROUGH!” The song kicks off with an amusing description of the youth’s family scene: “Mom and dad are so frightening/Every day is a crisis/Dad gets home and he’s NERVOUS!/The air’s so thick you can’t breathe!/Don’t let them get to you/there’s not much you can do/ and little boy I know what you’re going through...” Much of what Green Day would go on to write about in the 1990’s with their massively successful song output was anticipated by The Neighborhoods.

My other favorite songs by The Neighborhoods included an ode to the wondering eye of a young man, *Flavors*, featuring the cool chorus, “I love flavors - I love to try them ALL!”, and *Prettiest Girl*, which Elton John could have fit in nicely on his masterpiece album, *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*. One of their most complex lyrical expressions was the power ballad, *Mr. Reeves*, a thoughtful meditation (and more) on the suicide of the original television Superman actor, George Reeves, whose bizarre leap off of a building haunted many a child watching the show during the 1960s.

My band opened for The Neighborhoods in May 1980 at an intimate club in Providence, Rhode Island. It was an honor and a privilege to have done so. About five years ago I recorded a cover version of *No Place Like Home* as a birthday surprise for our former band’s guitarist Dave who remains a close friend with me and other members of the “Tones. We still bask in the memory of having witnessed the peak of The Neighborhoods forty years ago. The Neighborhoods would go on to open or David Bowie in 1987 at a stadium show in Foxborough, MA, and tour with major acts such as The Ramones, Cheap Trick, and Bowie’s art band, Tin Machine. David Minehan also played a stint as a guitarist with the alt-rock sensation, The Replacements. He currently runs a recording studio, Woolly Mammoth Sound, in the town of Waltham outside of Boston, and The Neighborhoods’ new set of songs, *Last Known Address*, can be streamed on Amazon Music and other services. I consider myself so fortunate to have been a witness to one of rock’s under-appreciated moments of glory, an exceptional, brief window of time in the genre that was honest and true with brilliant and pure sincerity in every performance. Everyone should be so lucky to be in the presence of genius in the artistic genre they hold closest to their soul. Link: *The Neighborhoods perform Prettiest Girl and No Place Like Home in 1979 on Boston television*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5Mia0yvVmw>. ■



Pets of Tri-I

POOJA VISWANATHAN

For this issue, I interview **Rudy**, the dog who lives with Riccardo De Santis (Postdoc, Brivanlou lab, The Rockefeller University) and his wife, Dacia (Columbia University).

Pooja Viswanathan: How old are you? In human years?

Rudy: I have 5 human years.

PV: Is there a story behind your name?

R: My parents wanted to name me after a scientist, but not a pretentious one. The story goes that one day, one of my humans (the tall and hairy one) was in what you humans call a “meeting” and he met this very important scientist from Harvard. They were having a very formal discussion until a young Ph.D. student stopped by and interrupted the conversation, saying to his important supervisor in front of everyone “Hey Rudy, are you missing again your own talk?” I don’t really see the connection, but this is the reason why I am named Rudy.

PV: How did you first meet your humans?

R: I arrived in New York from Puerto Rico and I was staying in small dog resort on 38th and First avenue called “Bidawee.” The food was good and my room had a lot of toys (I love toys). Many humans were going around visiting and meeting dogs. The day after my arrival my humans stopped by, and we started to hang out over some treats and some new toys (have I mentioned that I love toys?). They convinced me to go with them to stay in their apartment, where I took the bigger room and I left them the small one.

PV: Where do you live?

R: I live in Faculty House, close to my favorite dog park just across the street by the river and my small private backyard that by coincidence is the Rockefeller campus.

PV: What are your favorite neighborhoods in NYC?

R: My favorite neighborhood is Central park, perfect to spend my Sunday walk where I have the chance to meet many friends from all over the New York canine world.

PV: If you could live anywhere else in the world, where would you live?

R: I would live where it is always sunny



Photo courtesy of RICCARDO AND DACIA

and warm, someone told me that a place like that exists and it is called Sicily. I will go there at some point, just for a quick check, and I will let you know.

PV: What are your favorite foods?

R: Carrots and treats, of any kind, shape or flavor!

PV: What is your favorite weekend activity in NYC?

R: I like to hang out with my humans and walk around to say “hello” to every dog I come across. I like to human while I am having my social activities (****must check what they mean).

PV: Besides your human roomies, who is your favorite human in the Tri-I community?

R: I like everybody, but I like those humans more who have treats.

PV: Do you have a funny story to share with us?

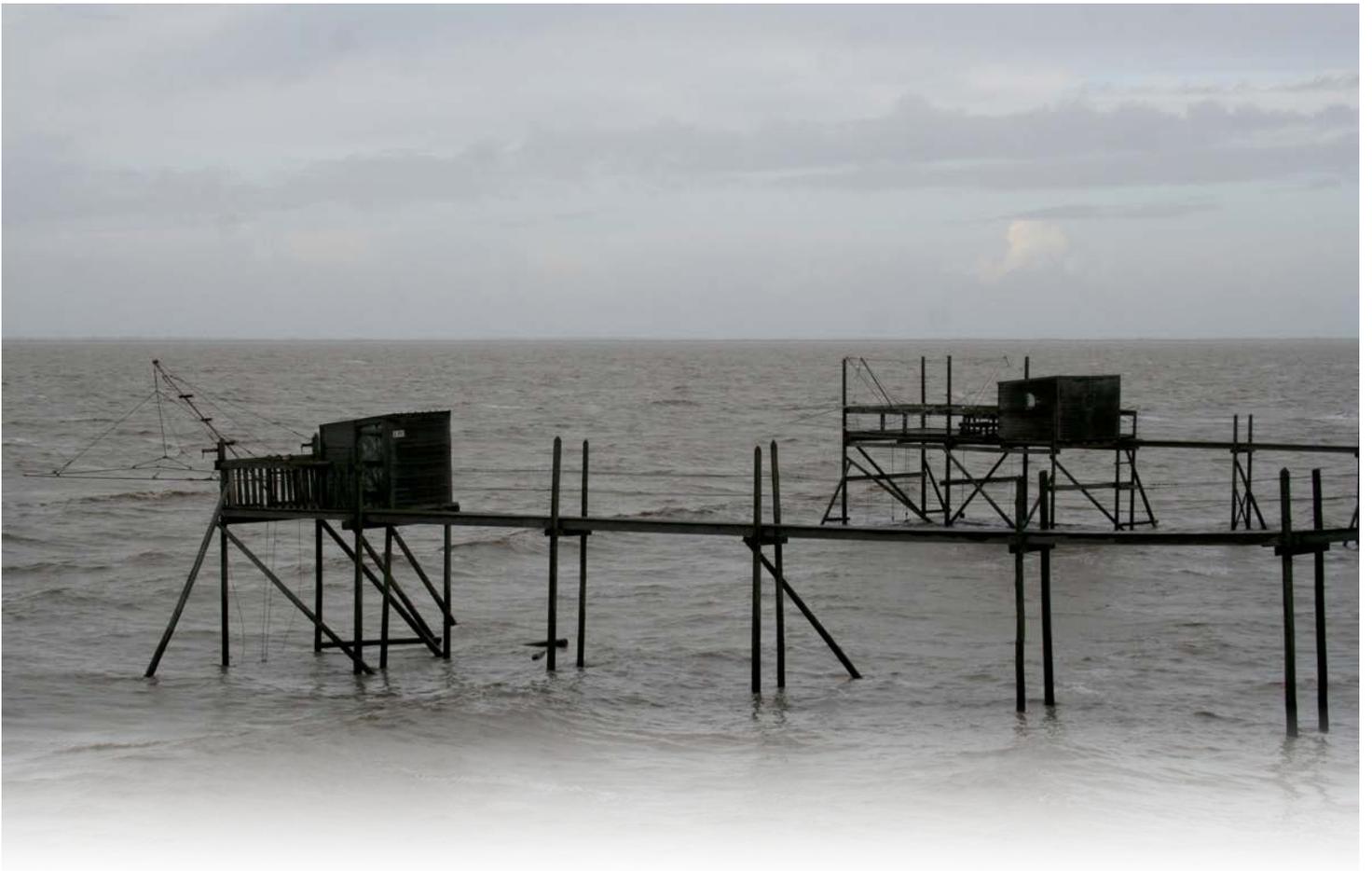
R: The first time I went to Brooklyn, my humans decided to go on this strange car that goes on water, that they call a ferry. In the beginning I was super scared of the weird noise and the rocking, but at some point I met a beautiful human puppy, her name is Marina. She petted me and I gave her a huge kiss. Suddenly, I was not scared anymore and I enjoyed my sniffing around in this island called Brooklyn.

PV: Is there some way we can see more pictures of you on the interwebs?

R: I don’t have an Instagram profile yet, my parents said that I am too young, but they promised me that I can have one when I turn seven human years.

PV: If you could have any human ability, what would it be?

R: I would like to have the human ability to open the fridge, I am sure something good is hidden there. My humans always go there and don’t let me look or sniff inside. ■



Life on a Roll
“Carrelet” fishing in the
Aiguillon Bay, France

ELODIE PAUWELS
<https://elodiephoto.wordpress.com/>

You might be surprised by these strange little wooden shacks on stilts overhanging the ocean in some places on the French Atlantic coast, like in Esnandes in the Aiguillon Bay. These huts

are called “carrelets,” after the name of the square nets used to fish (“carré” meaning square in French). A winch allows the net to be immersed and pulled up. Well found, don’t you think? ■

