

Team

The Education Advancement Monitor

Alexander Haas
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

First Things *First*



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Mrs. Leonard "Be" Hass, would have celebrated her 116th birthday on May 16th this year. If you've been around a while, you may know that Be is the Haas in Alexander Haas. Some will remember her as the tireless volunteer, who donated countless hours to The League of Women Voters in the '30's, trying to do what she could to ensure no one's voice got lost in the clamor of a rapidly growing skyline. To others, Be was the strong woman who became a leader during a time when women were taught not to speak about money and politics. As the only woman appointee to Governor Arnall's commission to redraft and revise Georgia's constitution, she defied the idea of the powerless woman. She knew she

could make a difference.

In 1954, Be helped to found the first fundraising firm our city has ever known, now named Alexander Haas, and what a difference she made. She was involved in planning more than 400 fund-raising campaigns for schools, hospitals, art groups, churches and civic programs. At one point, she was involved in 90 percent of the campaigns under way in the city. For her efforts, in 1988, she became the 22nd recipient of the WSB Radio/Atlanta Gas Light Company's "Shining Light" award for her service to humanity.

Be, a lifelong Atlantan, departed our lives in 1997, but her indelible mark on Atlanta, fundraising, nonprofits, and a multitude of other causes, lives on today.

Happy Birthday, Be.



from the home office of
Nancy E. Peterman | Partner

Help, I've Fallen into Zoom and Can't Get Out...

Plenty has been written about the impact of the pandemic on our work lives. One positive surprise has been the success with which our development teams have adapted to remote working, particularly using videoconference tools (Zoom, FaceTime, Teams, GoToMeeting, etc.) to connect with prospects and donors. Many have worked through this medium well, very well in fact. From direct solicitation to special events, several clients and former clients have reported record fundraising years for 2020.

One of our senior partners was an earlier adapter of this technology; his enthusiasm began with Skype long before COVID 19. Perhaps it had to do with reducing travel to some extent. I never shared his passion for this channel—I found it tiring and uncomfortable—but it was easy to avoid back then when others were not as familiar with communicating in this fashion. After a year of zooming he now reports he's finding repeated videoconferencing tiring as well. Further, he reports that he was on a call recently where one of the participants, who displayed a still picture instead of using his camera, fell asleep. The others could hear him snoring. Anecdotal evidence from fellow colleagues and clients alike indicates a similar disdain for working exclusively via videoconferencing. A recent peer-reviewed article in the American Psychological Association's Technology Mind and Behavioral Journal articulates why many of us are finding the technology exhausting, and how to mitigate its effects. Here are some take-aways from his article which help to explain our reaction (via the *Washington Post*).

We're not used to so much eye contact.

Constant eye-contact is problematic for our brains as this isn't a normal occurrence in our pre-technology brain. Videoconferencing gives us much more than our recommended daily allowance of intense and up-close facial contact. Without realizing it, we are absorbing and continuously analyzing all the non-verbal feedback that this high definition medium offers. Fatigue, anxiety, and a desire to escape are natural responses to the overstimulation. Limiting the number of hours of videoconferencing per day, setting meetings for 50 minutes or less (instead of an hour), eliminating evening sessions to provide downtime, are ways to counteract its impact. There's nothing wrong with asking before scheduling each call, "Do we have

to see each other and share screens, or would an audio call suffice?"

We're not used to constant self-evaluation.

In our previous pre-pandemic meetings, we might have briefly checked in a mirror before entering a room to ensure our appearance was satisfactory. Now, we're confronted continuously with our own face as part of the video meeting. Except for those among us who have narcissistic tendencies, it's stressful and uncomfortable to judge our appearance unceasingly. And, just as when shown a group photo, your eyes will immediately go to your own face, a videoconference that includes your face, will draw your attention to your image, where you will evaluate and re-evaluate your appearance, facial expressions, clothing, gestures and even background setting. If you are highly critical of your own appearance, this can be detrimental to your self-confidence as well as your ability to pay attention to meeting content. Turning off your own face, using the "hide myself" feature can allow others to see you, but eliminates your face from your screen.

We're stuck in one spot.

The efficiency of videoconferencing is that we can have back-to-back meetings with zero commute times—one can be in eight locations in one day without ever leaving the living room. It's been said that sitting is the new smoking when it comes to unhealthy habits. This technology encourages couch-potato tendencies. I recently guest lectured for a college course, where two of the attendees were seated in their beds. Any accommodation which gets you moving is a healthier option. Just before the pandemic, walking meetings had become popular. When possible, one of my colleagues schedules his daily walk with audio calls, a good strategy to move more during the workday.

We're not used to so much mental effort.

As our brains are wired for in-person meetings, the computer version has a heavier cognitive impact. Remembering to mute, un-mute, to limit gestures, to avoid reacting to distractions in the workspace (animals, children, lawn service activity, etc.) takes a toll on the mental load. There's less in-meeting downtime, where one might have talked about the weather or social activities. The intensity has increased. Again, anything which limits the time connected to others in this fashion can reduce the brain-strain.

Hopefully, the new normal post-pandemic world will help us achieve a better balance between in-person meetings and audio/video connections, making us effective and efficient without sacrificing a healthy lifestyle.

We Think You Should Know

WOFFORD

THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOFFORD COLLEGE

Wofford Campaign Success A Year Early & Over Goal!

Congratulations to our Client Partner **Wofford College** (Spartanburg, SC)

for the successful completion of “For Wofford,” its six-year \$300 million comprehensive campaign with gifts and pledges totaling more than \$470 million as of May 7, 2021, one year ahead of schedule.

The keystone of the campaign was the contributions of **Jerry Richardson**, ‘59, who contributed a total of \$257.3 million, including a recent \$150 million gift which ranks among the largest single campaign gifts made to a national liberal arts college.

“It’s important to pause, celebrate and express our enormous appreciation for the gifts we received, but it’s also vital that we honor all of the donors and gifts of this campaign by striving for an even more powerful student experience and an even better Wofford College,” said Wofford’s President **Dr. Nayef Samhat**.

Are DAFs Bad for Philanthropy?

Some Researchers Say Yes

According to a new data analysis from Boston College law professor Ray Madoff and James Andreoni, an economist at the University of California at San Diego, **charities lost out on \$300 billion from 2014 through 2018 as charitable donations went into donor-advised-fund accounts and private foundations** and didn’t come out. The amount lost is substantial: For context, “Giving USA” estimated individuals donated \$295 billion to all charities, including DAFs, in 2018 alone.

The findings from the research directly counter the narrative put forth by major donor-advised-fund sponsors, who argue the increasingly popular giving vehicles boost giving by providing a useful silo for charitable funds that can be opened when need is greatest.

“There’s basically no evidence that the rise of DAFs has increased the total amount of giving,” said Madoff, noting that individual charitable giving has hovered around 2 percent of income for at least four decades, according to “Giving USA,” the annual study of American philanthropy.

Madoff, along with the philanthropist John Arnold, has been building a coalition of donors, scholars, charities, and foundation executives to press Congress to add new incentives to insure that more money flows to charities that put the money to work right away. Among their proposals are new incentives to encourage donor-advised-fund holders to distribute their money within 15 years and the creation of a new class of donor-advised funds that withhold tax deductions on contributions until the money is given to a working charity. They are also seeking to limit the ability of private foundations to meet their requirements to distribute at least 5 percent of assets every year by contributing to donor-advised funds.

As a result of the growing diversion of charitable contributions to donor-advised funds and private foundations, Madoff and Andreoni estimate that from 2014 to 2018, working charities received gifts equivalent to around 73 percent of the value of individual giving in that time.

Charitable Giving Expected to Return to Pre-Pandemic Patterns in 2021

A new report from *GivingTuesday’s Data Commons* research arm, reviews how the events of 2020 affected the behavior of charitable donors and offers predictions on how giving would change in 2021. The report is based on aggregated 2020 data from 74 charitable-giving platforms and focuses on giving to established nonprofits that raise no more than \$25 million annually.

Key Findings

Overall giving in 2020 is estimated to have **increased 5.2% from 2019**, driven mostly by large donations from supporters who had previously given to an organization in 2019 or earlier.

A 1.3% increase in the number of supporters was driven “almost completely” by an **11% increase in the number of small gifts of \$101 to \$500**. The number of donors who gave \$501 to \$5,000 increased 2.2%, while the number who gave more than \$50,000 increased by 5.3%.

Most nonprofits saw fundraising **revenue drop 5% to 10%** as the lion’s share of giving went to organizations with already-robust fundraising totals and whose work was directly related to the effects of the pandemic. And, many smaller nonprofits temporarily halted fundraising in the early days of the pandemic.

The report recommends **maintaining contact with new 2020 donors and reminding them of the impact of their gifts**. In addition, the authors urge charities to promote recurring donations to keep new donors in the fold. *COP, 5-11*

Oh, the Things Be Said....

Be Haas was a true southern lady. In addition to her grasp of fundraising, she also had a grasp of the English language, southern style. For her 90th birthday, we presented her a collection of what we refer to as **Be-isms**. Sometimes witty, sometimes direct, but always appreciated, morsels of...well, Be.

Here are just a few; and if you didn’t know Be, you should get a good idea of what made her so special from these morsels.

After getting in her ‘say’ at a campaign meeting...

There are a few advantages to these gray hairs!” or The gentlemen at King & Spalding and the people at the First Presbyterian Church call me ‘Mother Superior.’

When old-fashioned courtesies were not observed...

Those people have manners, but they’re bad.

When Be didn’t know the details of the subject but could convincingly speak to the numbers...

What I know about that subject could fill a hollow toother, but numbers don’t lie.

When avoidable carelessness was involved...

I could brain that person.

When a reluctant, self-conscious campaign volunteer was being too timid...

It’s not like I’m asking you to tell them to stick beans up their noses!

Never afraid to acknowledge her own mistakes...

Well, how ‘bout that sports fans!?! You’re right after all...and if London had been the capital of France, I’d passed Geography!

In advising weary clients to hang in there in the midst of the arduous Kresge application procedures...

The Kresge Foundation asks very peculiar things, but their money’s not peculiar when you get it!

Amidst group indecisiveness...

We have too many choices here, like the donkey between two haystacks that starved to death!

In noting her lack of affection for the always crowded United Way parking lot...

I’m taking my Chevrolet down to that crazy parking lot to see if I can hang it somewhere!

Her disclaimer for being the self-appointed campaign nag...

I know I sound like a Dutch uncle, but...

When she wasn't altogether convinced...

I trust that information about as far as I can sling a piano.

In bringing comfort to a strained executive director...

Our job at that this firm is to bring Structure to Chaos. Now, how does that sound to you?!?

In presenting unconventional fundraising ideas to doubtful clients...

If I had good sense, I'd be crazy!

And last, but not least, her daily farewell upon leaving the office, purse over shoulder...

I'll be at my desk.

We'd Like You to Know

Transforming Institutions



Gannon University in Erie, PA is a returning Client Partner.

For more than 30 years, Alexander Haas has been a fixture in the nonprofit community. We are honored to have worked with some of the largest, and some of the smallest, institutions that help make our country a better place to live.

[Higher Education Client Partners.](#)

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3520 Piedmont Road | Suite 450 | Atlanta, GA 30305
404.525.7575

