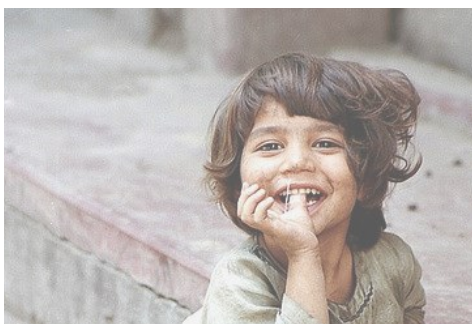


“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

-Jesus



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Christmas: A Reflection



It isn't too far from the truth to say that, even as adults, there is something special about the holidays. Although it is busy, and some say overly-commercialized, none of this overcomes the silent lucidity of which the holidays are wrapped. For a

moment let us weave a semantic contemplation.

Dies Natalis Solis Invicti, or “the birthday of the unconquered sun” was a Roman festival, inaugurated by the Roman emperor Aurelian (270–275). This set the foundation for what would later be adopted by many different faiths and cultures. Each culture would later define their own religious meaning and symbols. Contextually, the most noted of these celebrations being Christmas, which was no exception. Jesus wasn't born in December, was he?

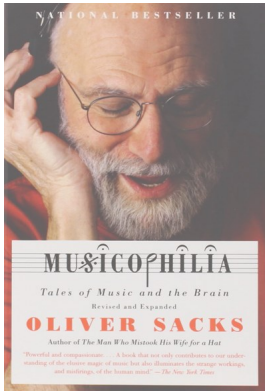
12th-century Syrian bishop Jacob Bar-Salibi writes in an early Christian manuscript, “It was a custom of the Pagans to celebrate on the 25th of December the birthday of the sun. When the doctors of the Church perceived that the

Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took council and resolved that Jesus birth should be celebrated on that day, drawing from the Hebrew prophet Malachi 4:2, ‘But unto you that fear my name shall the son of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.’” Here, one easily unravels the semantic bridge used to justify the decision.

It is interesting juxtaposing these two histories against one another. In a world that seems troubled with conflict, it is easy to be burdened with the doubt that there is any peace on earth whatsoever. Whatever the holidays mean to each one of us is personal, though it seems there can be some universals in these two seemingly unrelated histories. We are reminded, in the nativity, that Christmas is for children. Hopefully, all of us can experience Christmas as a child. In the celebration of *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti* we are simply asked to acknowledge the yet unconquered sun. Her light shines upon all us equally; regardless of race, creed, color, or religion. In the cold of winter, let us imitate her warmth and love.

With the eyes of a child may the glitter enrapture us and unravel the mystery of the holidays. As we feast with family and friends may we remember the sun, whether cause or effect, is still the magic that brings forth the harvest. Lastly, let us imitate St. Nicholas the Wonderworker and, in our own unique way, wave our magic wand over the world and make everything softer and more beautiful.

Patron: Andrea



“I have always had an interest in the person of Oliver Sacks. His interests were so diverse.”

“I am a self-described nerd. I have always been a bit quirky” begins my time with FCPL new director Andrea Stineback

“Patron” is a column in *Athenaeum* that focuses on someone connected to FCPL. This month I interviewed Andrea Stineback, “I am a self-described nerd. I have always been a bit quirky. Go easy on me.” Although she was quiet, she was comfortable. She is your new director, take a moment and welcome her.

Let’s talk a little bit about the library. You are the new Interim-Director?

Well, I have a bachelor’s degree in English with a minor in music studies. I started at the Aubbee Branch and worked there for six years. At the Rochester Branch, I worked as the teen services manager. During this time I finished a Master’s in Library Science, then became adult services/reference librarian, before being promoted to interim-director. I actually thought I would work in publishing or journalism. After watching *Almost Famous* I thought being a music journalist would be fun. In high school I was the editor of our yearbook, literary magazine, and newspaper.

What do you wish others knew about you?

Hmm. I guess that I am quiet, not for any real reason though. I suppose that my heuristic view in directing could be misunderstood. I think people, given the opportunity to learn, often do. My metric in directing is that those around me simply make an effort to learn.

Do you have a favorite movie or tv series?

Let me say, first, that my vision of life has been shaped by these mediums. I started with *X-files*. In fact, Scully almost convinced me I wanted to work in the FBI. Next, I was a big fan of *The Office*. Currently, I am *A Walking Dead-head*. I am sort of, and always have been, into zombies since I was little. Don’t judge me.

What is in your cd player right now?

Foy Vance’s *Wild Swan*, although I am intrigued with the work of Lord Huron.

Is there an author that has had a lasting impression on you?

Stephen King in junior high drew a line in the sand for me and later, academically, I have had an interest in the work of Oliver Sacks.

What is it about Oliver Sacks that you find intriguing?

Music has played such an important role in my life, it is the one thing I feel like I couldn’t live without. He was interested in the effects of music on his patients. The movie *The Music Never Stopped* is about one patient and other stories are recorded in his work *Musicophilia*. Also, he had face-blindness. In an interview with the *New Yorker* he spoke about how not being able to identify his own reflection contributed to extreme shyness. He is just interesting.

You have mentioned music a couple of times. What led to your interest in music?

I don’t know. I have always loved singer/songwriters. I am a lyrics person. I think music at some level affects our perception. I cannot say that I understand how it “works,” but music has always been a positive part of my life.

Do you have any artistic interests?

I enjoy writing. One thing that many people probably don’t know about me is that I like origami. I also have the desire one day to write a personal memoir.

If you had one superpower?

This may sound odd, but the ability to say the right thing at the right time. It would be incredibly useful for me.

Is time travel possible?

I would have to say no because then we could alter history. It is an interesting question. I guess I say this because sometimes it does seem like things fall into place, like fate; thus time travel would allow us to alter fate. So, I guess that is my context. I also wonder if we did time travel, if we would even know it was happening.

What does Andrea Stineback’s bucket-list look like?

I don’t do bucket lists. I just try to live everyday as if it is my last. If I had to answer the question I would say probably go to Ireland. My family has Irish lineage.