


Spring 1991

The Gamut: A Journal of Ideas and Information, No. 32, Spring 1991

Cleveland State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/gamut_archives

 Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), [Business Commons](#), [Life Sciences Commons](#), [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Recommended Citation

Cleveland State University, "The Gamut: A Journal of Ideas and Information, No. 32, Spring 1991" (1991). *The Gamut Archives*. 30.
https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/gamut_archives/30

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Publications at EngagedScholarship@CSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Gamut Archives by an authorized administrator of EngagedScholarship@CSU. For more information, please contact library.es@csuohio.edu.

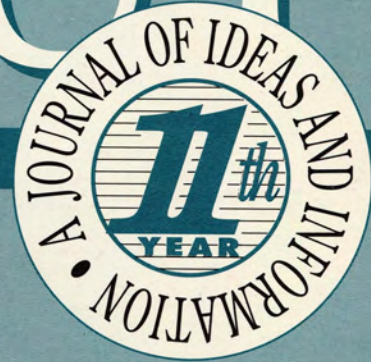


This digital edition was prepared by MSL Academic Endeavors, the imprint of the Michael Schwartz Library at Cleveland State University.

T ♦ H ♦ E

GAMUT

NUMBER 32 • SPRING 1991 • \$6.00



Pickwickian Syndrome

also:

The Bones of Fort Laurens

The Odds on Getting Born

Cleveland State University
ISSN 0275-0589

*Let's Reorganize
Major League
Sports!
page 25 -*

Shouldn't you join our élite?

Some people want to make sure they see every issue of *The Gamut*; it is something they never want to be without.

Others recognize the advantage of long-term savings.

Both kinds of people know a good thing when they see it; they are members of *The Gamut's* special circle of lifetime subscribers.

Pay \$100 and receive every future issue of *The Gamut*. It's as if after only five one-year renewals you never needed to renew again.

Enjoy a lifetime of great reading;
become a lifetime subscriber to *The Gamut*.

Join these devoted readers:

Joseph W. Bartunek

William A. Hite III

John A. Iaconis

James P. Klimczak

Stuart A. Kollar

Michael B. Wright

John Gabel

John L. Horton

Stuart Klein

Margaret Keal Knowles

Sara R. Watson

Pat G. Zentner

THE GAMUT

T ♦ H ♦ E
GAMUT

Number 32
Spring 1991



Editorial

- Louis T. Milic **2** The Cynic's New Word Book
- Jane Ware **4** The Bones of Fort Laurens
Excavating Ohio's only Revolutionary War fort
- Lawrence Martin **12** The Pickwickian Syndrome
A deadly combination of obesity and too shallow breathing
- Donald Dewey **25** Let's Reorganize Major League Sports!
Shouldn't major league membership be based on performance?
- Barbara Cunliffe Singleton **31** Walking the Wrong Way Around the Monastery
Tibet's cultural heritage is being erased under Chinese rule
- John A.C. Greppin **37** The Language of the Babylonians and Assyrians
Deciphering cuneiform, the wedge-shaped Akkadian script
- Christopher Nyerges **44** Don't Fight Green Invaders—Eat Them!
Wild plants aren't all weeds

Fiction

- Vickie Nelson **51** The Comic Book War
- Elise Bonza **63** Junk into Art: Sculpture-Hangings by Rema Mandel
Sculpture with industrial roots
- Peter C. Baker **69** Human Survival from Conception to Old Age
The odds on embryonic and fetal failure
- Steve Bonner **76** Words into Plowshares
Manipulating the world with cultural tools
- Mark Edward Koltko **79** On Committing Acts of Psychotherapy
Psychoanalysis is no tea party
- Martin Siegel **82** Selling It with a Smile
From Chiquita Banana to Morris the Cat

Poetry

- Marilee Richards **88** Giving You Up
- Katherine Murphy **89** Visit to the Polygamists
- 91** Miss Intensity Thinks About Her Name
- David Reddall **94** Yo-Yo Man
1951: when the kid who mastered the Duncan Imperial could
be king of the playground

Editor: Louis T. Milic
Co-Editor: Leonard M. Trawick
Managing Editor: Susan Grimm Dumbrys
Circulation Manager: James Guilford
Consulting Editor: Stuart Kollar
Design Consultant: Amy T. Jenkins
Intern: Elise Bonza
Portrait Photographer: Herbert J. Ascherman
Staff Photographer: Louis T. Milic

Advisory Board:

John A. Flower
David Budin
Joella Burgoon
Robert Cheshier
William Gunlocke
David Guralnik
Ronald Haybron
Robert Jackson
Marilyn Mason
Victoria Neufeldt
Reuben Silver
Katherine Torgerson

Editorial Consultants:

Gary Engle
John Gerlach
Bruce Beatie
Peggy Broder
James Borchert

The Gamut: a Journal of Ideas and Information is published three times each year by Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio. Subscription rate: one year (three issues), \$15.00; two years, \$25.00; three years, \$30.00; lifetime, \$100.00. Library rate, \$18.00 per year. Foreign subscriptions \$3.00 per year additional. Single copies, including back issues, \$6.00; sample copy (our choice) \$3.00. Claims for missing issues honored within six months of publication.

The Gamut invites commentaries for its "Back Matter" section. Those interested in submitting articles and creative works are encouraged to write for guidelines. Address all correspondence to: *The Gamut*, Room 1218 Fenn Tower, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio 44115.

Copyright © 1991 by Cleveland State University. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. ISSN 0275-0589.

About the Cover:

Charles Dickens's Fat Boy in illustration by Phiz for *The Pickwick Papers*. The Pickwickian syndrome is named for the behavior and appearance of this fictional character. See article, page 12.

Editorial

The Cynic's New Word Book

These definitions were inspired by another look at Ambrose Bierce's *Devil's Dictionary*. If he was living today, he might have more to say.

The Holiday Season. A period of commercial activity between the day after Thanksgiving and December 25 which serves as a barometer of the financial health of the nation. A bad season (such as 1990), characterized by a restrained desire to buy expensive gifts for relatives, friends, and business acquaintances, is perceived by financial analysts as an indication that the nation is entering a recession.

Censorship. A charge levelled at anyone who questions the right to financial support on the part of artists whose work is primarily notable for a conjunction of outrageous, blasphemous, pornographic elements, generally without social or aesthetic value.

Freedom of Expression. A right claimed by those desiring to beg on trains or in the street, to dance in the nude in bars, to attempt to convert passersby to their religious or political views in airports, or to accuse others of sexism, racism, or other objectionable biases. The same right is not available to those desiring to express views not considered *politically correct* (see below), such as blasphemy at earlier times, now opinions concerning race, sex, intellect, ability, labor strife.

Family values. A cluster of opinions held by conservative to right-wing voters, often associated with religious groups, usually including objections to abortion and the 55-mile speed limit, to various kinds of taxes, and enthusiasm for the right to own pistols, rifles, shotguns, for the application of the death penalty and stringent prison sentences.

Diversity. A term applied to the systematic refusal to apply standards to any endeavor, especially those not subject to quantitative evaluation, such as the arts and humanities. Oddly, diversity is less cherished in fields such as mathematics, engineering, open-heart surgery, and bomb disposal.

Politically Correct (formerly, among Communist Party members, the *Line* or *Party Line*). An attribute of views unlikely to offend the most liberal thinking about a variety of subjects. Thus it is not politically correct to suppose that Asian students do better in school because their culture favors study, or to doubt that political oppression is the cause of all educational failure, homelessness, bankruptcy, and other misfortunes, or that the United States is an immoral, racist, sexist oppressor.

Television. A means of inducing viewers to desire and buy goods and services, under the guise of offering sports, entertainment, music, news, etc. The early addiction of children to the viewing of television programs is perceived as essential to the economy and the well-being of parents. Opponents of this medium, who claim that the debilitating effect of television interferes with maturation, intellectual development, and the ability to read and to perform simple acts of cleverness, are offered "serious" or "public" television, which consists almost exclusively of British film series and accounts of the extinction of rare animal species, punctuated by appeals for donations.

Multiculture. Part of a fashionable claim that all cultures are equally deserving of acceptance. In effect this must result in the rejection of the dominant culture which provides the cohesion of the nation, and the acceptance of practices such as the suppression of women, the rejection of literacy, the preference for raw meat, the cruel and pointless killing of animals, polygamy, and the like. Social scientists have ably described the unifying power of a common culture. The ancient Romans adopted all religions and made them part of their own. The consequent rise of Christianity and decline of Rome provides a useful augury.

Education. An activity which occupies humans from the earliest age until maturity and sometimes middle age; also an establishment of salaried workers whose function is either to inculcate valuable knowledge or to maintain order among the young or to prevent them from flooding into the work force with deleterious economic consequences. In exceptional cases the young benefit from exposure to this process for a limited period.

Dog (also Cat). A quadruped mammal available in different sizes, colors and conformation kept in the homes of human beings as a "pet." There are some fifty million such animals in captivity in the United States. They require to be "walked" (to allow for disposal of wastes) by their owners who in most cities are required to accompany them carrying instruments for the recovery of solid wastes. Their needs and the desires of their owners to minister to them have given rise to a considerable industry, whose effect is visible in television commercials and print advertisements, and have created a class of trained and celebrated animals who appear in them.

Louis J. Milic

The Bones of Fort Laurens

Jane Ware



▲ *Jane Ware, a freelance writer with an A.B. from Smith College and an M.A. from New York University, became interested in Fort Laurens while working on an article about forensic science for which she interviewed Dr. Sciulli. Her book, *An Ohio State Profile: A Year in the Life of America's Biggest Campus*, was published last year by Wm. Morrow. (Photo: Ed Kremenski)*

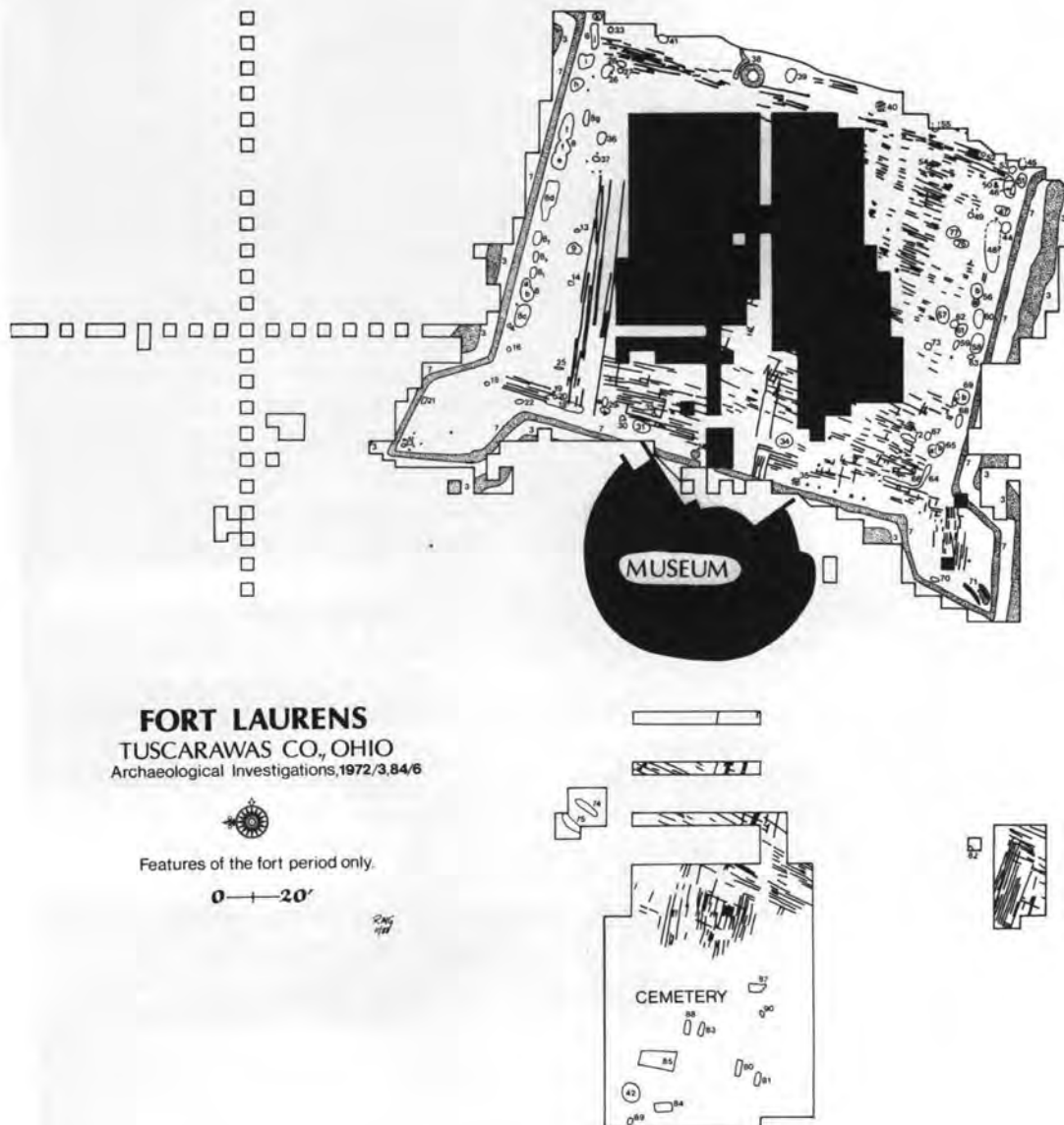
Fort Laurens was the only American Revolutionary War post in Ohio. It was built above the Tuscarawas River, served no useful purpose, cost some twenty lives, and after just nine months was wisely abandoned. But because of its uniqueness and the heroic action that took place there, a memorial (the Fort Laurens State Memorial) has been built on the site, about ten miles south of Canton and just below the town of Bolivar on Interstate 77. The memorial, on a strip of grassy terrace, has an Ohio Historical Society museum (closed in winter), the tomb of an Unknown Soldier of the Revolutionary War, three stone markers placed by Revolutionary War descendants, and a depression in the grass to outline the original fort. The fort was about 180 feet square, with diamond-shaped bastions at each corner; when the Ohio-Erie Canal was dug in 1832, the east bastions were lost.

Though the fort failed in its military purpose, it has turned out to be a successful archaeological site. Digs in the 1970s and 1980s unearthed 21 skeletons—American soldiers who died there early in 1779. These represent the largest group of eighteenth-century Euro-American remains yet found, nearly half of all such skeletons available for study. They tell us how tall frontier Americans were, and how they lived with aching backs. Above all they reveal the brutality of the wars of that period.

Scientific and historical bonanza or not, though, these are American soldiers, and their bones have been sitting around in boxes at the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus and making some people unhappy. To an archaeologist, bones should be preserved for study by future scholars who will have tools and techniques not yet discovered. But to many of the people who live around Fort Laurens—especially a group of history buffs who have followed all the digs, helped rescue artifacts, and joined in excavating—it is high time for the bones to return to the earth. “They belong here,” says Earl Olmstead, president of the Tuscarawas County Historical Society. “They were the only Revolutionary soldiers on active duty killed in Ohio.”

So in the spring of 1990 the General Assembly of Ohio allocated \$38,000 for a crypt for Fort Laurens and a related exhibit, which are due to be installed in summer, 1991. The idea, says Ohio Historical Society curator Amos Loveday, is to rebury the bones in a crypt that would both preserve them and keep them accessible for study later. That way everyone should be satisfied.

“Fort Nonsense.” That was what the soldiers called Fort Laurens. General Lachlan McIntosh came here with 1200 men in late 1778,





Ft. Laurens mass grave (Feature 85 on p. 5) at the completion of excavation, August, 1986. The fragmentary remains of 13 soldiers lay heaped at the south end of the grave pit, and two other men were laid out side-by-side at the north end. All men died violently.

following rivers west from Fort Pitt. After construction of the fort was under way, McIntosh returned to Pennsylvania, leaving behind a garrison of 170 men. But those soldiers were too far from Fort Pitt—seventy miles—to be provisioned and supported effectively. Moreover, Fort Laurens was in a bad place to meet any of its military objectives. It was too far away to threaten the British fort at Detroit or Britain's Sandusky Indian allies. It was closer to Coshocton, where America's Delaware Indian allies were, but it was not close enough to protect them.

So the main business of Fort Laurens turned out to be survival, and even that was not easy. Starting in late February, 1779, almost 200 Wyandot, Shawnee, and Mingo Indians, with some renegade frontiersmen and British troops, besieged Fort Laurens for a month. They hid in the woods and pounced on anyone who ventured out for meat or wood—the British were paying for scalps. Forced to stay in the fort, the Americans went hungry; some even resorted to cooking and eating their moccasins. No wonder they pulled out of Fort Laurens well before another winter.

Most of what we know about Fort Laurens comes from military dispatches from and about the fort: pleas for supplies, reports of attacks. Other sources are scant or questionable. One of the 1200 soldiers who went out with McIntosh, Robert McCready, did keep a diary of the trip. Another man on the same trek, John Cuppy, was interviewed, though only in 1860, when he was 99. But both Mc-

Cready and Cuppy left the fort to go back to Pennsylvania with McIntosh. Of the soldiers McIntosh left behind, 20 were from the 8th Pennsylvania Regiment and 152 from the 13th/9th Virginia Infantry—two frontier regiments. So far as is known, none of those soldiers left a diary or letters about Fort Laurens. In 1845 the widow of one, Benjamin Biggs, retold her husband's recollections, 22 years after he died.

But even though the site of Fort Laurens was farmed in the nineteenth century, the fort's underground record stayed intact. The buried dead remained. The fort's stockade and buildings and hearths also remained, marked in the earth by soil of different colors or the presence of more or less gravel, clues that are the stuff of archaeology.

Two anthropologists have interpreted the underground story of Fort Laurens. One is Richard Michael Gramly, an archaeologist now curator of anthropology at the Buffalo Museum of Science. Gramly has been in charge of all the digs at the fort. He describes them as historical archaeology, which "mixes digging with trips to the archives." The other is Ohio State University's Paul Sciulli, professor of anthropology. Both men have done many digs at Indian sites, but Gramly's work encompasses history and artifacts, whereas Sciulli specializes in human bones and teeth. He knows the 20 or 30 characteristics of teeth that reveal racial ancestry; he *reads* bones. He read the bones that Gramly found and dug up at Fort Laurens.

Gramly's first two digs at Fort Laurens were made during the summers of 1972 and 1973, when he was a doctoral student at Harvard University. He found the exact location of the fort—the basis for the outline now etched in the grass. The trouble was that the fort was not where everyone thought it would be, but 200 feet to the south. The miracle was that the museum, which was already under construction, was not on the site of the fort. Less fortunately, leaching trenches dug for the museum restrooms went right into the middle of the fort. Even so, Gramly says, Fort Laurens is a remarkable site. It survived almost intact and was never built on. Also, it was occupied for such a short time that everything there could be dated with certainty.

Artifacts were found, but not many. Probably the best refuse pits were lost when the canal was built. Gramly and his crews did find a piece from the officers' china teapot and bones from the fresh game meat that only the officers could afford. This was a stratified society. The enlisted men ate salt pork.

Gramly didn't locate the cemetery until August, 1973, the end of his second summer. He found it by a leap of faith, by figuring that a building he found outside the fort must be the hospital, and the

cemetery must be next to it. It was. Part of the cemetery was under the museum access road, which Gramly rerouted immediately and permanently. That's why this road today has a sudden loop, like a question mark.

That summer Gramly opened one grave. That skeleton became the Unknown Soldier, now in the granite mausoleum enclosed in a circle of evergreen hedge. This soldier had been buried in a casket—the only one in a Fort Laurens grave, as it turned out—and his hands were crossed over his abdomen. A hook-and-eye and a swatch of cloth were under his head—probably remnants from a shroud. A musket ball was lodged in his pelvis.

It was more than a decade before Gramly returned to Fort Laurens, and by then he had finished his doctorate and joined the Buffalo Museum of Science. His first trip back in 1984 was brief. He dug up a second grave. It was a trial, to see if digging up these graves would stir public opposition. It didn't, and Gramly came back in 1986 and exhumed the remaining 19 skeletons, which brought the total to 21.

Gramly was relieved that the digs didn't stir opposition. Exhuming graves is never hastily undertaken, even for the most serious of reasons. It requires time—at least a century and a half, Paul Sciulli suggests—before the dead seem distant enough. More than 200 years had elapsed between 1779 and 1986, but Gramly tried to give the dig patriotic propriety. A flag flew and an honor guard, a man wearing a Revolutionary War soldier's uniform, stood at attention.

It took seven weeks to disinter the cemetery's seven individual graves (two were empty; one had two bodies) and one mass grave. The topsoil, which had been plowed, was removed with spades, and the subsoil with trowels. The bones themselves were unearthed with bamboo splits, brushes, dustpans, and little scoops. Though the graves were four feet deep, too deep to be affected by plows, reverberations from road traffic probably caused some damage. Archaeologically speaking, the now brown-colored bones were in good to fair condition, even though many were broken and not one skeleton was complete.

All the bones were taken to the Sewing House in Zoar, an Ohio Historical Society facility several miles from Fort Laurens. There each individual skeleton was laid on a cot and gradually reassembled, washed and glued. Every day several people would stay in the house to tend and inventory the skeletons and ultimately to bag and box them. Altogether that summer, 82 people, almost all volunteers, helped with the dig. About half came with Gramly from Buffalo; the rest were local.

The mass grave held the fragmentary skeletons of 13 men who, unaware that a siege had begun and that almost 200 Indians and British soldiers were waiting to ambush them, went out for wood on February 24, 1779. Suddenly they were attacked and killed; two others with them were taken prisoner. No one dared to leave the fort to retrieve their bodies until the siege ended a month later. By then, wolves had found the corpses. One thigh bone shows the tooth marks of a wolf.

In 1987 Paul Sciulli studied the Fort Laurens bones. He began without assumptions; he didn't even assume that all were male. The pelvis, broader in women than men, indicates the sex of a skeleton, but anthropologists also use other measurements to determine gender—the diameter of the head of the thighbone, for example. All very large diameters are men, and all very small diameters are women; in-between diameters may be either. One of the Fort Laurens men had the smallest such bone possible in a male. But at the back of his head, he had bony muscle anchors that only a male would have.

A skeleton can reveal secrets, such as the age of two boys who died at Fort Laurens. When they enlisted, they no doubt lied, saying they had reached the Continental Army's minimum age of 16. But 200 years later, their bones show they were 14 or younger. Altogether six of the men were in their teens; ten were in their 20s; three in their 30s and one in his 40s. (That totals 20, because the Unknown Soldier was never examined in a lab.) The average age was 23 and a half.

Of the 18 Fort Laurens skulls that could be assessed for ancestry, all were northern European. That jibed with census reports for the period. There was little evidence of the mixture of African, Indian, and European features that anthropologists often see in Americans of later periods.

The men ranged in height from just under 5 feet 4 inches to over 6 feet 1 inch. The two boys were not the shortest: one was 5 feet 5 and the other almost 5 feet 8. The average height for men over 15 was 5 feet 8. Sciulli says that is almost as tall as the 5 feet 9 average for men today. Although early European immigrants were indeed shorter than Americans today—John Smith, who was born about 1580, was 5 feet 1—by the mid-18th century, America was so prosperous that people were well fed and nearly as tall as they are now. This comes as a surprise to most people today. “We tend,” Gramly observes, “always to paint rude pictures of the past.”

For sure, frontier life and fort building were hard on the back. Many of the men at Fort Laurens had spinal disc injuries. Their teeth were bad—almost every man had cavities and half had abscesses. Their teeth were worse than those of other Colonials, but so was their diet.

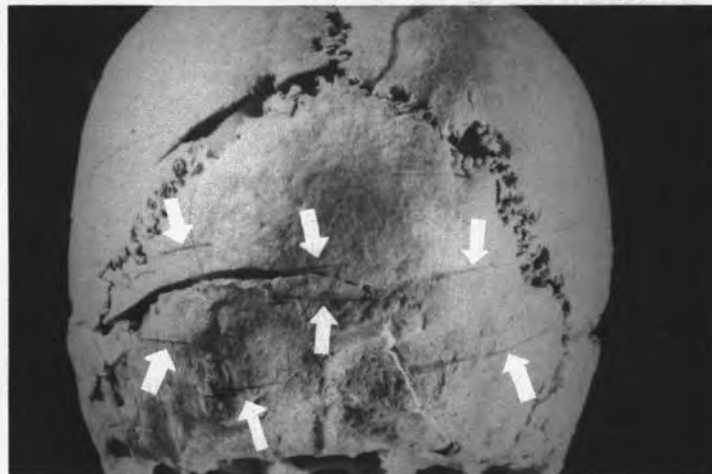
Parietal region of a human skull from Feature 84 (Map, p. 5), Ft. Laurens cemetery, showing wound caused by an iron tomahawk with a blade 2-2.5" wide.



Frontal bone of a human skull from the Ft. Laurens mass grave (Feature 85), showing a wound caused by a spiked, ball-headed club. The spike has penetrated the bone completely.



Occipital region of a human skull from the Ft. Laurens mass grave (Feature 85) showing scalping knife cuts.



Photos and map courtesy of Richard Gramly.

Above all, the bones of Fort Laurens give testimony to horrifying deaths. Almost all had cut and hack marks. Four skeletons, including the Unknown Soldier, were found with half-inch musket balls. Nineteen skulls had been scalped; they have clusters of fine lines at the back. Four were battered, probably by ball-headed war clubs.

Reflecting on this, Gramly recalls that when he was a boy in Elmira, New York, “the word ‘tomahawk’ engendered romantic thoughts about the time when Iroquois Indians roamed the forest and rivers of New York state. . . . I have learned that a tomahawk is nothing but an axe. The cut it makes on a human skull, shin or shoulder is horrible to behold or even to contemplate.”

The graves of Fort Laurens also yielded a few intimate personal tokens. One soldier had trinkets in his pocket: an unfired musket ball, a piece of lead spilled in bullet casting, an iron cone, used as a bag decoration. Another skeleton had copper-shanked wooden buttons at the knee; the copper stained the bone green. Most skeletons were found without buttons or other evidence of clothes, perhaps because the Indians, in a dramatic gesture of conquest, had stripped the uniforms.

More may still be found in the rediscovery of Fort Laurens. In the summer of 1989 Michael Gramly and an aide from the Buffalo Museum of Science, Jack Holland, set out to see if they could learn more about Fort Laurens from Revolutionary War muster rolls, which were quarterly military roster reports. Searching first in Harrisburg for the 8th Pennsylvania records, they found nothing.

But at the National Archives in Washington, they did find the muster rolls of the 13th/9th Virginia for January through March, 1779. They found the names of ten men who were killed on February 24 at Fort Laurens, of two who were captured that day, and of two who were killed at “Tuskaraway” on the same day. The last two, Gramly says, could have been with a supply party that tried to approach Fort Laurens by river—such a supply party did lose two men—but he finds that an unlikely coincidence. He thinks that all twelve who died February 24 were killed in the big ambush and buried in the mass grave.

These were the names: Sergeant Andrew Dunlap, Corporal Samuel Taylor, and Privates William Cleavland, Hugh McCurden, Thomas Brittle, Peter Simmons, Timothy Hays, William Gibson, Greenbury Shores, George Osburn, Charles Evins, and William Simmons. Privates John Fox and Eleazor Prichet were taken prisoner.

The remaining men lie nameless in this distant and unknown corner of our history. □

The Pickwickian Syndrome

A deadly combination of obesity and inadequate respiration

Lawrence Martin



▲ Lawrence Martin, M.D., who graduated from the University of Florida School of Medicine and did post-graduate medical training in New York City, is now chief of the pulmonary division at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, and an associate professor of medicine at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. He has already published two books and this case study is one of a collection that will make up his third. His outside interests include sailing and racquetball.

I knew Mayzee Fallows (not her real name) for about two years before she was admitted to the medical intensive care unit (MICU). I first saw her as an outpatient in 1986 when she was 63. Even then she was enormous—275 pounds, 5 feet 3 inches—and had trouble breathing. Her chief complaint was “shortness of breath.”

“Oh Dr. Martin!” she exclaimed back then. “I can’t walk from here to there without struggling.” She pointed to a wall of my office about 10 feet away.

“How long’s it been this bad?”

“Only the past few months. But it seems to get worse each day.”

Weight was her problem. Imagine carrying a hundred-pound sack of potatoes packed around your abdomen and rib cage. Just like movement itself, your breathing would be *restricted*. Mayzee breathed this way all the time. Each of her breaths was limited, too shallow to do a proper job of gas exchange.

We normally take in about half a quart of air with each breath. Mayzee could only manage one-fourth of a quart. She needed more air but her chest cage couldn’t oblige; as a direct result, carbon dioxide in her blood was too high and the oxygen level too low. Mayzee was comfortable at rest but wiped out when walking or climbing stairs.

Breathing difficulty also interrupted her sleep. To compensate, she frequently napped during the day, and at the worst times. She’d had two accidents after falling asleep at the wheel. No one was hurt, including Mayzee, but at age 62 she had to quit driving.

After that first visit I diagnosed Mayzee’s problem as typical of Pickwickian syndrome, a triad of obesity, excessive daytime sleepiness, and elevated blood carbon dioxide. To physicians the term “Pickwickian” connotes a fat, sleepy patient. The name of this curious syndrome comes not from any doctor or patient named Pickwick, but

is instead traced to a character in Charles Dickens's first novel, *Pickwick Papers*, published in 1837. At the end of Chapter 53 Dickens introduces a scene involving a fat boy:

A most violent and startling knocking was heard at the door; it was not an ordinary double knock, but a constant and uninterrupted succession of the loudest single raps, as if the knocker were endowed with the perpetual motion, or the person outside had forgotten to leave off. . . .

The object that presented itself to the eyes of the astonished clerk was a boy—a wonderfully fat boy—habited as a serving lad, standing upright on the mat, with his eyes closed as if in sleep. He had never seen such a fat boy in or out of a travelling caravan; and this, coupled with the utter calmness and repose of his appearance, so very different from what was reasonably to have been expected of the inflicter of such knocks, smote him with wonder.

"What's the matter," enquired the clerk.

The extraordinary boy replied not a word, but he nodded once, and seemed, to the clerk's imagination, to snore feebly.

"Where do you come from?" inquired the clerk.

The boy made no sign. He breathed heavily, but in all other respects was motionless.

The clerk repeated the question thrice, and receiving no answer, prepared to shut the door, when the boy suddenly opened his eyes, winked several times, sneezed once, and raised his hand as if to repeat the knocking. Finding the door open, he stared about him with great astonishment, and at length fixed his eyes on Mr. Lowten's face.

"What the devil do you knock in that way for?" enquired the clerk, angrily.

"What way?" said the boy, in a slow, sleepy voice.

"Why, like forty hackney coachmen," replied the clerk.

"Because master said I wasn't to leave off knocking till they opened the door, for fear I should go to sleep," said the boy.

Dickens's portrayal lay dormant medically for 119 years, until 1956, when Dr. C.S. Burwell and colleagues published a medical case report titled "Extreme obesity associated with alveolar hypoventilation—Pickwickian syndrome." After quoting Dickens's description of the fat boy, the authors went on to describe their patient, a 51-year-old business executive who stood 5 feet 5 inches and weighed over 260 pounds:

[He] entered the hospital because of obesity, fatigue and somnolence. . . . The patient was accustomed to eating well but did not gain

weight progressively until about one year before admission . . . As the patient gained weight his symptoms appeared and became worse . . . he had often fallen asleep while carrying on his daily routine . . . on several occasions he suffered brief episodes of syncope [fainting]. Persistent edema [swelling from excess fluid] of the ankles developed . . . Finally an experience which indicated the severity of his disability led him to seek hospital care. The patient was accustomed to playing poker once a week and on this crucial occasion he was dealt a hand of three aces and two kings. According to Hoyle this hand is called a "full house." *Because he had dropped off to sleep he failed to take advantage of this opportunity.* [Italics original.] A few days later he entered the . . . hospital.

. . . Therapy consisted chiefly of enforced weight reduction by means of an 800-calorie diet. On this regimen the patient's weight fell from 121.4 to 103.6 kg [267 to 228 pounds] in a period of three weeks. As he lost weight his somnolence, twitching, periodic respiration, dyspnea [difficult or labored breathing] and edema gradually subsided and his physical condition became essentially normal.

Since that first medical paper thousands of patients have been diagnosed with sleep disorders. The spectrum of problems ranges from occasional insomnia to sleepwalking to the far more serious and potentially life-threatening Pickwickian syndrome. Many hospitals run "sleep labs," secluded rooms replete with bed and exotic monitoring equipment for charting physiology during sleep.

Mayzee Fallows needed such an evaluation. More important, she needed to lose weight. Even if her sleep pattern tested normal, which I knew it wouldn't, her weight was the serious problem.

Mayzee's wedding picture at 23 showed a woman of 140 lbs., solid and attractive. By age 50 she weighed 200 lbs. but had no (known) medical problems. At 60 she weighed 240 lbs. and was under treatment for high blood pressure and diabetes. She added another 35 pounds over the next three years. Fortunately Mayzee did not smoke (the combination of cigarettes and morbid obesity would have been fatal well before I ever saw her). As it was she could barely manage.

Why did she eat all that food?

"I don't eat that much," she said. "Honest I don't, Dr. Martin."

Doctors used to discount this claim, heard from many massively obese people, but to a certain extent it may be true. Metabolism nose-dives in middle age and a normal or even slightly low-calorie diet may not bring about any weight loss, at least not without added exercise. But daily aerobic exercise for people like Mayzee Fallows is simply not feasible. The only solution for the massively obese is such a

drastic decrease in calories that medical supervision becomes necessary.

Mayzee had been on diets before but they always failed. No willpower, she confessed. She had never been in a medically supervised weight-loss program and that is what I proposed. She could lose weight while doctors followed her metabolism and studied her breathing to see why her oxygen was so low. The only way to do both was to put her in the hospital.

Mayzee was concerned that her insurance wouldn't cover such an admission. I checked. Her insurance plan did not recognize hospitalization for obesity alone, so I admitted her for "respiratory failure, chronic." Unfortunately for Mayzee this was a legitimate diagnosis, confirmed by the elevated carbon dioxide level in her blood.

Dickens's Fat Boy in illustration by Phiz for The Pickwick Papers.



We did a battery of tests to check function of her heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas, and adrenal glands. Surprisingly, everything checked out normal or near-normal except her lungs. Lung function tests showed severe “restrictive” impairment, confirming the clinical impression. As a result of shallow breathing the oxygen pressure in her blood was reduced to 55 (normal is above 85) and carbon dioxide pressure was elevated to 53 (normal is between 36 and 44). Some physicians would say that Mayzee belonged to the “50-50” club, referring to her O₂ and CO₂ levels (referred to as PO₂ and PCO₂ in test results). Membership is definitely not desirable.

On the evening of day three, routine tests were completed and she was sent to another wing of the hospital for a sleep study, technically known as “polysomnography” (the recording of many [*poly*] records [*graphy*] during sleep [*somno*]). The studies are conducted in a windowless room with the patient lying on a queen-sized bed (large enough to accommodate the heaviest patients). After Mayzee lay down, a technician connected wires, emanating from various monitoring devices, to her head, nose, ear, chest, and extremities.

I went to observe the beginning of her sleep study. Lying flat, wired up, and surrounded by all kinds of electronic boxes, Mayzee looked like a character in a sci-fi thriller. Twenty minutes later Mayzee was fast asleep and I left her to the sleep technician. Mayzee slept from 10 p.m. to 6:30 a.m., at which time she was taken back to her regular ward bed. I saw her on morning rounds. She claimed that she had slept well, undisturbed by the wires, and was not tired.

I went to the sleep lab to check the results. The test showed three things. Mayzee snored a lot; her throat tended to close and block her upper airway during sleep; and her blood oxygen fell, at one point to 38, a level not compatible with long life. She was at risk of *sudden death*.

I prescribed a plastic gizmo that fits over the nose and forces a continuous stream of air into the throat. Called “nasal CPAP,” the device is worn by the patient only during sleep. The continuous jet of air keeps the upper airway from closing and, in many patients, the oxygen level from falling. Mayzee tried the nasal CPAP only two nights before rejecting it. “It’s like sleeping in an air vent,” she said.

I gave her a more acceptable nasal cannula for use during sleep; it delivers extra oxygen through the nostrils, but at no increase in air pressure. The oxygen at least kept her O₂ level from hitting rock bottom while she slept.

In the middle of week two Mayzee started the Optifast protein supplement diet. In this diet all food is taken away and the patient drinks only a liquid protein supplement several times a day. The

supplement allows the body to burn mainly carbohydrate and fat during what amounts to semi-starvation. For patients who stick to the supplement there is often remarkable—and safe—weight loss.

After three weeks in the hospital, Mayzee went home weighing 255 pounds. A 20-pound weight loss was not negligible for such a short period, but the first 20 are the easiest. Now all she had to do was continue the diet, plus use oxygen at night.

At first all was success. A month after discharge she weighed 240 pounds and her oxygen level was up. Two months after discharge she weighed 230 pounds, a satisfying drop of 45 pounds in only three months. She looked and felt better and had improved blood gases as well.

But alas, something happened. She quit attending the clinic. Since that was the only place to get the protein supplement, she quit dieting as well. About a month afterwards I received a card from Optifast Clinic: "Your patient, MAYZEE FALLOWS, has dropped out of the Optifast Program."

I called the patient. Mayzee claimed she quit going because she couldn't get a ride.

People who lose weight in the best of programs frequently gain it back. Reasons for backsliding are varied, but Mayzee's was a common one—inability to keep up clinic appointments. She could have found other transportation but didn't make the effort.

On the phone she admitted to gaining weight and having more trouble breathing. I saw her the next day, in my office at the hospital. She weighed 262 pounds and had leg edema. A chest X-ray confirmed early congestive heart failure. I admitted her to the hospital and began diuretics to mobilize the fluid. She did not need the intensive care unit on this occasion.

Our specialist in morbid obesity saw her in consultation. He didn't mince words. "Given the severity of her problem and recent failure on the Optifast diet, I suggest consideration for gastric stapling. Please contact Surgery."

First you try dieting without supervision. That seldom works. Then you try supervised dieting. That is sometimes successful. When it fails you have a range of procedures to choose from, all disappointing in their long-term results. Gastric stapling, literally stapling the stomach into a smaller pouch for receiving food, is one of the more popular operations for the massively obese. The "stapled" stomach is supposed to make the patient feel satiated with less food. Success with the operation is limited, however. Perhaps a quarter of the patients maintain significant weight reduction over the long term.

A surgeon visited Mayzee to explain the operation and the risks. Mayzee thought about the procedure for two days and decided

against it. She wanted to try losing weight with the diet again. She promised to stay with it, despite earlier failures.

She was accepted back into the Optifast program. We also made special arrangements for transportation if she couldn't find a ride to the clinic. Most patients are given only two chances in the program; this was Mayzee's second.

She left the hospital in a week, weighing 253 pounds.

Mayzee quit the Optifast diet three months later, this time with the excuse that "it just wasn't for me." Compliance is everything in weight reduction and there was nothing more the Optifast Clinic could do.

She continued using the oxygen cannula and diuretics, and her weight did not go down. It didn't go up either, but age was against her. What the 30- or 40- or 50-year-old body can tolerate, the 64- or 65-year-old can find unbearable.

Along with her internist, I followed Mayzee, but we could not correct her underlying medical problems. Her oxygen and carbon dioxide levels remained grossly out of balance. She was—I told her several times—a ticking time bomb. It was a question of when, not if.

The bomb went off late in March, 1988, just after she turned 65. Mrs. Fallows was brought in to the emergency room, almost apneic [without breath]. Apparently, she had collapsed at home and the EMS (Emergency Medical Service) was called. When they got her to the hospital her PCO₂ was 96 and her PO₂ 35. She was on her way out. They had great difficulty intubating her, finally putting the breathing tube through her nose. On the ventilator her blood gases improved, and when she was stable enough they moved her to the MICU.

I *thought* I knew Mayzee but the person rolled into the MICU was much larger than I remembered. She must have gained another 50 pounds. Three nurses and two doctors lifted her from the transport stretcher to the hospital bed.

Her MICU bed rested on a scale so that additional weight could be accurately recorded. She weighed 318 lbs. and looked it. Her belly was enormous. How could anyone breathe with all that fat pressing on her lungs?

About an hour later, after things were squared away with Mrs. Fallows, I went to talk to Mr. Fallows in the family waiting area. Thin, in his mid-60s, he had just recently retired from a job with the post office. I knew from previous visits that their marriage was a good one and that Mr. Fallows was devoted to her care. Unfortunately there was little he could do without her cooperation.

He told me that Mayzee had been just lying around at home, not doing much. For the last few days she had been apathetic. That day he hadn't been able to get her out of bed. She hadn't wanted to come to the hospital and told him not to call the ambulance. "Said she was fine, just wanted to be left alone."

I explained that she was critically ill and could die at any time.

Our initial tests did not reveal any acute infection or other explanation for Mrs. Fallows's deterioration. She seemed to have worsened just from increase in both age and weight. That left us with the task of correcting her weight, again. Until we took off a couple dozen pounds—or redistributed them—she would likely need the ventilator.

The next morning on rounds with medical students and interns we found her awake, lying in bed with her head raised slightly on one pillow. She looked pachydermish with the endotracheal tube coming out of her right nostril. Her legs were huge, rounded limbs of hardened tissue, the result of years of edema. The skin around her ankles was bluish-red and scaly.

I arranged the sheets to reveal her abdominal protuberance. We've had heavier patients before (one of 550 lbs.), but Mayzee's short stature and roly-poly appearance made her somehow look more grotesque than the others. Clinical observation and professionalism aside, such patients always elicit a bit of voyeurism. So it was on rounds. Everyone stared at Mayzee's belly.

I went over the ventilator settings and blood gases with the house staff, examined Mayzee's lungs and heart, reviewed her fluid intake and urine output. She was stable but not ready to come off the ventilator. In the hallway we discussed her case.

"What would you do now?" I asked Sherry, one of the interns.

"I don't know. Can we keep her on the ventilator while she loses weight? I guess that's one way to stop her from eating."

"Is there any alternative? Can we get her off the ventilator the way she is now? What's her major problem?" I asked.

"Her weight."

"Right. Any other problem?"

"Well, hypertension."

"Right, that's a problem too, but it's not what I'm thinking. Is there any other reason she could be in respiratory failure besides the weight?"

"She doesn't smoke and has no asthma. Her chest X-ray is clear. What are you getting at, Dr. Martin?"

"Suppose you studied blood gases and breathing capacity in 20 non-smokers under 5 feet 3 inches and weighing over 300 pounds. What do you think you would find?"

"I don't know," said Sherry. "Did you do that study?"

"No, but others have. There are minor abnormalities in some people, but in most the breathing capacity and blood gases are normal or at least near normal, even in people over age 60. The point is, weight by itself is not the only problem. There has to be another factor or factors to explain *her* problem. I've been following Mrs. Fallows for two years. Even when her weight was 250 she had trouble with O₂ and CO₂.

"Most likely patients like Mrs. Fallows have an abnormal brainstem respiratory center. For some reason, her brain won't let her do the extra work of breathing that all the extra weight requires. Many obese people *are* able to do the extra work and maintain good O₂ and CO₂ levels. She doesn't do the extra work necessary for deeper breaths, so her blood gases are abnormal. It's just a theory, but it does help explain why not every obese person has Mrs. Fallows's problem."

"Would respiratory stimulants help?" asked Sherry.

"You mean some kind of pill to stimulate her brain stem?"

"Yes, something like that."

"A few have been tried, particularly progesterone. They generally don't work, and if they do it's only over the long term. Certainly that's not going to help in the short term. We've got to get her off the ventilator very soon," I said. "She's not going to lose enough weight to make a big difference in a few days. How are we going to do it?"

"Diuretics."

"They will help mobilize excess water, but probably won't make much of a dent in her belly. She's already on Lasix (a potent diuretic). Any other ideas?"

No answer.

"Well, there's one way," I said. "A therapy too little used in MICU. What?"

They were stumped.

"I'll give you a hint. It's an elemental force of nature. One of the four primary forces."

"Newton," said the medical resident, who had been listening intently.

"That's right. We're going to use *gravity*. It's free and every room is equipped. If we don't get that tube out of her throat soon she's bound to have a major complication. Infection or airway damage. A tracheostomy on Mrs. Fallows will be very difficult. She has no neck. A surgeon looking for a hole in her trachea could get lost." The house staff stared at Mayzee through the glass doors. "We've got to get her off the ventilator," I said. "The only way is with . . . an anti-gravity bed."

A "Big Boy" bed (from a brochure provided by The Mediscus Group, Akron).



"What's that?"

"A bed that will allow her to sit up without sliding to the floor. Look at her. She's in the anti-breathing position. Her abdomen is like a heavy weight pushing on her chest. How can she breathe on her own? If we can just unload her lungs I think we can let her off the ventilator."

"Marsha," I said to our head nurse, "can we get her one of those Big Boy beds? You know, the kind we used before on that 500-pounder?"

Unlike a conventional hospital bed, the Big Boy is constructed in sections. Each section can be raised or lowered to bend the patient into the desired position. With the Big Boy we were able to raise Mrs. Fallows's chest at an angle of 60 degrees from her abdomen. At the same time we kept her legs stretched out to a comfortable, near-horizontal position. This posture effectively shifted her massive abdomen away from the chest and gave her lungs more room to expand with each breath. She remained this way (with slight variation) for the next two days while we gradually turned down the ventilator settings.

On her third MICU day we disconnected Mayzee from the ventilator, leaving the endotracheal tube in place. At that point she breathed on her own, through the tube. Her arterial blood gases remained about the same as baseline values: PO_2 64, PCO_2 59. I

decided to take the risk of pulling the endotracheal tube. We could always put it back in.

After extubation Mayzee's PO_2 remained borderline low, PCO_2 high. Although she did not need re-intubation she wasn't ready to leave MICU either. I would describe her state as a "ventilatory limbo," almost-but-not-quite needing artificial ventilation, almost-but-not-quite ready to leave MICU for a regular ward bed.

When not sleeping Mayzee just lay in bed. She made few demands on the nurses and generally seemed unconcerned about her situation. There was no hint of desire to get better and leave MICU. Had she given up? Or was her mood a result of deranged blood gases? We found no evidence of neurologic damage. She was oriented and able to converse but just seemed unmotivated. Overall, a bad sign.

Mayzee's fifth day in hospital, April 1, was also the day house staff changed rotations. Her new intern was Roger Bailes, a 29-year-old with a career interest in emergency medicine. Dr. Bailes was in his ninth month of internship (the academic year begins in July) and he had already spent a month in MICU in October. He knew his way around. What he didn't know, unfortunately, was much pulmonary physiology.

Interns and residents cannot choose their patients. They have to take whoever is assigned to them and Mayzee came under Dr. Bailes's care. He wasn't very sympathetic to her condition. As far as he was concerned, if she just took deeper breaths she could get out of MICU and off his service.

During morning rounds on April 3 he asked if we could transfer her out of MICU. He thought we had accomplished everything we could in MICU. Her blood gas was about the same: PCO_2 72, PO_2 56, on nasal oxygen.

I reviewed all the blood gases obtained since extubation. They did not show much variation: chronic hypoventilation (underbreathing) and low oxygen levels. We had tried everything to improve her gas exchange, including sitting her up in the Big Boy bed, deep breathing exercises, adjustments of diet, and diuretics to mobilize edema fluid.

"I don't know," I said wistfully. "I wish she could just take deeper breaths and lower her CO_2 ."

At my remark Dr. Bailes's eyes opened wide. He must have been looking for the proper opening and I provided it. "I think I have an explanation for her failure to improve," he said.

"Really? What?"

"Mrs. Fallows just doesn't want to breathe more. It's her personality. She needs more motivation." Translation: psychiatry con-

sult and transfer out of MICU. Not a bad idea on the surface, but incredibly naive *in her case*. He went on, "Some patients just don't want to breathe deeply. She's just lazy and wants to be this way. Maybe psychiatry can help her."

How to answer this medical delusion? He was so wrong I was actually amused. Personality and attitude have nothing—NOTHING—to do with why patients underbreathe or have a low oxygen level. Nobel prize-winning physiology showed long ago that you cannot will yourself to hypoventilate or become hypoxemic (transcendental meditation notwithstanding). Children who hold their breath to gain attention always start breathing again before it's too late. The brain won't let a child—or an adult—voluntarily slow down breathing to a dangerous level.

I decided to give Dr. Bailes the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps I misunderstood his meaning. "You mean because she eats a lot that her breathing is affected, and that psychiatry could help motivate her to lose weight. Is that what you mean?" I asked.

"Well, that too," he said. "But you see this kind of breathing in lazy people. It's just her basic personality."

"Do you have a reference for that?" I asked.

"Well, I read it somewhere," he said lamely.

"Roger, what's the average PCO₂ of patients on the psychiatry ward?"

"I don't know," he said.

"Anybody?"

"Forty?" asked Sherry.

"Forty point oh oh," I said. "Normal."

"Now, what's the average PCO₂ of prison inmates?"

No one answered.

"Forty point oh oh. Normal. And what is the average PCO₂ of all the people who are nasty, mean, uncivilized, and LAZY?"

This time I refused to answer my own question.

"Forty?" said Sherry again.

"Right. Forty point oh oh. Roger," I continued, "you clearly don't know what can make someone hypoventilate. Fat can do it. She's fat. Lesions in the brainstem can do it. That's a theoretical possibility in her case but no good way to prove it. Long-term smoking can do it but she doesn't smoke. Some drugs can slow your breathing but she's not on any of those. Muscle weakness can do it and she may have that. But personality? Never."

No one said anything. If you can't help the patient at least teach the house staff. Make it so they *never forget*.

"Well," I said, "I think we've done everything possible for Mrs. Fallows in MICU. Why don't we transfer her upstairs."

Follow up

Mrs. Fallows stayed in the hospital another two weeks. Her attitude improved along with a return to ambulation. On the day of discharge her weight was down 45 pounds and arterial blood gases were better than in MICU, though still not normal.

She was given a rare third chance in the Optifast Program. She stayed with the diet for a few months, then stopped a third time. Two months later she collapsed at home. Mr. Fallows called Emergency Medical Service and paramedics reached the house within minutes. They found her apneic and began cardiopulmonary resuscitation, which was continued during the ten-minute ambulance ride to the hospital. On arrival in the emergency room she had no pulse except that provided by chest compressions. Another half-hour of CPR failed to restore her heartbeat and she was pronounced dead. No autopsy was performed. □

Let's Reorganize Major League Sports!

Donald Dewey

Guess the American sport.

It is a multimillion-dollar business. It boasts major league franchises in the largest urban and suburban commercial markets in the United States. It uses its economic organization and political influence to prevent the success of maverick competitors. It has an ownership class that is as ostensibly concerned about the viability of the sport as a whole as it is about the profitability of an individual franchise. It stocks its major league teams from an annual drafting of amateurs, from a network of farm club satellites, or from a combination of both. Its organizational spokesmen claim to present the sport to the public at its highest level of professional competence and environment.

The sport, of course, could be baseball, football, basketball, or hockey. With the labels of Major League Baseball, the National Football League, the National Basketball Association, and the National Hockey League, and regardless of what courts or congresses have had to say about violations of federal anti-trust statutes, each of these four sports operates a *de facto* monopoly. From this position of rarely tested strength, the four sports have felt free to expand at common will, to transfer franchises from one city to another, and to dismiss entire regions of the country as minor in financial importance, however major in their aspirations. As baseball's Federal League demonstrated in 1915 and the United States Football League demonstrated anew a few years ago, either you play with the big boys or you play in a backyard for friends and relatives.

One of the advantages of being a monopoly is the power to define priorities as the occasion warrants. Thus, for example, even the sacred dictum about winning-isn't-everything-it-is-the-only-thing is at best a half-truth where the professional leagues and associations are concerned; in many cases, holding on to a market takes precedence over holding down the opposition. Ask baseball fans in Chicago, where the Cubs of the National League haven't captured a pennant since 1945 and where the White Sox of the American League have won only once since 1919. Ask football fans in Detroit, where the



▲ Donald Dewey is a writer and editor who lives in Jamaica, New York. He has received a number of prizes for his writing including, in 1990, second prize in the Nelson Algren Fiction Competition and first prize in the Queens Theater Network Prize Competition. His novel, *Reasonable Doubts*, will be published by St. Martin's Press in 1991. Of this article he says, "It weds my interest in European cultural questions with sports questions."



In the old days there were Giants in New York and Athletics in Philadelphia: their moves to San Francisco and Oakland were not necessarily related to the success of the teams. Above left: the New York Giants of 1888; right, Al Simmons, Mule Haas, and Bing Miller of the Philadelphia Athletics in 1930. Photos courtesy of The Cleveland Press Collection, Cleveland State University Archives.

Super Bowl has always been just one more television show. Ask basketball fans in Los Angeles, a one-team city with two teams. Ask hockey fans in New York, where the Rangers last heard cheers in a Stanley Cup final around the same time that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was beginning to worry about the war aims of Japan.

On the other hand, the professional powers-that-be have not hesitated to cancel the leases of losing baseball teams in Washington, losing football teams in Baltimore, losing basketball teams in Kansas City, and losing hockey teams in St. Louis. What led to the removal of these franchises to greener artificial turfs in other cities wasn't merely the losing of games, but parallel drops in gate receipts. Not that this is always the case, however: Cleveland's baseball and basketball teams labored on for long years with very few witnesses eager to watch their ineptitude, but never came closer than rumors to being shifted elsewhere under new management. In still other instances, franchises have been successful on both the field and at the box office, but have moved anyway because of the prospects for even greater profits. Brooklyn baseball loyalists and New York football supporters are particularly acquainted with this kind of business strategy.

Confusing? If neither winning or losing, nor making money or losing money, is in itself an automatic condition for determining the longevity of some franchise in a given market, what is the key factor? Why, when even a profitable franchise like the baseball Dodgers was encouraged to move to Los Angeles, has not at least one of baseball's presently degenerated franchises been permitted to accede to the

blandishments of such potentially lucrative markets as Denver, New Orleans, central Florida, or Phoenix?

The long answer is that each territorial decision affecting professional sports bubbles out of a cauldron of specific economic and political pressures, public relations tactics, and personal rancors and friendships. The short answer is the very nature of an associative monopoly, where stability is more often a bargaining stance against outsiders than it is some profound internal state. In professional sports as in other fields of enterprise, associative monopolies are ultimately geared more toward preserving themselves than any of their single constituents, no matter how seemingly illogical or incoherent some of the moves taken in that interest may seem. Put more practically, franchises will be shifted, added, or dropped as much for the organizational benefits accruing to Major League Baseball, the NFL, the NBA, or the NHL as for individual market gains.

Therefore, fans familiar with the histories of the four associations have little reason to feel secure about the stability of their own favorite local team. If the profitable Dodgers could shift their operations from Brooklyn to Los Angeles largely to allow the O'Malleys to tap into California real estate, why can't the Yankees eventually move to New Jersey to harvest a financial windfall without having to give up all of their New York following? If Al Davis could pull the Raiders out of Oakland and set them down again in a city that already had an NFL team, why can't a club like the Dolphins move to New York, where there is no team? If it has been all right for the basketball Royals to go from Rochester to Cincinnati to Kansas City to Omaha back to

Baltimore fans were furious when the Colts deserted them for Indianapolis. Right: a 1965 Baltimore Colts game against Detroit. Photo courtesy of The Cleveland Press Collection, Cleveland State University Archives.



Kansas City and then to Sacramento within a very few years, why why can't the NBA permit another transfer tomorrow to Butte or Coney Island? If network television continues to refuse coverage of professional hockey, why can't the NHL reach out for that big money by agreeing to substitute a red ball for a puck to make the ice action more visible or by entrusting the ownership of league teams exclusively to major corporations that have clout with the networks?

However fanciful some of these possibilities might sound, it is up to the governing associations—not to the fans who support local franchises or to the would-be fans who would like a local franchise to support—to accept or reject them. In the decision-making process, neither the public that wants to hold on to a team nor the public that wants to gain a team has much of a say in the matter. So where does that leave the two groups?

For one thing, it should leave them with the awareness that they have a basically common cause. As basketball fans in Kansas City have discovered to their shock, fighting to maintain a team, fighting to lure a team away from another municipality, and fighting again to maintain a team, are eminently reversible roles. It also ought to make fans more responsive to the way that professional sports, especially soccer and hockey, have been organized in numerous European countries.

The way the European system operates, professional teams are divided into the equivalent of one major league and several minor leagues of descending ability. With the end of each season, the bottom three teams in the major league switch places for the following year with the first three finishers in the highest minor league; the minor leagues make similar swaps. Not surprisingly, a London or a Rome soccer club that abruptly finds itself forced to play in small village parks at a minor league level instead of in municipal stadiums at a major league level usually goes on a buying and trading rampage to make sure that its demotion doesn't last beyond one season. Similarly, the graduated minor league team is sure to do everything possible to perpetuate its promotion.

The implications of the European system for American sports are as obvious as they would be revolutionary:

1. Instead of waiting indefinitely for some governing association to approve a franchise shift, the promotion and demotion method would allow a minor league city to enter the majors very quickly on the strength of its own comparative skills.

2. The method would give every minor league franchise in the country an incentive for operating as more than merely a farm club incubator for potential major leaguers. Minor league fans would no longer have to settle for the perverse consolation of knowing that



they would one day lose a talented player because he proved to be too good for them.

3. The method would make expansion superfluous and raise the quality of play. Instead of being stocked with over-the-hill and mediocre players (always in the past the fate of expansion teams in their initial seasons) the minor league city could compete immediately with a roster of players that, at least, would not have to suffer through the throes of learning how to play as a unit.

4. The method would induce the weakest teams at all professional levels to do more than just go through the motions at the end of a season. Individual players on the weakest teams could no longer be satisfied with their personal statistics.

5. The method might lessen the influence of television over professional sports. Would NBC or ABC be eager to enter into a contract that insured coverage of games from Pawtucket and Tidewater? Perhaps not, but the alternative would be to force the networks to be more candid about why games of the week inevitably come from only New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

6. The method would discourage some owners from getting into professional sports. How would the owners with the win-at-all-costs mentality put up with a season of playing in Utica or Santa Cruz?

7. The method would ultimately reward those long-suffering fans of sad sack teams. Even critics of the win-at-all-costs mentality would have to concede that coming out on top once every generation or so would be a pleasant novelty for the millions of enthusiasts who buy

What's this, Cleveland playing the Braves? Yes—not Atlanta but Boston, in the 1948 World Series (Earl Torgerson is putting out Lou Boudreau at 1st). Photo courtesy of The Cleveland Press Collection, Cleveland State University Archives.

season tickets, who pay out more money for cable sports channels, and who walk around their neighborhoods in the caps, T-shirts, and windbreakers of their favorite local team.

8. Finally, this method would weaken the authority of individual satraps within the administrative leagues and associations. No matter what market he commands, the owner of a minor league team is going to wield a lot less influence than he was accustomed to as a major league executive.

Admittedly, most of the reasons for adopting a promotion-demotion system in American sports are precisely the reasons why it would not be adopted. But then again, it was only a few short years ago that free agency also seemed like a pipe dream. □

Walking the Wrong Way Around the Monastery

Barbara Cunliffe Singleton

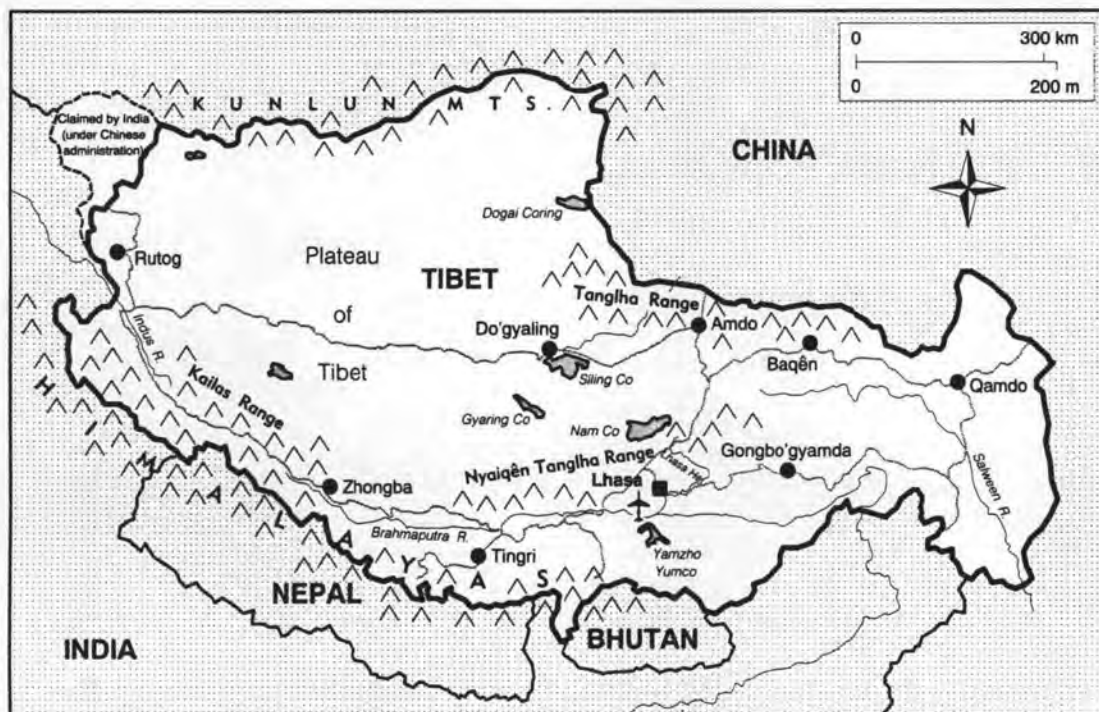
As I looked at the small Ramoche monastery in Lhasa, Tibet, a dark, gray-bearded man, dressed in a black yakskin coat paused to look at me. He seemed about to speak. But in a minute he was off in a prayerful walk around the stone building. Moving in the traditional clockwise direction, he disappeared around the corner and I followed.

On the far side a wall, protected by an overhanging roof, had been washed with green paint. Under the paint could be seen massive, rounded, dark shapes, the assertions of Tibetan Buddhist cosmology. The old man now came over, pointed to this veneer of “restoration” and shook his fist. Sorrowfully he traced the outlines of the original forms. He turned to see if I had understood. When the Chinese began to “spruce up” a few of the remaining monasteries (most had been destroyed) as tourist attractions and to prove that “freedom of religion” still exists in Tibet, they had restored this one in the simplest way. Not following the rich colors and shapes of the Tibetan pantheon, they had painted rows of repeated Tara (protectress of Tibetan people) figures in one-width, thin brush strokes—“stick figures,” almost stencil-like. A Chinese soldier, circling in the wrong direction, strode into the walkway and the old man returned to his merit-giving walk around the monastery.

I was in a place known as “Tibet” in the English-speaking world. This once independent Himalayan country is now known by Chinese only as “Xizang,” which means “Western Province.” The people of Tibet are not permitted to use their own name for their country, which is “Pö” or home. Overrun by the Chinese army in 1950, Tibet has been subject lately to increasing immigration by Chinese soldiers and civilians. Beijing has forced this massive population movement in an attempt to weaken and eradicate Tibetan culture. The Dalai Lama, revered religious leader and head of the government-in-exile, rules with the aid of the Secretariat in Dharamsala in northern India.



▲ *Barbara Cunliffe Singleton, who lives in Yellow Springs, Ohio, has been a lecturer in English in South America, Tunisia, Turkey, Indonesia, and Taiwan. “Through travel in Tibet,” she says, “and visiting Tibetan refugee villages in Nepal and India, I’ve come to support the effort of Tibetans to regain their homeland. That they’ve done this in a peaceful Buddhist manner was recognized by the Nobel Committee when the Dalai Lama won the Peace Prize 1989.” She has just completed a book of travel essays called But I’ve Already HEARD about Rishikesh!*



For an early lunch I walked to the restaurant adjoining the Banak Shöl (Furred Skin) Hotel. Like most of the small restaurants that serve foreigners, it used the choose-your-own-food-in-the-kitchen method. The woman in front of me, about 40, her black hair combed into an extravagant bun, took a plate from the stack at the end of the table. She spooned up a little from some of the bowls, each filled with onions or crisp green peppers, carrots, moist potatoes, cabbage, cooked rice, tomatoes, or yak meat, all chopped to bite size. After selecting spices from six bowls, she gave the plateful to the cook, a Tibetan woman in a long black dress. The cook stirred her wok, then slid the cut food into the sputtering oil and it exploded, flavoring the air with fried garlic. She cooked each customer's mixture separately.

When my plateful was done, I took it into the dining room. The woman who had been in front of me smiled, so I went to her table and we talked. She was an American who had studied in India and become a Buddhist nun. We discussed what I had seen at the monastery that morning. The Chinese defaced or destroyed statues of Buddha to end what they think of as superstition and archaic customs. Since a quarter of the men in Tibet were monks, doing away with monasteries would add to the available work force. In the Chinese view, their "liberation" of the Tibetans conferred benefits on China's economy. The Chinese soldier walking counterclockwise

around the monastery was an instance of China's policy of cultural insult to what it considers a backward culture.

On the way to Drepung Monastery, where a ceremony would take place that afternoon, I passed the site of the Nechung Monastery, formerly home of the State Oracle, a ruin of jagged walls and skewed roof. I took a short-cut through the apple orchard around Drepung Monastery to the entrance. Drepung (meaning "rice heap") is one of the largest monasteries in Tibet.

Passing through a gateway in the wall, I followed a cobblestone walkway up the hillside between stone buildings. Four colleges clustered on these grounds, originally for monks from Mongolia, Qinghai, Chamdo, and Sichuan.

Three fleecy dogs rose from the dust and stretched. Western tourists tell each other that these dogs are incarnations of failed monks and so the present monks take care of them. When I asked an English-speaking Tibetan monk, he said, "We can't know if a dog is an incarnation of a monk. It might be; it might not. Anyway dogs should be taken care of."

A tall, "white-eyed" man (Tibetan expression for foreigner no matter what color his eyes) was approaching with a walking stick as tall as he was. His beard was full, orange-brown and curly, and his hair was matted; his Tibetan coat, dusty. As he came closer, I could see his face was blistered from sunburn and his lips were so chapped that they were split and crusty.

I wanted to offer him chapstick, but instead I said, "Hello? Do you know where the ceremony is going to be?"

Pointing his walking stick towards a spot higher on the hillside, he answered, "I saw some monks gathering in front of a prayer hall up there. Where are you from?" It turned out he was American too. "I'm a walker," he said. "I've walked here from Yunnan and I'm going across Tibet to Nepal." He spoke slowly and looked into the distance. "At night I stay with Tibetans in their houses. They call me in. They want me to rest. I sleep on the floor on a yak skin. The Tibetans are

Tibet is a landlocked, autonomous region of China 470,000 square miles in extent. It is mainly a plateau 15,000 feet in height surrounded by mountain ranges rising to 29,000 feet. Its present population is about two million of which one-quarter are Chinese. Another four million Tibetans live in adjacent regions, long part of China. Before Tibet lost its independence to China in the 1950s it was ruled by the Dalai Lama, a spiritual and secular leader, who is believed to be the reincarnation of Chenrezi, the Buddha of Compassion. Tibet has been formed and influenced by Buddhism for over 1300 years.

Drepung Monastery in Tibet. From The Splendors of Tibet (Sino Publishing Co., 1980. Copyright © 1980 by Audrey R. Topping).





A class in the courtyard of Deyang College, one of the four colleges within Drepung Monastery. From Tibet: The Sacred Realm Copyright © 1983 by Aperture, Inc.

wonderful. They give me whatever food they eat. They try to give me money. I give it back. I have \$35. I've walked all over the world, but the Tibetans are the best. I love being up here in these bare mountains. I've been walking for six years. I've walked all over Africa. I like people in Africa, too, but there's something about the Tibetans. I don't speak their language, but we understand each other." He smiled, in spite of the painful cracks in his lips, and raised his walking stick in greeting, as two shaven-headed monks in muted red robes walked past us.

A gong boomed on the hillside. I parted with the walker, who said he had been to a ceremony like this six days ago. Metal echoes wavered in the clear Himalayan air. Steady beats led me to a flat, clay-coated roof. A monk raised his arm to strike the gong while more than two hundred monks gathered in the prayer hall below. As they entered, they pushed aside the hanging, thick as a fencing mat, that covered the doorway. The "eternal knot," symbol of the everlasting teachings of Buddha, woven into the hanging served as a reminder to those who entered to have compassion for all sentient beings.

In the darkened room the flickering light from the yak butter candles touched the red on the shoulders of the monks and highlighted their smooth heads and faces. Light, according to some Tibetan Buddhists, removes the darkness of attachment and hatred.

After a few minutes fifteen teen-aged monks, with the enthusiasm of a basketball team, ran out of the room to the nearby kitchen and soon returned with heavy, gold-rimmed, black containers, which they carried down the rows. The teenagers stopped in front of the monks sitting on mats. The older monks dipped in to wipe their faces, touched their mouths with the liquid, then sipped from their cupped hands.

From a platform a higher-ranking monk, wearing a crimson pleated cape, chanted the scriptures in a surging basso profundo voice. He could sustain a single note until the listener gasped for air.

Some monks looked around and talked during the chanting. Heads together, they seemed to be discussing the travellers sitting quietly on the rug at the end of the room and the other Westerners standing near the door.

"I'm surprised there's so much chit-chat during these prayers," I whispered to the well-dressed traveller next to me. "Perhaps it's all right in their culture to be sociable during the chanting."

"No, I don't think so. We were warned about this in New York. In the Office of Tibet, some Tibetans and visiting monks have heard about this talking and lack of discipline. They think perhaps the Chinese just let some people be monks for show. They are disappointed that some monks don't seem to take the Buddhist chants seriously."

After a while I left to look around the grounds and to see the Buddhist paintings on the boulders behind Drepung. When I came back an hour and a half later, I sat by the woman I had talked with before, one of the four remaining Westerners in the hall. They had been served yak-butter tea and a heaping bowl of sweetened rice with broken barley bread on top. Their red two-liter Chinese thermos was filled with butter tea.

"Earlier, you spoke of the Office of Tibet in New York. What did you do there?" I asked her.

"We bought some books about Tibet and some pictures of the Dalai Lama to give to people here. Some recently returned travellers showed us their photographs and slides of Tibet. The Tibetan staff are very friendly. I've thought about them so often since I've been here. They want to perpetuate Tibetan culture and make Tibet a buffer state between India and China, a 'Zone of Peace.'"

It was incongruous that we Westerners, with only a hint of the meaning of this Buddhist ceremony, should be able to come here, while Tibetans who longed for the experience could not return without becoming citizens of China or of another non-Tibetan country.

"Before we leave," the woman continued, "we're going to light a butter candle here and walk around the monastery on behalf of the New York Tibetans."

Walking the wrong way around the monastery is only a token of the harsher indignities suffered by the Tibetans: to be forced to have their children schooled and indoctrinated in China proper; to have Chinese people settle in river valleys, driving Tibetans to less fertile land; to see large sections of their country incorporated into neigh-



His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Courtesy of The Office of Tibet in New York City.

boring Chinese provinces (Sichuan, Yunnan, and Qinghai), leaving Tibet slashed to less than half size; to suffer their land to be deforested and its plateaus used for nuclear testing, missile bases, and a planned nuclear waste dump; to fear the arbitrary imprisonment and torture experienced by nuns, monks and thousands of other Tibetans. Yet in spite of all their demoralization, Tibetans sometimes say to foreign travellers, "We're glad you're here. If you weren't, we'd be treated much worse." □

The Language of the Babylonians and the Assyrians

John A.C. Greppin

The ancient peoples known to history as Babylonians and Assyrians, who lived in the part of the world roughly corresponding to modern Iraq, both spoke dialects of Akkadian, a language whose written history lasted nearly three millennia, ending before the beginning of the Christian era. When Akkadian became extinct its place was taken by Aramaic (a Semitic language akin to Hebrew) spoken by the historical Jesus. Seven centuries later this gave way to Arabic, the language of the new religion of Islam.

The Babylonians and Assyrians are known at least in name to most of us through the Bible. The fabled Assyrian city-state of Nineveh began to form around 3000 B.C., but at that time was overshadowed by Sumeria, a state of unknown ethnic affiliation to its south. In the 13th century B.C., Tiglathpileser I pushed Assyria's borders briefly to the Mediterranean; Assyria then fell back but this drive to the West became a permanent part of Assyrian foreign policy. It was repeated by Ashurnasirpal in the 9th century B.C., but again there were no lasting results; a period of imperial dormancy set in until the Great King Assurbanipal in 650 B.C. pushed triumphantly westward into Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. Under his intelligent rule the city of Nineveh reached its height. But the costs were high; the necessity to keep a large army meant a lack of agricultural manpower at home; food had to be imported and the end came fairly quickly when a united army of Medes and Babylonians took Nineveh in 606. Assyria never recovered.

The history of Babylonia was also legendary. Babylonian power arose considerably later than Assyria, beginning under the great law-giver Hammurabi, c. 1750 B.C. (his famous Law Code was discovered by the French at Susa in 1903), but it survived independently only for a short while, soon falling under the power of a nomadic people from the East. Babylon became a vassal state of Assyria in the

▲ Originally a piano student at Eastman School of Music, John A.C. Greppin received a Ph.D. in Indo-European Studies from UCLA and is now a professor at Cleveland State University, where he specializes in Indo-European linguistics and the classics. He also edits *Raft*, a journal of Armenian poetry and criticism, and is interested in chamber music and ornithology.

ninth century B.C. A century and a half later, in 689 B.C., it was sacked during an uprising against the Assyrian King Sennacherib and it was not until the death of the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal that Babylonia again became independent (625 B.C.). Under Nebuchadnezzar II Babylonia reached its greatest height, destroying Jerusalem and leading the Hebrews into what is called the Babylonian Captivity (586 B.C.). But though the new Babylonian Empire seemed secure, it was overtaken by the Persian king, Cyrus the Great, who made it part of his Empire in 539 B.C.

Neither Assyria nor Babylonia ever regained power. Thereafter, the Near East came under the control of Alexander the Great and his successors; by the beginning of the Christian period the Romans held it; next came the Parthians (an Iranian tribe), who destroyed the army of the consul and triumvir Crassus in 53 B.C. No Semitic people arose in strength in the Near East until the 7th century A.D., when the Arabs triumphantly conquered everything before them as far as Spain.

We know about these ancient civilizations in part because the Akkadian language was written on clay tablets which have long outlasted the monuments of its speakers. To create a text in cuneiform, the scribe made a tablet of wet clay, inscribed the wedge-shaped symbols on it with a stylus, and baked it. Such tablets can last thousands of years like the potsherds that archaeologists find in their digs. Though Akkadian was at one time the *lingua franca* of the Near East, by the middle of the first millennium B.C., at the final decline of Babylonian and Assyrian culture, the Greeks still had only a vague knowledge of this complex script; Herodotus, writing about 425 B.C., spoke only of "Assyrian characters," which he had seen carved in rock faces, and an understanding of that script died with that culture. Medieval Arab culture took no note of it. Significant knowledge of

A modern imitation of an ancient clay tablet, inscribed with a seal at bottom. Photo from They Wrote on Clay by Edward Chiera, © 1938 by the University of Chicago. Reproduced by permission.



Babylonian came to Europe no earlier than 1621, when a certain Pietor della Valle wrote from the Persian city of Shiraz to a friend in Naples about the "nail-shaped" script, as he called it. Carsten Niebuhr, who had traveled to Persepolis in Persia in 1765, brought back a trilingual inscription. The first part was alphabetic cuneiform later shown to be the Old Persian script of 36 characters; the

second was a somewhat more complex system that proved to be Elamite (the language of a people who conquered Babylon c. 1500 B.C.); and the third was an extremely complex arrangement with hundreds of characters. Eventually scholars realized that this was Babylonian cuneiform.

The first successful effort at deciphering the Old Persian script came from one Georg Friedrich Grotefend, a German high-school teacher. He realized, because of the limited number of characters, that the first inscription must be alphabetic, a point he reinforced by noting that some words had as many as ten separate marks, too many for syllabic or logographic (picture) writing. Assuming that this first inscription was Persian, he knew that it must contain names of Persian kings, names that were known from ancient Greek or Hebrew sources. On the basis of his training in Greek and Latin, he decided that the inscription began as follows: "X, the King, the great (?), the King of Kings, Y, the King's son, the Achaemenid (?)" (a Persian dynasty). Next, he went through the list of Persian kings tallied in Herodotus. Cyrus and Cambyses were dismissed since those two kings' names began with the same letter. Using other clues, he decided that the first king's name must be Darius and the second Xerxes! He later came close to identifying the Old Persian word for king (*khshāyathiya*), based on the phonetic shape of the word for "king" known from the Avesta, the holy book of the Zoroastrians.

Soon scholars with training in Oriental languages were able to take Grotefend's discoveries much further. Rasmus Rask, a Danish scholar, in 1826 identified the genitive plural in the phrase "King of Kings." A little later (1835) an Englishman, Henry Rawlinson, was able to show more closely the relationship of this language to Sanskrit and Avestan. In the following decades most of the details were added. Scholars now had the tool they needed to begin the translation of the two other languages on these Old Persian tri-lingual inscriptions. Since scholars now knew essentially *what* the inscriptions said, it remained to learn *how* it was said. In 1845 Sir Austin Henry Layard, digging around in the ruins of Nineveh, discovered the library of Ashurbanipal, which contained more than 10,000 tablets. This immense set of new texts brought the decipherment of Akkadian to a new level. Since then hundreds of thousands of these tablets have been recovered.

Meanwhile the Swedish scholar Isador Löwenstern was able to determine that one of the two remaining inscriptions represented a Semitic language, a giant step forward. But he erred in assuming that the symbols represented only consonants, as is the case in Hebrew and Arabic; thus he suggested that there were seven signs for the



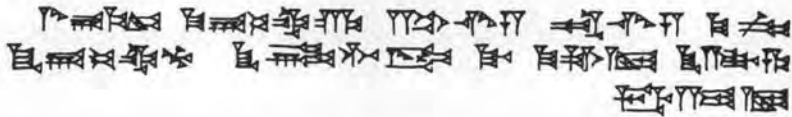
George Friedrich Grotefend, who made the first breakthrough in cracking Babylonian cuneiform writing.



Henry C. Rawlinson, the "Father of Assyriology."

letter *r*. In 1850 an Irish scholar, Edward Hincks, showed that the symbols were really consonant and vowel sequences: those seven symbols for *r* actually represented *ar*, *ir*, *er*, *ur*, *ra*, *ri*, and *ru*. At this point Henry Rawlinson, who came to be known as the "Father of Assyriology," made a major breakthrough, showing that a single sign could be read in a variety of phonetic variants: the symbol for *ud* could thus also represent *tam*, *par*, *lah*, or *hiš*. Rawlinson's list of 246 characters is essentially still valid. By now the framework of the Akkadian language was known and it needed only the careful and meticulous filling in of the details. This ancient Semitic language could now be read, aided of course by our knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the other Semitic languages.

Following is a short passage in the Old Babylonian dialect, an exact rendering of Hammurabi's first law (from David Marcus, *A Manual of Akkadian*).



The characters of Law One can be rendered as the following set of sounds:

*šum-ma a-wi-lum a-wi-lam ú-ub-bi-ir-ma ne-er-tam e-li-šu id-di-ma
la uk-ti-in-šu mu-ub-bi-ir-šu id-da-ak*

and as the following set of words:

*shumma awilum awilam ubbirma nertam elišu iddīma lā uktin-
shu mubbirshu iddāk.*

The vocabulary of Law One classified according to function:

Nouns: *awilum* "a man," *nertum* "murder charge," *mubbirum* "an accuser."

Verbs: *ebēru* "to accuse," *nadū* "to bring," *kānu* "to convict," *dāku* "to be executed."

Adverb: *lā* "not."

Conjunctions: *shumma* "if," *ma* "and, but."

Preposition: *eli* "against." (*eli-šu* "against him")

Translation of Law One:

If a man accused (another) man and has brought against him a charge of murder, but has not convicted him, his accuser shall be executed.

The Akkadian language, like the other Semitic languages, differs markedly in vocabulary from the Indo-European languages, but does not differ markedly in grammar. Like Proto-Germanic, many of the

modern Slavic languages, and Hittite, there are only two clearly described tenses; they can be called “perfective” and “imperfective.” The imperfective shows incomplete action, or present (*adabbub* “I am plotting”) and also future action, which is necessarily incomplete (*inakkim* “he will heap up”). The perfective tense, once called the “second” imperfective, shows completed action (*isbatū* “they took”).

The possessive works unlike the Indo-European languages, the head (or possessing) word not always being marked (as it is in English by ‘s), but replaced by the so-called “construct form,” in which the second of two contiguous nouns is in the possessive case. So, as we have in Arabic such a metaphorical word for opium as *abū naum*, literally “father (of) sleep,” so we have in Akkadian a similar structure. For masculine nouns, the first word of the construction loses its vowel (actually, its case marking) and the second goes into what can properly be called a genitive case: *šar šarri*, “king of kings,” from *šarru* “king.” Linguists would call this “double marking” since the derivative form *šar* already warns us of the impending genitive that is marked redundantly by a final *-i*. Double marking is not an uncommon phenomenon, as in “he walked speedily” where, because of English word order, “speedily” is likely to be an adverb but is redundantly marked with the adverbial ending “-ly.” Without double marking this would be “he walked fast,” where no adverb ending occurs.

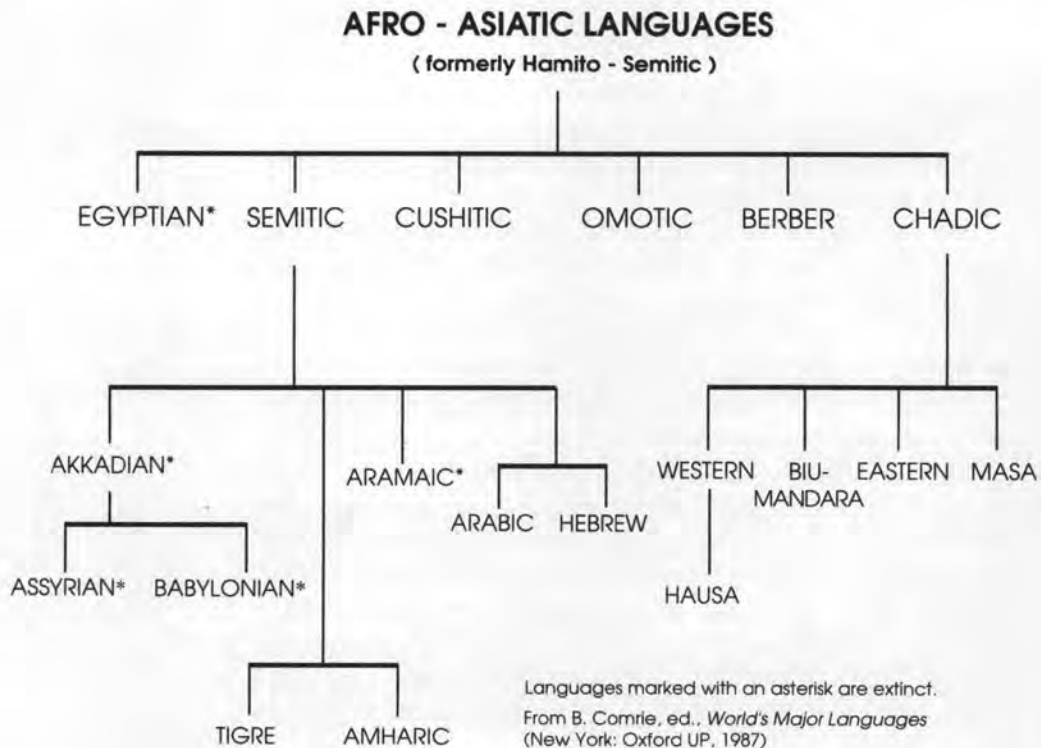
Verbs in Akkadian show gender in the second and third person: *išakkan* means “he establishes” while *tašakkan* is “she establishes.” Similarly, *tašakkanū* and *tašakkanā* are “you (masc.) established” and “you (fem.) established.” However, there is no gender implied in the first person singular and plural. Akkadian *ašakkan* “I established” is either masculine or feminine.

Akkadian possessive pronouns are odd too, for they never quite became separate words, but rather function as suffixes. Thus we have, from *abu* “father,” the words *abūa* “my father” and *abūšu* “his father.”

It has been known since the late eighteenth century that Arabic, Hebrew, the other ancient Palestinian languages, and Ethiopic were closely related. By the nineteenth century further links were made with the Hamitic languages, Egyptian and its linear descendant Coptic being the best known. These somewhat diverse languages show uniformity in having, for instance, a clear feminine marker in *-t* (compare Akkadian *šarrum* “king,” *šarratum* “queen”). In 1955 Joseph Greenberg was able to expand this grouping considerably, and in so doing, changed the name from “Hamito-Semitic” to “Afro-Asiatic.” Greenberg argued that there were five separate “nodes” to

the Afro-Asiatic family, of which Semitic and Hamitic were only two. These five nodes could only be distantly related, yet the points of correspondence were interesting. One clear group is Chadic, best revealed in Hausa, a principal language of Nigeria. There are also at least 120 Chadic tribal languages which may be included, such as Somrai, Masa, and Bura. The Cushitic group is smaller, having only thirty-five representatives which are spoken around the horn of Africa and south to Kenya. It includes Somali, Afar (spoken in Djibouti), and some of the languages of Eritrea. Of these, only Somali has any depth of literacy. The Omotic group, with thirty-four languages, is spoken along the Sudanese border of Ethiopia. It includes only a hundred thousand speakers, most of whom are nomadic, ever pressing on to diminishing grazing lands. Other than Semitic and Ancient Egyptian, these languages are not easily studied. To do so anthropological linguists must tread the barren wastes of Saharan Africa.

Hundreds of root words are held in common by as many as four of the language nodes. We can cite the first person "I" as an example: Proto-Semitic *an-aku*, Ancient Egyptian *ink*, Cushitic *ana*, and Chadic *ni*. And just as the Indo-European languages manufacture



different nouns and verbs by using suffixes, the Afro-Asiatic languages produce variety by internal change: Arabic *kataba* "he wrote," *maktaba* "library," Cushitic *adanbiil* "I collect," *adbil* "collected."

Where and when did this all start? Igor Diakonoff locates proto-Afro-Asiatic in the southeastern Sahara. Unity came to an end in the seventh millennium B.C., during the Saharan Mesolithic period, when the land was not yet desiccated. Egyptian broke away first, going north and east. Then the Chadic group went south and Omotic drove southeast. Later, at the end of the Mesolithic period, Cushitic struck off directly east and the Semitic people moved into Western Asia by the fifth millennium.

Akkadian, the oldest of the Semitic languages, is part of a vast linguistic panorama that is more than nine thousand years old. The racial diversity of this great language family, from the Caucasoid Levantines in Palestine to Black Africans dwelling as far south as the highlands of Kenya, represents an unusual phenomenon. □

Suggestions for further reading:

- Igor M. Diakonoff. *Afrasian Languages* (Moscow: Nauka, 1988).
 Johannes Friedrich. *Extinct Languages* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1957).
 David A. Marcus. *A Manual of Akkadian* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1978).
 Holger Pedersen. *The Discovery of Language: Linguistic Science in the 19th Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959).

Don't Fight Green Invaders— Eat Them!

Christopher Nyerges



▲ *Christopher Nyerges is an author/lecturer/educator interested in survival skills, gardening, American Indian history and beliefs, and the Cherokee language. "In my teens, I desired to know specifically how American Indians survived day in and out with no farms, stores, roads, refrigerators, etc." Nyerges is a student of Shining Bear, an Iroquois medicine man. He is also the author of three books, including Urban Wilderness: Handbook to Resourceful City Living. Currently, he is the editor of LAmment, the magazine of the Greater L.A. area Mensa, the international high IQ society.*

As the early American settlers began their westward move across the North American land mass, they brought with them, both intentionally and unintentionally, a large array of European plants, many of which preferred the disturbed and cleared soil that resulted when a settlement was established. One of these was called "white man's foot" by the Indians, not because it resembled a foot, but because it appeared to sprout out of the white men's footsteps. Preferring environments that had been cleared and reclaimed from the wilderness, this was truly a plant of civilization.

Today white man's foot (*Plantago major*), or plantain as it is more commonly called, is as widely distributed throughout the United States as the familiar dandelion. Plantain and a broad assortment of other plants have come to prefer the settlements of man as their home. They are not commonly found in the American wilderness, and because of their ability to survive even the harshest conditions man has devised for them, they are now maligned as "weeds," "nuisances," and "pests."

Many "weeds" were brought to the New World not only because they were deliciously edible but because a surprisingly large number of them were also medicinal. Our pioneering forefathers would have cried out in outrage if they had been able to foresee the vast array of herbicides and other killing techniques that their descendants would devise to decimate these valuable plants.

Agronomists today are united in this all-out assault on the "weed." Euell Gibbons made the public aware of the fact that there are countless tons of food plants growing wild, struggling to survive. He said that the main reason people didn't use this wild food is that they feared the ridicule of family, friends, and neighbors for stooping to pick what everyone else regards as trash. Nevertheless, he managed to broadcast this message as part of a television commercial for several months in 1975. It was halted on July 4, 1975, when the

Federal Trade Commission asked General Foods Corporation to withdraw its Post Grape-Nuts ads in which Gibbons described certain plants as being edible. The Federal Trade Commission felt that four of the ads had “the tendency or capacity to influence children to eat plants or parts thereof which they find growing or in natural surroundings. Some of the plants or parts thereof are harmful if eaten.”

Since 1974, when I began teaching outdoor classes in the use of wild plants, I've been continually confronted with both sides of this issue. On one hand, many people are extremely concerned about the value of becoming self-sufficient, with both in-city and back-country skills. But true self-sufficiency cannot be accomplished without the use of wild plants, which necessitates accepting some small potential dangers.

Possibly the greatest excitement to gardeners and hikers comes when they discover that almost all the weeds in their garden and along the trail are good food and possible emergency medicine. These are the weeds they have often seen but not taken the time to study. Many that are European natives have so



Above: *Plantain* (*Plantago major*).



The author smelling wild horehound, which he says is an effective remedy for coughs and sore throats. “Simply make an infusion of tea.” The herb is bitter, though.



a single stem of
CHICKWEED

well naturalized themselves that they now come up in sidewalk cracks, through blacktop, in sprayed and cultivated gardens, and wherever there's even a sliver of an opening and a little moisture. People who are preoccupied with the aesthetics of gardening view this prolific growth as an altogether unhappy prospect. The weeds have taken over and seem to defy eradication.

One of the most persistent wild European weeds that I've gathered all over the United States is chickweed (*Stellaria media*). It is, even to the most pampered palate, an incredibly good salad plant. You can understand my dismay when, on the front page of the *Weedone Illustrated News*, distributed to all major newspapers in the spring of 1976, was the headline "WEEDONE CHICKWEED CONTROL." It seems that American scientific genius had perfected a liquid, one pint of which mixed into 10 gallons of water could kill all the chickweed on 3000 square feet of lawn. On the back page of this anti-weed newspaper was a large chart with illustrations of 35 common weeds, 9 herbicides, and directions for which poison is most effective for killing which weed. Included in this list of "pest plants" was wild garlic, chufa nut grass, chickweed, plantain, French sorrel, heal-all, dandelion, yarrow, sour grass, and ground ivy, a list of delectables that any student herbalist or naturalist would shudder to find are in need of destruction/eradication. Why our continued myopia?

It is not an overstatement to say the United States is at war against weeds, the "enemy" being mostly plants that came from foreign soils and have thrived here. The irony is that most of these "enemies" are friends that could help us. Once we understand this, the war can be over.

Take kudzu (*Pueraria lobata*) for example, a native of the Orient that was first brought to the U.S. in 1876. Although originally used in this country as a fragrant shade and ornamental plant, kudzu burst into the spotlight in the 1930s in soil conservation programs. Kudzu is a leguminous, fast-growing, drought-resistant plant which grows on hard, depleted soil and revitalizes the soil by giving back nitrogen-rich nutrients.

By the early '40s, kudzu had been well introduced into every Southern state. The Soil Conservation Service embarked on a massive planting campaign and the Civilian Conservation Corps was employed to plant kudzu along the backroads and highways and along every gully and gorge.

But as early as the late '50s, the very ones who promoted this miracle vine began to consider kudzu a pest—some even began to panic. With the favorable growing season in the South and no natural enemies here, kudzu vines can grow up to 100 feet in length in a

season. Today you can see kudzu wherever you travel east of Texas and south of Ohio and Pennsylvania—waves of billowing green along the highway embankments, invading farmlands, covering road signs, telephone poles, and abandoned dwellings. Today most American farmers despise kudzu and work to eradicate it. Once praised as a savior, it is now maligned as a curse.

Japanese farmers, on the contrary, who are not so blessed with ideal kudzu growing conditions, use it for a broad assortment of purposes, including an excellent cooking starch, a jelling agent and coating for fried foods, a thickener in soups, and several herbal medicines; even the fiber is used to make cloth.

In the case of kudzu, it is a matter of simply not valuing what is so abundant. Besides being an excellent plant for livestock pasturage, kudzu also improves the land. According to the former head of the Soil Conservation Service, kudzu “will cover a corn field in one year; the next spring or early summer it can be plowed and the land planted to corn; then after the last cultivation of the corn, it will again spread over the field, stop erosion, store more nitrogen, and at the first hard frost, lay down a carpet of rich leaf litter at least the equal of forest litter. All this in only one year.”

In many cases of soil deficiency, allowing “pests” (like kudzu) to grow a few seasons will provide needed soil nutrients. Then, once their work is done, the pests will disappear.

Giant foxtail (*Setaria faberi*) was once a serious problem only in Missouri, Illinois, and parts of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Indiana, but this Chinese native has now spread over most of the United States. The seed germinates in the absence of air (due to compaction) and an accumulation of carbon dioxide. The culprits here are hard nitrogen fertilizers, mechanical cultivation, and farmers' improved capacity to destroy the soil. The presence of foxtails tells us that the soil is compacting and must be made fertile again. Killing the giant foxtail with herbicides may work in the short term, but will clear the way for an even more degenerative weed—fall panicum.



Kudzu (Pueraria lobata).

Fall panicum (*Panicum dichotomiflorum*) is worse than giant foxtail. It is a tough grass, gnarled and knotted, that jams up farm machinery and even pulls down corn plants. In a field where the tightly compacted soil produces foxtails in early summer, fall panicum will follow later in the year *if* herbicides are used to eliminate the foxtail. Allow the foxtails to grow and there will be no fall panicum because the foxtail emits auxins into the soil which inhibit fall panicum. Kill the foxtail and you take away the auxins. The solution to the problem posed by this weed is not to kill it, but rather to balance the soil. We need to learn what the presence of these weeds is telling us.

Broom sedge (*Andropogon virginicus*), also called poverty weed, was originally found only in the rainbelt South, an area of warm temperatures where rains leach many of the nutrients from the soil. Broom sedge is a low degenerative type of weed that survives where higher types of plant life can't, in calcium-poor soil. Because most California soil is lacking in calcium, broom sedge proliferates. The obvious solution is to add calcium lime to the soil.

Another "plant enemy" costs the states of Florida and Louisiana several million dollars annually to combat. The United States officially declared war on this invader way back in 1899, and has since fought it with dynamite, chemicals, flame throwers, pitchforks and various cutting devices. Today, the battle is all but lost, as the enemy has persisted and spread over most of the globe. This enemy is the water hyacinth.

Before 1884, the water hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) could be found only in Brazil. The plant was on display at the New Orleans Centennial Exposition in 1884, attracting much attention from viewers. Someone from Florida took a pailful of the plant to "beautify" the St. Johns River. A few other well-intentioned gardeners also took seedlings for their ponds and fountains. A flood hit Florida in the mid-1880s and spread the water hyacinth over Florida. Within seven years, the plant could be found in waterways from Virginia to California. In 1895 it was found in Australia, from which it spread to Asia. It was introduced into Africa in 1951 by a missionary. It was first growing in just a section of the Congo River a few miles from Brazzaville, but it quickly spread more than a thousand miles into almost every tributary of the Congo, and then into

Water hyacinth
(*Eichornia crassipes*).



Ethiopia, Zambia and Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), Sudan, and Uganda.

Today the water hyacinth can be found everywhere in the world. It thrives in major rivers such as the Nile, Mississippi, Amazon, and the Mekong. Choking out once-navigable waterways and fishing spots, it is no wonder the plant is despised. But in spite of all efforts, including the continued efforts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the water hyacinth only seems to get stronger after each attack.

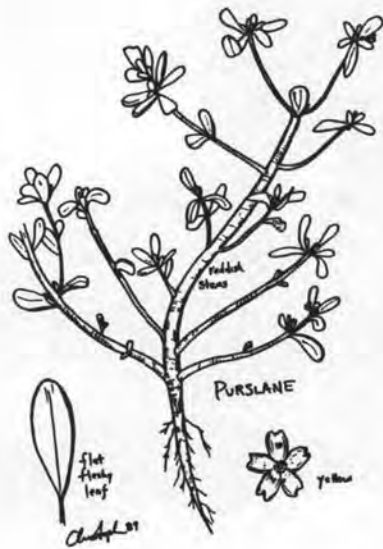
Is there possibly another way to view this problem? Many researchers and scientists are beginning to see the water hyacinth as a valuable resource. One such researcher, Godofredo Monsod, Jr., was awarded the Presidential Panday Pira Award three times in his native Philippines for his work with the water hyacinth. He's been experimenting with making animal feed, human food supplements, clothing, paper (high quality, suitable for currency or stocks), particle board, pharmaceutical products, and alcohol from this plant. Monsod also claims that most of these products can be produced economically if processing plants are built near where the water hyacinth thrives. Even NASA has supported Monsod's claims that making these products from the water hyacinth is economically feasible. Water hyacinth can also be used for water purification (if grown in polluted waters, the plant will absorb heavy metal pollutants such as lead, silver, mercury, cadmium, cobalt, strontium, zinc, aluminum, etc.) and for the production of methane gas.

Wild food foragers can use water hyacinth stolons, leaves, swollen leaf stalks, flower stalks, and flower buds directly as food, the stolons being the most tender and desirable. All parts must be first thoroughly steamed or boiled before being eaten or an unpleasant prickly sensation will result in the throat. Because of the fiber content of the mature plant, the young plants are preferred.

Why is America so determinedly killing off its herbal birthright? I look out my window at sow thistle and filaree and lamb's quarter and see beauty in these weeds. I know that they are valuable. My yard will never be hacked and pummeled into a man-made picture of what constitutes "beauty." I allow them to grow because I see in them the deep beauty of staunch independence, of the courage to persist boldly in the face of wide opposition. In exchange for the safe haven I give them, they provide me with an occasional leaf, flower, bud, or stem to eat, and 12 to 14 hours a day of oxygen.

Periodically we experience media attacks on the wild plants around us (I recall in July, 1976, jimsonweed was under attack). Suddenly in the newspapers and on television we are shown





pictures of a poisonous plant and told, “Here is a dangerous plant to be aware of—it grows wild and it may be in YOUR neighborhood. Don’t let your child eat it”—or some variant thereof. Once the public interest is aroused, suggestions pour in with ways to totally eradicate the plant which is such a menace to society.

Sad ignorance! Rather than looking to real solutions (such as plant identification classes in elementary schools), our minds jump to thoughts of plant genocide. How shocked these alarmists would be to learn that their Christmas holly and mistletoe and their beautiful poinsettias are also poisonous. Will they ask that Easter celebrations be banned because the calla lily is poisonous, and that formal gardens be scythed flat because most hybrid ornamentals are poisonous as well? Lucky for the rest of us, they haven’t found out about these other threats to our peace and well-being—yet.

As the battle rages, the herbiphobes continue to spread their benighted doctrines: Wild plants will take over every yard unless the owners maintain constant vigilance! Yes, I say. If allowed to do their natural work, wild plants would cover the earth in green and provide food for us all.

But now I’m getting hungry—and that young lamb’s quarter by the gatepost, the succulent purslane next to the steps, and that great tall sow thistle outside the fence in the backyard are beckoning. □

Illustrations. Photos pp. 44-45: Judith Gordon. Line drawings pp. 46, 49, 50 by C. Nyerges, from *Guide to Wild Foods*; p. 45, drawing by Emma Bergdolt for *All About Weeds*, by Edwin Rollin Spencer (Dover, 1974); pp. 47 and 48, drawings by Regina O. Hughes for *Common Weeds of the United States* (Dover, 1971).

The Comic Book War

Vickie Nelson

My mother was a civil libertarian. She still is one, actually, but it seemed a larger part of her life that long ago summer when I was nine. It was a busy season for her. The Rosenbergs were in jail, waiting to be executed for telling the secret of the atomic bomb to the Russians. The blacklist, an eerily named document I pictured as an actual book, huge and leatherbound like a family Bible, was swelling daily with the names of authors and movie makers. A Senate committee was grilling citizens right before our eyes on our brand new Philco television set. And I had discovered horror comics.

My mother faced all but the last of these with an unequivocal certainty. She knew right where she stood on Joe McCarthy and the Rosenbergs and Dashiell Hammett. At nine, I knew these names well. They were discussed daily at my mother's kitchen table, a table around which it was much more likely to find people gathered to stuff envelopes than to eat a meal.

All the people who gathered around my mother's table knew where they stood, and I stood with them. I knew that people in a free society should be able to say and read and see what they wanted. They couldn't shout fire in a crowded theater because that endangered everyone else, but shouting fire was an exception. Besides, it was hard for me to imagine anyone wanting to shout fire in a crowded theater.

My mother had a copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which she kept on the living room coffee table, along with copies of *Dissent* and *I.F. Stone's Weekly*. It wasn't as easy to get a copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1953 as it is now, but my mother had managed it through her best friend, Maureen, who made a yearly trip to Europe. Everyone who visited our house, even some of the ACLU envelope stuffers, picked up *Lady Chatterley* and leafed through it.

"What about—?" these leafers were likely to ask softly, nodding their heads in my direction as they searched out the good parts.

"Cassie is allowed to read whatever she wants. I don't hide things from her." My mother's voice was even, but it held a note of chal-



▲ Vickie Nelson lives in Eugene, Oregon, where she is a senior editor at Oregon Coast magazine, a freelance writer and editor, and a part-time librarian. She is interested in literacy and animal rights, and enjoys ice skating in her free time. Her fiction has appeared in *Portland Review* and *Modern Short Stories*.

lenge, which few people rose to. My father had been one of the few who did, but he wasn't living with us anymore.

When the questioners had gone back to the search for the good parts, I would look up surreptitiously to see how they were reacting. Occasionally, I leafed through the book myself, but, personally, a story about a grown man who called his penis John Thomas seemed just about the stupidest thing to get excited over that I could imagine.

What *was* confusing my mother that summer was comic books. She and I were waging a sort of Comic Book Cold War. This war had two distinct fronts. On the first front we were comrades and co-conspirators against my Aunt Thelma, and I loved it. On the second front the lines were hazier. My mother wasn't my enemy exactly, but she wasn't the clear ally she was in the war with Aunt Thelma either.

I had a huge collection of comic books that I kept in an old cardboard box. I had everything—*Lulu* and *Looney Tunes*, *Caspar* and *Heckle and Jeckle*, as well as the usual *Donald Ducks* and *Mickey Mouses*. Although I didn't care for teenaged stories, I even had some *Archies*. I bought them for my cousin Carol, who didn't own a single comic. My Aunt Thelma had forbidden her to read them because they would distort her value system and rot her mind.

Carol and I spent almost every day together that summer, and when she came to my house, she headed straight for my box of comics. She would sit opposite me while I tried to keep a game of checkers or Parcheesi going, a comic book open on her lap, lost in a world of Archie and Veronica.

"Carol's reading comics, Mom," I announced solemnly the first time Carol pulled this stunt. I had left Carol upstairs and sought out my mother at her typewriter like a grim first mate seeking the captain's orders on a mutinous sailor and probably hoping for a keelhauling at the very least.

My mother stopped typing and stared at me for a few moments. She took off her glasses and took my hand. She only did this when we were going to discuss a big issue.

"Cassie," she began softly enough. "Carol's reading comics is really none of our business."

"But Aunt Thelma—," I began.

"Cass." The voice was much firmer now. "Neither of us is obligated to act as Thelma's hatchet man."

Hatchet man! I was impressed. This was a term usually brought out for the enemies, like Roy Cohn and Richard Nixon. We were obviously talking more serious business here than I had realized.

I returned to Carol and the comics with new respect. She and my mother and I were engaged in civil disobedience; we would neither

appease nor accommodate the enemy, in this case my Aunt Thelma. Although I knew in civil disobedience you had to be willing to pay the penalties of your action, I secretly doubted Aunt Thelma's punitive powers as long as my mother was on our side. Besides, who was going to tell Thelma anyway? No spies in our little camp. I felt a sort of gleeful exhilaration.

The second front of the Comic Book War was not as happy for me. It involved a man Carol and I met that summer. He was a peculiar sort of man, like no other adult we had ever met, and so, of course, he attracted us like no other adult we knew. Even his name was strange, K.C., just two initials, a lot like my own name and yet almost no name at all.

K.C. stayed home all day, which was remarkable enough—only mothers, children, and the incredibly aged remained home all day in our world view—but what he did all day long left us almost dumbfounded. He read comic books. Like me, he kept his in a large cardboard box, and he kept that box beside him where he sat in a wicker rocking chair on the front porch, reading and rocking all day long.

Carol and I had noticed K.C. the day he and his wife, Lily, moved in. There was no moving van, just an old flatbed. The man who drove the truck helped Lily carry in a couple of stained mattresses and some boxes and odd pieces of furniture. K.C. himself didn't carry in anything. He didn't direct or pay any attention at all. As soon as the wicker chair was put on the porch with the box of comics next to it, he sat down and began reading. The man who had helped them gave Lily a little hug before he drove off and left them there sitting on their porch.

We waited a decent amount of time, at least fifteen minutes, before we approached. I went first with Carol bringing up the rear, our usual mode of entering the unknown. Lily was sitting on the stoop with her knees pulled up so that you could see her underpants. I was quite struck by this manner of sitting because Aunt Thelma was always telling us no lady would sit that way. At first I wasn't quite sure Lily was a lady, she was so small and skinny. Her long red hair sat way up on her head in a little knot.

"We saw you move in," I began.

"So I see." She spoke in a flat voice and didn't smile or say anything to encourage us.

I wasn't daunted. "You have kids or anything?"

"Depends on how you interpret anything." She rose after speaking and fanned herself with the skirt of her dress. I would have given anything for Aunt Thelma to have seen that. Then she turned and went in and left us alone with K.C.

He had been reading until Lily went in the house. As soon as she left, however, he looked up and bestowed on us a gentle, almost ethereal, smile. I didn't know then how very rare his smiles were or how infrequent his words.

"It's all right," he said in a soft, comforting kind of voice. "Don't worry." Again he proffered that sweet smile.

"Okay." I had no idea what I was agreeing not to worry about, but I felt encouraged.

I approached close enough to get a good look at what he had in his comic box. I was impressed. My comics all were drawn in a broad, flat style, with lots of open, white and pastel spaces. Emotion was indicated with one or two pen strokes, creating an upsidedown crescent to show sadness or a wide circle to show surprise.

The lines in K.C.'s comics twisted and turned to create dark, gnarled creatures, whose faces, or what they had left of faces, expressed agony, depravity, madness, and grief. The color schemes skipped the pastel palette and went for black and blood red and the various colors of putrefaction. In my comics characters stuck with a "Thanks, Mister!" and "Ha, Ha, Ha!" vocabulary. In K.C.'s books the characters gnashed their teeth, moaned, snarled out curses of eternal damnation, and died in death agonies that taxed the limits of my skills in phonics.

Squatting by the box, leafing through pages gloomier than my most inspired visions of the blacklist, I felt like some of my mother's most timid visitors with *Lady Chatterley*. Surely this stuff had to be taboo. People shouldn't see these sights. Carol sat where Lily had been sitting and regarded me coolly. K.C. went back to his reading as if he were alone. I took a couple comic books out of the box and handed one to Carol. Until we heard Aunt Thelma's dinner call, we sat and read, lost in worlds where demented doctors matched wits with the undead, vampires kept an eternal watch for vulnerable necks, and premature burials were a national sport.

The second front had opened up.

"Mom, what is a crypt exactly?"

I kicked Carol under Thelma's table, where we sat eating Campbell's Tomato Soup and grilled cheese sandwiches.

Fortunately Aunt Thelma interpreted a crypt as a sort of code the government used in wartime and didn't stop to wonder where we had picked up this odd word. Unfortunately too many odd words and ideas were popping up in our conversations, not to mention our dreams, to escape her keen ear for very long.

Carol and I were spending our mornings swimming at the municipal pool and riding our bikes around the neighborhood, much as we always had. K.C. never appeared on the porch before noon.

As soon as we spotted K.C. and his box of comics, we were off to the *Vaults of Horror*, the *Chamber of Chills*, and the *Tombs of Terrors* like ghouls to a grave robbing. We passed our afternoons in a spellbound swoon, mesmerized by scenes of vileness previously beyond our imaginations.

I was enthralled, rapt, engrossed.

What's more I was in love. The object of my affection was, of course, K.C. I could not imagine a more enchanting man. He was probably in his late twenties, and his thick black hair was shiny and slicked back in a style at the time I had no name for. He had a tattoo on his arm in the shape of a lily-of-the-valley and a ring in the shape of what I called a skeleton. He called it a death's head. He was usually barefoot and dressed in jeans and a white cotton shirt. His clothes were always very clean. They smelled like Tide, and that must have been Lily's doing. Lily herself was never there. She worked all day, and by some unspoken understanding, Carol and I always left just before her bus was due.

He arrived on the porch around noon with the comic box and a cup of coffee. He took tiny sips from that cup over the course of the afternoon although he never quite finished it. By four thirty when we left, the coffee that remained looked oily and had little rainbows in it.

We rarely spoke although occasionally I would read one of the comics out loud to Carol, who didn't read as well as I did. I noticed once when I was reading that K.C. had put his own book down and was listening. I got up my nerve and climbed up in the wicker chair with him, not on his lap but on one of the broad arms of the wicker rocking chair. I leaned against him, my legs dangling down to the floor. Carol climbed on the other arm. K.C. held the comic. We sat like that all afternoon.

The silence was ominous.

My mother and Aunt Thelma had been screaming at each other for what seemed like hours. Now it was quiet. Aunt Thelma must be gone. I didn't know what to expect. I had heard my mother say, "My God, Thelma, they're only comic books," at least twice, but I was uneasy. Were they only comic books?

She knocked at my door. She always did. We had a high respect for privacy in that house.

When she came in she sat on my bed and put her hand on my head.

"Did you hear Thelma?" she asked. I saw she had a copy of *Tales from the Crypt* in her hand.

I sat up and nodded. "Hard to miss."

My mother laughed. Her habit of treating me like an adult would sabotage her in our upcoming battles.

She put the book in my lap and it fell open to a particularly chilling tale of bondage and decapitation.

"You like this stuff, Cassie?"

"Well,—" I hedged. "It's interesting."

"I wouldn't forbid you to read anything," she began honorably enough, "but I do think—" She seemed stuck for a moment. "I do think too much of this kind of thing could give you bad dreams."

"I don't have bad dreams," I said, not entirely truthfully.

"And could give you a pretty lopsided view of life—" she forged on somewhat lamely, "—if you read too much." She was venturing into unfamiliar waters here, and I could tell they looked pretty murky to her.

"What's too much anyway?" I asked, attacking from the rear.

"We have to talk about that." She was quiet for a while. "Also we have to talk about K.C. And how much you should visit him. Or whether you should visit him at all."

I was speechless. Was my mother blacklisting K.C.? A person I shouldn't visit was an idea so foreign to me it was almost incomprehensible. I was shocked. My entire world view vibrated and began to tilt.

My face must have betrayed my confusion because she conceded almost immediately. "Now I'm not saying you can't ever see him. Maybe we'll go for a visit together. But he's a man, Cassie, and well—he's been pretty sick, he needs a lot of rest and quiet and—"

"And what about friends?" I broke in. "Maybe he needs friends. And so what if he's a man. What about Lennie? What about Mitch?" I went on naming various male friends of my mother's with whom she encouraged an uncle-niece or big brother-little sister relationship. My mother's non sequitur concerning gender so enraged me I almost missed the only important piece of information she was giving me, but her voice kept echoing around the inside of my head as I yelled. I finally managed to grab it.

I stopped shouting and stared at her. "What do you mean he's been sick? What's wrong with him?"

She seemed as relieved as I was to find this more solid ground to meet me on. "He was in Korea, you know, and he's been in a V.A. hospital for a while. You must have noticed he's pretty different, Cassie. He's not what you'd call totally normal."

This was both a hit and a miss for my mother. Normal was not usually held up to me as a goal to strive for. However, I had to admit K.C. was different. And this sickness theory could explain some things, like his box of pills, and how tired and dreadfully weak he always seemed. Sometimes a comic would slip from his grasp. His hands would sink slowly, fingers upward into his lap, and his head would drop, his eyes closed or closing.

"Why did he have to go to the V.A. hospital anyway?" My voice was calm now. "Did he get wounded?"

"That I don't know, honey. Lily was sort of vague about it." She seemed genuinely sorry that she couldn't give me more details about K.C. "I'd tell you if I knew."

And, of course, she would have.

In the end I wasn't strictly forbidden to go to K.C.'s. My mother simply let me know that she very much wanted me to spend my time engaged in more constructive activities; that, personally, she believed a girl with my reading abilities and interests could not possibly enjoy those gory comics; and that she would be deeply disappointed in me if I frittered away my whole summer vacation and bothered K.C. in the bargain.

Carol was simply forbidden to go to K.C.'s, and both she and I found this prohibition much easier to deal with than my mother's profound overestimation of my psyche. All Aunt Thelma's injunction meant was that when I went to K.C.'s, I would borrow a comic or two for Carol. And I did, of course, go to K.C.'s. I went less often and more surreptitiously, but I went. I went when I was sure my mother was busy with the envelope stuffers, and I went between the post office and the market when I was on a bike round of errands.

I agonized over my deceptions. All my experience had been as my mother's ally, not her adversary. I hated our new roles. Also there was the problem of contraband, a concept that had never even existed for me before. I had taken to borrowing comics from K.C. for myself as well as Carol. Theoretically my room was a free zone. My mother had often voiced her opinions on parents who read their kids' letters or searched through their diaries. But just in case, I hid K.C.'s comics under my mattress. I would take them out at night to read by flashlight, my heart pounding at every squeak or groan from the old house.

I began to answer my mother's questions with the same vague replies Carol used with Aunt Thelma. Actually, this experience increased my respect for Carol. Previously I had wondered if her many "I don't knows" and "Can't remembers" indicated some mild form of

retardation. Now I followed her lead, as the more experienced resistance worker.

"So where are you off to?" my mother would ask, leaving her ACLU buddies to follow me to the door.

"I'm not sure," I'd say. "I might ride over and watch them building the new bridge."

"You be careful if you go over there. And stay out of people's way."

"I will," I said. "If I go."

So the secret meetings and the forbidden reading and the lovelorn gazing went on. The summer grew older and hotter, and I grew skilled in the arts of evasion and subterfuge.

And then one particularly hot afternoon, K.C. failed to appear on the front porch. He wasn't there the next day either.

I biked by every fifteen minutes or so both afternoons, but the porch remained empty.

Carol and I sat on my front steps. We were camouflaging our reconnaissance maneuvers with a game of checkers. From our position I could get a tantalizing glimpse of K.C.'s porch, but I couldn't quite tell if the rocking chair held the beloved object of our obsessions or not. We discussed borrowing Carol's father's binoculars but thought we might attract too much attention to our little outpost if we did.

"Maybe he's at the market or something," Carol proposed, pushing a checker aimlessly around the board. "Maybe Lily sent him for groceries."

I rolled my eyes at her. I couldn't believe she could actually picture the frail K.C. pushing a loaded basket of food around a market. We'd never even seen him walk further than across the porch to the rocking chair.

"For two days?"

"Well," she challenged. "What's your idea?"

"I think I should go over and check things out."

Carol squealed and then clapped her hand over her mouth. "You mean go in?"

"Well, at least go up on the porch and knock. Maybe he's just reading inside."

But we both knew it was hotter inside than out, and I'm sure neither of us actually thought K.C. would simply open the door and invite me in.

"I won't tell," Carol assured me quickly. Her assurance made me a little nervous since I was used to taking her loyalty for granted, but I took off anyway.

I knocked halfheartedly a couple times at K.C.'s front screen, but I could see inside. No one was there. The few pieces of furniture Carol and I had watched going in were scattered around, hardly taking up any space at all. The floor was bare, and I could see the countertop in the kitchen, full of pans and dirty dishes. I had never looked in the house before. My attention had been riveted on what was on the porch.

I played absently with the latch and was not surprised to feel it open. I didn't hesitate at all. I walked in. The house was hot and very quiet. The only sounds were the ticking of a clock in the kitchen and my own footsteps over the naked wood floor.

The stairs led up directly from the living room, and I took them without pausing to consider the possibilities of intrusion or danger.

Two small bedrooms took up the whole of the upstairs. K.C. was lying on a mattress on the floor in the smaller of the two. An orange crate holding his coffee cup and the death's head ring served as a night table. It was on its side and filled with comics. The wall held no mirror, only an unframed picture of a woman in a bathing suit and high heels. Other orange crates held clothes, not folded up neatly, just stuffed in.

K.C., dressed only in underwear, was sleeping. He was lying on his stomach, and he looked whiter and thinner than usual, although I couldn't really tell because I had never seen his legs before.

"K.C." I said his name softly, but he didn't move. I said it louder. Then I shouted. Finally, I sat down on the mattress by him and touched his shoulder gently.

His eyes opened, then closed again. I shook him. He woke up a little more this time.

"Hey," he said. "Cassie."

"Yes," I said. "It's me."

He had no response to this. "Should I get you some coffee?" I asked. I had seen a Pyrex pot on the stove.

"No. No, that's okay." He rolled over on his back, his arm over his eyes. I watched him slip back into unconsciousness.

If I hadn't been welcomed, I hadn't exactly been repulsed either. Cautiously, I lay down beside him. I had never been in bed with a man before, let alone a man in his underwear. I looked over at him, struck by the darkness of the curly hairs on his upper legs, the tinyness of the nipples beneath his tee shirt. And between his legs, of course, I looked there too. All the sex education books my mother had gotten from the library featured little boys. I found the lump of K.C.'s penis impressive. Maybe it did make sense to call such a bizarre thing John Thomas.

I gazed long and hard at him. If he had wounds, I couldn't find them.

I pulled a few comics out of the orange crate, put the death's head ring on my thumb, and settled in. These comics were different from the ones we read on the porch. They had titles like *Soldier* and *True War Stories*, and in the stories army men, not demons and zombies, tortured their enemies and sought revenge. The levels of gore and brutality were about equal. I read less avidly than usual, my consciousness drifting between the world of war and the amazing fact of K.C. lying beside me on a bed. Or at least a mattress. The afternoon grew hotter, the room more stifling. I slipped into sleep myself.

When I awoke K.C. was up and pulling on his jeans. He was more animated than I had ever seen him before.

"For Christ's sake, Cassie!" he said. "You shouldn't be up here."

I wondered why he was telling me this now when he had greeted me in a manner I had managed to interpret as friendly a while ago.

"And you don't wanna be reading this stuff." He swept the war comics off the mattress.

"Why not?" I asked, shocked by his anger. "You let me read your other stuff."

"That's different; that's bullshit." He grabbed the comic I had been reading out of my hand and hurled it across the room.

I was speechless. Because I loved him so much, I stared at the comic for several moments, trying to understand him.

"Okay," I said finally. "I won't read it anymore."

"Okay." He seemed the old, tired K.C. again—back to one word utterances. He left me alone and walked down the hall.

When I heard water start to run, I grabbed two of the war comics and sandwiched them between some of the horrors.

"K.C.," I called down the hall. "I have to go. I'm borrowing a few of your comics."

I heard a sound that I took for affirmation, and I left.

That night the sound of sirens awoke me around midnight. My mother got up too, and in our nightgowns and bare feet we stood on the front porch and watched the activities around the ambulance and police car in front of K.C.'s and Lily's. The August night was mild, but I hugged myself as if it were cold.

"I want to go over, Mom," I begged. "Maybe they need help."

She squeezed me to her. "I know you do, Cassie. But you can't. They've got all the help they need."

In the morning she told me what she knew. K.C. had taken so many pills he had fallen into something deeper than sleep, something

almost like death. They were taking him back to the V.A. hospital for a while.

I sat at the breakfast table, my cereal untouched, my bare legs swinging. On my thumb I wore the death's head ring I had accidentally carried away yesterday afternoon. I stared at it forlornly. Maybe it had magic powers. Maybe it had been protecting him. Maybe this was all my fault.

"But how much did he take?" I asked in a small voice. Even little kids knew you had to be careful with medicine. "How could he make such a big mistake?"

My mother left the sink where she had been standing and came and sat opposite me.

"Sometimes, Cassie, a person can be in so much pain he doesn't worry about taking too much. It's even possible to want to take too much."

I stopped swinging my legs and sat absolutely still attempting to absorb this. Although her meaning was not crystal clear to me, her words filled me with a deeper horror than any of the terrible comics I had been gorging on that summer.

"Was K.C. in so much pain?"

"I think he might have been." She reached across the table and took my hand. After a while she cleared her throat. "Maybe you shouldn't tell Carol anything about what I've just told you. Thelma may want to tell her something different."

I wasn't absolutely sure what my mother had told me, but I knew it was something important, something adult, something so terrible, a child like Carol was better off not knowing about it.

I nodded at my mother. I agreed with her completely.

The week before school started I sat alone on my front porch and watched the man who had moved K.C. and Lily in carry the same old furniture out.

My tenth birthday was approaching and I felt much older than my cousin Carol, almost like a teenager. Although we would become constant companions again in a few years, our relationship was entering a hiatus now, and I regarded her as if from the other side of a chasm.

It had been a long strange summer. The Rosenbergs were dead, Senator McCarthy was a hero to some of the kids I knew, and my mother and her friends seemed to be writing their letters with a little less enthusiasm. And for some unknown reason, *Lady Chatterley* had disappeared from her position of honor on our coffee table.

I watched Lily and the truck driver for a while as they moved between the house and the flat bed. Then I got the comics and K.C.'s ring from my room.

I walked over to Lily's house slowly. She was arranging newspaper-wrapped packages in one of the many cardboard boxes on the porch. I saw that K.C.'s comic box was among them.

"How's K.C.?" I asked, dropping the comics I had borrowed into the box with the others.

She stopped working and looked at me. Her face was flushed with the heat and streaked with dust and sweat.

"So-so," she answered.

"I have something of his," I said, slipping the ring off my thumb and holding it out toward her.

As she took it from me, she made a little sound. Then she held it for a moment, cupped in her hand, like a baby bird.

Lily is K.C.'s wife! The thought flashed through me like a little shock of electricity, followed by an image of the lily-of-the-valley tattoo on K.C.'s arm.

Suddenly I felt bashful and embarrassed. I wondered if I would have the nerve to ask the question I had come to ask her. "Lily—" I began tentatively.

She broke out of the reverie the ring had inspired and looked up, a bit surprised I thought, to find me still standing awkwardly in front of her.

I took a deep breath and toed the box containing K.C.'s library of war and horror.

"Did the comics make K.C. sick?" I asked. "Will he get better if we don't let him read them?"

We both stared down at the box of comics at our feet. I nudged it again with my toe, humiliated by the impropriety of a kid like me talking this way to a grownup like her. I expected her to laugh.

But she seemed to regard my idea seriously and even bent and touched one of the comic's covers as if she was about to pick it up and leaf through it to see if the contents just might be evil enough to induce despair.

"I don't think so," she said slowly, stroking the comic gently with one finger. Then she smiled at me, a small, wistful smile, and the first that I had ever seen on her.

As I stood there in the street with Lily, I understood I would never see K.C. again. I turned abruptly and ran down the street toward home, and by the time I stopped to call back to her, "Tell him I'll love him forever," I realized I was so far away she could no longer hear my voice. □

Junk into Art— Sculpture-Hangings by Rema Mandel

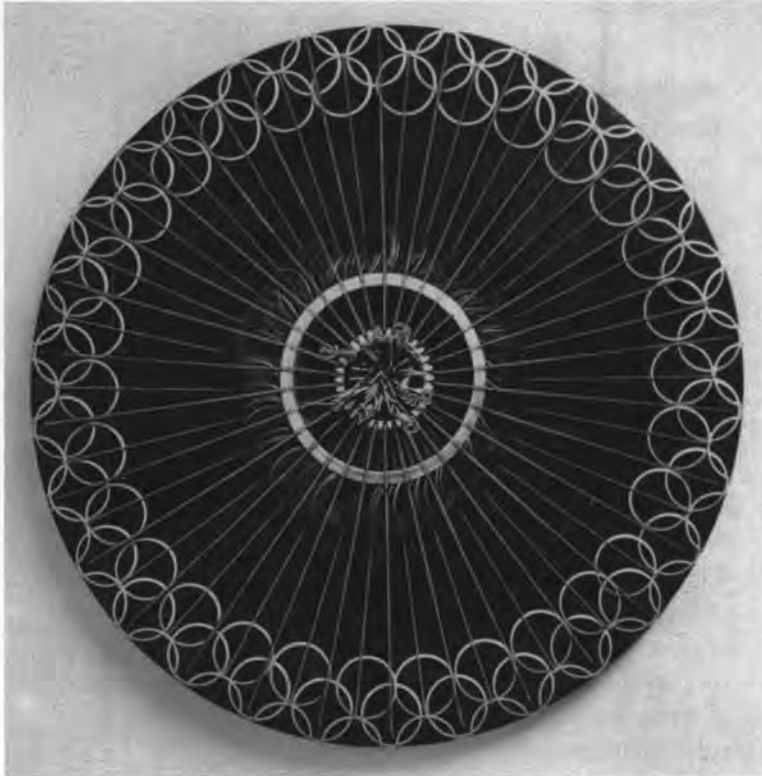
“Creative people have always used their environments for expression,” says artist Rema Mandel. “The American Indians on the river used clay. I use junkyards.”

In her 20-year search to discover how creativity can accommodate our industrial environment, Mandel seems to have found an answer in her space-age wall hangings. In these works she uses industrial materials such as metals, high-density plastics, seat-belt webbing, springs, and wire. But even such an eclectic medium needs rules, so Mandel created her own for these highly individual works: “Art needs limitations as well as freedom,” she observes. Traditional wall hangings are woven of textiles, and Mandel follows this tradition by using no welding, power tools, glue, or artificial distortion. “The media have to support themselves.”

Her works “explore and exploit the properties of the materials.” For example, “Fringed Hanging” displays properties of covered modern wire. “You can bend it, twist it, strip it, thread it, wind it, fringe

*Rema Mandel with
one of her works.*





Rema Mandel, Rondeau Construction. Aluminum, steel, wood steel springs. 32" diameter.

it, coil it, braid it, knot it, wrap it, split it." The materials inspire the design of the work. Coiled springs evolved into the circular work "Rondeau Construction."

Mandel's studio is her home. She creates her metal works in a lower-level studio and displays many of them on the ground floor. The second floor houses another studio for textiles and paintings. Mandel graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Art as a design student, working in paint and fiber arts. She eventually took a step further to work with mixed media and industrial materials. She still works on textile projects (such as beautifully crafted jackets), as well as wall hangings and paintings.

The wall hangings, which are often regarded as sculpture, have been shown in Canton, Cleveland, and Youngstown. Mandel once had a display tent at Cleveland's Riverfest, and factory workers who came by "derided the work because it was familiar. They wondered how I had the nerve to use their workaday materials for art." But she forgives such reactions. "You don't like anything you don't understand." She is philosophical: "There is some pretty bad everything and some pretty wonderful everything out there." The artist's role is to reveal the wonderful that is hidden among the bad.

The creation of a space-age wall hanging begins with the "study of the material and what its properties suggest in the way of design.

If you study the material long enough," Mandel explains, "it will speak to you. The best way an artist can work is to love her materials and explore all its properties."

For this artist, choosing the materials is a "mental exercise." "Everything from nature, even metals, can give subliminal messages. All materials can reflect on our lives. I'm a 'material junkie.' I'm hooked on finding beautiful fabrics, metals—anything that attracts the eye is fair game."

As she chooses the materials and lets them "suggest" their own design, Mandel also finds messages and meanings for them, ranging from social awareness (the deserted child in a textile work) to the horror of the Holocaust (in a sculptural piece of screaming faces). But there are also pieces without political overtones, such as one hanging in Mandel's home: "There is no message in this one," she says. "The purpose was to recycle my husband's ties!"

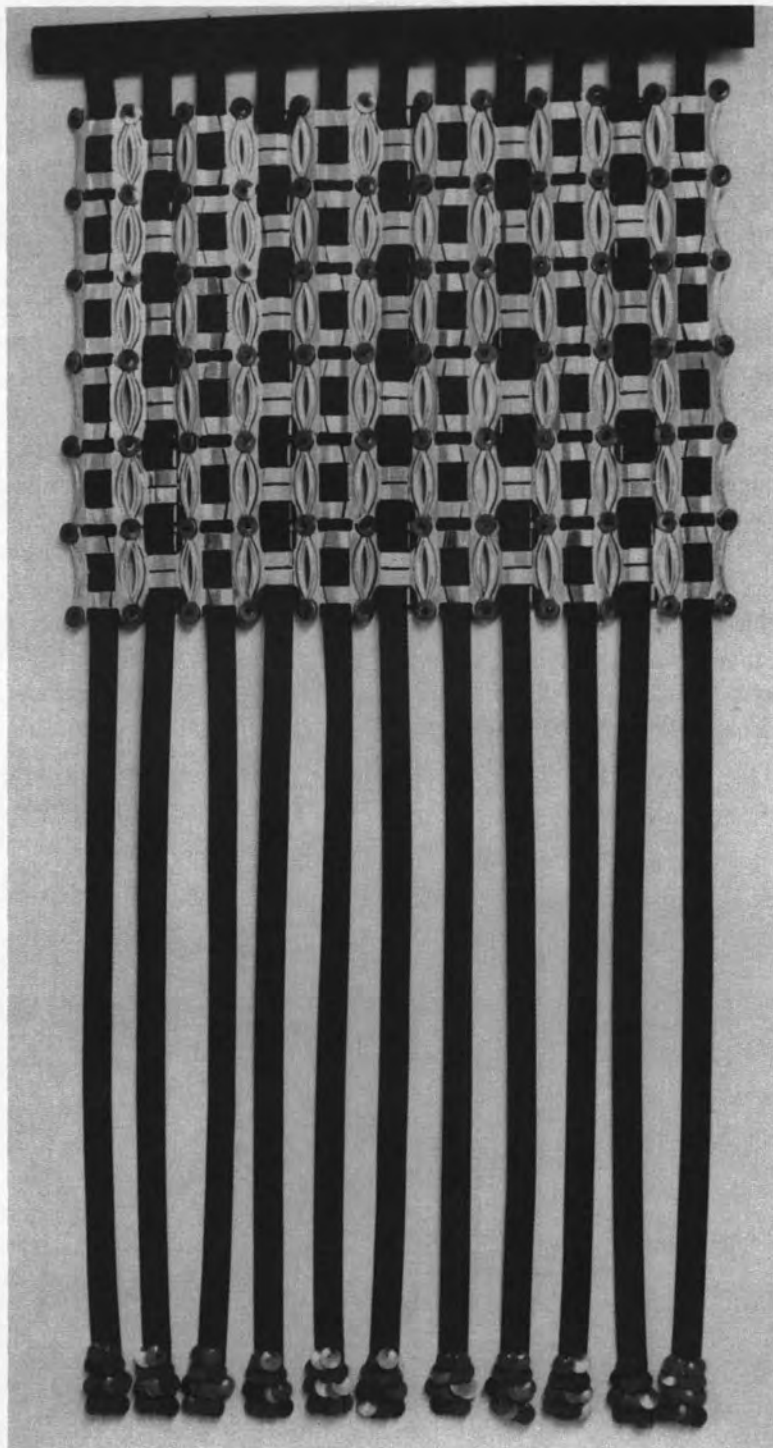
"I see the electronic age engulfing our lives," she exclaimed, "but the inclusion of this reality will join countless past revolutionary changes to blend into the inevitable pastiche of artistic expression." Currently she is studying computer graphics as yet another artist's tool. Is it possible, then, for art to accommodate our industrial environment? It has to, Mandel answers. "Art is life and life is art!" □

—Elise Bonza

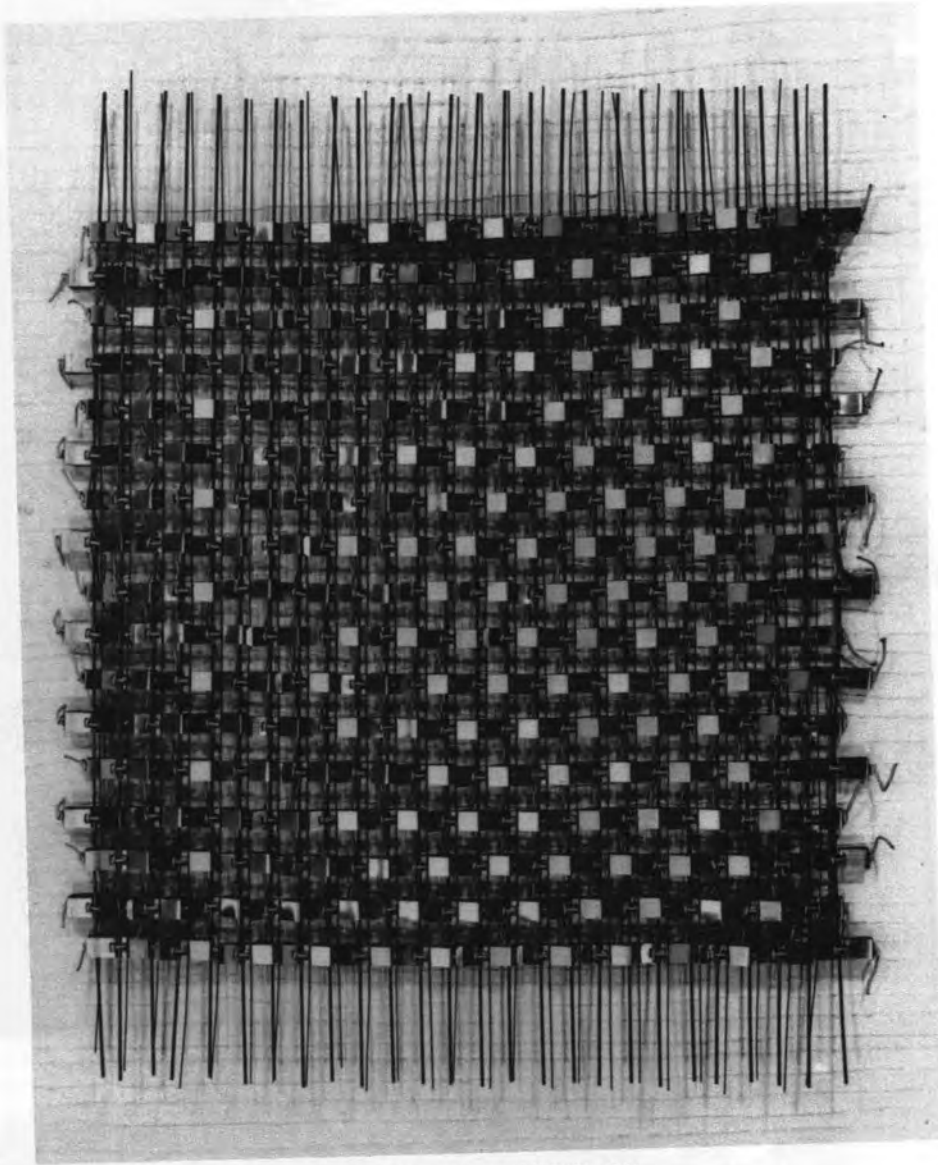
▲ Elise J. Bonza, a student in the graduate English program at Cleveland State University, interviewed Rema Mandel while working as an intern at The Gamut. Bonza has taught junior high school and courses in English as a second language, and has worked as a disc jockey and a writer/editor for the *Wooster Voice*. Her poems have appeared in *The Artful Dodge* and *Whiskey Island*.



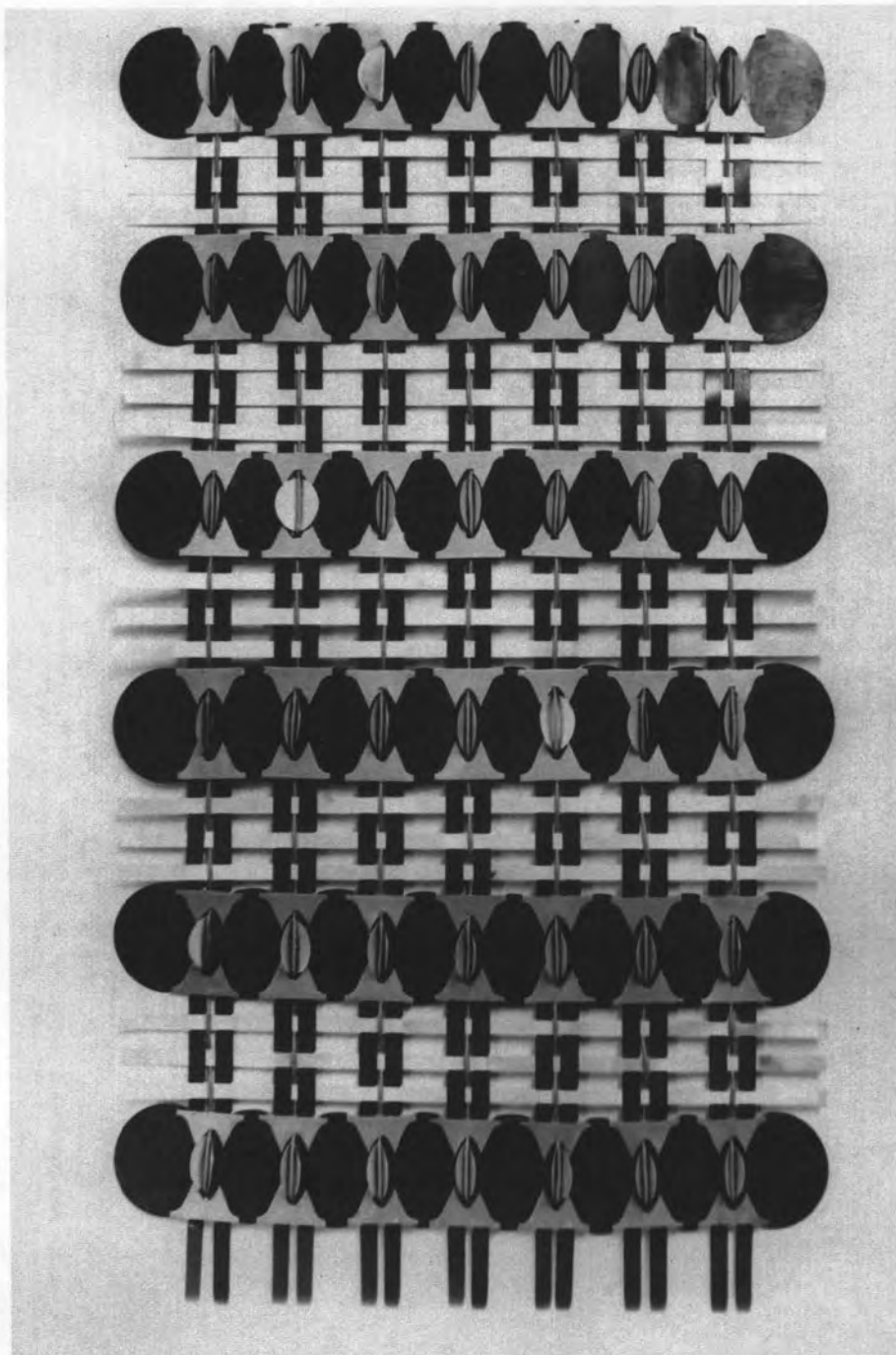
The artist at work.



*Rema Mandel, Hang-
ing Loose. Stainless
steel, seat belting,
enameled steel. 19" X
38".*



Rema Mandel, Clip Artistry. Steel, wire, copper. 29 1/2" x 36".



Rema Mandel. Kayak. Steel, aluminum, wire. 13 1/2" X 17 1/8".

Photos of Rema Mandel's works are by George Jeter.

Human Survival from Conception to Old Age

Embryonic and fetal failure is much more frequent than popularly believed

Peter C. Baker

There is a widespread belief in our culture that human embryonic development is an exquisite process of near perfection. Although the act of conception itself is treated from a variety of moral and clinical perspectives, the embryo's development is usually described in reverent, almost magical, terms. Reproductive information for the general public usually comes from check-out stand tabloids or from science programs on educational television, where beautiful photography and a grandfatherly voice unfold for us the faultless and intricate history of our own beginnings. Certainly embryonic development is wonderfully complex, but the level of perfection usually assumed is incorrect.

Patterns of reproduction and death

All of us who manage to get through a high-school biology class and later see a few science programs on television have a fairly good sense that in nature, reproduction is generally a very profligate business. Each oak tree makes many acorns every year, but the oak population remains fairly constant. The same is true of polliwogs and frogs. Historically humans have also conformed to this pattern, although the numbers are not nearly so extravagant. In modern times, for reasons that are debatable, the human population pattern has shifted.¹ As we all know, people used to have large families but only a few children would survive. Death rates in infancy and early childhood were very high and even the few that grew to adulthood could not expect to live to old age. Most were killed by infectious diseases. There is a popular myth that famine and war are coequal with infectious disease as the cause of human death and population control. But we are now ending a century in which famine continues unchecked, death in war has achieved the efficiency of a

▲ *Peter C. Baker, a native of San Francisco, received a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of California at Berkeley. He is now a professor, teaching embryology, in the biology department at Cleveland State University. Outside interests include building miniature ship models.*

manufacturing process, and yet there is no shortage of new humans. Infectious disease is the important variable. Modern medicine and public health activities have decreased the frequency of death by infectious disease and the by-product of such change is an increase in deaths by cancer, heart attack, and stroke, all degenerative diseases of advancing age. In a world of changing patterns of death we have shifted our study of human health and now worry less about syphilis and more about stroke, less about childhood fevers and more about reproductive error.

Human reproductive error

Our awareness of the magnitude of reproductive error is expanding while our ability to do anything about it is either static or embroiled in legal and ethical debate. We can admonish pregnant women to take no drugs, drink no alcohol, stay away from x-rays, eat well, and see a doctor, but even if they followed all these warnings, the frequency of birth defects would be reduced by only a very small amount. Prenatal diagnosis and elective abortion would reduce it a tiny bit more. The frequency of birth defects in the population, if we consider only those individuals who make it to birth, is about 15 percent.² They come in varying degrees of severity and for the most part are from causes unknown, and thus unpreventable. The bleak expectation that there is little we can now do to alleviate the problem must however be balanced with the growing knowledge that a better part of reproductive error never survives to birth.

Not long ago one could say that about one of five pregnancies failed to make it to birth and that about a fourth of those failures involved faulty individuals. Further study and new diagnostic methods now demonstrate that the failure rate is much, much higher and so is the rate of defect for those failures.

Failures in late pregnancy seldom go unnoticed. The fetus is too large and the events of miscarriage too dramatic to ignore. For such events then we have pretty good data about their number. Early failures are more cryptic. During the first weeks of pregnancy the embryo and its associated placental tissues are so small (fractions of an inch in diameter) that their loss is frequently perceived as little more than a late menstrual period with a larger than usual amount of hemorrhage. Not only are early embryos smaller, so that their failure goes unnoticed, but they are also in early stages of formation so possible defects are difficult to determine. Our growing ability to detect pregnancy at its earliest stages and to discover, more accurately than ever before, whether embryos that fail in early pregnancy are flawed has provided us with new insights into the waste that seems to be part of the human reproductive process.

The beginning of a new individual occurs when an egg is fertilized by a sperm. The product of fertilization is a zygote. We have no precise way of knowing how many zygotes are flawed and soon die. The developing zygote is carried down the fallopian tube to the uterus. It arrives in the uterus on about the fourth day, floats about for a couple of days, and then starts to implant. Implantation involves burrowing into the tissue lining the interior of the uterus until the embryo is completely surrounded by maternal tissue. After fertilization the most important event in the embryo's life is implantation. Failure to implant means death. How many fail to implant is difficult to determine but estimates run to as high as 15 percent. How many of those failures are themselves defective is unknown. Defects at the very earliest stages of embryonic life therefore are still to a large extent beyond the limits of analysis.

Once implantation starts, the embryo is within the range of modern analytic methods. As the embryo implants it releases chemicals, hormones, into the surrounding maternal tissues. The hormones, which alter the mother's physiology to accommodate pregnancy, are picked up in the maternal bloodstream and eventually some end up in the urine and can now be detected at preposterously low levels. Pregnancies in their very early stages can thus be confirmed weeks before the mother has any clue that she is pregnant. Therefore we can compare the number of pregnancies revealed by newer hormone detection methods from urine with the number of pregnancies detected some weeks later by more traditional means. The difference represents lost embryos. It is estimated with this approach that between one-fifth to one-fourth of implanted embryos do not survive to the time of the usual clinical diagnosis of pregnancy. In most of these cases the mothers do not even know that they were pregnant. From then until birth the loss proportion is lower but the total destruction between implantation and birth is conservatively estimated at about one third. When we factor in possible loss before implantation the rate ranges around one half. This is a conservative estimate; some would set the frequency nearer three fifths. None of these estimates are within the range of acorns and polliwogs but they are far larger than most people imagine.

Data to estimate the number that suffer from defects among the failed reproductive events is difficult to obtain. Studies are few and any attempt to extrapolate from those few with great precision is impossible.

Generally the term *embryo* is used to designate an individual up through the eighth week of pregnancy; after that the term *fetus* is used. Some studies of defect differentiate between these two periods but many do not. The longer a pregnancy continues before it

terminates the better the chance that its status relative to birth defect will be defined and enter into the public health statistics. The reasons are obvious. The older and larger the specimen, the better chance for detailed description and the more structures that can be scrutinized for possible deficiency. The younger and smaller the specimen, the more difficult it is to analyze and the greater the chance it will not be recovered at all.

Investigations of the individuals from pregnancies that terminate during the embryonic period indicate that the frequency of anatomical defect is probably in the neighborhood of 50 percent. Estimates as high as 84 percent and as low as 32 percent have been reported, so there is considerable range between reports. The figure of 50 percent is a conservative generalization and one would not be surprised to see this figure get larger as more studies become available. Investigations of defects in individuals from pregnancies terminating during the fetal period fall rather consistently around 25 percent. There is reason to believe that this figure is fairly accurate as far as it goes, but it could increase as a result of better methods of testing for biochemical or physiological deficits in specimens that manifest no anatomical irregularities. The use of such methods would undoubtedly send both the embryonic and the fetal failure rates higher. One might expect this to happen in the future, but not quickly, because such extensive analysis is costly.

It can be reasonably said that most conceptions never get born, and many that fail, perhaps half, are clearly defective. Countless pregnancies initiate and conclude without any overt recognition of their existence.

Among the analytical methods much used in recent years is the study of human chromosomes, especially from fetal sources before birth, through amniocentesis, and from embryonic and fetal tissue following spontaneous abortion or miscarriage. Chromosomes are the structures in living cells that carry the hereditary information of an organism and control the ongoing business of its life processes. We can now tell when there are broken, relocated, missing, and extra chromosomes. These studies reveal that about two thirds of failed embryos and one fifth of failed fetuses have abnormal chromosomes.³

A large proportion of chromosomal error is called trisomy and involves the existence of one extra chromosome added to the usual number of forty-six. There are twenty-three ways in which trisomy can occur, one for each of the twenty-three chromosome pairs that humans have in their cells. All but one of the twenty-three ways do occur but only about a half dozen ways can make it to birth and be compatible with postnatal life; and even in those cases, few survive.

Most trisomic zygotes fail in pregnancy and it is estimated that one-fourth of failed pregnancies between about five weeks and twenty-five weeks of gestation are trisomic. The frequency of trisomic births increases manifold with maternal age. Thus trisomic errors, such as Down syndrome, are many times more common among older mothers.⁴

These data should not suggest that chromosomal errors like trisomy are the only flaws that cause pregnancies to terminate. Chromosome studies are easier to perform than many other kinds of investigation, so they tend to be utilized first. Most failed pregnancies are from unknown causes. While the future will probably provide us with more information and better explanations, the progress will be slow. This area of research is not near the top of the list of recent biomedical research priorities.

Male Inferiority

For every 100 female babies born there are 106 male babies born. If we check back through gestation, the ratio becomes more extreme. When failed pregnancies are counted, the sex ratio shifts significantly toward males. About 150 males are lost by miscarriage and stillbirth for every 100 females lost. When the reasons for the deaths are sought through autopsy, the sex ratio continues to be unbalanced toward males for almost all types of causes of death. During earlier stages of pregnancy the sex ratio is also skewed toward males. It would appear that more male zygotes are produced than female zygotes and during gestation more males than females fail. In all probability more males are defective than females. Studies of neonatal death, moreover, indicate that within the first week of life more than 150 males die for every 100 females that do.⁵

Growing up and growing old

Males continue to die at rates greater than females even after the hazards of pregnancy and early postnatal life. By the end of the second decade of life the ratio of males to females has reached parity. For almost all categories of causes of death males exceed females during those years. The trend continues. Males go right on dying at higher rates than females until around the age of 80, when the female death rate starts exceeding the male death rate. By then, however, there are about 150 females for every 100 males. These differences in rate of death have historic correlates. As we look back, the ratio of males to females dying at any given age becomes more and more equal. Only a couple of hundred years ago it might well have been equal since most deaths were the result of infectious disease, and microbes tend to be unprejudiced. Life back then was short and harsh for both sexes.⁶

Conclusion

The fact that men do not survive as well as women has been common knowledge for many years. But the fact that they have more trouble just getting born and that this situation is the result of being more imperfect than females is less well known. Males are more fragile than females from conception to eventual death, so that there are perhaps half again as many males conceived as females to produce a rough equality during youth and early adulthood. The progress of modern medicine has allowed males a longer life and females a still longer one.

Over and above the difference in survival rates of males and females during all stages of existence is the fact that so very many conceptions fail before birth. The fact that many, some think a majority, of the failures are flawed only reinforces the view that reproduction in humans is not so perfect a process as the nature programs on television suggest. For each of us alive today there are one or two siblings that didn't make it—and the majority of those were brothers. □

Notes

¹Modern medicine, public health, and control of infectious disease are usually considered the cause of increasing longevity in human populations. There is not universal agreement here however, and for a very different discussion emphasizing psychosocial factors see *The Health of Nations* by L.A. Sagen, 1987, Basic Books, Inc., New York.

²The frequency of birth defect in the population is not entirely clear at this time. Levels of 5% of live births were considered fair estimates some years ago. Levels of 15% are now considered more accurate. This is not to suggest that the frequency is increasing but rather that our monitoring has improved and genetic factors have been given more significance. At one time the focus was on anatomical malformation at birth, more recently we have considered heritable factors that may express their negative actions later in life. There is even a growing body of work that is attempting to work out behavioral problems that may be related to the reproductive process. One of the sad aspects of the modern "information explosion" is that most news about birth defect seen in the so-called "media" is inaccurate or misrepresented. In a series of very informative chapters at the end of *Teratogen Update* (edited by J. Sever and R. Brent, 1986, Alan R. Liss Inc., New York) Robert L. Brent considers many of these problems and goes into detail about irresponsible behavior relative to birth defect and the legal apparatus.

³These figures about failed pregnancies come from a variety of places. Some representative sources include:

1. T. Shepard, A. Fantel, and J. Fitzsimmons, 1989, *Teratology* Volume 39, pp. 325-331.
2. A. Wilcox, C. Weinberg, J. O'Connor, D. Baird, J. Schlatterer, R. Canfield, E. Armstrong, and B. Nisula, 1988, *New England Journal of Medicine* Volume 319, pp. 189-194.
3. B. Poland, J. Miller, M. Harris, and J. Livingston, 1981, *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica* Supplement 102, pp. 1-32.
4. E. Volpe, 1987, *American Zoologist* Volume 27, pp. 697-714. This last article is filled with interesting discussions of reproductive issues.

⁴Trisomy 21, Down syndrome, is extensively studied and it has been estimated that fewer than a quarter of the individuals with the condition even survive to birth. For one kind of trisomy involving the sex chromosomes (XXY individuals) about half make it to birth, while for another sex chromosome trisomy (XYY individuals) essentially all survive to birth. For all trisomy situations it is estimated that only a small percent (around 6%) survive to birth. This subject

has been well-reviewed by T. Hassold and P. Jacobs, 1984, *Annual Review of Genetics* Volume 18, pp. 69-97.

⁵These figures are from far fewer reports than just straightforward embryonic and fetal survival articles, but the conclusions are difficult to argue with. Again, some representative sources are:

1. A. Jakobovits, A. Jakobovits, and A. Viski, 1987, *Early Human Development* Volume 15, pp. 131-135.
2. W. James, 1989, *Journal of Theoretical Biology* Volume 139, pp. 59-67.

⁶These kinds of data are available from many sources. One of the most interesting of these is *U.S., A Statistical Portrait of the American People*, 1983, edited by A. Hacker, Viking Press, New York. The book is filled with interesting population data including bits of minutiae like the number of accidents involving musical instruments, accidents at railroad crossings involving motorcycles, the number of deaths by lightning, etc.

Words Into Plowshares

Steve Bonner



▲ *Steve Bonner is a systems engineer and a Ph.D. student in mathematics at the Catholic University of America. He has written several public-domain software programs for the Commodore Amiga home computer, including a human evolution tutorial. Several of his articles have appeared in the linguistic quarterly, Verbatim. Bonner has an ongoing interest in human evolution, linguistics, and cosmology.*

Some years ago, *Smithsonian* had a feature called "What Is It?" It consisted of a picture of some object along with a description. The object was usually a kind of tool whose function was lost, perhaps as a result of changes in fashion or technology, like a bathing machine or a bootjack. Readers were invited to send in any information they might have about the item. The process of obsolescence affects tools much more rapidly than other elements of society, like works of art, games, or clothing, whose purpose can be ascertained long after it has stopped being worn. The same process affects language.

Words are tools. When we encounter a linguistic relic, we seek to discover its original function. As with mechanical tools, we sometimes have only a word's morphology with which to work. But this can lead us astray. A pitchfork and a salad fork have physical similarities, but very different functions. In the same way, we cannot assume any semantic link between words which merely look alike. A *gaggle* of geese is one thing—a *googol* of geese is quite another! (A *googol* is a one followed by a hundred zeros, a number larger than the quantity of atoms in all the galaxies we can observe.) The potential confusion is greater when dealing with archaic or extinct languages.

It sometimes seems that the words disguise themselves, as if to defy our attempts at understanding. For example, in Latin there are *deponent* verbs—verbs which superficially look like passive verbs, but which have active meanings. On investigation we learn that they are remnants of the older Greek middle voice, in which the subject of the sentence acts as both agent and recipient of the action. Indeed, without some sort of Rosetta stone, an entire language may remain unintelligible. It is only now, after decades of research, that the Mayan language is sufficiently well understood that decipherment is possible. Interestingly, the word *decipherment* is the word usually used to describe such a translation process. The word can also refer to the decryption of a message written in secret code. With limited

knowledge of a remote culture, and no dictionary, the level of difficulty involved is essentially the same as that of breaking a secret code.

Physical tools allow us to reshape the world around us; words, we believe, allow us to manipulate thoughts. We may formulate an idea using words and convey it to another person. It can be examined and analyzed by means of discussion using such tools as other words. As simple machines, such as levers and pulleys do, words permit us to consider ideas and revise them. As a magnifying glass lets us see imperfections in material objects, a linguistic dialectic can reveal flaws in a logical proposition, so that they may be corrected. Our simple word-machines can also be combined to form more complicated semantic devices. In this way, we make possible syllogisms, debating teams, and formal propositional logic.

In natural languages, words are created as they are needed. It is not known when language began: this question is still controversial and unsettled among linguists. It seems highly probable, however, that the vocabulary used by the earliest speakers consisted of words affecting their survival, as suggested by the 50,000-year old cave paintings of Lascaux. The earliest linguistic tool kit probably did not contain words for *ennui* or *mauve*. The earliest stone tools are hardly recognizable as tools at all. They seem to be little more than roundish paperweights that have been smashed around a bit. Archaeologists, however, recognize the stones for what they are. One wonders what it would be like to reach into some ancient burial ground and pull out a fossilized word. Would we recognize it? It probably would not have many of the traits we have come to associate with words in modern languages. Did hominid verbs possess tense? (One can hardly imagine a person speaking one million years ago using the past tense! Should we refer to a *past paleolithic participle*?) Did the speakers of *Proto-Indo-Human* have a notion of the subjunctive mood? If something was not actually transpiring, did they care? One might speculate that planning for a future event, such as a hunt, required a grasp of the potential. Were nouns inflected, as they are in many modern languages? Can we imagine a Neanderthal vocative case: *Et tu, Ooke?*

During periods of migration or conquest, ships laden with goods sail the world over, carrying with them a cargo of language as well. Extinct trade routes can be traced by the characteristic remnants of belongings left behind by travelers. Nouns and verbs are scattered across the countryside like shards of pottery. The British Isles were occupied by the Romans on several occasions. Each time, Latin words were left behind. Although some of the words have fallen into disuse, a great many are still used today, either in their original forms or as cognates. Sometimes such borrowings are used in ways hardly contemplated by the original users. Consider the Latin words *video*

**A past
paleolithic
participle?**

and *exit*. These literally mean *I see* and *he departs*, respectively. Although used today as nouns, they were originally verb forms. The purist might argue that such alterations constitute an abuse of language. Using a word in a manner never intended for it is a bit like using a spanner to drive in a nail. It works, but it is awkward and possibly dangerous. Why, for example, should *video* be taken from the first person, but *exit* from the third? I have always thought that theaters should mark exits with large, red EXEUNT signs. In case of fire, wouldn't a lot of people leave?

We needn't go back to the dawn of language itself to be aware of the invention of new words. The process occurs every day, and has been going on throughout history. Before it was realized that celestial bodies travel in elliptical orbits, the term *epicycle* was used to describe the complex system of circles-within-circles thought to govern planetary motion. When early chemists needed a word for a substance they thought was responsible for combustion, they created the word *phlogiston*, from the Greek verb for *burn*. When an object burned, it was thought to give up all its phlogiston. (Such an object was then said to be *dephlogisticated*.) These words, together with other terms, such as *bodily humor*, *phrenology*, and *aether*, are no longer used. They describe phenomena or hypotheses about them no longer held to be valid. We have placed these lexical tools in civilization's attic and left it to future generations to rediscover their functions. But there are many more examples of words created for specific purposes which have remained in use. One striking example is the word *robot*. Karel Čapek coined the term in 1920 in his play *R.U.R.* by modifying the Czech word *robotit*, meaning *to drudge*. Clearly, we have use for such a word today and are likely to in the foreseeable future.

When necessary, words can also be wielded as weapons. The modern-day citizen is all too familiar with the barrage of assaults from the sophisticated machinery of an advertising campaign. Political campaigns leave behind them battlefields littered with discarded tactical phrases. *Kinder, gentler. Safety net. Normalcy* (coined in ignorance by Warren G. Harding). It isn't important whether the overall message is meaningful, so long as the right words are invoked. It has been said that warfare in the modern age is often carried out by litigation instead of military force. Briefcases at the ready, battalions of lawyers wage war against opposing forces. Latin phrases are lobbed mercilessly at the heart of the enemy's main argument. The victor survives to harangue another day. One wonders if these tools of verbal war will ever become obsolete, and if so, into what sort of linguistic plowshares they will be beaten? □

On Committing Acts of Psychotherapy

Mark Edward Koltko

At dinner parties, when people ask me what I do, I am often tempted to say, “I commit psychotherapy.” (I have worked in neighborhood clinics and with social service agencies. Currently I work with a variety of adults, with students in a college counseling center, and with the terminally ill and the aged at a nursing home.)

I would describe what I do in this fashion because other verbs do not capture the flavor which psychotherapy has for me. To say “I do psychotherapy” reminds me of saying “let’s do lunch” or “I do tennis”: the phrase smacks of superficial involvement, while psychotherapy demands something much deeper.

To say “I conduct psychotherapy” puts me in the position of a director, which is not my relation to my clients. It sounds as if I were some sort of Leonard Bernstein of the soul, leading an orchestra of one. I suspect that symphony conductors know where they are headed when they begin conducting a concert. In contrast, it is the nature of psychotherapy that I do not usually know where the work will lead us, in any definite sense. I walk along with my clients, much more than I lead them.

The phrase “I am engaged in psychotherapy” is almost right. It has the flavor of struggle, which is part and parcel of good psychotherapy. In military terms, the “rules of engagement” guide the decision to commit to a battle. Yet, the verb has *too* warlike a taste, it is too adversarial.

But the phrase “I commit psychotherapy” has certain advantages. One “commits” crimes, adultery, blasphemy, or sin in general, and psychotherapy has similarities to each of these.

Like crime, psychotherapy is risky and dangerous. Anything truly powerful is dangerous; if psychotherapy were safe, it would not have the power necessary to accomplish real change and growth. And because it is dangerous, psychotherapy can also turn out terrifically badly. Permanent emotional scars or physical death are not



▲ *“I have been engaged in committing acts of psychotherapy in a formal and professional sense for almost seven years,” says Mark Edward Koltko. “During this time, I have come to understand that psychotherapy deserves the same kind of T-shirt slogan that the artists have: ‘Therapy is Not Nice.’” Koltko is now working on a Ph.D. in counseling psychology at New York University. He is also involved in several book projects, one of which is a narrative of his experiences as a Mormon missionary in Japan.*

unheard of as results of psychotherapy gone bad. Most psychotherapists, though, do not talk of these things, except among themselves, and that rarely, perhaps in the privacy of the consulting room of one's clinical supervisor, as closely closeted as jewel thieves huddled over a table in the back room of a waterfront bar.

Like adultery, psychotherapy involves an intimate relationship between two people, two souls, which occurs outside the bonds of marriage. It is a peculiar intimacy, to be sure. The relationship is never meant to be permanent, and it is usually one-sided. But however lopsided and unrequited it must be, psychotherapy is intimacy nonetheless, an intimacy which in some ways necessitates a deeper sharing than other intimate relationships. One can keep secrets from one's spouse or lover and yet sustain a reasonably healthy relationship. But if one keeps secrets from one's psychotherapist, the whole purpose of the relationship is lost.

Like blasphemy, psychotherapy often involves calling into question the central myths upon which one has founded one's life. By "myth," I do not mean something that is necessarily false or incorrect; a myth is an organizing story, a statement or narrative that gives meaning and value to life. We each carry around a set of guiding myths about the self, parents, relationships, and the universe. These myths help us cope with reality, but beyond a certain point they may prevent our emotional growth. I speak, for example, of the myth of "I must be a perfect lover/scholar/manager/spouse/parent to be a good person," the myth of "my parents were perfectly proper people," and the myth of "only twisted people have desires like *that*," among many others. These myths serve a purpose, but further growth demands that eventually one question them. Yet questioning often evokes an emotional reaction similar to questioning someone's religion in blunt terms: a reaction of horror at the blasphemy. For what are our myths, if not a kind of personal religion? For psychotherapy to be effective, nothing can be beyond questioning, including the covert religion we carry around, our private Pantheons and their stories.

Psychotherapy may not seem like "sin in general," in the sense of sin as something which separates one from the good, from one's own true nature, or from God (however defined). But during psychotherapy the client does have free rein to *discuss* that which is really or purportedly sinful, sometimes at great length. Indeed, it is frequently the case that progress in therapy depends on such a discussion. There are those who feel that this in itself is sinful. My own experience, though, is that, when psychotherapy is properly committed, it is much more likely that the client will have a clearer,

more articulated set of values, and live in harmony with them, being more authentic with other people. If this is sinful, then let us sin.

No doubt there are those who object to the dark flavor I give to psychotherapy, by associating it with terms like “crime” and so forth. I suspect that this association will be particularly galling to people who feel that virtue involves not only giving one’s allegiance to the light, but also refusing to actively acknowledge that the dark exists in one’s personality at all. Most of my co-conspirators in the commission of psychotherapy, however, act on the supposition that a fearful ignorance of one’s dark side only gives power to the darkness.

Building an addition onto one’s home may require strengthening the underlying foundation as a preliminary task. Strengthening the foundation of a home is an incredibly filthy job, which may involve work with varieties of dirt from centuries-old dust to raw sewage. Yet it is often necessary work. In much the same way, my clients’ personal growth and liberation from their personal demons often require first digging through the details of emotions surrounding incidents of incest, rape, emotional abandonment and abuse, obsession, attempts at suicide or homicide. Only a voyeur *enjoys* this, and voyeurism works against one’s being a good psychotherapist. I do not enjoy it, but I find it necessary.

It is true that certain personalities are simply not strong enough to bear the stress of dealing with issues like these. But for most people, it is a cruel joke to say these themes are best left alone. One may wall up the dead body in the basement, but it does not go away. At best, it will begin to stink, with an odor that permeates the entire house of one’s being. At worst, like a horror tale, dead bodies walled up in the basement do not stay dead, but gather strength from the living and come back to haunt one. Our issues do not just “go away.” If psychotherapy involves digging through muck and filth and pain and memories desperately wished forgotten, then so be it—the alternative is too often a crippled emotional or mental life, even though that may be invisible to the folks who live next door.

“I commit psychotherapy.” The more I think about it, the more I am comfortable with the phrase. It indicates psychotherapy’s danger, its illicit intimacy, its iconoclasm, and its concern with acts not sanctioned by society. It suggests that after an hour or twelve of meeting with the dying and the wishing-to-be-dead, the angry and the anguished, psychotherapists might well wish to wash their hands—and their minds and souls. □

Selling It With a Smile

Martin Siegel



▲ *Martin Siegel, an associate professor of marketing at the University of Akron, developed the ideas in this article doing research for his "Humor in Advertising" course. His interest in the visual aspect of things is confirmed by his own work as an artist: Siegel creates "dimensional paintings"—wood block sculptures painted with acrylic—which he has exhibited at a number of shows. He is also a third degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do Karate—"a great, constructive way to relieve stress and improve (and coordinate) mind and body."*

Advertising is tough. Of course advertisers want their prospects to be in an open—preferably a receptive—frame of mind. But that cute little jingle that sounded great in the agency conference room might not be so pleasing to someone trapped in traffic, and low on gas, on the way home from work—that is, if it is even heard on any of the numerous AM and FM radio stations across the dial.

Advertisers also have to contend with the twin demons of clutter and lack of retention. Every day of the week, except Sunday when there are more, city newspapers will have two-thirds of their space filled with ads in all sorts of sizes and rectangular shapes. Radio, depending on whether the station is AM or FM and on the time of day ("day part"), will play from ten to sixteen minutes of commercials each hour. On television, assuming the prospect hasn't switched to cable as so many have, there will be about sixteen minutes of commercials—more if it's a sports event. The rates for these ads (media people call them "impressions") will be high, and common wisdom has it that repeated impressions are necessary for retention of the sales message.

Finally, what is it that is actually being sold? It's easiest to advertise something different, such as the first pivoting or twin-track razor, the first gel toothpaste or shave cream, or the first disposable diaper. Lots of products, however, have little to differentiate them from the competition.

One device that advertisers have found successful in dealing with these problems has been the invention of fictional characters that are identified with a product. Often such characters are anthropomorphic, that is, animals or objects with human characteristics. They are appealing, distinctive, and memorable; like humor itself, they often provide fun based on incongruity and the unexpected. A talking toilet bowl can attract attention if none of the competitors has tried it before. A successful character can soon become a second trademark and a low-cost way of adding media continuity. Unlike humor, which must be fresh to be memorable,

brand characters may be used over and over, spanning even decades with unwaning effectiveness.

Like other advertising devices, most brand characters have been positive rather than negative. One negative favorite of mine, though, was Peter Pain, used up to the late 1940s in the Sunday comics by Ben Gay, at the time trademarked under the French spelling Ben Gué. Peter Pain was a green gnome with a potbelly and an angry face that always needed a shave. He wore a black derby pulled low over his eyes and carried a pitchfork which he used as a weapon, jabbing it into an innocent victim's neck, shoulder or back. Luckily, a rub or two of Ben Gay would take him out of the picture, but only until the next Sunday when there would be another pitched battle.

Peter Pain and his pitchfork have been rubbed out for good, but an opposite of sorts, Planters' Mr. Peanut, remains as popular as ever. So very top-hat-and-cane urbane, Mr. Peanut next to Peter Pain would make an anthropomorphic Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. They should be enshrined as such but, as they say on television, more on that later.

A memorable figure from the golden years of television was Muriel the fine cigar. The sales message was a song that burlesqued burlesque. It began:

I'm today's new Muriel,
the fine cigar . . .

followed a half minute or so later with the provocative ending:

Why don't you pick me up
and *smoke* me some time?

Only in America could a cigar be Mae West with a name like Muriel!

Mae West may not have had rivals, but Muriel did have to share the spotlight with Chiquita Banana. Singing to a Latin beat (was it a samba or a rhumba?), Chiquita soon had America's eyes peeled and its consciousness raised with her advice,

Don't put your ba-na-nas
In the refrigerator!

Color, always crucial in packaging, has played a major role in establishing the persona of some anthropomorphic characters. Green, for example, has been used to carry opposite connotations—sickness and decay or growth and freshness. It can be Peter Pain or the Green Giant. The Green Giant began in the early '20s when the Minnesota Canning Company began marketing a highly successful



The debonnaire Mr. Peanut.

Below: Chiquita Banana.





version of large-sized “giant” peas. They called it Green Giant, referring to the larger size compared to other peas then available. But the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office refused a trademark, saying that the words “green giant” were too descriptive. Eventually someone came up with the idea of using an actual giant as a symbol (a white giant at first, later changed to green). Green Giant got the trademark and went on to become one of the great icons of American advertising.

Animals have provided the most abundant source for anthropomorphic characters. It’s unusual to have two different products using the same animal with the same name at the same time, but such was the case with Tony the Tiger, who still roars “GR-R-REAT!” for Kellogg’s Frosted Flakes, and Exxon’s now discontinued Tony, whose “put a tiger in your tank” still may bring a smile to motorists who bought gasoline in the 70s. When energy became a global concern, Exxon felt the fun had to go.

Left: the pea-Green Giant.

Below: a tale of two tigers.



Charlie the Tuna for Star-Kist remains one of the few fish to attain anthropomorphic fame. Indeed, it's not your everyday fish that wears eyeglasses. Morris of 9 Lives (played by a live "actor") is obviously an attractive cat, but his real uniqueness lies in his voice.



Above: Charlie.



Left: Morris.

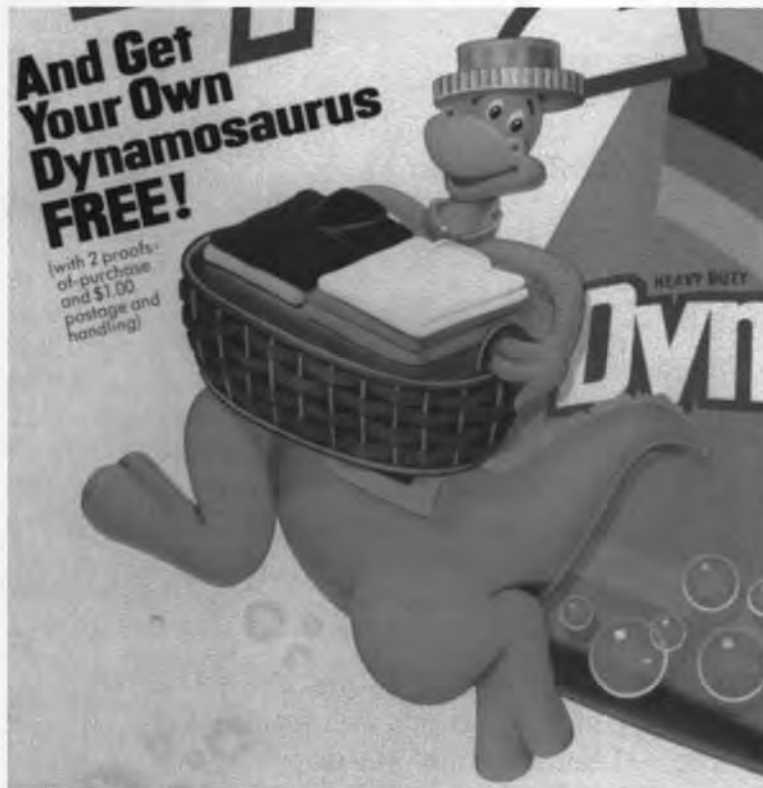
Children have proven popular ad icons as far back as the nineteenth century. One of the most famous is the little girl on Morton's salt boxes, spilling her salt to show "when it rains, it pours." In the early 1900s, Buster Brown and his dog Tige were such a rage as a newspaper comic strip that a line of shoes were created carrying his name, a rare instance of the character preceding the product. "I'm Buster Brown, I live in a shoe. That's my dog Tige, he lives in there too." Mickey Mouse and other Disney characters have similarly endorsed many products.



In the 1950s the elf-like Speedy Alka-Seltzer told us in his effervescent voice that “relief is just a swallow away”. Like Peter Pain and Exxon’s Tony, Speedy has been shelved; but Poppin’ Fresh, the Pillsbury Doughboy, still tickles us. Made of rubber, Poppin’ Fresh bridged the gap between realism and animation, one of the first examples of what the California Raisins do so well today.

Honors for the most famous trio undoubtedly go to Snap, Crackle, and Pop of Kellogg’s Rice Krispies. Though still prominent on the package, S., C., and P. aren’t used much in advertising these days. They’ve also gotten to looking alike, which wasn’t the case in their early years. Now, only their hats and coats tell them apart. Snap, the oldest, still wears a white chef’s hat. Crackle, forever in the middle, sports a red-striped stocking hat, while Pop has a military cap strapped under his chin. Otherwise they look like triplets. I guess that’s what happens when you’ve been together over fifty years.





The list could go on: the Keebler Elves, the dancing Old Gold cigarette packs, Hefty's Al E. Gator, the Fruit of the Loom guys, and a newcomer, Dynamo 2's Dynamosauros, almost all cheerful, simple appealing figures.

Besides being fun, successful brand characters have been highly profitable. They don't have to be paid residuals, they don't grow old or uncooperative, and their sole reason for existence is to tout their product. They can establish unique recognition for low-cost consumer products as few other devices can.

Considering the importance of these figures in America's consciousness and hence in our whole culture, it's surprising that a permanent place hasn't been built to house them under one roof. How they were created and why they've succeeded would make interesting stories. And with advertising expenses hovering around \$50 billion a year, such a place should be top drawer, patterned perhaps along the lines of the baseball or football hall of fame. I propose the place be called the *Hall of Anthropomorphic Heroes of Advertising*. And sooner than you can say "thirty-second spot," I bet that people in the ad biz will label it HAHA. □

Poetry

Marilee Richards

Giving You Up

I had given you up for dead only
to find out you really were. On television
Jimmy Swaggert wept his repentance
to the Lord and across town another sand pit
caved in. Some off duty firemen dug out
a few metacarpals, your class ring

as the sand gave way to pebbles, then soil
crumbling beneath their scuffling feet.
Transparent now, you may
have been moving among them, excited,
creating a cool breeze that was
your ghostly breath as you hunted

for a piece of your old life
that would make you real.
So much was in the news that day
it only made the back page.
The Blue Angels were doing a show
and had a near miss, demonstrating gravity—

the center toward which we all are pulled.
A prayer of thanks was offered over speakers
for their safety. July something,
ages before: you were speeding
toward a destination from which no prayer
could save you. It took three officers all

▲ *Marilee Richards* was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, and now lives in Alameda, California. She is a social worker who specializes in adoptions, placing abused and neglected children and infants with drug problems. She has bicycled across the United States and through New Zealand and backpacked in the Sierra Nevadas and much of the Southwest. Her poems have appeared in Southern Poetry Review, Cincinnati Poetry Review, and other publications. Speaking about her work she says, "The best poems are not about any particular thing You have to be willing to abandon the experience if the language leads you elsewhere."

of Sunday to uncover the last
of your thread-bare bones as 50,000 watt evangelists
cursed the slippery road to hell, celebrated
the Good Word: where to send our saved
dollars. Your jaws were locked, revealing
no secrets of the afterlife for us

the living, to take comfort from or misconstrue.
Quite a crowd gathered around
the excavated hole. There were reporters
who left for an opening game, some residents
of the local psychiatric facility
holding hands in pairs, warmly dressed.

Visit to the Polygamists

“Hardworking sons of bitches” was all
my grandfather said. The played-out land
absorbed the silence of the endless afternoon.
On every steep incline the Studebaker stalled.

Sometimes I dozed, in the dream
the heavy smells of skinned animals.
We inched on, the big tires flattening
cactus and sage, sometimes the glint

of a bottle or overturned car in the wash
as the dozen wood-frame houses, orchard
of bony trees, crept into view. There are moments
so finely etched they can be caught

and looked through like wings. I want to say
the stories turned out not to be true,
or that we found our cows standing
in some blessed shade and turned back,

or what did it matter that the sun kept
shining like a brass church bell and on
one porch sat a girl not much older than myself,
her cotton dress strained over a belly

that looked as if it could burst
open like a seed pod at any moment,
something ancient in her eyes
I didn't want to know. My grandfather

approached an overalled man bent
to the engine of a truck. I could hear
them laughing and by the time the dogs
had slunk back beneath cars, we left.

I remember the girl as she leaned in close,
purple bruises covering her thin white arms,
flies landing everywhere, the apples
she handed me that were too green to eat.

Katherine Murphy

Miss Intensity Thinks about Her Name

Centuries ago at EST, when I waved my hand,
praying the Trainer would choose me—as lost
as my friend Helen who got married and now her name
isn't in the phone book anymore—for the Birth Process
because he was teaching all 300 of us, simultaneously,

to get in touch with our bodies and the Self
(I'd heard it was like being reborn, alive again,
assertive, experiencing—wailing *Oh Moon of Alabama*
in the tub, charging that fringy sequin dress,
feeling, instead of being a machine and just meshing gears

even though they don't let you go to the bathroom
and keep you in folding chairs until 4 AM), the Trainer
pointed, "You—Miss Intensity—in the red sweater,
Sweetheart, up here," and I sat in the director's chair,
high as a bar stool, with a microphone like his,

close enough to smell his aftershave lotion,
and I was Miss Intensity for two whole weekends
even though it wasn't on my name tag—
it wasn't like he just gave me my name,
it was finally somebody knew who I was, even though

I might have been suspicious of another name
from another man—usually some animal name first
like Bunny, or Pussy Cat, then you marry them
and take theirs (unless of course you hyphenate)
and then they begin to speak in the imperative voice—

▲ Born in Duluth, Minnesota, Katherine Murphy now lives in Cleveland, Ohio, where she recently received an M.A. in English from Cleveland State University. Currently she works as a research assistant in the thoracic and cardiovascular surgery department of a major hospital. Of this poem she says, "The persona of Miss Intensity allows for the incorporation of the stuff of real life in my poems. Poetry should concern itself with everyday problems. This is especially true of women's poetry since our concerns are not always thought to be the raw material of art." She has had work published in *Mid-American Review* and *Poetry in the Park* anthologies.

it's a common problem, for instance, last winter
when I went for pregnancy tests every month,
the nurse read my name one day and said
"Aren't you related to Dr. So-and-so?"
and I said "What? That's not my real name,"

and she gave me the funniest look and just
set the bottle on the counter and we both laughed
and she wiped her eyes and said "Gee, none of us
have real names," and when I came back she said
"Dearheart, you're not pregnant, you're just old,"

so all spring I bought those home tests
at the drug store, but they wouldn't turn blue,
and then I forgot about my name, I guess, until
that day at the gas station I was trying to put air
in my left front tire and somebody stole my purse

(reached right in and picked it up off the car seat),
and my driver's license and all my credit cards,
my social security card—all with my married name—
and I thought how will I prove who I am and then
poems, nobody else could have written my poems

because once in a workshop this famous poet said I
had an individual voice and I thought Honey I haven't even
started talking, but now I wondered do words have different
kinds of whorls for everybody, like finger prints
and then I thought well, they'll believe my husband,

but instead of going home I drove to the mall—
a 1/2 price sale—and tried on a paisley maternity dress
(marked down for the third time, completely lined,
a famous maker although the label was cut off), scared
he'd be angry, and then I searched the lot for the car

and sat on the curb in front of Saks 5th Avenue
looking up at the clouds, wondering where's the car
and how in the world did I get too old to have a baby
and what will I say if he yells at me, when I suddenly saw
my face, my own face in the clouds, an alabaster statue

and then, slowly she turned, and she was still me
—down to my nose and the silver lamé scarf tied
around my throat in a bow and my hair avant garde
like Ricardo did it at the Fall Make-Over
when he transformed me into the real me

and I wondered is seeing my face an omen
for getting pregnant or winning the lottery
or even finding the car, but the clouds disappeared
and I thought most people wouldn't believe
Miss Intensity is my real name, but they are wrong.

Yo-yo Man

David Reddall

▲ *David Reddall is a carpenter, toymaker, and writer living in Provincetown, Massachusetts. He received a B.A. from Colgate and an M.A. from Syracuse University. He is interested in sailing and martial arts and plays jazz saxophone. One of his short stories was published recently in Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine.*

I want to speak now of yo-yos. Not of marbles or of tops—by the early 1950s, when I was in grade school, their time was past, at least in my neighborhood. No, the preeminent toy of my childhood was the yo-yo.

There was, of course, only one brand for the serious player, and that was the Duncan. The company produced several models, all made of wood, all brightly painted. At the top of the line was the coveted Duncan Imperial, the yo-yo of choice at Fulton Street School and the most expensive, costing, if memory serves, one dollar.

When you had saved up the requisite buck by mowing lawns or returning bottles, the next stop was Smiley's variety store. Smiley was a taciturn Lebanese man who, in fact, rarely smiled but who stocked the necessities: cap guns, pea shooters, Wee Gee water pistols, and Duncan yo-yos. If you were in luck you would find a solid black Imperial set with rhinestones, a yo-yo guaranteed to boost your prestige on the playground. You purchased the Imperial and some extra strings, paid the melancholy Smiley, and then hit the street to show the thing off and revel in the envious glances of your less fortunate mates.

It is probably a function of memory, but it seems to me that anywhere one looked in 1951 there were kids practicing with yo-yos, a veritable galaxy of brightly colored spinning satellites. Practice was the key, of course. Anyone could make a good yo-yo sleep. A novice could, with a minimum of practice, perform the easier tricks such as Walk the Dog, Spank the Baby, or Forward Pass. More difficult were Over the Falls and Loop the Loop. When you could execute Rock the Cradle other kids would pay attention.

One of the most popular tricks at Fulton School was Around the World, a maneuver in which the yo-yo was flung forward with an underhand motion and allowed to describe a large circle over one's head, around, and back into the hand. To make one flawless circle required a little practice. To keep the yo-yo spinning while getting two revolutions (three was considered impossible) was skill of

another order and a matter of keen interest to us because of the difficulty involved. Unfortunately, it required that the yo-yo be flung forward with terrific force, sometimes resulting in broken windows, dented automobiles, and screaming children.

Our teachers grew weary of telling us not to practice in the hallways. Parents, however, were more lenient, perhaps because yo-yos diverted us from potentially more lethal games involving knives, such as Territory, Mumblety Peg, and Stretch. So we practiced, gradually perfecting Around the Corner and Pinwheel, all the while anticipating the next big Duncan competition.

For several years Duncan sponsored a contest that was held in the Rivoli Theater. The field was narrowed through a series of eliminations with the finalists taking the stage and vying for prizes that ranged from patches to yo-yos to jackets emblazoned with the Duncan logo.

More than the contests, however, I remember the men who visited the schools, the professional yo-yo practitioners. It never occurred to us that demonstrating yo-yos in elementary schools was a marginal occupation. As a matter of fact I recall wanting, at various stages of my youth, nothing more than to be a golf caddy or a yo-yo demonstrator. Even today, I admit both pursuits retain their appeal.

In the spring of 1951 our fourth grade marched to the auditorium to see the yo-yo man. Sleeves rolled up over sinewy arms, he surveyed us benevolently, a slight man with a satchel filled with yo-yos. Soon they were spinning, flashing back and forth from the yo-yo man's hands, now one in motion, now two simultaneously describing large lazy circles about his head or cutting short sharp arcs of color around his wrists. They danced, floated, walked across the floor, and flipped back to the hairy hands that understood humming wood and vibrating string, hands that performed astounding tricks that we had never before seen or imagined.

Following the demonstration the yo-yo man answered questions, perhaps repeated a trick if it was requested. For a quarter he would take his pen knife and carve a sunset or a palm tree on our yo-yos. And then he was gone, and we returned to the mundane world of arithmetic and spelling, all of us itching to break out our Imperials and try some of the breathtaking things we had seen him do.

I recently discovered my old black Imperial packed away in a closet. A few stores still sell yo-yos,

The author's friend Albert Hall with his Duncan Imperial on the corner of Bramball Ave. and Sackett St. in Jersey City, 1952.



although they are plastic now; in one store I bought new strings, waxed them up, and began renewing the old forms. I've almost got Three Leaf Clover under control, although I'll never be able to do it with two yo-yos the way the yo-yo man could. Nor will I be able, as he did, to conclude the trick by having both yo-yos dive into my pockets.

And as I struggle to master Double or Nothing and Skyrocket, I think of the yo-yo man who carried his trade with him in a leather grip, moving from town to town and performing his minor miracles.

□



Sculptor David Davis


HERBERT ASCHERMAN JR.

Portrait Photographer
1846 Coventry Village, Suite 4
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118
(216) 321-0055

Official portrait photographer for The Gamut.

Coming



- The cultural significance of food
 - The Basque language
 - Making libraries efficient
- Margaret Atwood: the progress of her fiction
 - Presidio, a Texas border town
 - The moral basis of vegetarianism
 - Ezra Pound's wartime broadcasts