

# THE TORCH

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# From the President



This will be my last communication to you as I approach the final three months of my terms as President of the International Association of Torch Clubs. It has been a great experience for me, mainly because of the wonderful people I have had the opportunity to meet and the chance to work with you and the preceding Board of Directors. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

As the Toledo convention comes closer, I should like to tell you that the committee there is working hard and efficiently to create a meeting of Torch caliber. I attended a club meeting which was first class.

I hope to be in Appleton, Wisconsin on the 15th of April to present the new Fox Valley Club with their charter. Early in May, Kate and I will be in Western Maine to celebrate their anniversary. (They were chartered in 1929.) New clubs are great and anniversaries are even better, but we have lost some clubs through the last few years despite all our efforts. I wish there was some magic formula for bringing them back to life!

We often hear from clubs that their members know nothing about the International organization and are not really interested in anything beyond their own club. It is for this reason that I am quite a believer in some kind of revision to our system which would expose the actual Board to the membership. Perhaps we should have regional open Board meetings or regional meetings with Board members. Ideas would be welcome and perhaps something of this type could occur in the future.

Speaking of the future, I do hope that we can provide George with a positive view of Vision 2000+ to take to the convention. We have said and we have heard that there has been enough talking and now is the hour for action. I am inclined to believe that we, as a Board, are actually in agreement on some of the basic issues. We need to reach a consensus on these and then discuss methods to approach agreement.

Paraphrasing Winston Churchill, I said at the beginning of my term that I did not become Torch President to preside over the demise of Torch organization. Churchill was partly wrong; the old colonial British Empire became out-dated, and the Commonwealth is a better, more appropriate organization for today's world.

Perhaps the transformation of the "old" Torch and the development of a "new" Torch would be beneficial by increasing membership and providing a new vitality. I realize that we must not lose sight of any of the basic Torch principles.

I hope to see you all in Toledo in June.  
--Ruth Giller

# The Editor's Desk

By the time you receive this, our 1999 convention will be less than four weeks away. That's pretty close, but there is still time to get in a last minute reservation and enjoy the fun and fellowship of the Torch convention in Toledo. If you've attended in the past, you know how enjoyable and educational they can be. I think I've just used what is considered in marketing to be a "bad" word...education. Another word that springs to mind is "broadening," but there are some of us to whom that word also has unfortunate connotations. Perhaps we'll settle for "mind expanding." Regardless of the word chosen, you'll enjoy a Torch convention if you'll just register and join us in Toledo.

This issue of *The Torch* is four pages longer

than the usual issue. Your board approved that on a trial basis in order to see if we could publish more members' papers without exceeding our budget. Whether or not we continue to publish this many pages depends upon the budgetary outcome of this experiment. As editor, I'd like us to continue the size increase because it bothers me to have to put aside so many worthy papers. But even a retired CPA can see that we can only do what we can financially afford.

I am not equipped at home to go on the internet and the computers at our office are all tied up with tax returns, so I

**Please see "Editor," next page**

# P.S.



Many, if not most, of us work in fields and organizations (including Torch) that bring us plaques and certificates from time to time. I myself kind of like them and want to put mine where someone else can see them.

But I'm still trying to figure this out: What is the proper place? If you don't display everything, are you showing disrespect to the presenters whose offering you store instead of show?



Much of my newspaper work in precubicle days involved spaces with no walls, so plaques and certificates went on the wall of our basement rec room, unseen by anyone but myself and members of the rock bands that practiced there, or in a box. They just didn't seem "right" for living or dining room space and our family room is all windows and bookcases.

But when our kids were bringing home trophies (mostly) and plaques by the armful in high school because there wasn't room for them in their high school trophy case, I was delighted to show them off in our living room. And despite their protestations ("Dad! That was more than 15 years ago!"), most are still there, clustered atop the piano because I haven't found anyplace else and don't want to box them.



By the time I had my own office with walls, I had quite a stack of my own awards. Although I thought my friends who limited their displays to one super-significant award had the right approach (tasteful but impressive), I didn't have

## "Editor," from previous page

had not been able to look at the Torch page until my local librarian showed it to me on a recent visit. We did not have the time to see all of it, but the portion that I did see looked good to me. Let's hope it will provoke some interest in qualified candidates for membership. If you haven't yet visited the site, look us up at [www.torch.org](http://www.torch.org).

At headquarters we are particularly

anything quite that significant (I confess: I never won a Pulitzer!) so I went for numbers.

My second Interchurch Agency office was my first with enough wall space for the whole boxful, and I put most of them up. When I left the Agency to open my own office, my colleagues insisted it was really because I had run out of wall space. I am now in my third office since that move. It has little wall space. Practically everything is back in the box.



My puzzlement over display is one reason the Editor's Quill award for best published Torch paper is the Editor's Quill. When we decided to add this to the Paxton Lectureship award, I suggested we make it a desk pen instead of a plaque and call it (ta-da!) *The Editor's Quill*. And so it is.



Display of such memorabilia is hardly the most pressing decision one faces, but it has just dawned on me that it may be representative of the family - career - community issues we must constantly sort out.

The musing was prompted by my receipt the other night of the Bishop Maurice Dingman award for peace and justice from the Catholic Peace Ministry of Iowa. This is something of a "lifetime achievement" recognition which I certainly don't deserve, but which I consider far from ordinary. I certainly wouldn't nominate me for it.



While his name means little to anyone outside of Iowa, Bishop Dingman was truly saintly and a very special person to thousands of Iowans (and not just Catholics). This framed citation featuring the bishop's portrait is very special to me

sensitive to the decline in Torch member numbers. Each time we prepare mailing labels for the magazine or newsletter, or club billings, it is brought rather forcefully to our attention. The International Board has devoted a good deal of thought and effort to arresting the decline, and planning for the success of the organization in the twenty-first century. The real key to success, though, is in the hands of the individual members acting through their

because of him. My kids, who seldom see my office, where the wall is still mostly bare, insist it belongs in my home, and hung it there. I think I'll leave it.



I received a lesson in flag terminology recently from Ivan Hrabowsky of the St. Catharines, Ontario, Torch Club, and several encyclopedias.

In my last column, groping for an identification that would immediately convey the relationship of the Canadian Red Ensign (this was, as I remember it, the flag on Edgar Peer's flagpole) to its days in the British Empire, I called the flag the Canadian Union Jack. But there is no such thing.

My reference works (which I should have checked earlier) tell me that the British flag is called the Union Jack (capital U, capital J) and it's the only one. Like Canada once did, many nations that made up the British Empire still carry this design (which was created by combining the crosses in the flags of England, Scotland and Ireland) in their flag's *union* (the canton, or upper corner of the flag next to the pole). So, for that matter, does the flag of the State of Hawaii.

When the design in the union of a nation's flag is used alone in a smaller flag, such as the blue and white flag flown at the bow of U.S. Navy ships, that flag is called a *union* (small u) *jack* (small j). The Navy's flag is officially identified (at least in my encyclopedia) as the Navy Jack.

All this information is coming to you from the wonderful field of vexillology. Vexillology is the study of flags. Did you know that? I didn't. But I do now.

Torch offers us wonderful learning experiences, and I thank Ivan for contributing to mine.

--Paul Stanfield



local Torch clubs. If we are to succeed, or even survive, it will be as a result of your efforts to assure good programs at club meetings and inviting potential members to attend those meetings as guests. Torch can prosper only if the individual clubs prosper, but at headquarters we can only support your efforts, not initiate them, so please let us know how we can help you.

--Pat Deans

*A campaign that changed the course of history.*

# The Peninsula Campaign of 1862

by *Frederic Nicholson*



## About the Author

Fred Nicholson is an attorney with the law firm of Willcox & Savage in Norfolk, Virginia, where he works on estate planning and federal tax matters. He

is a graduate of the University of Virginia College and Law School. During his years as an attorney he has worked both for and against the government and has been an adjunct professor at Rutgers, Georgetown and NYU Law Schools. Six years ago, as he entered the springtime of his senility, Fred moved back to Norfolk, where he spent his early life. Before that move, he practiced law and lived in Manhattan, on a temporary basis, for 33 years. He has expressed concern that the proposed flat tax and elimination of the estate tax threaten to repeal everything he knows, so his efforts at public speaking represent a tentative search for a new career. His interest in Civil War matters developed partly out of legal work performed in matrimonial disputes, but largely out of his reading of *The Battle Cry of Freedom*, a splendid study of the Civil War by James MacPherson.

This paper was presented to the South Hampton Roads Torch Club on October 17, 1996.



In the May 20, 1862 edition of *The New York Times*, an editorial, reviewing the state of the Civil War slightly more than a year from its inception, concluded by observing: "In no representation of the rebel cause is there a gleam of hope." At that time the conclusion seemed unassailable.

After an initial victory at Manassas, there had been an unbroken litany of southern defeats: at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson on the Kentucky-Tennessee border; at Shiloh in southwest Tennessee; at Hatteras, and Roanoke Island, and New Bern, in North Carolina; in Louisiana, where New Orleans, the south's largest and wealthiest city, had fallen to the Union; in

Virginia, where only ten days before, Norfolk was occupied by Federal troops and where, most alarming of all, the Army of the Potomac, commanded by General George McClellan, had advanced to the outskirts of Richmond—at its closest point its soldiers could see the spires of the churches, set by their watches by the hourly chimes.

## George Brinton McClellan: The Meteoric Rise to the Top

Taking Richmond would be the fulfillment of the Peninsula Campaign—McClellan's grand strategy for a decisive Union victory, one that might result in negotiations for peace. McClellan had come to Washington the Previous August to take command of the Army that he would lead to the gates of Richmond, to be named, at his request, "The Army of the Potomac." He came on the strength of a victory under his leadership in the western part of Virginia. It was, by objective measures, a minor success against a small and disorganized group of Confederates, but the Union was badly in need of a hero, having recently suffered a humiliating defeat at Manassas, and McClellan, only 34, handsome, charismatic—satisfied that need, and so the magnitude of the victory was exaggerated, to his advantage.

And one promotion was followed by another. Within three months after arriving in Washington McClellan was appointed general-in-chief of the entire Union Army, while retaining command of the Army of the Potomac. This combining of staff and field responsibilities, prompted the President to ask if he might be overextended, and McClellan to reply: "President Lincoln, I can do it all." In seeking the word that epitomized George McClellan, you would not have chosen either "modesty" or "humility."

His life to this point had been a story of continuous success. Born into a wealthy Philadelphia family, he attended the best private schools, always excelling, and at 15, with special dispensation, he was accepted at West Point, graduating second in his class, in time for the Mexican War, where he served with distinction in the Corps of Engineers,

the elite branch of that time. And after the war he was marked as a young officer with a brilliant future and was given the best assignments to advance his military career. Nevertheless, he ultimately tired of the peace-time Army, and, after ten years of service, resigned to pursue a business career, where, within two years, at 32, he was one of the nation's highest paid executives. On the start of the Civil War, he returned to the army as a major general in command of a division formed in Ohio. Within two months there was the action in western Virginia and after that his meteoric rise to the top.

His early performance in Washington confirmed the reputation that preceded him; for he was a brilliant administrator and organizer; and under his leadership the thousands of recruits pouring into the City were transformed into a disciplined Army. Clearly, McClellan was at his best in preparing for combat.

At this point, the problem began to emerge—the transition from preparation to execution—for the days went by, summer merging into autumn, and autumn into winter, and then into the New Year, 1862, and the war in the east was at a standstill. A daily Army bulletin often signed off, "all is quiet along the Potomac." Initially a source of comfort, it became an object of humor and then of scorn. And the perception developed in some circles of a general so taken with his creation that he hesitated damaging it in combat.

## The Proposed Campaign

Political pressure mounted for action against the Confederacy. The President repeatedly conveyed this to the General at frequent meetings—over fifty times during McClellan's eight months in Washington. And finally in February 1862, McClellan revealed his plans to the President.

It was not the expected proposal. The advance on Richmond, rather than through Northern and Central Virginia, would come from the eastern part of the State, by an Army that would get there in boats that sailed down the Potomac into the Chesapeake Bay and then south into Hampton Roads. They

would land at Fort Monroe, on the tip of the Peninsula between the York and James Rivers, and from there advance on Richmond.

The proposal concerned the President for several reasons, prominent among them being the vulnerability of Washington to a Conference attack if the greater part of the Union Army was in eastern Virginia. The problem would be avoided, or at least greatly reduced, if the Army of the Potomac's offense came from north to south, so that the Army would shield Washington as it advanced toward Richmond.

But Lincoln was a civilian president, his military experience limited to several weeks to an Indian war in which he saw no fighting, and he hesitated to override a popular general whom he had called to Washington to lead the Union attack in the east and who, after months of preparation, had developed a plan for that attack.

Moreover, the general opposed an attack from the North. Influenced by a vivid imagination and an incompetent intelligence advisor, he estimated there to be 150,000 Confederate soldiers in Northern Virginia. By out-flanking them—by getting between the Confederate Army and Richmond—he would overcome a three-to-two numerical disadvantage, one based, however, on an estimate of his enemy that multiplied reality by a factor of three.

The result was a compromise. Lincoln accepted McClellan's plan, but one corps of his army, 35,000 men under General McDowell, was to be held in reserve for the protection of Washington. As often happens in such matters, the two men came away with differing impressions; McClellan that the 35,000 men would soon be sent to the Peninsula; Lincoln, that there was no understanding concerning when or if they would be sent.

### **Embarking for Fort Monroe**

Six miles below Washington, at Alexandria, the Potomac widens to permit deep water navigation. From here, startling on March 17, the men embarked for Fort Monroe, in a setting never repeated in this country, before or since. Over 300 vessels of every shape and kind assembled at the docks in Alexandria, ferry boats from Philadelphia, colorful red and white excursion boats from the Hudson in New York, tall transatlantic packets, barges and canal boats. Some were owned by the

government. Most were chartered from private owners at a total cost of \$24,000 a day.

Seizing the moment, McClellan addressed the departing soldiers: "In later years we can ask no higher honor than the proud awareness that we served with the Army of the Potomac." To Northern editors with an exposure to Shakespeare it suggested Henry the Fifth at Agincourt on St. Crispin's Day, but a more knowledgeable few recognized the words, with necessary revisions, as those of Bonaparte to the Imperial Guard, on their leaving for Italy. McClellan was sometimes called the "Little Napoleon," it was intended as a compliment and he regarded it as such.

The transporting of the Army went off smoothly, no casualties or loss of equipment of any significance. From mid-March to early April this patchwork fleet delivered to Fort Monroe over 100,000 men, 15,000 horses and mules, thousands of wagons and ambulances, heavy cannons, and other military supplies. A British correspondent, accompanying the Army of Potomac, described the massive operation as the "stride of a giant."

### **A Stalemate at Yorktown**

The scene at Alexandria was repeated at Fort Monroe. A resident of Norfolk, observing it through a telescope, told of a "forest of masts; so close together they defied counting," and of endless streams of soldiers disembarking into the landings.

There were over 100,000 men where barracks could accommodate only 10,000. A carpet of white tents soon stretched from Fort Monroe to Hampton, a village burned to the ground by the Confederates the previous August to deny its use to the Union. And in early April, with McClellan's arrival, the Army of the Potomac began its advance up the Peninsula, destination Richmond.

It required six weeks—until the middle of May—for McClellan's Army to reach the outskirts of the Confederate Capital, longer than anticipated, giving the Southerners added time to prepare the defenses.

Four weeks were taken at the Peninsula's narrowest point, in front of a Confederate defence line, extending seven miles across the Peninsula, much of it along the Warwick River from Yorktown on the Union's right flank to the James River on the left. The Confederate reception committee, less than

13,000 men, was led by General John Bankhead Magruder—tall, elegant, impeccably dressed, the quintessence of a Southern gentleman. "Prince John" to his friends, for his love of the good life, Magruder had an histrionic flair that would serve him in defending against the Army of the Potomac, when it reached Yorktown two days after leaving Fort Monroe.

McClellan had hoped to outflank the Confederates at Yorktown, much like George Washington against Cornwallis 80 years earlier. The defense, however, was more formidable than anticipated, and McClellan was taken in by the performance arranged by Prince John.

Magruder divided his men into two groups; marched them back and forth along the defence line, creating the illusion of new troops continuously arriving and moving into position. The illusion was enhanced by sound effect, drum and bugle calls, shouts of marching orders, often identifying nonexistent battalions. Rejecting a concentrated attack against such numbers, McClellan planned a siege of Yorktown. Heavy artillery would be carried by barge from Fort Monroe, taking time, and in the interim the two Armies were stalemated along the Warwick.

By this time, Confederate reinforcements began reaching Yorktown from General Johnston's Army in Northern Virginia, whose command was extended to the Peninsula. Joseph Johnston was in many ways the Confederate counterpart of George McClellan—a fault finder, always seeing the weakness of his position. Among his Army colleagues, the story was told of his day of grouse hunting. He was an excellent shot but never found the right moment—the birds were too high or too low, the dogs too close or too far, the sun too bright or too overcast. The time for the perfect shot never came, and at the end of the day he was empty-handed.

Arriving at Yorktown, Johnston decided against continued resistance on the Peninsula. He planned a covert withdrawal as the enemy completed its plans for a siege.

Late on the night of the third of May, the stillness along the defense line was broken by a sustained bombardment from Confederate artillery. It continued for an hour, then ended as abruptly as it had begun, and after that there was silence. In the early morning of the next day, Union pickets peering across the defense line, no longer saw their Confederate counterparts. Cautiously at first, and then with confidence,

they approached the abandoned Confederate positions. Amid the litter of a retreating Army, attention was drawn to a bit of prophetic verse written in chalk across the surface of an abandoned army tent: "To the Yankees: He that fights and runs away will live to fight another day, May 4, 1862."

### **To the Outskirts of Richmond**

The Confederate retreat from Yorktown was interrupted by a battle outside of Williamsburg, along a fallback defense line prepared by Magruder. But it was only a delaying action, for Johnston maintained his resolve against a defense on the Peninsula. The pursuing Army of the Potomac moved slowly over poor roads made worse by an incessant rainfall. Nevertheless, by the middle of May it was at the outskirts of Richmond, preparing a siege of the City.

Sustaining McClellan's Army before Richmond required over 600 tons of supplies daily, a need that could not be met by land transportation up the Peninsula. Instead a base of supply was established at White House on the Pamunkey River, which flowed into the York, now controlled by the Union Navy. From White House, the Richmond and York Railroad, left intact by the retreating Confederates, ran 25 miles to the Capital. It was now to serve the Army of the Potomac in carrying supplies from the docks at White House.

This, however, exposed a weakness in the Union position—created by a river overlooked in McClellan's advance planning, the Chickahominy, a slow moving stream that made its sluggish way across the front of Richmond in a southeasterly direction until it emptied into the James River, 30 miles below the city. Its presence required a division of the Union Army, part north of the River to protect the base of supply at White House, and part south to maintain the anticipated siege of Richmond.

Hoping to take advantage of this, Johnston planned an attack south of the River at Seven Pines, six miles east of Richmond, starting on the last day of May. The fighting at Seven Pines accomplished nothing. The two Armies ended where they had started, not withstanding the appalling carnage, over 11,000 casualties in two days of fighting.

Every casualty is, of course, a personal misfortune and a family tragedy, and at Seven Pines one was also of historic importance. In the late afternoon of May 31,

Joseph Johnston was hit in the shoulder by a rifle shot and then in the chest by a shell fragment. He was carried by ambulance into Richmond, where his life was saved, but his injury would require an extended convalescence.

### **Lee Takes Command**

President Davis, in replacing Johnston, passed over the General's second in command, to appoint the President's Chief of Staff, Robert Edward Lee. It was to be a temporary appointment; Johnston would resume command after his recovery, perhaps in three or four months. But, of course, that never happened, and the beginning of June, 1862 dates the start of the legend linking the names of Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia, as it was to be called at his request.

The historian must overcome the advantage of hindsight, for it complicates one's understanding of the prevailing view when the defining events were yet to happen—as in understanding the contemporary reaction to the appointment of General Lee.

To that point Lee's wartime reputation had been tarnished by failures with which he was unfairly associated. In both western Virginia, during the middle of 1861, and along the coastal defenses in South Carolina, later that year, he was placed in charge of failed efforts in serious trouble even before he arrived. And his return to Richmond in March 1862 to become Chief of Staff coincided with failures on the Peninsula, causing his identification with them.

His detractors called him "Granny," for that gentle countenance that in later years would be seen as a saint-like quality, or "the King of Spades," for preparing the defenses of Richmond by digging trenches, a pursuit unbecoming to southern gentlemen. He was dismissed by *The Richmond Examiner* as someone who "has yet to risk a single battle with the invader," an appraisal shared by McClellan who said he was pleased by the change of command; for he considered Lee "likely to be timid and irresolute in action." For a view that better stands the test of time, there was Joseph Ives, an aide to President Davis; asked what might be expected of Lee, he replied: "I tell you the man is audacity personified, his very name is audacity."

### **A Change in the Strategy**

It required little time to validate that

assessment; for in less than two months Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia would dramatically alter the course of the war. To appreciate what it involved, recall the state of the Confederacy in May 1862, the litany of defeats justifying the editorial in *The New York Times*.

Against this background Lee changed the Confederate strategy in fighting the war. He deemed it essential to take the initiative. Remaining on the defensive in front of Richmond, as McClellan carried out his plan for a siege, could lead only to defeat. Time was no longer on the side of the Confederacy.

Lee proposed to divide his Army, sending the greater part across the Chickahominy, to attack the Union's right flank at Mechanicsville, a small village five miles above Richmond. At the same time Stonewall Jackson would bring his Army down from the Shenandoah Valley to a position behind the Union Army. If successful, the attack would threaten White House, perhaps bringing the rest of McClellan's Army north of the Chickahominy to protect the base of supply—in an open battle, at a place dictated by the Confederate, for Lee hoped not only to save Richmond, but also to destroy, or seriously damage, the Army of the Potomac.

But there was a substantial risk. The division of Lee's Army would leave fewer than 25,000 Confederate soldiers south of the Chickahominy to defend Richmond against a Union Army three times that size. If McClellan acted on his numerical advantage he might storm into the City. Lee took the gamble because he believed—correctly as it developed—that McClellan was determined on a siege and would not attack. But it was "audacity personified."

### **The Ride-Around McClellan's Army**

Lee's plan was based on a surmise as to the deployment of Union troops along its right flank. He wanted assurance from a reconnaissance of the area—a job for the cavalry. And so it was that on the tenth of June, Lee summoned to his headquarters that flamboyant Virginian out of the age of cavaliers who dressed for combat in knee high jack boots, a redlined cape, and a felt hat with an ostrich feather plume, James Ewell Brown Stuart. Lee explained what he wanted. How to get it was left to Stuart.

The response, by Stuart and 1,200 of his fellow cavalrymen, was the celebrated

ride-around McClellan's Army, starting west of Richmond on June 12, and returning to the city from the east two days later. Stuart needed to go no more than one fourth of the way to get the information Lee requested, and historians differ on whether the full trip was necessary or desirable. Detractors say Stuart took a foolish risk to satisfy his ego. His defenders say that he did what was necessary—since retracing his steps would increase the risk of capture. But on this there is agreement: it was a daring performance, lifting the morale of the citizens of Richmond at a time when good news was in short supply.

When Stuart crossed the Chickahominy on the way back, he was only minutes ahead of the pursuing federal calvary, led by General Phillip St. George Cooke. In better days, before the war, Stuart had met and married Flora Cooke. Flora had a special interest in the ride-around, for Phillip and Flora were father and daughter. Phillip was a lifelong Virginian who choose to fight for the Union. Of his father-in-law's decision, Stuart would say: "he will regret it only once, but that will be continuously."

### **The Seven Days: North of the Chickahominy**

Less than four weeks passed from Lee's taking command until the first battle. The demands on his time and attention were unrelenting. On the sixth of June, he received a letter from his wife, Mary, telling of the sad death of their only grandchild.

It was to be called the Seven Days because the two armies were in near continuous combat from June 25 through July 1, 1862. The first move was actually made by McClellan—a small advance at Oak Grove in front of Richmond to bring his siege guns closer to the city.

The Confederate attack began on the second day at Mechanicsville against the right flank of the Union army north of the Chickahominy, and by the following day, June 27, at Gaines' Mills, it broke through the Union line, and the federal soldiers withdrew to the banks of the River.

By an objective measure, it was a Union setback not a total defeat—the Confederate casualties were higher, and the Union position might have been stabilized had added troops been sent across the Chickahominy to stem the tide or had they moved aggressively against Richmond from below the River.

However, the fate of the Army of the Potomac was not being determined by objective reality but rather by the perceptions of George McClellan, with his delusion as to the numbers against him, believing Lee to have 200,000 men under his command—giving a two-to-one advantage, when in reality the Confederates numbered less than half of that. With this perception and with the Confederate breakthrough north of the River, McClellan feared that his army would be cut off from its base at White House, facing a disaster.

The state of his mind may best be appreciated through his telegram to the War Department in Washington, sent immediately after Gaines' Mills:

I have lost the battle because our force was too small. I again repeat that I am not responsible for this.

And it concluded:

If I save the Army I tell you plainly that I owe no thanks to you or any other person in Washington. You have done your best to sacrifice this Army.

The charge stemmed from the failure to send the reinforcements he had requested, but it was made in words suggesting not simply an error in judgment but an act of treason. The charge was never seen by the President or the Secretary of War. Before delivery of the telegram the last two sentences were deleted by the communications officer in Washington.

### **The Decision to Retreat**

To save his Army, McClellan ordered a retreat 20 miles to the south—to the banks of the James River at Harrison's Landing. By his definition, it was not a "retreat" only a "change in his base of supply." The euphemism would become a source of humor to the Confederates. A southern soldier, writing to his family in North Carolina, told of a dog fight in which the company mascot—call him Rover—got the worse of it and ran off, whispering and licking his wounds. Among the men it was agreed that Rover hadn't been beaten, he simply changed his base of supply.

McClellan's decision caught his army with an abundance of supplies and weapons on the landing at White House and in storage parks below the Chickahominy—greatly exceeding its ability to carry in the retreat. To prevent capture by the Confederates, the order went out to destroy

everything that could not be taken. The resulting scenes of havoc provided enduring memories to those who were there: of huge bonfires into which the men threw supplies of every shape and description; of hundred of barrels of flour and rice and molasses and coffee enveloped in flames; of an enormous mound of hardtack, the daily ration, the size of a large barn, consumed in fire; of rivulets of whiskey from broken barrels flowing into and intensifying the flames; of men risking severe burns to fill their canteens; of burning boxcars packed with ammunition set off in firecracker sounds like a multitude of Fourth of July celebrations; of an unmanned locomotive sent careening down a track across a broken trestle and plunging into the Chickahominy in a cataclysmic explosion.

The greatest misfortune in human terms was inflicted on Union soldiers wounded at Gaines' Mills. With the abandonment of White House, they could not be taken by ships to northern hospitals. Instead, over 2,000 of them were crowded into a field dispensary at Savage Station, below the Chickahominy. Those who could neither walk nor be carried, were kept ignorant of the decision to retreat. Only as doctors and staff began returning to their units did they come to realize that they were being left, to become prisoners of war. A doctor who was there, years later recalling the experience, was to write: "their cries are still ringing in my ears."

### **The Pursuit: Glendale**

With McClellan's decision to retreat to Harrison's Landing, over 30 miles from Richmond, Lee's first objective—lifting the siege—was realized. The second—the destruction of the Army of the Potomac—seemed within reach. It would not be as originally planned, north of the Chickahominy against a Union Army defending its base at White House. Instead, if it happened, it would be below the Chickahominy against several columns of federal troops and wagons on narrow country roads toward the James River.

The need was to intercept this slow-moving caravan, which had a day's head start from McClellan's unexpected decision. If it were to happen, it would have been at Glendale, a small crossroad village, of several farms and houses—through which the retreating Army of the Potomac had to funnel on its way south. Pursuing Confederate units

were sent by Lee down four roads going southeast out of Richmond and having their juncture at or near Glendale. But they narrowly missed, partly for a failure of communication—less than half of the men reached where the fighting was—and partly from a brave defense by five union divisions, facing westward at Glendale to protect the march of the retreating Army.

The date of the fighting at Glendale was June 30, 1862. Looking back years later, Porter Alexander, who served as a Confederate Major in the Peninsula Campaign, was to say, “there were a few times when the Confederacy was in reach of a military success so conclusive as, possibly, to lead to an ending of the war. The missed opportunity at Glendale on June 30, 1862 impressed me as the best of them.”

### **Malvern Hill**

The next day, July 1, the last of the Seven Days, the fighting moved to Malvern Hill, several miles southeast of Glendale, within sight of the James River. Actually not a hill but a gently rising plateau, it, nevertheless, was a formidable defensive position, manned by thousands of Union troops and bristling with artillery when the pursuing Confederates arrived on the morning of that day.

It was the last effort at defeating the Army of the Potomac before it reached Harrison’s Landing, within the protection of the many Union gunboats now in the James River. This, and the frustration of the previous day, might explain the order to charge the crest of the hill; but how to explain the willingness of young men—from small towns and farms, with no military background—to obey the order, to charge an entrenched position, literally into the months of cannons.

It would be almost a year to the day from Melvern Hill to Picket’s Charge at Gettysburg, and, on a smaller scale, the result was the same, with over 5,000 Confederate casualties in less than two hours. “It wasn’t warfare, it was murder”—the words of D.H. Hill, a Confederate general who was there on July 1.

### **Harrison’s Landing**

After Melvern Hill, the Union Army safely retreated the remaining seven miles to Harrison’s Landing. They were to be there for 45 days. Their encampment covered two plantation estates—Berkeley and

Westover—an area over four miles in width, bordered by a creek on each side, and extending several miles out from the banks of the James River. Into this space, over several days, poured an army of more than 90,000 men, with 4,000 wagons and ambulances, and over 14,000 horses, mules and heads of cattle. Seen from the deck of a boat in the James River, the landscape, turned brown from the summer heat, was dotted with thousands of white army tents, intermittent parks filled with wagons and weapons, and corrals holding thousands of animals.

The first impression may have been favorable, but that view of Harrison’s Landing was short-lived, made so by the oppressive heat—often exceeding 100 degrees in the shade,—the cramped conditions—too many men and animals in too little space, and by the poor sanitation, attracting a plague of flies—big black flies everywhere that drove the men to distraction and that for many represented the lasting memory of the place. And there was the tedium and monotony of daily life, with nothing to do but the mindless make-work an Army devises to keep men occupied under such circumstances.

It was in these conditions that Daniel Butterfield, a Union officer at Harrison’s Landing, was inspired to compose a bugle refrain commanding lights-out at the end of the day, and on an evening in late July the haunting strains of taps permeated the darkness at Harrison’s Landing, as it would in later years on thousands of evenings in thousands of military encampments and installations throughout the world.

### **Ending the Peninsula Campaign**

Matters were now in a state of suspension, pending a decision; was Harrison’s Landing to be only a temporary refuge—the final chapter of a misguided adventure—or, was it, as McClellan urged, to be a base of operation for a renewal of the campaign against Richmond. President Lincoln was confronting that question when he arrived at Harrison’s Landing on the ninth of July to meet with General McClellan. It was his second trip into Virginia during the Peninsula Campaign.

With the events of the past three months, the President had returned to the idea of an attack through Northern and Central Virginia. Smaller military units had been consolidated into a new army—the Army of Virginia under the command of

General John Pope—with its headquarters near Washington. One alternative was to terminate the Peninsula Campaign and bring McClellan’s Army north to join forces with the new army.

If Lincoln was leaning in that direction even before meeting with McClellan, no final decision had been reached. That decision, however, was eventually driven by the General’s ever-changing demands as to the reinforcements he needed to resume his campaign against Richmond. Initially, it was 100,000, a wildly unattainable number, given what was available. After agonizing discussions, the bid was reduced to 20,000, apparently acceptable at both ends, and the Peninsula Campaign seemed to be saved. But for only 24 hours. On the following day, reacting to false rumors of Confederate reinforcements pouring into Richmond, McClellan more than doubled his demand, to 55,000. With this, Washington gave up on the Peninsula Campaign, and on the third of August, McClellan was ordered to evacuate Harrison’s Landing and bring his Army north to join with the Army of Virginia.

Some of the men left by boats on the James River; most of them marched down the Peninsula to Fort Monroe, and from there sailed up the Bay and the Potomac to Northern Virginia. By the sixteenth of August, it was all over; Harrison’s Landing was deserted—McClellan himself was the last to leave. And with that the Peninsula Campaign came to its ignominious end.

The Civil War in the east now took a new direction, further north—to Manassas, and then into Maryland at Antietam Creek, and after that Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville in Northern Virginia and Gettysburg, in Pennsylvania. The war would return to the James River, but after two years had passed. It would again be the Army of the Potomac, but under a different Commander, with different views on what was required to defeat the Confederacy.

### **The Large Context**

In conclusion, there is a need to see the Peninsula Campaign in a larger context; for it was instrumental—and perhaps crucially so—in changing the war: the way it was fought; the objectives in fighting.

“It was still possible in May, 1862 to believe that the war might be ended before it was all consuming”—these are the words of Bruce Catton in his monumental history of

***Please see "Campaign," page 35***

This paper is a source of comfort for your editor.

# It's Just Perfect—Or Is It?

by Phil Hugo



## About the Author

Phil Hugo is a native of West Point, Nebraska, and is a graduate of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln with a B.S. in zoology. He spent most of his adult life as a naturalist working with people in the outdoors, attempting to instill in them a greater understanding of the world in which they live. He is currently a self-employed handyman and also works as an engineer's field technician on waterline construction projects.

Hugo is a member of the Lima, Ohio Torch Club, having served two terms as president. He has been actively involved with several community organizations, including Kiwanis, the Urban Forest Council, and the Council for the Arts of Greater Lima. Married and the father of two daughters, he enjoys photography, writing, backpacking, cooking, and meeting neat people.

He does not profess to know a great deal concerning the subjects he chooses to explore and write about. Rather, it is his insatiable sense of wonder and curiosity about the world in which we live that is the underlying force behind his desire to want to learn and share with others.

This paper was presented to the Lima Torch Club on May 20, 1996.



***"It was a beautiful instrument that was played with something approaching perfection."***

**Album liner notes  
on Roy Orbison**

During a recent trip to Philadelphia, my family and I were having dinner in a nice Irish pub we have come to frequent while visiting the area. As I perused the menu the descriptions of two entrees caught my attention. "Two giant crab legs steamed to perfection." Scallops sauteed in garlic butter to perfection." In particular, it was a single

word in those lines that jumped out at me.

I believe I noticed the word almost as soon as I began reading the menu because for quite some time I had been thinking about the word, its meaning and how it applies to our own lives. The longer I pondered, the more obvious the word became. I started to see the word in newspaper articles and ads, on television and in everyday conversation. I offer the following excerpts from newspaper ads as evidence: "One look and you'll see a difference that's perfectly brilliant." "Searching for the perfect sofa?"

Aside from the word being used to entice customers into buying things, it became obvious that individuals, ancient and modern, were using this word with Latin roots while reflecting on life.

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## What does it mean to be perfect?

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Actress Sandra Bullock has this to say about herself: "I'm just the kid who happens to live next door. I am not like Doris Day, who was the perfect, perky girl next door." And from the Chinese philosopher Chung Tzu: "the perfect man employs his mind as a mirror. It grasps nothing; it refuses nothing; it receives but does not keep."

And while the concept of perfection generally has connotations of good, it is also used in relation to criminal or evil elements. How many of us have wondered if the perfect crime is possible. This description is from the video "Above Suspicion": "he was the perfect cop, the perfect husband, the perfect father—and maybe even the perfect killer." Finally, need I remind you of Adolph Hitler and his quest for the perfect race.

By now, you have probably gathered that the subject of this paper has something to do with the concept of perfection. What does it mean to be perfect? What concept did ancient Greek artists have of perfection as it related to form, shape and beauty? Do we use the word loosely? Or in the words of a friend who describes himself as a perfectionist in recovery: "Is perfection

attainable and, if so, is it desirable in terms of human behavior? Should we strive for excellence instead?"

Before we go any further, we should look at some definitions of the word and its derivatives so we have some understanding of what we are talking about. Interestingly enough, the definitions of perfect and its forms, e.g., perfectibility, perfection and perfectly, to name a few, occupied nearly half a page in my *Webster's Dictionary*, which by the way is not a lap writer's perfect companion due to its size.

The word comes from the Latin *perfectus* and is the past participle of *perficere*, to finish. The roots are *per*, meaning through and *facere*, to do. Although time and space do not allow me to discuss the entire list, I will mention a few definitions that are germane to this discussion as well as some that are interesting.

The basic definition of perfect, used as an adjective, means complete in all respects, without defect or omission, sound or flawless. In his book, *When Good Is Never Enough*, Steven J. Hendlin offers this definition: "Lacking nothing that properly belongs." Back to Webster. The word also means in a condition of complete excellence or it can be used comparatively, as to create a more perfect union. The word can be used to indicate without reserve or qualification. An example of this would be the sayings, a perfect stranger or fool. In other words, a complete or flawless fool or stranger.

If one stops to analyze that usage for a moment, you cannot help but wonder if there is such a thing as an incomplete or imperfect stranger. Should we just say, "I met a stranger on my walk today."

Another usage of perfect as an adjective applies to grammar, such as the present, past and future perfect tenses of verbs. In music we have perfect cadence, chord and pitch. And although I was never very adept at math, I suspect the concept of perfect numbers is something mathematicians hold dear to their hearts.

Used as a verb, perfect can mean to finish or complete, so as to leave nothing

wanting, as in this verse from John 1.v.12: "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us."

There are several uses of the word or variations thereof as a noun, some of which we will discuss later, especially as they relate to religion and human behavior. However, there is one variation that some of you may find interesting because you might think you fit the definition of a perfectibilist, or someone who believes that perfectability may be attained in this lifetime. Of course, you may also believe you are a perfectionist, or a person who strives for perfection.

The last definition I found was that of a particular kind of cigar, the Perfecto. Little did I know that as a mischievous lad sneaking an occasional stogie from my father's desk that it may have been one of a standard shape, thick in the center and tapering to a point at either end. Come to think of it, that also sounds like a possible definition of the perfect Torch paper.

I'm not really sure what spawned this interest in perfection, but as I mentioned above, the more I noticed how often the word and what it stands for appears in our lives, the more curious I became. As with many great ideas, and I realize using great to describe this paper may be a bit presumptuous before you have heard what I have to say, those ideas are often borne of real experience, one's sense of curiosity or a combination thereof.

In this case, I suspect the embryonic seed can be traced back a few years to a conversation I had with an Amish woman. While I waited for her husband to return home, we engaged in simple conversation, some of which centered on our respective children and how many we had. As with many Amish families, they had several. Mrs. Yoder (not her real name) told me they lost two very young boys the previous spring when they were swept away while playing near a swollen creek. I expressed my sympathy, to which she replied, "It was God's perfect love at work." As I crossed the stream where the boys died, I had to ask myself what was so perfect about a God who would create such a flood of tears as the Yoder family must have experienced with that tragedy.

The idea of perfection and its impact in our lives is probably evidenced in no greater area than things of a religious nature. Anyone who has grown up in the Judeo/Christian tradition has some knowledge of this subject, whether it be trying to live a

morally perfect life or understanding the perfect love of God in times of tragedy. Is the admonition expressed in Matthew 5. 38-48, "You therefore must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" attainable?

Among religious groups or any other for that matter, none have undoubtedly been as successful at communal living as the American Shakers. Many of you are probably somewhat familiar with their story and what they stood for. For the Shakers, a basic tenet of their lifestyle was the hope that they might achieve physical and spiritual perfection. A perfection gained by living a simple and, to many of us, idyllic life.

As stated on one of the 12 Virtues of the Order, "Simplicity implies a Godly sincerity and real singleness of heart, in all conversation and conduct. This virtue is the operation of holiness and goodness and produces in the soul a perfect oneness of character in all things."

For the Shakers, keeping their inner and outer lives in perfect order was a means of reflecting the perfect order of God's kingdom. At mealtime food was taken from serving bowls in a specific manner. The sexes took their meals on opposite sides of the room, slept apart and a sister could not make any alterations to a brother's clothing while he was wearing it. Villages were laid out in squares, with right angle paths and color coded buildings.

The Shakers were known for their fine craftsmanship, from furniture to stone walls. Complete. Flawless. But how perfect? During a recent visit to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, I scrutinized a couple of pieces of Shaker furniture for any sign of imperfection, and while there was an overall standard of excellence I detected irregularities on certain chair spindles.

While reading the book, *The Shakers - Hands to Work, Hearts to God* by Amy Stechler Burns and Ken Burns, it became apparent to me just how important order and perfection were to these people. As important as all the rules and order were to maintaining the perfectness of Shakerism, however, something apparently was missing because the Shakers died out. Perhaps it was not so perfect.

I took my question about God's perfect love and the death of Amish children to Reverend Richard Sheffield, a Presbyterian minister. What did he make of her statement? In his view it was probably not God's perfect love that swept the boys to their death. "I believe what the mother was really saying

was that it is her belief in God's perfect love that will help her find a way to deal with her loss."

If one ponders the idea of God as being the ultimate perfectionist, that idea also begs the question of why there is so much imperfection in the world, i.e., disease, hunger, genocide, and albino robins. Does that mean God is still striving for perfection—completeness? That every now and then the God force messes up and has to start over. The old "Do it until you get it right" attitude or simply put, "Practice makes perfect."

Some would see that view differently, including Reverend Sheffield. "I call it the 'I don't understand it and I can't accept it on faith, so I will rationalize it somehow theory. God created the world perfect, but somehow evil or imperfection crept in'." Learned theologian and philosopher that he is, he doesn't pretend to understand it all.

In his view, spiritual perfection is being as God has intended one to be, whatever that may be. From the biblical perspective, that standard is Jesus. Perfection does not mean "Be God, but be like or act like God. Be as God made you to be, not seeking to measure up to rules or standard but Christ-like. To love God and love thy neighbor as thyself."

Attempting to incorporate perfection into our lives or understand it from a spiritual standpoint is not something that is akin only to Christianity. For the ancient Hebrews, the attempt to live a life of moral perfection was an effort that consumed much of their daily life. Over 700 different rules dictated how they should live their lives. One group, the Pharisees were continuously striving under a great sense of burden to reach moral perfection. In today's parlance, their God may have told them to, "Lighten up people, get a life."

Although I did not take the time to research in detail the views of other religions or cultures, I'm reasonably certain one would find references to perfection as it relates to the moral and spiritual aspects of our lives. I have been told that for the Navajo Indians it means leaving an intentional imperfection in their weaving because in their view only the Great Spirit is perfect. Finally, from the Eastern view we have this thought by Shunryu Suzuki: "We should find perfect existence through imperfect existence. We should find perfection in imperfection. For us, complete perfection is not different from imperfection."

Aside from the religious or spiritual aspect, our quest for perfection plays a large role in our everyday lives, from both a material and personal standpoint. That quest will affect how we see ourselves, what kind of children we raise, how we act on the job and whether we will have a perfect lawn or Christmas tree.

As this is being written, it is early May and people's thoughts and energies turn to gardening and lawns, i.e., having a lawn consisting of nothing more than a bluegrass, fescue or rye mixture. No weeds, no bugs, no fungus. To achieve that goal, people will support the multi-billion-dollar lawn maintenance industry by applying fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.

Of course, there is a downside to the effort put forth for the perfect lawn in that property owners, applicators, neighbors and pets may be subjected to potentially harmful chemicals. And yet, despite their best efforts, the perfect lawn often eludes them, because the outdoor environment is not static—it is always subject to change.

So I will forego my quest for a perfect lawn in the interest of diversity. Violets, dandelions, six-legged critters and imperfection. Alice Walker, the award winning author of *The Color Purple* has this to say about seeing the virtue in flaws: "In nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways and they're still beautiful."

If this were being written in December, my thoughts along with millions of other folks, would be on Christmas trees, specifically for, yes you guessed it, the perfect tree under which to place the perfect gift for Grandpa Elmer or that special someone. Go to any lot where trees are displayed and you will see the quest in action. "This one's not bad but it feels dry." "This Douglas fir has a nice fragrance but there is a branch missing here and the trunk is crooked." The perfect Christmas tree. Symmetry. Shape. Color. Fragrance. Does it exist?

During my youth, the search for the ultimate tree for our home was no different. However, there came a time when, according to my father, really nice trees were difficult to find, so he took matters into his own hands. After fashioning copper tubes (he's a plumber), which were attached to the trunk of the better of two trees, dad would cut branches from the remaining tree and insert them into the tubes. I can still see him filling the tubes with his squirt bottle on his lunch

hour, nurturing his idea of the perfect Christmas tree.

Perhaps one day science will generate that tree. Scientists are now growing trees that have branches at a 45-degree angle and thick needles that do not fall off.

By the way, my father must have given up on finding the perfect Christmas tree, because as my sister recently remarked, "Now dad just gets those spindly-looking trees."

"Are you a perfectionist? Do you expect to be the best at everything you try? Do you work harder than anyone else? Do you feel paralyzed by fear of failure? If you do, this book can help you." It is titled *The Perfectionist Predicament—How To Stop Driving Yourself and Others Crazy* by Miriam Elliott and Susan Meltsner. When I entered perfect in the computerized card catalog at the local library, this book and several others relating to the subject came up. Most of them deal with perfection from a sociopsychological perspective and some of the problems associated with the idea.

I knew the books could be an asset to my project, but as I began to look through the information, I discovered some of what lay between the covers pertained to me. You see, I have often put that label on myself, and having read about it, I'm not sure if I am a full-blown or sometime perfectionist. The self-assessment tests in the books seem to contradict each other in some ways as the questions relate to me.

If I were to be truthful with myself, I probably lean toward the perfectionist side of the fence. On the other hand I try to let myself off the hook a bit by saying that I strive for excellence. What is the difference? Ann W. Smith, author of *Overcoming Perfectionism* puts it this way:

Overall, there is nothing terribly wrong with trying to be the best self we can be. Excellence as a choice can be very rewarding. This desire to be superhuman only becomes a problem when we begin to believe that perfection is actually possible - even necessary - for self-esteem, peace of mind and acceptable by others. At that point, it has become a compulsion.

And what happens when the quest for perfection goes awry? When it becomes a compulsion? Some of you may have read the recent story in *The Lima News* about the Rutgers University math professor with a reputation for perfectionism who has been

charged with beating his wife to death with a claw hammer. Why? Because he discovered he made a mistake in a textbook after it was published. At that point, his perfect world apparently began to crumble. In the words of one colleague who knew Walter Petryshyn for decades: "It sounds as if his perfectionism drove him to insanity."

Perhaps someone should have told the good professor that perfection is unattainable—that we set ourselves up to lose if we think otherwise. We will make mistakes, sooner or later. In this case, the loss was a human life and a talented professor.

This is an extreme case, but how many of us have reacted in a negative manner when we discovered the perfect spouse wasn't so perfect after all. Or when the photograph we spent so much time composing through the camera's viewfinder came back with a flaw.

When do we accept the fact that we gave something our best effort? When do I say as a businessman, "Phil, you've caulked the tub or made some repair to the best of your ability. Now move on before it costs the customer more than it should just because you think you have to be a perfectionist." As a former boss once said to me, "We can't always get 100 perfect. It is better to settle for 87 percent and get something accomplished than do nothing at all."

For some people perfect may mean being divorced, abandoning the artificial life of perfection they were forced to endure and living today with some imperfection in their life. Being the person they always knew they were and accepting who they are.

For 23 years, Angelique (not her real name) was married to a man who demanded nothing less than perfection from his wife and children. At the start of each day, everyone had an assigned time to get in and out of the bathroom. The amount and kind of food on the breakfast table was prescribed. Dinner was no different as he expected a gourmet meal five nights a week. Napkins placed just so, with no pans on the table.

In other areas of their life his suits had to be taken to the cleaners in a certain rotation and socks placed in a precise order in the drawer. When it came to Angelique, there was a specific dress code she had to adhere to. If she did not, he let her know about it.

In Angelique's words, "From a personality standpoint, we were exact

**Please see "Perfect," page 34**

An event that affects all of us in ways not yet known.

# The Global Impact of the Chernobyl Accident

by Gareth E. Gilbert, Ph.D.



## About the Author

Gareth Gilbert received his B.Sc., M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees from the Ohio State University where he recently retired after thirty-eight years of teaching Botany and Plant Ecology and conducting ecological research in deciduous forest ecosystems. Beginning in the late 1950's and early 1960's his ecological research included the fate of radioactivity added to forest ecosystems, especially via fallout. During the mid-1960's he spent two summers studying radioactivity and radioecology at the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies located in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

Since his retirement he has continued his research into the fate and effect of natural and man-made radioactivity added to the ecosphere.

This paper was presented on April 10, 1997 to the Columbus, Ohio Torch Club.



## Introduction

An Anglican communion service refers to our planet as "...this fragile earth, our island home." Our planet is fragile and truly is an island in the Universe. Basically, our planet is a system composed of four subsystems: the upper atmosphere or "stratosphere," which occurs some 35,000 to 40,000 feet and beyond above our heads; the lower atmosphere or "troposphere," characterized by weather phenomena; an inner sphere composed of bedrocks and a molten core, the 'lithosphere, and the 'biosphere' (hereafter referred to as the 'ecosphere'), that extremely thin sphere occurring at the earth's surface and characterized by aquatic and terrestrial organisms, including human beings.

Components of the ecosphere, both

current and former and living and non-living, are acted upon by a variety of forces, the sum of which constitutes their environment. Since the evolution of human beings and their various cultures, the complex of natural forces associated with the ecosphere has been supplemented by a host of man-made factors, one of which has been the production and release of artificial, i.e., man-made, radioactivity.

A variety of events has resulted in the release of marked amounts of artificial radioactivity into the ecosphere, the first three of which were the detonation of the original atomic devices at Alamogordo, New Mexico, followed by the detonations of the two atomic bombs which ended World War II. These events were followed by above-ground nuclear weapons testing during the 1950's and the early 1960's. Two major accidents occurred during 1957 which released marked amounts of radioactivity into the ecosphere, namely the Kyshtym and Windscale accidents. The former occurred in the USSR and was a heat explosion involving a tank of high-level radioactive wastes; the latter occurred in England and involved a fire at Windscale, a reprocessing and plutonium production facility. In 1967 a severe summer drought in Russia resulted in the drying of Lake Karachay which had been used as a nuclear waste dump. The dry sediments and associated radioactivity were then widely dispersed by hot, dry winds. Three satellites with nuclear devices for supplying electrical energy also added radioactivity to the ecosphere following burnup in the atmosphere. Two were Russian, namely COSMOS-954 and COSMOS-1402, the burnup of which took place in 1978 and 1983 respectively; the other was American which burned up in 1964 and was of special interest since it contaminated the ecosphere with plutonium. The last significant nuclear contamination of our island home was due to the Chernobyl accident which released a massive amount of radioactivity associated with gases,

aerosols (e.g. smoke), and fragments of the reactor core.

The major impacts of artificial radioactivity produced by the Chernobyl accident on the human population were: acute and severe health effects, including death, long-term health effects, such as cancer, which may not be discernible from spontaneous cancer, socio-economic effects, and psychological effects.

## The Accident

The Chernobyl accident occurred during the early morning hours of April 26, 1986, and was an experiment gone wrong. Lewis (1986) stated "...the accident is further evidence that if something is working an effort to test it to make sure it is really working can do more harm than good." In other words, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it!"

A great amount of radioactivity was released during the initial explosion, and most was contained within the overlying troposphere; however, a small percentage eventually was transferred into the stratosphere. During the following five days the daily amount of radioactivity released markedly declined. Beginning with day seven, however, there was a marked daily increase associated with the burning of graphite, a major component of the reactor. The fire was extinguished on day 10 and the release of radioactivity essentially came to a halt.

More than 70 kinds of radioactive atoms were released by the accident. Fortunately, most of these atoms were of little importance since they were not volatile, were produced only in small quantities or rapidly decayed and disappeared. From a global and health perspective, it is generally agreed that the most important radioactive elements were varieties, i.e., isotopes, of iodine and cesium. However, in the western portion of the former USSR and adjacent Europe atoms of strontium, silver, ruthenium, tellurium and plutonium were also of importance.

In summary, the Chernobyl accident was, according to Lewis (1986), "...the worst (commercial) nuclear accident there can be—a core twice the size of any in commercial use in the United States and an uncontained accident in which a substantial fraction of the core was released."

### **Dispersion of Chernobyl Radioactivity**

Dispersion of Chernobyl radioactivity was essentially confined to the Northern Hemisphere and involved a variety of transport processes. These included the shipping of contaminated material such as food, transport by rivers and streams, commercial air travel involving passengers and their personal effects as well as the airplanes themselves, and the migration of song and game birds which nest in northern Europe and migrate southward during winter. The latter should not be taken lightly. During the 1950's and 60's the operators of the Hanford Laboratories, located in the State of Washington and one of our major nuclear weapons production sites, were concerned with such transfers since ducks, geese and shore-birds which nest in Canada and Alaska would visit the site during their migration to Mexico and other countries of Central and South America. During their stay at Hanford some species accumulated considerable radioactivity. In regards to Chernobyl, Baeza et al. (1988) "...found five species of migratory birds that winter in Spain to be contaminated by radiocesium as a consequence the Chernobyl accident."

The major dispersion process, however, was air mass movement. Although Chernobyl is located at a latitude where winds, in general, move from west to east, as they do in the central United States, the winds occurring at the time of the accident transported Chernobyl radioactivity essentially in all directions. Indeed, it was a meteorological nightmare. I have classified these winds as "circular winds," "southeasterly winds" and "westerly winds." The complex of circular winds accounted for the dispersion of radioactivity throughout the western region of the former USSR and adjacent northern and southern Europe. ApSimon et al. (1988) stated these winds "...blew from all directions." More specifically, he stated that during April 26-27, "...the plume swung to the southwest and northwest... During April 28 material went mainly north, turning toward the east on April

29 and then to the southwest and south to complete the circle on April 30." The southeasterly winds transported a major plume to the northwest passing over the Baltic Countries, Poland, Baltic Sea, Finland, Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Iceland, Greenland, Quebec and, finally, to the eastern portion of the United States. The westerly winds transported radioactivity to Japan, across the Pacific Ocean and to the west coast of North America and hence to the eastern portion of the United States. The United States and Canada, therefore, received a 'double-whammy' of Chernobyl radioactivity. One from the northeast; the other from the west. And, both contaminated air masses arrived on our opposing shores on approximately the same day.

### **Fallout of Chernobyl Radioactivity**

Whereas much of the radioactivity produced by the detonation of above-ground nuclear-weapons devices was ejected into the stratosphere and slowly settled through the troposphere and hence into the ecosphere, most of the Chernobyl radioactivity was confined to the troposphere and quickly returned to the ecosphere as fallout.

There are two basic fallout processes, namely wet- and dry-fallout. Wet fallout, also referred to as rain-out or wash-out or sometimes snow-out, is associated with precipitation and is a relatively efficient and rapid transfer mechanism for many radioactive particles, such as those of radioactive iodine, due to gravity and is a relatively slow process. The spatial distribution of radioactivity due to dry-fallout is, in general, uniform and often referred to as "blanket coverage." In contrast, wet fallout, especially that associated with thunderstorm activity, results in an extremely uneven spatial distribution of radioactivity characterized by scattered "hot spots." Since the Chernobyl accident occurred at the start of the thunderstorm season, many areas of the Northern Hemisphere were, and continue to be, characterized by hot spots surrounded by areas with radioactivities little or not above natural levels. Reports concerning the importance of wet-fallout and the presence of hot spots abound. For example, Hohenemser and Renn (1988) state "...rainfall locations exhibited activities 15 to 20 times higher than dry locations." Papastefanou et

al. (1988) reporting from Greece, stated "Convective storms...were responsible for carrying the bulk of the radioactive material from atmosphere to ground." And, Hotzl et al. (1989) reported that "Southern Bavaria received a comparatively high deposition of (Chernobyl) fallout radionuclides..." And that "About 70% of the total activity was precipitated in the afternoon of 30 April, during a strong thundershower."

Thundershower activity occurred in Northwest England, Scotland, northern Wales and northern Ireland during passage of the Chernobyl plum; therefore, these areas received considerable fallout, especially in the upper elevations of the mountainous regions which are characterized by relatively high amounts of precipitation.

### **Fate and Effect of Chernobyl Fallout on Natural Aquatic Systems**

#### **Rivers and Streams**

The fate of radioactive elements added to aquatic systems is controlled markedly by their solubility. Cesium and plutonium, for example, are quickly absorbed by particulate matter and transferred to sediments, whereas strontium usually remains in solution and, if added to rivers or streams, can be transported many miles downstream. Radioactive cesium and strontium were important components of fallout deposited in the vicinity of Chernobyl and, therefore, were added to the nearby Pripyat River which flows into the Dnieper River. The latter is a major river with many reservoirs, including a reservoir which serves the city of Kiev. It eventually flows into the Black Sea. Voitsekhovitch et al. (1996) reported that most of the Chernobyl cesium added to the Dnieper River has "...accumulated in the reservoir bottom sediments of the Kiev Reservoir..." It is assumed that most of the strontium was transported downstream toward the Black Sea.

Berkovski et al. (1996) studied the various pathways by which Dnieper River radioactivity is transferred to humans and concluded the most important pathways are: the drinking of river water, use of river water for irrigation and consumption of river fish. They calculated the human radiation doses received via these pathways and concluded "... (an) important problem is the high individual doses...to fishermen and their families."

## Lakes

Thousands of lakes located in the former USSR, the Baltic States, central and northern Europe and the Nordic countries of Finland, Sweden and Norway received significant inputs of Chernobyl radioactivity. This was especially true of lakes in the Bryansk region northeast of Chernobyl. According to Fleishman et al. (1994) the concentrations of radioactive cesium in fish from these lakes were approximately ten times those in fish in nearby rivers.

As with rivers and streams, radioactive elements of low solubility, such as cesium, were quickly transferred to the sediments. However, as reported by Monte et al. (1991), "...most of the dissolved radionuclides remained in the upper layer of the lake waters... Winter mixing then resulted in dilution of the radionuclides in the entire lake volume."

Extensive studies have been conducted on the radioactivity of Swedish lakes. That these studies were extensive is confirmed by a paper by Hakanson et al. (1992) which reported that about 14,000 lakes were found to have fish with cesium activities above the maximum permissible concentration. They also agreed that "In general, it appears as if fish feeding on bottom fauna or on other organisms, which in turn feed on bottom animals, have relatively high...(cesium) concentrations." Restrictions still exist on the consumption of fish from Swedish lakes. Similar findings for Norwegian lakes were reported by Britain et al. (1991) who also reported that fish license sales fell by 25%.

## Seas

A number of seas received significant amounts of Chernobyl radioactivity, including the Mediterranean, Black, Baltic and North Seas. According to Ribbe et al. (1991) "The Baltic Sea was the marine ecosystem most affected by Chernobyl fallout." Also, "The occurrence of 'hot spots' at the surface was characteristic of the contamination."

The fate of fallout cesium added to the Baltic and other seas was similar to that added to the Dnieper River in that it was absorbed by particulate matter, settled to the bottom and became incorporated into the sediments. Again, bottom dwelling organisms or organisms feeding on bottom dwellers including human beings have the potential of ingesting considerable

radioactivity. For example, plutonium deposited on the Baltic Sea was quickly absorbed by particulate matter and transferred to the sediments and bottom dwelling organisms. Skwarzec and Bojanowski (1992) reported the concentrations of plutonium in bottom dwelling organisms ranged from 600 to more than 27,000 times greater than in the surrounding sediments. This is an excellent example of a marked increase in concentration of a chemical element as it is transferred from component to component of a food chain.

Another fate of marine fallout is sea-to-land transfer by onshore winds transporting sea foam, also known as spume. Martin and Heaton (1989) reported radioactivity levels in spume that "...were several thousand times greater than in seawater..." And, Pattenden and McKay (1994) agreed with others that three critical subgroups of people received radiation from Chernobyl fallout added to the Baltic and other seas, namely: fishermen associated with contaminated fishing gear, consumers of fish and visitors to rocky coastal areas who were irradiated by radiation associated with dried spume.

### Fate and Effect of Chernobyl Fallout on Natural Terrestrial Systems

#### Deciduous Forest Systems

The fate of Chernobyl fallout on European deciduous forest systems has received relatively little attention since these systems do not include pathways which transfer significant amounts of fallout to humans.

#### Evergreen Forest Systems

The fate of Chernobyl fallout on evergreen forest systems of Scandinavia, however, has received considerable attention since these systems are important sources of food for deer, grouse, hare, rabbit, moose, fruits, seeds, and mushrooms, all of which are consumed as part of the human diet. Mushrooms are particularly notorious for the uptake and concentration of fallout radioactivity.

Evergreen forests, such as those of Scandinavia, are relatively efficient in intercepting airborne particulate matter, such as the particulates that were associated with gaseous plumes produced by the Chernobyl accident. Bonnett (1993) reported "The large specific surface area of spruce trees results

in a greater interception capacity than in broad leaved trees." And Bunzl and Schimmack (1989) reported that interception by a spruce forest "...was, on average, 30% higher in coniferous forests than in adjacent grassland or arable land..." Consequently, living components of Scandinavian evergreen forests have the potential of high concentrations of Chernobyl radioactivity.

Johanson (1994) reported that in Sweden "...problems have arisen with high...(cesium) activity concentrations in game animals, mainly moose and...(deer)." And that "The number of moose harvested...during the autumn period was 135,000 in 1988." Karlen et al. (1991) reported "...about 110,000-120,000 (deer) are shot each year." So, moose and deer were important in the transfer of Chernobyl radioactivity to humans. These pathways are especially important during the autumn season when the radiocesium content of moose and deer meat is relatively high, evidently due to the ingestion of mushrooms and/or heather plants, the latter of which also concentrate fallout.

#### Peatland Systems

Extensive treeless peatlands associated with Scandinavian forests are an important source of fossil fuel. According to Hedvall and Erlandsson (1992), "Peat is mainly burnt...as a substitute for oil." Since peatlands received considerable amounts of Chernobyl fallout, there was concern that combustion of peat would result in radioactive contamination of local air. Concern also was expressed for human irradiation due to the use of peat ash in building materials, such as concentrate, fertilizer and bedding material in greenhouses used for food production. An additional concern, according to Reponen et al. (1993), was the presence of plutonium in Finnish peat. This plutonium originally was associated with radioactive dust formed in the initial explosion of the reactor, and was accompanied by highly radioactive hot particles which, although sparsely distributed in peat, are considered by some to be a significant health hazard due to their great radioactivity. According to Mustonen (1989) "...it was clear that peat ash from the essential fallout region could not be mixed in concrete for use in housing construction." However, "The use of peat ash for certain concrete products was continued once their radiological consequences had been

estimated..."

## **Tundra Systems**

Landscapes of high northern latitudes are treeless due to climatic conditions which are extreme for trees but not extreme for a host of herbaceous plants and low-growing shrubs. Such landscapes are known as "arctic tundra." Arctic tundra is also the home of many species of animals including fox, hare, mice and birds as well as large mammals including bear, caribou and reindeer, the latter two of which serve as a source of food, clothing and shelter for both Eskimos and reindeer herders, such as Laplanders. Large areas of tundra are dominated by plants known as lichens which are important ecologically since they serve as the base of a lichen-to-reindeer/caribou-to-reindeer herder/Eskimo food chain.

Studies conducted during the early days of above-ground nuclear weapons testing revealed that lichens are efficient collectors of radioactive fallout, that such fallout is transferred to and accumulates in caribou and reindeer tissues and is then transferred to reindeer-herders and Eskimos following ingestion. Tundra ecologists were concerned with the impact of this food chain on the health and welfare of Eskimos and reindeer herders following above-ground weapons testing and the Chernobyl accident.

Soon after the Chernobyl accident the Scandinavian governments established maximum permissible concentrations of radioactivity in reindeer meat for its consumption, sale and movement. This was devastating to the socio-economic life of reindeer herders who, according to Clines (1986), had "...developed cooperatives to build a lucrative gourmet food export business." This business not only involved the sale of reindeer meat to their neighbors to the south but also to foreign countries such as Japan. According to Rissanen and Rahola (1989), the population of reindeer in Finland stood "...at about 360,000 in 1988." And that "About one-third of all reindeer are slaughtered annually." Recently Åhman and Åhamn (1994) reported "The first year after the Chernobyl accident, 73,340 out of a total of 93, 554 slaughtered reindeer (78%) were rejected..."

The following actions were taken to reduce the socio-economic impact of the Chernobyl accident on reindeer-herding communities: the government purchased

contaminated meat for use as mink and fox food, maximum permissible concentrations of contaminated reindeer meat were increased and reindeer herders moved their herds and families to less contaminated areas.

## **Fate and Effect of chernobyl Fallout on Agricultural Systems**

### **Introduction**

Fallout of chernobyl radioactivity on agricultural systems was transferred to humans via ingestion associated with a variety of pathways. Two pathways of special interest were the pasture/hay-to-cow-to-milk-to-human pathway, important in the transfer of radioactive iodine, and the pasture/hay-to-sheep-to-meat-to-human pathway, important in the transfer of radioactive cesium.

### **Pasture/Hay-Cow-Milk-Human Pathway**

The pasture/hay-to-cow-to-human pathway was especially important in the transfer of radioactive iodine to people living in the western portion of the former USSR and eastern Europe, especially children. In this pathway, fallout iodine added to grass communities, such as pastures and hay fields, is transferred to the tissues and fresh milk of cows following ingestion and, following commercial processing, is transferred to beef, milk and milk products including cheese and butter. The final step is the transfer to human via ingestion, especially the ingestion of milk. Much of the ingested iodine is transferred to and concentrated in the thyroid where it has the potential of initiating thyroid cancer. Since the half-life of the variety of iodine is only eight days, one way of greatly reducing the intake of iodine in fresh milk is to convert the milk into dairy products such as cheese and butter. Not only does this process take but the resulting products have relatively long shelf-lives.

As pointed out by Likhtarev et al. (1994), the measurement "...of iodine exposures for children deserves special attention because of their higher exposure and their higher relative risks for thyroid cancer." According to Marshall (1986) "Polish children were given potassium iodide to block absorption of radioactive iodine by the thyroid. But many did not get the medicine." Lujanias et al. (1994) reported "The first days after the

accident...were especially dangerous for the population of Lithuania because of...radioactive iodine."

A recent report by the Nuclear Energy Agency (OECD, 1996) reported the following in regards to the impact of Chernobyl radioactive iodine:

"In the last decade there has been a real and significant increase in childhood and, to a certain extent, adult carcinoma of the thyroid in contaminated regions of the former Soviet Union...which should be attributed to the Chernobyl accident until proven otherwise."

And

"There has been no increase in leukemia, congenital abnormalities, adverse pregnancy outcomes or any other radiation induced disease in the general population either in the contaminated regions or in Western Europe, which can be attributed to this exposure."

Buglova et al. (1996) published a study of thyroid cancer in Belarussian children and reported that the results "...show an excess of observed over expected thyroid cancer cases." And "The excess of the observed over the predicted incidence in the general juvenile population is caused by the thyroid incidence rate among boys."

### **Pasture/Hay-Sheep-Meat-Human Pathway**

The pasture/hay-to-sheep-to-meat-to-human pathway was important in the transfer of radioactive cesium to people living in Northwest England, Scotland, northern Wales, and northern Ireland. In this pathway, fallout added to pasture and hay communities is transferred by ingestion to sheep tissues and milk. The milk of ewes is available for ingestion by lambs; therefore, the concentration of fallout cesium in lambs can be relatively high, having two major sources of input, and the ingestion of lamb meat can be a major source of input on radioactive cesium to humans. This was confirmed by Marovic et al. (1992) who reported "...the high content of cesium detected in sheep...caused radiation doses (to humans) approximately five times higher than doses received through the consumption of beef, veal, and pork."

As associated pathway for cesium transfer to humans is via cheese made from sheep milk.

In Northwest England, shortly after the

Chernobyl accident, high concentrations of radioactive cesium were found in sheep, especially sheep of upland farms which received relatively great amounts of fallout. Consequently, the government placed restrictions on the sale, movement and slaughter of sheep; however, it was stated that these restrictions would be short-lived. According to Wynne (1989), the belief that these restrictions would soon be lifted "...was based on the assumption that, after the initially contaminated grass was consumed, radiocesium would be immobilized in soil, not incorporated into the new growth of grass. However, this model for cesium distribution originated in research on lowland, clay mineral soils. The upland soils were mainly acidic, with high organic content in which cesium remained chemically mobile and available for root uptake..." Consequently, uptake of fallout cesium by grasses, especially of upland pastures, continued resulting in high concentrations of radioactive cesium in sheep and the continuation of strict restrictions on the sale, movement and slaughter of sheep.

The economic impact of the restrictions was severe. According to Sandalls and Bennet (1992) "The restrictions immediately affected 5,000,000 sheep and 500 farms and even today (1992), nearly five years after the accident, about 150,000 animals and 180 farms are still affected." As of March, 1997, and according to Beresford (personal communication), 11 farms in Northwest England (Cumbria) involving at least 14,000 sheep are under restriction. He also reported that in Wales some 400 farms, involving some 200,000 sheep are under restriction, that in Scotland 28 farms, involving 57,000 sheep are under restriction and in northern Ireland 57 farms are restricted. It is poignantly clear that, after more than ten years, the Chernobyl accident continues to have a marked impact on the sheep industry of many areas of northern Europe.

To counter these restrictions, upland sheep farmers resorted to a number of counter-measures, one of which was to transfer their sheep to lowland and less contaminated pastures where excretion of cesium via feces and urine was markedly greater than intake by grazing. The results of this countermeasure were marked reductions on the cesium concentrations of upland sheep transferred to lowland pasture. It also resulted in the transfer of Chernobyl cesium from upland to lowland farms.

### Summary

- The Chernobyl accident was the last of many events which introduced large amounts of man-made radioactivity into the ecosphere; the accident was the result of a reactor experiment gone wrong.
- More than 70 varieties of radioactive atoms were released, the most important of which, from a global and health perspective, were atoms of iodine and cesium.
- The major dispersion process was air mass movement which, in general, transported radioactivity to central Europe, northwestward to the Baltic States, the Baltic Sea, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, Ireland and hence to the east coast of North America, and eastward towards, Japan, the Pacific Ocean and hence to the west coast of North America. Therefore, two radioactive plumes reached the United States. One was from the northeast; the other from the west, and both arrived on approximately the same day.
- The spatial distribution of Chernobyl fallout was extremely uneven and characterized by hot spots.
- Much of the fallout deposited on aquatic systems, including rivers, lakes and oceans, was absorbed by particulate matter and transferred to sediments. Therefore, bottom-dwelling organisms, and animals feeding on bottom-dwellers, including human beings, were disposed to marked intakes of radioactivity.
- Evergreen forests of Scandinavia intercepted and assimilated marked amounts of Chernobyl fallout, and the included contaminated game animals, fruits, seeds and mushrooms were included in pathways which transferred radioactivity to humans.
- Fallout of Chernobyl radioactivity on treeless areas (tundra) of Scandinavia resulted in a marked negative impact on the socio-economic welfare of reindeer herders since a high percentage of reindeer became highly contaminated and were forbidden for sale as human food.
- The deposition of radioactive cesium on sheep pastures, especially upland pastures, of Northwest England, Scotland, northern Wales and northern Ireland, had a devastating impact on the sheep agribusiness since the sheep, like

reindeer, became contaminated and were forbidden for sale as human food. This impact, albeit much reduced, continues today.

- There is strong evidence that people, especially children, living close to the accident site have experienced an increase in thyroid cancer.
- The Chernobyl accident resulted in a radiological dose to the population of North America, but the health effect, if any, is not statistically significant.

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How will we get our news in the future?

# What's News?

by Luke Feck



## About the Author

Luke Feck joined American Electric Power in January 1990 as senior vice president - corporate communications. He has chaired the Nuclear Energy Institute's Communications Committee and the Edison Electric Institute's Communications Executive Advisory Committee.

Feck began his journalism career in 1956 as a copy boy at *The Cincinnati Inquirer*. During his 16 years there, he moved up through the organization serving as reporter, TV editor, local columnist, magazine editor, news editor, managing editor, executive editor and finally, from 1976-1980, as editor and vice president. In 1980, he became editor of *The Columbus Dispatch* and was responsible for the opinions, news-gathering, and display of the news. In 1982, Feck was also named director of the Dispatch Printing Company.

Besides his newspaper career, Feck has written television newscasts, published a city magazine, and, from 1964-1969, was president of Ackerman & Feck Press, a commercial printing plant in Cincinnati. He has also written "*Yesterday's Cincinnati*," a pictorial history of the city now in its eighth printing.

He is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati, where he majored in English. He served as a platoon leader in the U.S. Army Air Defense Command in the late 1950s.

This paper was presented to the Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio on February 6, 1997.



Erasmus is said to have gathered into his trunk all of the books available in his time. There were not 50 of them. Some of those books contained pages laboriously copied by monks whose output, on a given day, was about a page.

Gutenberg created the breakthrough with his movable type. In 1842, the news of the birth of Queen Victoria's second son was

the first transmitted by telegraph. But by the 1870's a man named Mergenthaler created a Rube Goldberg device that was, in fact, a miniature foundry capable of spitting out five lines of type every two minutes. Eventually, as the machine was perfected, an experienced operator of one of these machines, which were called Linotypes, could set a galley of type an hour—in a really good hour. (A galley is about 20 inches long and about two inches in width.)

When I first entered the composing room of the *Cincinnati Inquirer* as a copy boy in October 1956, there were 75 Linotype operators setting type for the next day's editions. One of my duties was to go to the Associated Press office a dozen blocks away and bring back the stocks. I would return each afternoon with the day's stock exchange transactions around 5 p.m. At that time, the Linotype operators—all 75 of them—would stop setting stories and, for the next 50 minutes, pound out the New York stock tables. By the end of that time, stocks were set in agate and ready to be alphabetized and put into the metal chases. A line of type coming out of the machine was formed by molten lead and was hot enough to blister your fingers: thus the term "hot type."

In 1973, I went to a "cold type" conference in Boston, Massachusetts. There, a computer-driven camera as big as an automobile set the entire New York Stock Exchange from electronic impulses in eight minutes. One person staffed the camera. The transaction from mechanical *hot type* to electronic *cold type* had begun. The urge to "capture the original keystroke" became the mantra in newspapers around the world. That means simply when a reporter types a story, the keystrokes he or she makes should be the ones that eventually get the story into type.

This would toll the eventual death knell for the printer of those days. Today, for example, *The Columbus Dispatch* has about 50 printers remaining from a high of 400. In seven years, if automation has its final way, there will be none. The skill and artistry of an honored craft died in the computer. And what does the technology of today and

tomorrow foretell?

This technology is simple and relatively easy to understand, even for those of us who are technologically challenged. But is there a future without ink on paper? What does the Internet mean to editors like Mike Curtin, to publishers like the Schulzbergers, the Scripps, the Wolfes or Max Brown?

Charles Krauthammer, in *Newsweek*, contends that there is "no need for mourning. Clay tablets gave way to papyrus, sheepskin scrolls to bound books, illuminated manuscripts to Gutenberg type. In the end, each revolution was for the better." He says that a typical news magazine pays 20 percent for the writers and editors to get the stuff together. The remainder goes into capturing their thoughts and transforming them to ink on paper and toting these boiled trees around until they arrive in your mailbox or at your nearest Border's. He says "Print will die of this waste and expense. It will die, too, because it is so slow to transmit. The speed of truck vs. the speed of light"—and all so environmentally unsustainable.

What may be dying is printing—not writing.

Let's briefly explore the newspaper industry of today vs. That same industry in 1955 and see what we can learn of Krauthammer's projection. In 1955, newsprint cost a nickel a pound on the spot market. In 1995 that same pound of newsprint would cost just short of 33 cents a pound. It is interesting to note that, on many Sundays in November and December, the paper in your Sunday edition costs more than your subscription.

And if we take a snapshot of circulation trends from that day in the mid '50s, we will see some interesting trends emerge. In 1955 morning newspapers had 21 million buyers, evening papers had 32 and a half million, for a total of 53 plus million. In 1995 morning newspapers had doubled buyers to 43.1 million, and evenings were halved to 15 million. The total in 1955 (morning and evening) was 53.8 million buyers; the total in 1995 was 58.2 million. In 1995 Americans spent \$9.7 billion to read daily and Sunday papers. And the cost of the paper in the

newspapers they read was \$6.7 billion.

An objective view could be that the newspaper industry has shown some growth. However, the U.S. population has soared from 151 million in 1955 to 248 million in 1995. In 1955 four out of five adults read a weekday paper. In 1995 fewer than two of three adults read a weekday paper. In 1955 newspapers brought in \$3 billion of advertising. In 1995 that number is \$36 billion. In 1995 more money was spent on advertising in newspapers (\$36 billion) than was spent on direct mail (\$32.8 billion) or in the yellow pages (\$10.2 billion) or magazines (\$8.7 billion). TV brought in \$36.2 billion, cable \$11 billion.

The Radio and Television News Directors Foundation recently profiled today's news consumer. "People diverge radically in what interests them, which media they use, and how often they follow the news," the study says. News preferences differ radically by gender, by generation, by education, by socioeconomic status, and by access to technology. 40% of those under 30 believe that keeping up with the news is at least somewhat important, while 65% of those over 50 believe that.

There was a proportional dominance of older newspaper readers, and that trend is also reflected in network evening newscasts. Each medium may be in danger of becoming an anachronism as we head to the millennium. But the things that interest news users are as predictable as they are axiomatic and historic. When asked to rank news of interest to them, two-thirds said they were interested in news about their own town and community. That was followed by news about their state or part of the state where they live (at 59%), the country as a whole (at 56%), and the weather (at 53%).

Although people are very specific in their news likes and dislikes, the survey found a significant proportion (29%) says that a news editor is in a better position to select what might be of interest to them. Two-thirds said *they* are in the best position to choose what interests them. When it comes to news people need to know, however, 45% said they could best determine what news they need. The percentage of people who use on-line services to check for news at least once a week is up to 47% from 31% just last year. It is not as grim as it sounds. One survey conclusion was that "Even among the vanguard of on-line users, far more say the bulk of their news and information comes from traditional sources."

Now that we know a little bit about newspapers and where people get their news, let's look at the other "traditional media" briefly. Though I haven't been in a newsroom for several years, I hope you will recognize that I continue to use the newspaper as the surrogate for traditional media. Nonetheless, there are some points that should be made about the other media.

The big three magazines—*Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*—continue to maintain a buyer base above two million each week. But all three are clearly seeking their niche in the media marketplace. They have tended to turn more and more to "star journalists." The *Wall Street Journal* says that "offering celebrity allure and idiosyncratic opinion on the week's news, the stars are crowding out the relatively unknown reporters and writers who traditionally fill the news magazines' pages with fact-filled dispatches.

"Big names are the reason people turn to the magazine," said the late *Newsweek* editor Maynard Parker, who made a splash in the summer of 1996 with a cover story of excerpts from Bob Woodward's campaign book, *The Choice*. He has hired Frank Deford, Alan Sloan and Jonathan Alter, whose columns get increasingly prominent play. *Time* has signed up contributors like Calvin Trillin, Doonsbury cartoonist Garry Trudeau, and Reagan speech writer Peggy Noonan.

The *Journal* says "The trend is serving up something fresh to readers who already know the week's news from daily newspapers, all-news TV channels, four broadcast networks, and the Internet." But it is also stirring some unease among journalists and readers alike, particularly as the lines between opinion and reporting blur. It used to be that reporting came from several different reporters from the ground up. Now, reality is all in the eye of the original beholder—who is a columnist or bylined writer—and it comes with minimal reporting.

Broadcast TV, as opposed to narrow-cast niche operations like the Gold Channel or The Home and Garden Channel, has seen its traditional role threatened. In the days of Huntley and Brinkley or Walter Cronkite, the networks could say "Sit down at 6:30, and we'll give you the news." But now we can pick and choose when we want to watch the news or sports. 25 years ago people scoffed when the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network started. Now there is ESPN2 and ESPN News, and talk of ESPN

Classic. CNN and *Sports Illustrated* have joined forces for sports news. And there is the Cable News Network and its stepchild, CNN Headline News. NBC has two cable news networks, an Internet news service with Microsoft, and a programming service in Europe. "We've always been in the news-gathering business 24 hours a day. Now we can share it 24 hours a day," says an NBC news editor.

The audience for the 6:30 news stands at 25.5 million people, 10% less than it was three years ago. Television appears healthy on the outside. It rates continue to rise though its audience continues to diminish. Competition may be coming at an accelerated pace. America On-line announced a new pricing plan in November 1996 that has clogged its computers. It charges one flat price for unlimited access to its services if you can get on it. An A. C. Nielson survey released last week (1997) indicated that homes that subscribe to America on-line watch 15% less television than the average home.

1996 was *the* year for radio. The Telecommunications Act, passed in 1996, triggered broadcast mergers on an unprecedented scale. Between February and the end of June 1996, \$8 billion worth of radio stations changed hands, including WTVN here in Columbus. Westinghouse purchased Infinity Broadcasting for \$4.9 billion, just \$600 million less than it paid for CBS the year before. Today Westinghouse has \$1 billion a year in annual revenue from its radio holdings. The cable networks seem quiet for the moment as they attempt to digest their buyout binge. Time Warner has \$20 billion in debt, thanks to its acquisitive nature.

The phone companies lurk just over the horizon. Long-distance rates are up, and Americast, son of Ameritech, is competing for cable subscribers here in Columbus.

What lures rational business into uncharted waters? What drives these huge purchases? The answer is revenue, primarily revenue from advertising, but not advertising revenue exclusively. As we begin to think about the vast sums of money that advertising translates into, let's also explore the Internet and its first cousin, the World Wide Web.

Those who have tried to explain the internet often begin with a simple analogy. They think of the railroads of the last century. In those days, hundred of start-up railroads could create track of any width they chose. But in order to get my train off my track and

onto yours, we need to agree on a common railroad track gauge. Once that was done, every loop, every spur, every inch of track in the century could be connected, thereby creating a national rail network that spanned the entire continent. My trainload of lettuce could travel from California to Columbus, using any contract path I chose. It could go on a direct, straight route or to Columbus by way of Albuquerque, Minneapolis, Baton Rouge, Cleveland, Atlanta, and often here.

The difficulty, obviously, is that all that lettuce would spoil. But packets of digital information don't spoil and can travel faster on any open path they choose to get to their destination. The net effect is that information being sent to you from California to Columbus may have gone to any or all of those destinations on its way to you, the addressee.

Meanwhile Microsoft has pledged its billion dollars to the Internet and intends to launch services in many major U.S. cities using *CityScape* to provide information—initially about arts and entertainment. Microsoft has been relentlessly hiring staff and negotiating with local media to obtain information for these services. Meanwhile, many newspapers have already designed their own web sites, betting they can profitably move their local franchise from print to PC. It is a bet they must make. Already you can find Digital City, Hometown, and City Search, services much like CityScape.

City Search is an online service that intends to provide information about local restaurants, movies and entertainment. These are labor-intensive activities, but they are activities worth doing. City Search is testing its approach in Durham, North Carolina, and the results are not yet known. However, if you were of a mind to see *The English Patient* and wanted to go to dinner afterwards at a Japanese restaurant, City Search could help you. Not only would it tell you where *The English Patient* is playing, but it would also give you a list of Japanese restaurants, within a 10-minute drive of the theater, provide reviews of the restaurants, buy your tickets for the movie, and make reservations for dinner at the restaurant you select. It would also provide you with a map showing you how to get there.

Andrew S. Grove, chairman and chief executive officer of Intel, talks about the Internet in his autobiography, *Only the Paranoid Survive*. "In the past several

years, practically every media organization—the Viacom, the Time Warners—has founded a new media division for experimentation, and much of that is now focused on the World Wide Web. This could be an even bigger deal than what is happening to the telecommunications and personal computer industries. By some estimates, worldwide spending on advertising is about \$345 billion. To gain any of that on a big scale, you have to steal 'eyeballs' of the consumer audience from where they currently get their messages today; that is, newspapers, magazines, radio and television. And you have to attract those eyeballs back to the World Wide Web."

But for this to happen in any big way, lots of eyeballs would have to be lured away from the traditional media. Information would need to be made as appealing as the programming on traditional media today.

The probability that personal computer production rates are likely to surpass combined black-and-white and color television production rates this year would seem to support the notion that personal computers, connected to the Internet, could become a significant alternative to television.

Then there are the Internet appliances—simplified computers that would rely on largely centralized computers someplace else on the Internet to store their data and would just transmit to the appliance users whatever data is needed. The argument for these Internet appliances goes like this: users would not have to know as much about computing as they do now because all of their tasks would be performed behind the scenes by a network of larger computers. Such an Internet appliance could be built around a simpler and less expensive microchip.

There is little question that the World Wide Web is beginning to catch on. 200,000 web pages are launched each day around the world. It is a compelling medium for those who want or need to stay informed. In the fall of 1996, it personalized the election to undertake tasks that, on their face, can be pretty intimidating. The web's unique advantage is that it has virtually unlimited space to present background information on an issue and the ability to archive and cross-reference that information in almost any way you choose. The one disadvantage is that, until you get there, there is no way to tell a high-quality, professionally created and supported site from an amateur one—especially if all you have is a list of addresses.

If you so chose during the Republican and Democratic conventions, you could have visited the Dole campaign or the Clinton campaign web sites and read their views on each issue. On other sites, you could compare the issues side-by-side. And, it is quite possible that the power of the incumbency gives a candidate more time, people and money to spend developing an efficient, easy-to-web site. The Clinton campaign's pages were far better organized and more graphically appealing than were Senator Dole's.

At the same time, there is an unprecedented opportunity to look at issues in detail. For example, hours before New York's Representative Susan Molinari delivered the keynote address to her Republican colleagues, visitors to the *Politics Now* site could have read an overview story of her remarks and looked at extensive biographical and background information on her—the kind most newspapers simply don't have the space to print. Among that information were reports on her voting record in Congress, including her votes on abortion issues.

The information is there in any depth or detail you may want to read, review or print out.

It is this depth of detail and searchability that makes the Internet, and especially the World Wide Web, so intriguing. For a newspaper reporter there is only one commodity that counts: space. And, as we have seen, space costs money. Space is natural resources, boiled trees, paper, white gold. I have never met a reporter who had enough space to say the things that needed to be said. On the Internet, that space is available almost without cost.

More and more, you see stories in *The Wall Street Journal* referring you to its Web site for further detail, further amplification, more news, more background, more information that is relevant but not printed because of the space that would be required. I think you will see it more and more in all publications. The Internet will become as pervasive a medium as print, TV or radio. It may well surpass each of the individual media, primarily because it mixes TV, radio and print all in one space while giving you instant interactivity.

At the same time, the computer recognizes that you have paid a visit to the site, makes note of that along with the frequency and duration of your visits. Eventually that information goes back to the

creator of the site. What a tool for a marketer!

Speaking of marketing, think of the Internet advantages to a retailer. Any retailer may come to mind, but for ease of understanding, let's make it Lazarus. More than six months ago designers began work on the materials you will see in Lazarus stores this coming fall. Though they will have many lines of merchandise, let's suppose you were going to want to buy a pair of Levis for the first home game of Ohio State's football season. These Levis come in many waist sizes, inseams, rivets or not. Perhaps with a loose, relaxed fit, traditional or tight fit, perhaps with a zippered fly and perhaps with a button fly. The design has been approved, the goods purchased, the material cut, sewn, warehoused, shipped and stocked so that when you, the customer, walk into the store you can select the length, the size, the style, the zipper or button fly, and it has to be available in the Eastland Lazarus, and it had better be in all of them.

Life became simpler in the 70s for those who chose to buy via the catalogue. Catalogs eliminated the retail outlets necessary for the choice of the customer. Stores exist primarily to provide the customer with a firsthand knowledge and information about what is available. Customers drive to these stores, using gasoline and tires, to gather that information. The information was also available in newspaper advertisements.

But what if I can do all my shopping on the Internet? I can tell the retailer precisely what I want, the retailer can provide precisely what I want while cutting back extraordinarily on the time required in design, procurement, warehousing, inventory control and the retail experience. If information equals what it replaces, then, in this case, it replaces inventory, warehouses, retail stores, print media, the tress they use to make the paper, gasoline, rubber, and so forth. The only thing missing is the tactile experience of handling the goods.

Let me give a real-life example. I love to go to Border's. I'm there at least twice a week. I love the studied casualness in which they display their books on the floor, causing me to trip over just the book I want. But on the Internet there is a book store called Amazon. It is a marketer's dream. After seeing the movie, *The English Patient*, I wanted to buy the book. I went to the Internet, went to Amazon.com, typed in the title, hit Search, and found 13 items: *The English Patient* in paperback to \$8.40, *The English Patient* in audio cassette for \$16.20,

*The English Patient* a novel, for \$22.50, *The English Patient*, a screen play in paperback for \$7.66, all by Michael Ondaatje.

But I also found *Jumping Frog: in English, Then in French, Then Clawed Back Into a Civilized Language Once More By Patient, Unremunerated Toil*, by Mark Twain, selling for \$3.56. I also found *Do You Understand: Communicating With The Non-English-Speaking Patient Handbook*, available in paperback for \$15.00. There is also *The English Patient Soundtrack*, *The English Patient Movie Tie-in Edition*, and my favorite, *Loyalist Resolve: Patient Fortitude in the English Civil War*.

When I clicked on the book itself, I learned that the first edition was available in hard cover at 307 pages, that it was listed at \$25 but that I could buy it through Amazon for \$22.50, it was published by Knopf, the publication date was October 1, 1992, and that its dimensions are 8.66 x 5.99 x 1.15 inches. It gives a 70-word synopsis, reviews by six "people," and a list of topics covered in the novel.

When you click on the author, you can find other books he has written. You order by hitting the Shopping List button and giving your credit card number. It's not the same sensory experience as a trip to Border's, but it is far more complete and helpful as you think about buying a book you're unsure of.

An article in USA Today said that automobile dealerships face a grim future. It said sales were stalling and businesses were folding. One of the reasons cited was online shopping. If shoppers buy online, where are they going to find information about the cars they intend to buy? It does not follow that they will look in a newspaper. If you've ever looked at an automobile website, you can see the car in motion, a detailed description of the car, and a program that will tell you how much automobile you can afford. This auto dealer example may be the flutter of the butterfly's wings in China, but it seems clear a tornado is coming, and the wise media owners will be prepared for the winds of classified change.

At the moment, the local newspaper owns the community franchise for news and information. The information it likes to collect is the information it likes to publish. Journalists never spent a whole lot of time getting more detail gathered because there really wasn't room to publish it in the first place. But the needs of the Internet users are for more depth, more detail. From my

vantage point, it seems to me that everyone who is about to enter the electronic marketplace for editorial data is about even if all the competitors have the will and the money to collect the data and begin their investment in the future today. In 1985, *The Dispatch* began to collect its news columns electronically in a searchable database. That database will be gold in the future as people research for arcane trivia about life in Central Ohio 13 years ago. But the start needed to be made then for value today.

Classified ads account for about 37% of a newspaper's advertising revenue. If you are interested in a 1957 Chevrolet, you may need only six or 10 lines in the entire Sunday classified section. Think of all the tress that die to bring you not even an inch worth of information. Clearly the way to learn about that '57 Chevy is electronically. And who has the lock on the classified database? The local newspapers do. But that means the Tompson newspapers in Lancaster and Newark have the same kind of information as *The Dispatch*. And so does Max Brown at his *Columbus Monthly* and *SNP Publications*. If it is the quality of the database under discussion, that database can reside anywhere its owner wants. The user doesn't care whether it resides either. He just wants to know about the 1957 Chevrolet Bel-Aire. So, for now, the advantage lies with those who are used to selling and publishing classified advertising. But can that inherent advantage withstand the onslaught of the Bill Gates millions? Can Gates form alliances with small weekly newspapers and enter the market easily? Questions abound. The answers, while not clear, are emerging. A major real estate advertiser can create a company web site with video and much more information about a house that appears in a classified ad. And it not only looks better, it is there alone without the competition of other advertisers—and eventually cheaper than it can be purchased in the daily paper.

The trend line shows declining usage of the traditional media, increased use of new media and a threat to the revenue stream of the most established of the established media. Pointcast is a screensaver that you can download off the Internet onto your screen. It is free. It offers the news of the day in various categories that you personalize. If you want to know the weather in Naples and Phoenix and London, it

**Please see "News," page 28**

Old fashioned morality plays in modern garb.

# Cowboy Movies and the Way We Are

by William L. Craig, Jr., Ph.D.



## About the Author

A native of Pittsburgh, William Craig attended Carnegie Tech and later graduated from Virginia State College. He earned a M.Ed. and D.Ed. from Wayne State University.

After teaching in the public schools of Tampa, Florida, he joined the faculty of the Norfolk Division of Virginia State College, now Norfolk State University. He became Vice President for Development and led the founding of the NSU Foundation and created the first endowments for the University.

Now retired, he serves as the Chairman of the Norfolk City Planning Commission and participates in other community activities.

This paper was presented to the Torch Club of Hampton Roads on May 21, 1998.



A few years ago our club was treated to a paper entitled "The Westerns Revisited." That exploration of the history of Westerns stirred memories of wonderful Saturday afternoons at the movies and provided the inspiration for this paper.

My theme for this paper is simple, I contend that the "Cowboy Movies," as we called them, in addition to being entertainment, were instruments for the transmission of values and morals and movie cowboys were the personalized synthesis of much of what we were taught by our parents, teachers, Sunday School leaders and neighbors.

Let us first examine the history and structure of Westerns. The earliest movies were extremely brief, lasting only two or three minutes and showing a skit or a stage act in the pattern of vaudeville productions. No producer knew what would appeal to an audience. This was an entirely new form of entertainment with no past to provide guidance. The basic form of all American movies is said to have been created with the making of *The Great Train Robbery* in 1903.

Produced by the Edison Company, the film ran only twelve minutes but it was the first film to tell a story. The plot was simple and contained many devices which became standard in westerns; the villains tie up the telegraph operator, stop the train, shoot down a train guard, visit a saloon where they make a tenderfoot dance by shooting at his feet, they are chased by the good guys with six-guns blazing, many are shot from their saddles and in the final shout-out all of the villains wind up dead.

In twelve short minutes, the story was told and cheering audiences demanded to see it over and over again. Producers began to realize that audiences would sit still and watch a story unfold, so plots for subsequent movies were taken from stories and eventually the works of outstanding writers like Owen Wister and Zane Grey were adopted for films. As the popularity of these films grew, writers were employed to write stories expressly to be made into films. However these stories were created, the fundamental plot has remained unchanged since *The Great Train Robbery*.

Jon Tuska, in his book *The American West in Film* describes seven variations which plots may follow:

- The Pioneer Achievement Story  
In this category would be all stories dealing with wagon trains, construction of roads and cattle drives. Building railroads and telegraph lines or stage coach lines would be included. The hero might be trying to build his own project or he might be helping others.
- Picaresque Wanderers and Searchers  
The heroes in these stories could be roving cowhands, gunfighters or plainsmen. As they moved from place to place they became involved in various adventures and left those with whom they had contact better off for their coming.
- The Ranch Story/Town Western  
These stories were located on cattle or horse ranches where conflicts existed with rustlers, homesteaders or sheep herders. Where the story is laid in town the conflicts involved empire builders or dishonest bankers.

- The Justice/Revenge Theme  
In many pictures using this platform justice is equated with revenge. The hero may begin by seeking revenge, which can be morally questioned, and be convinced to seek justice through due process of the law.
- The Indian Story  
In the pictures an Indian or an Indian tribe may be the point of focus motivation for the actions of the other characters. These pictures became popular in the 1950's and were concerned with social issues and injustices.
- The Outlaw Story  
Included in this category are all of those stories about heroes who have been forced into becoming outlaws or are outlaws who have become reformed. These stories were popularized in the 1960's. In earlier films, heroes sometimes appeared to be outlaws, but were eventually revealed to have assumed a guise in order to infiltrate villains to bring them to justice.
- The Lawman Story  
The heroes in these stories were not only sheriffs or town marshals but rangers, U.S. Marshals or detectives employed by cattlemen's associations. This plot is often combined successfully with many of the other plots.  
By and large the structure of the westerns is always essentially the same. There is conflict in the community. The community can be centered around a ranch, a town, a mine or a territory. The adversaries in the conflict will be well-identified as good or bad, honest or dishonest. The hero is not immediately involved in the conflict but eventually decides to become involved and thereby precipitates a show-down between himself and the villains or "bad guys." The hero inevitably triumphs and the "bad guys" are carted off to jail or in some cases are shot down. In the movies of my childhood they were usually taken to jail and, even though there may have been gun-play, no one was seriously wounded. Our heroes usually knocked them out with one stunning punch or shot the bad guy's gun from his hand without breaking the skin. The plots did not depend on violence to carry the story line.

The endings of the pictures varied somewhat. The hero sometimes settled down to the life of a rancher or a lawman, but quite often he rode off into the sunset thereby paving the way for him to appear in a later film in a new location.

Early in the history of these frontier dramas there evolved the so-called “B-Westerns,” films which occupied the secondary position in a double feature. These pictures followed the formula plots we have discussed and featured heroes who became well-known stars. The B-westerns were well-made and entertaining and fared well until the advent of television.

In the early western films, heroes were largely unidentified and were not given any screen credit. There was nothing unique about their appearance; they wore what they usually wore. Wardrobe was not considered to be a factor.

Appearing in *The Great Train Robbery* was an actor named G.M. Anderson who saw the potential of western films and became a partner in a production company. He also saw that the films being produced by others had no central figure—someone for whom the audience could root. When he could not find a suitable actor for his first film he cast himself in the part and adopted the name of the leading character as his own—Bronco Billy Anderson. Between 1908 and 1915 he made over 375 films, churning them out at the rate of one a week. The Bronco Billy films were the first western serials.

The heroes of these early films were not always clearly established at the film’s outset. Sometimes they were badmen who underwent a conversion to become good men and sometimes they were good men who teetered on the brink or became bad, eventually going through a redemption. One of the outstanding early heroes was William S. Hart. Hart’s heroes were usually men with a past, someone outside the law, who, because of a woman’s tenderness turns to protector of the innocent and oppressed. In a memorable scene from one of his films he is shown seated at a table with an open Bible in front of him and a bottle of whiskey and a six-gun to one side. In this silent film his facial expressions express his torment and inner conflict as he struggles with the forces of good and evil.

Tom Mix arrived on the screen without conflict. He had started making movies before William S. Hart and continued for a decade after Hart’s retirement. Tom Mix’s

career coincided with the coming of the “B” westerns. His screen image was that of a Boy Scout. He had no shady past and did not arrive in town covered with mud or trail dust and head for the nearest saloon. He was immediately and clearly identified as the hero. With the growing popularity of the “B” westerns he was joined by other heroes such as Buck Jones, Hoot Gibson, Ken Maynard, Bob Steele, Tim Holt, and others. One other trend began to emerge with the “B” westerns. The stories were written to include action of the sort seen in Wild West shows—trick riding, roping and trick shooting. Producers also began to fit the heroes out in the attire of the Wild West shows—white hats and decorated outfits.

With this background defined, let me now overlay a description of my personal recollections and how life was as seen by youngsters who looked at the “cowboys” through innocent eyes with wonder, delight, and pleased approval.

I suppose our first focussed awareness came when the Ralston Purina Company chose Tom Mix to be their spokesman. We didn’t know that he was past his prime as a movie star and we really didn’t care. He became a regular feature in the Sunday comics and in a daily radio show. Each day, Monday through Friday, at five thirty we received a new episode of Tom Mix with his faithful friend, the Old Wrangler. We know from his pictures in the comics that he was older than Tom—gray haired, wise and dependable—a worthy choice for a friend to Tom. How lucky, we thought, were Jimmy and Jane, who lived on Tom’s ranch the TM Bar, and were allowed to ride with Tom on their own horses. We never knew who their parents were and why they were not on the scene. These questions never occurred to us. They rode with Tom and that was good enough for us. Each day Tom faced a conflict and resolved it with strength and confidence and “put things right.” Each day he closed his adventure saying “Straight-shooters always win; lawbreakers always lose. It pays to shoot straight!” With that lesson drilled into us everyday, of course we were going to be straight shooters! Today, Tom’s words may sound rather banal, but to an impressionable boy of ten or eleven, coming from a larger-than-life hero, they were as profound in their teaching as any utterance from the Dali Lama. And so our appetites were whetted all week for Saturday—MOVIE DAY.

Saturdays began with the sounds of our

father stirring about the house. In the winter, it was the sound of the furnace being fed after last night’s banking. From the kitchen the first faint aroma of breakfast roused us from the last vestiges of sleep. Out of bed. Wash and dress quickly—four boys and a girl hastening to the table. Dad’s blessing—eat—clear the table and tackle your chores. We all had chores and there was no excuse and no escape. Sweeping, dusting, bed making, clothes hanging, all done to the exacting standards of Mom’s inspection and redone until she approved. Now this part of the morning routine was always rushed because we wanted to move on to the next phase as quickly as possible.

I don’t know how it started, but among the boys in the neighborhood it became a “matter of personal pride,” a challenge to earn one’s own fare for the movies and to help one’s younger brothers to earn theirs. On Saturday morning, the neighborhood was beset with teams of small boys competing to perform services for a fee. In the winter months, homes in Pittsburgh were heated with coal, so disposal of the ashes provided a lucrative market. At five cents a bushel, three bushels hauled away would earn the price of the movie and a box of popcorn. Multiply this by the number of boys in the family and you knew what your earning target was. There were other opportunities as well; shovelling snow or sweeping the night’s deposit of steel mill grime from the front porches. In warmer weather there were lawns to be cut, walkways to be scrubbed or any task that a neighbor was willing to pay for in units of nickels.

Competition was keen, and the idea that one or more of our brothers might not be able to go with us served to push us harder. We didn’t know the words “family solidarity” but we were learning them. Fortunately, our Mother seemed to always know where there was a little extra charge somewhere, so we never had to leave anyone at home.

So we spent the afternoon in the company of heroes in the balcony of the Capitol Theatre with all of the boys from our neighborhood. As far as we were concerned, this was entertainment of the most enjoyable kind. What we had to do to get there did not, at the time, contain a lesson for us. That would be understood later, but for then, the chores at home and the working for a reward were accepted unquestioningly as the way life was. I suspect that some of our neighbors

***Please see "Movies," page 35***

An important part of the modern history of Israel.

# The Rebirth of a People and a Language

by Marshall Giller, Ph.D.



## About the Author

Marshall Giller was born and raised in Florida. He earned his bachelor's degree in civil engineering at the University of Miami, an MA in Finance from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Ph.D. in educational administration from Michigan State University. Along the way, he worked in architecture, contracting, home building, the savings and loan industry and he is presently an associate professor of business at Ferris State University.

He further states: "All of this has virtually nothing to do with the topic of this paper. I spent a year in Israel from 1950 to 1951 and during that time picked up a conversational knowledge of Hebrew. Herzl was quite well known in the Jewish and Zionist circles in which I grew up. I learned about Ben Yehuda when I first went to Israel. I also have a great grandfather who was a Hebrew writer at the turn of the century in Russia and later in America. He wrote for a reading public which did not appear until a generation after his death: the Hebrew speaking children who grew up in the Land of Israel as a result of Ben Yehuda's efforts."

This paper was presented to the Grand Rapids Torch Club on December 10, 1996.



This is primarily the story of two men. One of them was the driving force behind the revival in modern times of an ancient nation. The other one was the driving force behind the revival of an ancient language which was to become the modern spoken language in this nation.

The first was Theodore Herzl, a Jewish journalist, born in Budapest in 1860. At the age of 18, his family moved to Vienna, capital of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and it was in the German language

that he did his later literary work. Herzl was typical of the assimilated Jews of his time and place. Not for them, the odd dress and pious orthodoxy of the Jews of Russia or Eastern Europe. He even joined a fraternity and a student dueling club in Vienna. Herzl's early interests were journalism and writing, at which he proved rather successful. Jewish problems occupied him only marginally, as when he quit the German students' society in protest against their anti-semitism. He graduated from law school and practiced law briefly, but then turned to writing for a career and published articles, stories and plays. A number of the latter were successfully produced in Germany and Austria.

In 1891, Herzl moved to Paris as the correspondent of a Viennese newspaper. There a shocking event shook him out of his complacency and probably had the greatest influence on the future direction of his life. This was the Dreyfus case.

Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French army, was accused of treason and spying for the Prussians and shipped off to Devil's Island, the penal colony in French Guiana. At the time of his trial, the French writer, Emile Zola became one of his staunch defenders and delivered his famous "J'accuse" speech. Eventually, Dreyfus was completely exonerated, but not until after bitter manifestations of anti-semitism in the French army and among the French public were revealed. Herzl was shocked to see a Parisian mob shouting "death to the Jews" when Dreyfus was publicly stripped of his military rank on January 5, 1895.

To understand Herzl's feeling of shock, one should know the admiration felt by Eastern European Jews for France. In the time of tyranny, pogroms, and persecution in Czarist Russia and Eastern Europe, France had been, since the French Revolution, the country of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." If mobs in France, of all countries, could shout "Death to the Jews," then the position of Jews must truly be hopeless. The Dreyfus

case was the culmination of events which forced Herzl to the conclusion that there was no future for Jews, except in their own country.

The idea of Zionism already existed among Jews before Herzl's time, what Herzl did was to galvanize existing Zionist organizations into action. He convened the first World Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, in 1897. In his diary at that time he wrote "At Basle, I founded the Jewish State."<sup>1</sup>

Herzl struggled as much with Jewish leaders as anyone else in trying to promote his ideas, which seemed far fetched at the time. I recall reading under "Zionism" in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1911 the statement at the end of the article which suggested that Zionism would soon die out, since anti-semitism was dying out in the world. Then came the Nazis and the Holocaust to make a mockery of this particular prediction.

Herzl spent the rest of his life in diplomatic negotiations with the Ottoman empire and other groups in an attempt to achieve his aims until his untimely death in 1904, at the age of 44. The Zionist movement, of course, survived him, and the Jewish State that he had predicted came into being in May 1948, just fifty-one years after that first Zionist Congress.

Herzl's most famous book was *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State) in which he expounded his ideas. A lesser known book is a novel he wrote in 1902: *Altneuland* (Old-New Land). It is a work of light fiction, perhaps not a great work of literature, but a very revealing look at Herzl's aspiration for his Jewish Commonwealth. Briefly the plot involves two men who, bitter and disillusioned with society, decide to retreat to an isolated island to live the rest of their lives cut-off from the world. On the way their private yacht stops off in Palestine. Herzl describes the Palestine of 1902 based on his own visit there. He, and his fictitious characters, find it to be a rather wretched, primitive country. One of the few bright spots is a visit to a Jewish agricultural

settlement, (based on Herzl's own experience in visiting such a settlement).

Then, in the novel, the two men sail back to Europe twenty years later, having been out of touch with the world all that time. Stopping off in Palestine, they are astonished at the change in the country. In the intervening years a Jewish Commonwealth had come into being. This section, which describes Herzl's vision, is the bulk of the novel. What the two men find is a modern country with marvels that did not exist there in Herzl's day. He describes Haifa, which in his day was a primitive village: "A beautiful city had been built close to the deep blue sea."<sup>2</sup> He describes the harbor in which "Vessels of all shapes and sizes and of all nationalities lay at peace here." This, of course, is a pretty accurate description of Haifa today.

Herzl was careful to describe the country as a self-governing commonwealth with the name "The New Society." He does not call it an independent state, since at the time he wrote this he was involved in delicate negotiations with the Turkish Sultan who controlled the country. Herzl describes a modern country, with an active cultural life, a magnificent opera house, newspapers, large department stores, and other civilized features which did not exist in the Palestine of his own day. In his "New Society" they have their own currency, denominated in shekels. All of these predictions have come true in Israel, today. Herzl predicts the draining of swamps and establishment of hydroelectric power, all of which came about after his death. One of the characters in his novel is an Arab named Reshid Bey, who follows Moslem customs, such as keeping his wife in isolation. As one of the characters explains "...here in your New Society one and all can live according to their own fashion."<sup>3</sup> Herzl describes Arabs and Jews living in harmony in "The New Society" where no attempt is made to change anyone's religion or way of life. This, of course, is true of Israel. Compare this attitude to America where the Palefaces historically have tried to convert the native Americans to their religion and culture.

In some respects the novel is not an accurate predictor. Herzl describes the country as including Tyre and Beirut,

which are now part of Lebanon. How could he have made an error like that? The fact is, in Herzl's day *there was no Palestine!* That is, there was a concept of Palestine, but there was no political entity with that name and there had not been since Roman times. It was the Romans who after the Jewish revolt in 70 A.D. changed the name of Judea to "Syria Palestina"—Phillistine Syria. This was meant to insult the Jews by renaming the country after their long time enemy, the Philistines. However Palestine was never even a Turkish province. It was part of the Turkish province of Syria. Which part? Again, the Encyclopedia Britannica of 1911 in its article on "Palestine" points out that the only definite boundary of Palestine is the Mediterranean Sea on the west. There was not a definite eastern boundary and the best definition of Palestine was "the biblical land of the Jews." Palestine did not appear on world maps until about World War I when a territory was carved out of the Turkish empire, called "Palestine," and the British were given a "mandate" to govern it. The original Palestine Mandate was on both sides of the Jordan. However, the British government partitioned it and called the part east of the Jordan "Transjordan" and the western part "Palestine."

Herzl did not predict the revival of Hebrew. In his novel, the implication is that the inhabitants spoke German, with the "peasants" speaking the dialect of German known as Yiddish. When a character in the novel suggests an evening at the theatre, he is asked whether he would like to go to the German Theatre, the French Theatre, or the English Theatre. However, in today's Israel, if you attend the theatre, it would be in Hebrew, which is the living language of the country. The revival of Hebrew as a modern spoken language is largely through the efforts of another remarkable man: Eliezer Yitzhak Perelman, who subsequently changed his name to Eliezer Ben Yehuda. He was born in Lithuania in 1858 and in his youth became caught up in the movement for the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel. While Herzl's thrust was political, Ben Yehuda was more interested in the establishment of a spiritual center for the Jewish people, and in the revival of Hebrew as the living language of the Jews. With

this in mind, he went to Palestine to live in 1881.

The status of the Hebrew language at that time was comparable to that of the Latin language. Many people studied it, academically. Jews who attended religious schools learned the language, and in addition, many Christian clergyman did and still do study Hebrew as a background to bible study. In the earliest American colleges, which were usually founded by religious denominations, Hebrew was taught along with Latin and Greek. A remnant of this practice survives in the Hebrew word Emet (truth) which is on the seal of Yale University. Even though nobody spoke Hebrew on an everyday basis, there is evidence that throughout the centuries it had been used as a *lingua franca* among Jews who had no other common language. In fact, Ben Yehuda was told by a scholar in Paris that in Jerusalem members of various Jewish communities were able to converse with each other only in Sephardi Hebrew.<sup>4</sup>

There were Jews in Jerusalem at that time. They have constituted the majority of the population for over a century. A Turkish census of 1905, quoted in the Catholic Encyclopedia give these figures: Jews, 45,000; Moslems, 8,000; Orthodox Christians, 6,000; and other denominations a total of 4,900.<sup>5</sup> So Ben Yehuda had many Jews to try to influence when he settled in the Holy Land. A majority of these Jews used the Sephardi accent, which is used by the Jews of the Middle East, including those Jews who were exiled from Spain in 1492 and spread throughout the Ottoman empire. The other accent is the Ashkenazi accent, used by the Jews of most of Europe and Russia. The difference is in the pronunciation of a couple of vowels, one consonant, and in accent. The well-known word "kosher" is pronounced "kasher" in the Sephardi accent. "Shalom" is a Sephardi pronunciation; in the Ashkenazi accent it is pronounced "sholem." In modern times, the Ashkenazi Jews have constituted the majority of the Jewish population of the world, and in America. Ben Yehuda, being from Lithuania, grew up using the Ashkenazi accent. However, he adopted the Sephardi accent in his campaign to revive the Hebrew language, and it became the accent used in spoken Hebrew today.

There were many among the traditional Jews who objected to the use of Hebrew for conversation or other profane purposes, and felt that it was the holy language to be used only for prayer and ritual. *Haskalah*, a Hebrew word meaning “learning” was a movement in the late 19th century to promote secular learning and the secular use of Hebrew. My own great grandfather was a leader in this movement. He wrote many books in Hebrew, including translations of Russian fables and texts on Hebrew grammar for a very limited number of potential readers.

Ben Yehuda began his campaign for the revival of Hebrew by announcing to his wife when they arrived in Jaffa that they would converse only in this language in their home. His son was born into a household where, for the first time in 2,000 years, the only language he heard was Hebrew. Ben Yehuda persuaded the directors of the Jerusalem school established by the French organization “Alliance Israel” to allow him to teach Jewish subjects exclusively in Hebrew. He also published a weekly, later a daily newspaper in Hebrew. His greatest project was his Hebrew dictionary, a massive work which he did not complete in his lifetime. As the use of Hebrew spread among the Jewish population and new immigrants, he was called on to coin many new words for things that did not exist in biblical times, such as *tizmoret* for “orchestra.” He usually turned first to Hebrew root words, then to similar languages such as, Arabic, to come up with terms to meet the needs of modern life. In one case he turned to the Bible for a word used in the book of Ezekiel. When Ezekiel saw the vision of the wheel, he described it as being made of “Chashmal.” This is the only time the word is used in the Bible, and the meaning of it is unknown, but Ben Yehuda used it as the Hebrew word for “electricity.”

As time went on, Ben Yehuda’s efforts bore fruit. Jewish settlers, coming from Eastern Europe, would work hard in the fields all day and then in the evening struggled to converse in Hebrew rather than relaxing in their native language. Teaching Hebrew in schools became prevalent. My wife’s grandmother, Ester Shapiro, was the world’s first Hebrew kindergarten teacher in the Jewish village

of Rishon LeZion at the end of the 19th century, and was honored near the end of her life by the Israeli government as a pioneer. Before Ben Yehuda died in 1923, he helped persuade the first British high commissioner after World War I to make Hebrew one of the three official languages of Palestine. It is said that near the end of his life, he was strolling down a street in Tel Aviv with Haim Nachman Bialik, a Hebrew poet. He accidentally knocked down a small boy who shouted at him “*hamor!*” Ben Yehuda was thrilled that a child would automatically shout a Hebrew invective meaning “jackass!”

The basic vocabulary that Ben Yehuda used was primarily the vocabulary of the bible, about 6,000 words. A young Israeli, born speaking Hebrew, would have no difficulty in reading and understanding the Old Testament in its original language. He would probably have a little less trouble than an American school child trying to understand Shakespeare. However, the style of the Old Testament is not the way people speak every-day Hebrew. Just as we understand Mark Anthony when he says “lend me your ears,” we would say something like “listen here” in modern English. Ben Yehuda fought for a simple style in modern Hebrew literature. As a matter of fact modern Hebrew is in the style of another ancient book, the Mishna. This book was written about 2,000 years ago and is a collection of the laws and oral traditions which form the core of the Talmud. With my limited conversational Hebrew, I can read the Bible with some difficulty and understand some of it. The first time I read a portion of the Mishnah known as *Pirkey Avot*, which means “Wisdom of the Fathers,” I found the style to be plain and down to earth. I felt as though I were reading a modern newspaper in Hebrew, as contrasted with the florid style of the bible. In effect, modern Hebrew picks up where it left off 2,000 years ago. Modern Israelis could probably converse with Hannibal and the ancient Phoenicians and Carthaginians. The language we call Hebrew was also the language or the other southern semitic people of the time. Aramaic was the language of the northern semites, the Syrians. It was adopted when those people conquered Judea. The two languages are as similar as German and Dutch, so the transition from one to

another was probably easy. Ben Yehuda, however, carefully omitted Aramaic and other foreign words from his dictionary.

Would Hebrew have been revived without the effects of Ben Yehuda? I can only point to the example of Ireland. The Irish government has made a valiant effort to revive Gaelic for the last seventy five years. However, when I watched a session of the Irish parliament recently on C-Span, and it was conducted in English! The Irish didn’t have a Ben Yehuda!

Do we have two men who were visionaries and also men of action. Each one of them actively worked to bring about his ideas and in time each was successful. However, they had two different visions. Herzl felt that the establishment of a Jewish state or commonwealth was of prime importance. His book, *Altneuland*, has been described as a vision of a Jewish state without a Jewish culture. Ben Yehuda, on the other hand, felt that the revival of Jewish culture and the Hebrew language was more important than the establishment of a political entity for the Jews. The State of Israel encompasses both visions and both men were necessary to bring it about in its present form.

Notes:

1. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Jerusalem, 1982
2. Herzl, *Altneuland*
3. *Ibid*
4. *Encyclopedia Judaica*
5. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1920

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Something for authors—and editors—to think about.

# Creativity vs. Plagiarism: What Separates Them?

by Walter J. Mueller

## About the Author

Walter J. Mueller was born in Connecticut and obtained his B.A. and M.A. from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. An exchange fellow at the

University of Jena, Germany, he returned as an instructor in German at Cornell University, where he received his Ph.D.

He served in the United States Army during World War II, and from 1945-1970 was in the Foreign Service of the United States, with postings in Germany, Canada, and the U.S. Department of State in Washington. As visiting professor of international relations he taught at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, and served as Dean of Area and Country Studies at the Foreign Service Institute, Department of State. Upon retirement from the Foreign Service, he became professor of German and Dean, College of Arts and Letters, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

A resident of Williamsburg, Virginia, since 1974, he joined the Torch Club of Hampton Roads, Virginia, in 1977 and served as its president in 1979-1980. He received the Editor's Quill Award in 1995 for a paper which appeared in the Winter 1995 issue of *The Torch* and served on its Editorial Advisory Committee, 1995-98.

This paper was presented at a meeting of the Torch Club of Hampton Roads, April 10, 1997.

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## Where Did It Come From?

There was a time when scientists asserted that the atom was the smallest entity. The neutron, for example, was not discovered until 1932, and many of the chemical elements remained to be found when I was an undergraduate. Since then, from time to time, as the attention of

physicists turned from the macrocosm to the microcosm, we have been introduced to more and more subatomic particles. To the best of my layman's knowledge, the smallest such particle revealed thus far is the quark. Who is to say that even smaller entities will not be found in the future? With ever greater sophistication and tools, scientists of the twenty-first century may surprise the world with deeper readings of the microcosm.

The point I wish to emphasize at the outset is that no matter how many more such discoveries are made and names given to all these minuscule phenomena, they themselves are nothing new. In other words, they have always been inherent in the substances previously identified; it is only that they have been found, not created.

This brings me to my fundamental belief concerning creativity (which I expressed in a Torch paper some years ago). I refer to what is often called the Lucretian Law: nothing can be created out of nothing; there must have been a precursor. Cosmologists often speak of the Big Bang origin of the universe. They assume gases or other substances somehow caused the bang, but that leaves unanswered the question where those substances came from before they reacted with one another. And the farther back one pursues first causes, the more one must recognize that something came before, even though that something may be unidentified or even unidentifiable.

In response to compliments on his technological inventions, Thomas Jefferson said that he did not make any discoveries but had only uncovered things that already existed. As Secretary of State, he was also in charge of the patent office, but he did not take out any patents, believing that whatever came to light should be made immediately available to humanity. He was not concerned about copycats—plagiarists.

These approaches have been known for a long time. Let me give two quotations from the Bible, both from the Book of Ecclesiastes: "...There is nothing new under the sun" (I.9),

and ... "Is there anything whereof of old time, which was before us" (I.10).

Although my topic is "Creativity vs. Plagiarism," it could be argued from what I have stated thus far that all is plagiarism, based on what went before, and that there is really no such thing as "creativity." We grow up in a culture and use its hallmarks in our daily lives, in conversations, in writings, in all our intellectual activities. Expanding this concept, we can speak of the fruits of human civilization, which encompass all cultures of the world. This then is the sum total of the cultural capital with which we have to work.

It is all here before us; it has all been said and done before. And yet, every day new creative results are derived from these existing cultures, something new emerges, and, as I shall argue, there can be creativity while we still have to work with material that has long existed. There must always be a connection with what existed before.

Since the culture contains all the elements with which we have to work, how can we create anything new? Indeed, how can we be said to create anything at all? Having hailed composers, writers, artists, scientists, engineers and many others for what they have produced in commonly recognized creative endeavor or enterprise, am I now trapped in my earlier definitions? I think not, because it is obvious that we need a different definition of the creative act.

## A Definition of Creativity

In my view, the basic definition of creativity, given the fact that everything must have an antecedent, is the *rearrangement* of existing material—material in the broadest sense. It might be argued that a nonsense word like "gobbledy-gook" has no antecedent and therefore represents a new creation. Yes, it is a new creation, but only in the sense that it is a new arrangement of a group of letters of the alphabet. The same may be said of a musical composition: all the notes used are time-honored, but the creative

aspect of the composition is that the notes were never before, to our knowledge, assembled in these sequences and timing. So it goes with works of literature: the words come from the vocabulary of the culture but are rearranged by some understandable grammar into a novel, short story, drama, poem. For me, one of the most eloquent combinations of a few common words were uttered by wheelchair-bound reporter John Hockenberry in the mountains of northern Iraq as the Kurds fled from Iraqi forces: "Like a river of humanity pouring down a mountainside."

### An Attempt to Define Plagiarism

"Plagiarism" is an elusive word. *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (10th Edition)*, includes under plagiarism "committing literary theft: presenting as new or original an idea or product derived from another source." Of course, citing this definition is also plagiarism, the extenuating circumstance being that I have placed the definition within quotation marks, together with an attribution. This definition sounds straightforward until one attempts to apply it. In art, for example, we speak of "schools" or "movements." Have the artist-adherents of such movements, for example, in Dadaism, been plagiarists because they imitated this nonsense style? Are the practitioners borrowing from (i.e., plagiarizing) precursors of the movement, and are the epigones—those pale, final imitators of the main movement—plagiarists?

Were those architects who based their designs on the Bauhaus architectural school of Walter Gropius plagiarists? According to the dictionary definition of plagiarism, if they are not presenting their style as new but declare that it is Bauhaus architecture, no plagiarism has occurred, yet it is imitative of someone else's work. Here one could easily wander off into the area of patents and copyright, but that is a legal protection system beyond the scope of this paper. Plagiarism takes place with impunity, if the source is well known and replication a common practice, as in building a geodesic dome, an acknowledged intention of Buckminster Fuller. I once had the pleasure of being Fuller's guide on a two-day visit he paid to the University of Alaska. In speaking to an enthusiastic audience for an uninterrupted three hours, he invited us to make free use of his ideas. If one does so, is this plagiarism or paying the author a

compliment, if not a royalty?

### Some Interesting Cases

Sir Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin by what he called "a triumph of accident and shrewd observation." The vulcanization of rubber occurred when sulfur was accidentally spilled on heated rubber. Both substances were well known, but this was the first known instance of this new combination. Accidents or discovery, we may well call both of these examples acts of creativity. But are they who do likewise plagiarists?

A gray area between creativity and plagiarism is the alteration of an existing word, phrase, title or saying but remaining close enough to the original to make a point. One day at the dentist's office, I suddenly thought: "The tooth, the whole tooth, and nothing but the tooth." I felt alternately proud of my creativity and guilty about having plagiarized in a pun the legal expression. In this paradox lies the problem. The present constantly feeds on the past. Take these examples:

The title of Ernest Hemingway's novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* derives from the English poet John Donne's "...Never seek to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." Is it plagiarism even though acknowledged?

A 1990 book by David Hays and Daniel Hays carries the title *My Old Man and the Sea: A father and Son Sail Around Cape Horn*. This is obviously a slightly altered title of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. Can there be any doubt that the Hays chose to imitate the title of a most successful book, hoping that some of the glamor of the earlier work would illuminate their own? Is this plagiarism or just resourcefulness (creativity)?

How does one categorize Johannes Brahms's "Variations on a Theme by Haydn" or Max Reger's "Variations on a Theme by Mozart?" Here we arrive at the intersection between creativity and plagiarism. If pressed, I would say that both are represented but creative differences save the day.

### Plagiarism in Unexpected Places

An amazing amount of "borrowing" occurs in unexpected places. I cite four examples.

Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware was forced to give up his quest for the presidency

in 1989 when someone recognized part of the text of a speech of his as having been taken verbatim from a speech by British Labor leader Neil Kinnock. Biden said in self-defense that he had frequently quoted this passage, always with attribution, but that on the particular occasion he had failed to attribute it because it had become such familiar prose to him. Is there such a thing as unintentional plagiarism? I would not want to be the first to cast stones in this instance, yet I also understand why the senator was challenged.

John F. Harris wrote in the *Washington Post* (11/10/96, p.A 21): "Politicians enjoy cribbing from [Arthur] Schlesinger [Jr.]. In 1992, then Governor L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia was caught lifting large passages of a speech from Schlesinger's book, *The Cycles of American History*, without attribution."

Alex Haley was widely acclaimed for his investigation into his African origins, published under the title of *Roots*. The rosy glow surrounding this work dissipated after it was discovered that he had purloined a substantial amount of material from a copyrighted book and he was forced to pay damages to that book's author. Haley did not want for apologists when his dereliction came to light. The stock argument in such revelations is: "They all do it." I do not accept that argument.

Under this heading comes Martin Luther King, Jr.'s doctoral dissertation, which was later found to contain whole pages taken verbatim from other writers on theological questions. Upon this revelation, three letters appeared in the *Washington Post* (11/30/90). Two of the writers maintained that such an act really did not mean anything when viewed against his monumental achievements in the civil rights field. The third writer attributed the shortcomings to King's doctoral committee for lack of adequate supervision and perhaps insufficient knowledge of current theological literature. This latter assertion is an egregious example of today's relativism: that the end justifies the means.

### Resurrection of the Forgotten?

Now I move to a third quotation from Ecclesiastes (II.16): "...seeing that which now is, in the days to come shall be forgotten." Much plagiarism, I believe, results from taking material from the forgotten, the obscure, the unrecognized, some of it

inadvertently, but much of it with full awareness of the borrowing. This aspect goes to the heart of the problem of creativity vs. plagiarism. Professor Alvin Kearns wrote (Washington Post, 11/18/90, p.13): "One of the distinctive marks of literature and the arts has in the past been that they are primary instances of human creativity. But now creativity itself is suspect and plagiarism, its dark opposite, increasingly hard to define." Later in the same article, Kearns comes to the core of the issue:

A few years ago a panel was convened to discuss the use by D.M. Thomas, in his popular novel *The White Hotel*, of whole pages from another book titled *Babi Yar*, about the slaughter of the Jews of Kiev by the Nazis. One expert on the panel expressed doubt that there is any such thing as pure creativity [and I agree]: "What is plagiarism, apart from the legal question of ownership, copyright or financial gain? How, for example, does it differ from repetition, reportage, quotation, paraphrase, exposition and other ways of reproducing previously existing material? Plagiarism is closer to pride, a sin of the spirit, than to the criminal activities of the burglar."

Professor Kearns raises some relevant questions about the often narrow dividing line between creativity and plagiarism. Nevertheless, I am unwilling to accept his last sentence, which exonerates the "cribber" from any legal responsibility. How about moral responsibility?

### Concealed Plagiarism?

What I call concealed plagiarism may be just as extensive as what I have hitherto discussed. What I mean by this is the practice of having others write speeches or books that contain no reference to the true author(s) of the text being purveyed in the name of someone else. Again, much suspicion falls on people in high places.

According to Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion*, (New York, 1995, p.62), Barry Goldwater's 1960 book, *Conscience of a Conservative*, was ghostwritten by William Buckley's brother-in-law and *National Review* editor L. Brent Bozell and sold 700,000 copies. I think we all know Goldwater better for hurling crass one-liners at a startled audience.

Hubert Howe Bancroft (1832-1918), an American publisher and historian, was the author of *History of the Pacific States* in thirty-nine volumes. *The World Book Encyclopedia* (1957) observes wryly: "...this work was largely written by paid assistants, to whom Bancroft gave little credit."

A superior of mine once asked me to draft a speech he was to give abroad. I sat down at my typewriter at home (5:00-7:00 a.m.), "whacked out" some ten pages, which I left in his in-box. Hearing no more about it, I asked him after his return whether my draft had been helpful to him. "Why, yes," he said, "I delivered it just as you wrote it." Well, if his collected papers are ever assembled, there will be another ten pages from his prolific pen!

How different is this hidden plagiarism from what is done in the classroom when one student copies from another during an exam or buys a term paper from a writing service? Students are held accountable, and properly so, yet how does this differ from the practice of those spending money (mostly other people's) to procure texts for their own purposes? Why is the student case wrong and the other case universally accepted?

Perhaps one of the most astonishing acts of plagiarism was committed by William Shockley, who was Director of Bell Laboratories in the 1950s. Two research scientists on his staff, Walter Brattain and John Bardeen, working independently of Shockley to develop the transistor, were successful in their quest. The transistor would become the rock on which future technological advances such as the computer would be based. As soon as Shockley realized the significance of the discovery, he associated himself intimately with it, publicizing it and announcing his intimate part in it. A photograph shows him sitting at a laboratory bench holding instruments in his hands and flanked by the standing Brattain and Bardeen. Using his position of authority and his connections in high places, Shockley managed to have himself included with the other two men in the award of the 1956 Nobel Prize in Physics. It was not long thereafter that he drove his associates out of their positions at Bell Laboratories. A more egregious example of plagiarism is hard to imagine, one of the rare instances in which it is clearly set off from creativity. Yet even the *Columbia Encyclopedia* (Fifth Edition, 1993) continues to credit him equally with

the other two researchers with the invention of the transistor.

Does anyone believe that the message from a corporate CEO in the annual report to stockholders, so deftly signed with facsimile pen, represents the signer's ideas and linguistic prowess? Ghostwriting has become prevalent throughout our society, and the higher an individual's position, the more likely it is that others are providing the texts. Contrast this with the image of President Woodrow Wilson as he pecked out his messages to the Senate and cabinet officers on an antiquated rotary head portable typewriter. History is now distorted when we try to evaluate the careers and writing abilities of public figures who have vanished from the scene. How different would our assessments of them be if they had been forced to write the words they uttered and imprinted on the pages of "their" books, let alone their memoirs and other legacies to the world?

### The Example of a Famous Poet

John Livingston Lowes, in his book *The Road to Xanadu* (1928, reissued by Princeton University Press, 1986), studied Samuel Taylor Coleridge's creation of the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and his poem "Kubla Khan." Coleridge's wide reading of languages, according to Lowes, resulted in many words, phrases and ideas that went into a Deep Well. Only later, his *Vision and Will* brought this material forth in a new form, but Lowes unearthed the resemblance between the Ancient Mariner and Ahasuerus (The Wandering Jew) and *The Odyssey*." In tracking down sources of the Ancient Mariner (several hundred pages in his book), Lowes found an antecedent for almost everything in the work. Was there no plagiarism here or did everything that had descended into the Deep Well become so transformed that a new creative endeavor resulted?

I was fully prepared to accept Lowes' evaluation of the origins of the Ancient Mariner and attribute it to a great outburst of achievement, which I still do, but then I came across a footnote by Lowes, according to which Coleridge had planned to write six or seven hymns about the earth, the sun, the stars and more. However, he wrote only one, entitled "Hymn to the Earth" (Poem I, 327) which, as Lowes pointed out, consisted of a free translation of the German poet

Stolberg's "Hymne an die Erde," of which Coleridge's title is a literal translation. Coleridge's wife Sara admitted that he had omitted attribution in at least ten similar instances. Yet Coleridge is revered today for his exceptional creativity, not castigated for his acts of plagiarism. I must conclude that Coleridge's work is a marvelous example of creativity and plagiarism so inextricably conjoined that only a braver intellect than mine would try to rend them asunder.

### Concluding Observations

By now it should be evident that I myself am uncertain about the boundary line between creativity and plagiarism. Some of my thoughts about this topic stem from what others have said or written about it. And I am not unmindful of the fact that in my earlier paper on the nature of creativity I stated unequivocally that each creative act took place on the back of a previous act and that one could continue to trace this piggybacking back in the direction of ultimate causality without uncovering (as Jefferson said) the first creative act.

We are bound by what our cultural environment has done for us and thus we

cannot avoid using our cultural stepping stones as we try to attain the unknown far shore. Using calculus to attack a certain problem does not constitute plagiarism of calculus developed by both Newton and Leibniz independently of each other, just as Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace came separately to the theory of evolution. We are entitled to use whichever elements of our culture can help us transcend what has already been achieved. What is not permissible is to broadly appropriate without acknowledgment another's product, in whatever form it has been created. That is plagiarism. Still, the line between the allowable and the unallowable is and probably always will remain murky.

I have always enjoyed benefitting from the fruits of our rich, diverse cultural heritage, most of which has been an integral part of our lives and can be ascribed only to our human inheritance, not to a specific individual. Yet I have often drawn on specific words and texts of others in my own presentations and writings, in order to illustrate arguments I am making, as I have done this evening. I never consciously use such material anonymously, believing that attribution is a moral, not only a legal,

obligation.

Recently, many months after having completed this paper, I awoke in the middle of the night thinking about a novel, *The Sorrows of Werther*, by Goethe, the famous German writer. The novel, based on Goethe's youthful experience of unrequited love and consequent thoughts of suicide, actually ends with Werther's suicide. The popularity of the novel spread rapidly throughout Europe and caused a wave of suicides across the continent. As I contemplated this situation, it occurred to me that life here followed art instead of the reverse. And then came my final insight that those who read the novel and acted on it by taking their own lives had committed the most personal form of plagiarism.

If there is any doubt about what is unallowable borrowing, ask the U.S. Secret Service about copying a greenback, and you will have an immediate definition of felonious plagiarism. But otherwise there is a vast gray area, and interpretations of what constitutes plagiarism vary. Inasmuch as I am unable to resolve the issue, I have laid it before you as a matter for further discussion.

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### "News," from page 19

provides information on as many places (up to 50) or as few as you care to enumerate. It gives you the stock prices for 35 different stocks and all the news that has been released about that company over the last month. If your topic is college football, you get everything it has available on college football. It will even give you a daily horoscope plus all the late-breaking news from CNN. It's beginning to sound suspiciously like an electronic newspaper, isn't it? And it is an electronic newspaper that I have *personalized* for myself.

Why would I turn to *The Dispatch* weather page, if I have everything I need to know already? Well, there is a reason. John Switzer. His style, his content can still pull me to his page. But that is the answer for now. Will it last?

Many believe that the Internet will become like the Forum of Rome. It is where

all individuals, businesses and government will be represented. It is where we will talk and shop, do business, gather our information...maybe even register our cars. Would you like to avoid the crowded lines at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles? You will find information suppliers charging for usage, for access, for archives. There will have to be content fees and there will be advertising and transactions.

What is missing from this picture of electronic, personalized news?

A sense of community, a civic sense of who and what we are and what we want to become. No matter how one feels about his or her newspaper today, it does provide a sense of community and community agenda. No matter what side you may take on an issue, you will generally find the issue framed in the paper and perhaps even an editorial to inflame or encourage you. If you customize

only to your needs and interests, commonality of community is gone. The collective focus that comes from turning the pages is gone.

In all likelihood, the content in tomorrow's news just won't be the same in my house as it will be in your house. We will have lost the services of the editor, the person who looks through the millions of words reported each day and says, "Yes, I think the readers in central Ohio would like to know about that." When that goes, community begins to argue faster that it already has.

The change is not coming, it is here. It will only accelerate. The response of the media we know today will shape the media of tomorrow if the owners are nimble enough, fast enough, and understand our new news needs well enough.

***It's not too late to register for the 1999 convention in Toledo, Ohio June 24-27th. See the order form on the inside back cover of this magazine.***

# The United Nations—Staying In or Out?

by Charles M. Robbins



## About the Author

Charles Robbins received his bachelor's degree in commerce and finance from Penn State University and became a Cost Accountant with a major corporation following his graduation.

Serving aboard destroyers in the Pacific as deck and communications officer in World War II, he earned eleven battle stars as well as a Letter of Commendation from Admiral R.A. Spruance.

Upon his return from military service, he served two terms in the Pennsylvania State Legislature. He was the owner and operator of a sporting goods business involving both institutional and retail sales until his retirement in 1979. Since then he has served as an instructor in marketing at a vocational school and other business subjects as Luzerne County Community College. In addition, he served for 15 years as an adjunct faculty member of Wilkes University teaching courses in small business management.

This paper was presented on October 13, 1997 to the Torch club of Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania.



The story of the United Nations cannot be told within the context of this paper. It is far too complicated and lengthy, complete with great expectations, a myriad of successes, failures galore, bitterness as well as political hypocrisy, pitting nations against nations in great power struggles—all this and more in the seemingly almost impossible, and yet, valiant attempts to bring to the world the goals set forth in the Charter of this great organization.

I shall therefore attempt to point out a few salient features which I trust will be of some interest.

## The United Nations: Staying in or Getting Out?

The purposes of the United Nations are set forth in Article I of the Charter. They are: to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples; to cooperate in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of nations in attaining these common ends. (This is but a very shortened version of Article I. The remaining 110 Articles can be found in any library in the U.S.)

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***“On balance, the U.N. can boast a distinguished and action-packed history, being involved in some of the most tumultuous events of the century...”***

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Immediately following the signing of the Charter government officials, eminent citizens, public interest groups, a large majority of the country's daily newspapers, and members of Congress of both parties participated in an unprecedented effort to “sell” the Charter, perhaps spurred by memories of the unexpected defeat in the Senate of the Treaty of Versailles, to which the Covenant of the League of Nations was attached. That event, in 1920, kept the U.S. from joining the U.N.'s predecessor. As an example of this oversell, Senator John McClelland of Arkansas declared that the U.N. Charter was “possibly the most momentous document ever produced by man.” Senator Alben Barkley of Kentucky, soon to become Vice President of the

United States, chimed in with, “this Charter will take its place along with the Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural Address as one of the great documents of human history.” *The New York Times* said, “it is now or never for this country.” However, the *New York Daily News* and the curmudgeonly *Chicago Daily Tribune* stood almost alone, the latter grumbling, “If we have peace for a time, it will not be because of the operation of the clumsy and self-defeating international mechanism outlined in the Charter but rather because none of the great nations chooses to start a war.”

The Charter established six principal organs of the United Nations; the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trustee Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat—at the very least, three of them deserve some explanation; the General Assembly with a membership of 185 nations may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the Charter. It may make recommendations on these questions and matters to the member states or to the Security Council or both, with one exception—it may not make any recommendations on any dispute or situation which the Security Council has under consideration unless the Council so requests.

The Security Council is composed of five permanent members - China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States - and ten nonpermanent members, elected by the General Assembly for two-years terms and not eligible for immediate reelection. Voting on all matters except procedure only is by affirmative vote of nine members, including the five permanent member votes. Any member

of the BIG FIVE has veto power over all matters except those which are procedural. Primary responsibility is focused on the maintenance of international peace and security. This power is extremely broad. The Council may determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression. In extreme cases it is within their realm to take military action against an aggressor if their recommendations are ignored by the General Assembly. While the General Assembly meets in regular session commencing on the third Tuesday of September each year, the Security Council is so organized as to be able to function continuously, and a representative of each of its members must be present at all times at United Nations Headquarters. On the Security Council's recommendation, the General Assembly appoints the Secretary-General for a five year term, most recently in December of 1996, Kofi Annan of Ghana became the seventh man to hold that post. (More about him later.)

The Secretariat is composed of a Secretary-General as Chief Administrative Office with such Staff as the Organization may require. He acts in his capacity as Secretary-General in all meetings of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council and makes an annual report to the General Assembly on the work of the United Nations. He also appoints the Staff and brings to the attention of the Security Council any matters which he believes may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.

However functional the Charter may have seemed, discord and mistrust reared its head even before the Security Council occupied the gymnasium at Hunter College on the Bronx campus on March 21, 1946 and long before the full U.N. meetings were finally held in October 1952 in their new four building headquarters along the East River in New York City.

As early as February 9, 1946 Premier Stalin startlingly proclaimed "no peaceful international order is possible between communists and the capitalist world." Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas called the speech "the declaration of World War III." To add further fuel to

the fire on March 5th, in the company of President Truman at Fulton, Missouri, Winston Churchill announced in a speech that "an Iron Curtain has descended across Europe." This signaled the beginning of the Cold War.

It was generally felt from the beginning that the United States would be the essential cog in the organization and initially the U.S. was preeminent in the United Nations. During the first decade of its operation, U.S. views almost invariably prevailed in General Assembly, even when they were frustrated by Soviet vetoes in Security Council.

Yet the preeminence was short lived. Almost from the beginning the policies of Argentina, Brazil, Burma, Egypt, India, Indonesia, and Mexico gave notice that a "third world" existed with interests identical with neither those of the U.S. nor those of the Soviet Union.

What could not have been anticipated in 1945 was the mercurial speed with which the Belgian, British, Dutch and French empires produced a hundred new "third world" states, almost none of which looked to the U.S. for leadership.

By 1970 there was a new "third world" majority. Even those countries that retained Western-style democratic forms were found voting as often with the Soviets as with the U.S. During this period Communist China even turned against the Soviet Union. Thus, the "ego trip" of the U.S. to lead suffered a steep decline from which it has never completely recovered.

The U.S. Delegation to the U.N. consists of the Permanent Representative who is the head of the mission unless the Secretary of State is physically present, a couple of Ambassadors, one, by tradition, Republican, the other Democratic, as well as a Public Delegate, plus five Alternates. John A. Scali, a great friend and confidant of President Nixon, who had never run for public office, nor had training in government, nor had a personal constituency, who would work most directly the will of the President, was chosen as the Permanent Representative for the 1973 session. The disputatious William F. Buckley, Jr. served, to his chagrin, as the Public U.S. Delegate to the U.N. in the same session. Among copious observations, he noted with some

exasperation that the USSR with 86 diplomatic license plates received 350 traffic summonses in a 10 day period, refusing to insert money into parking meters because they felt they would be contributing to the Vietnam War. He did not comment on the other 1714 diplomatic plates except to observe that the U.N. provided only 450 parking places.

Many matters, he said, are brought before the body, but a large proportion are irrelevant to anything and definitely unimportant. Trivial matters are given by their advocates the same intense treatment given to weighty matters. Buckley refers to the delivery of some speeches as exceedingly dull. On one such occasion one of his staff members passed him a note saying "I wish I could have him at my bedside instead of a sleeping pill."

Buckley's irritation rose to a higher degree as he wrote of the U.N.'s 1965 approach to the question of how to enhance Human Rights, in which it was decided to create a new post called High Commissioner for Human Rights. As ever, he noted, "When human rights plays at the U.N., human rights loses." He continued that action on this matter had been considered and postponed in each ensuing year, including the present year. With Buckleyesque irony he suggested that "Perhaps 1985 might be the year when the post might be filled."

He further quotes from a confidential cable with limited circulation which was sent to the U.S. Secretary of State by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a former Delegate to the U.N., upon recalling a U.N. speech by "A Stalinist S.O.B." in which by a direct lie the honor of American Democracy was impugned. Moynihan added "What drove me to despair was the complacency of our putative Allies in this matter. I looked down the list of those who go along and those who go along by abstaining. In half of them the present regimes would collapse without American support or American acquiescence."

While admitting to the General Assembly's adoption of several important matters, Buckley was so shocked by his three month experience that he said he would never be the same again.

Mr. Buckley must have been delighted to learn that the original and very first "High Commissioner for Human Rights"

was finally appointed in 1993, 28 years after the post was created. The gentleman's name is Jose Ayala Lasso of Ecuador.

In endeavoring to present a definitive statement with regard to the financial structure of the United Nations, I find myself woefully inadequate to follow to a logical conclusion the machinations of this body over a period of time. There is certainly nothing sacred in the Assembly's system of assessments which over the first fifty years of its existence has been thoroughly politicized and inequitable. The budget includes an annual U.N. assessment as well as a separate U.N. peacekeeping assessment. The Charter states that each of the present 185 nations is to be assessed on its "capacity to pay." This statute has been reduced to near fiction in more recent years by the injection of some type of almost unfathomable "per capita income allowance" to the puzzle. According to Madeline Albright, the 21st Delegate/Ambassador of her country, the United States, never shirking to do its part, was in December 1996 1.4 billion dollars in arrears. All members owed a total of more than \$2.151 billion—\$510 million for the regular U.N. Budget, \$8 million for International Tribunals, and \$1.633 billion for peacekeeping.

While the U.S. led all nations at \$1.4 billion, the U.S.S.R. with its three votes ranked second at \$492.2 million, Japan in third place with \$78 million. Ms. Albright, a well respected and extremely competent person, just prior to being appointed Secretary of State by President Clinton, cast the veto preventing Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt from a second term as Secretary-General. Boutros-Ghali was considered rather blustery and ineffective, to say the least.

In 1982 the assessed U.N. Budget amounted to \$721,354,404, of which the United States' share was 28.86 percent. The Soviet Union was next at less than half of the U.S. share. For 1996 the budget for the U.N.'s core functions—the Secretariat operations in New York, Geneva, Nairobi, Vienna, and five Regional Commissions—was \$1.3 billion a year. America's total share of the regular budget was \$321 million (25%) a year. Eighty percent of the entire budget was financed

by one percent of the members. 95 members paid .01 percent with an upper limit of \$2,100. The 1945 "obligation to pay" soon gave way because the Soviet Union and 29 other nations refused to pay for activities they opposed or regarded to be in violation of the Charter. Therefore, it is now open to any state to refuse payment on the ground that a U.N. activity is beyond the powers of the organ that authorized it, and against that state's interest.

The total U.N. budget for all programs, including peacekeeping missions, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and human rights improvement programs for 1996 was \$18.2 billion dollars. There are 53,589 employees for all programs. This figure excludes the official delegates who are paid by their individual nations. In 1996, the State Department's appropriation for all international organizations and conferences totaled \$1.24 billion. As 1996 came to a close three men were in position to advance the perception of reform within the U.N. Ismael Rezali of Malaysia held the office of President of the General Assembly. The newly elected Secretary-General, the most high-profile and prestigious position, fell to (no pun intended) Kofi Annan of Ghana, a 58 year old educated at M.I.T. and Minnesota's Macalester College. President Clinton called Annan "a proven performer" who is "clearly prepared to act."

Bill Richardson, 49, a former Democratic Congressman from New Mexico, became the new U.S. representative, the official title being "Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary" (E.A.P.)

Mr. Annan's primary order of business in January of 1997 was to visit Washington, D.C. with a promise of reform and a pitch for reconciliation, only to be challenged by the irascible Jesse Helms of North Carolina, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Helms said that he would be reluctant to send American tax dollars to the U.N. until convinced that more than piecemeal reform was in place to alter the status quo. The 1997 session of the U.N. was expected to be more than interesting concerning reform as well as the multifarious problems with which it will

be faced.

On balance, the U.N. can boast a distinguished and action-packed history, being involved in some of the most tumultuous events of the century, including the end of WW II, the birth of Israel, the Korean War, the Congo, the Suez crisis, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the invasion of Cyprus, the Six-day War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, Somalia and Bosnia, as well as its 38 peacekeeping missions thru April 1995. However, the single lugubrious fact which must stand out is that 20 million persons have died in wars, attesting to the cost of failure of the U.N.'s efforts in its quest for world peace and security.

In spite of its often rancorous deliberations the U.N. has served the world well for 50 years.

The United Nations system, except in the most marginal ways, is not about to be reformed. It is what it is; the realistic choice presented to the United States is either to understand it and operate as effectively as possible within it, or to get out in part, or altogether. For the present, the U.S. national interest is better served by a muscular strategy of staying in.

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**See you in  
Toledo—June  
24th-27th!**

# Ebonics

by Michael Liberman



## About the Author

Michael Liberman is a professor of English at East Stroudsburg University, where he has taught for 28 years. He has been asked to assume administrative positions on several occasions, and this year he is serving as Dean of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Liberman and his wife Diane, a teacher of mathematics, have three adult children.

This paper was presented to the Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania Torch Club on May 12, 1997.

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My topic is Ebonics, a fusing of the terms “ebony” and “phonics.” The term was invented by black, or as we say today, African-American, linguists in the 1970s and refers to the language—the phonics—of United States black people—the ebony.<sup>1</sup> The term is an attempt to replace what whites call “Black English” and white linguists have called BEV, the acronym for Black English Vernacular, a term developed in the 1960s.<sup>2</sup> It should already be apparent that much of the dispute over this form of language is racial. The way in which many if not most black Americans speak was already described formally by white linguists—really the only people who were linguists at the time—and named by them. Subsequently, blacks, among them black linguists, have attempted to wrest the privilege of describing and naming this language phenomenon for themselves, and the change in name from Black English Vernacular to Ebonics is one result.

But of course that is not all. In December of 1996 the Board of Education of Oakland, California, a city where a majority of the students are African-American, voted to have the teachers learn and then teach their students the grammar

of Ebonics, the lingua franca, that is, the customary language, of the majority of students in the system, African American. Teachers were to use the students’ understanding of the grammar of Ebonics to move them beyond that into an appreciation of and an ability to use the language linguists call SAE, Standard American English, the language form of the majority of Americans. In other words, students would be taught and learn to understand the grammar of BEV, the form of language they currently use, as a way-station to a subsequent understanding and appreciation of SAE.<sup>3</sup>

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***“...neither Chomsky nor any other major linguist would argue that children are born genetically programmed to speak a particular language: not English, or Greek, or Japanese, or French, or Ebonics.”***

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This vote by the Oakland Board of Education received national publicity and almost universal condemnation. Virtually every commentator, including initially Jesse Jackson, condemned the proposal, although Jackson later reversed himself.<sup>4</sup> Among their objects of scorn was, first, the view by many that this action by the Oakland Board of Education was only an attempt to declare Ebonics a separate language and thus secure additional federal funds for bilingual education in the school district. Second, the statement released by the Board said that Ebonics was “genetically based,” that is, the product of the heredity of African-Americans. Almost everyone considered this view ludicrous.

The question of whether Ebonics is a separate language is the focus of this talk, so I will defer that for a moment. As for

the issue of whether Ebonics is genetically based, I would like to address that briefly. The possibility begins with Noam Chomsky, the most important linguist of the second half of the twentieth century, who is still teaching at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has argued, and very persuasively, that language itself is genetically based. He says that humans have a language gene, which assures that they are born with the innate capacity to speak and in possession of some basic structures of language. This innate capacity allows children of two and three to produce language structures that they could not possibly have heard, to go immensely beyond anything they are taught or hear about language.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, neither Chomsky nor any other major linguist would argue that children are born genetically programmed to speak a particular language: not English, or Greek, or Japanese, or French, or Ebonics.

The Oakland Board of Education seemed to realize quickly that the phrase “genetically based” was simply wrong, and so a revised proposal for Ebonics instruction issued shortly after the first dropped that expression.<sup>6</sup>

As a matter of fact, in a more recent proposal on language teaching, the Oakland school board eliminated all mentions of the term Ebonics as well, so that the matter might be considered ended. A cover letter to the latest proposal written by the Oakland school superintendent, Carolyn Gettridge, says of the original proposal, “The resolution sought to establish a policy that would link learning success with the students’ mastery of standard English. But in stating this linkage, the intent of the resolution and policy became lost in controversy over terms such as ‘genetically based’ and references to ebonics as a primary language of African-American students.”<sup>7</sup>

So the teaching of Ebonics may no longer be an issue in the Oakland schools.

But I would like to suggest that the basis of the original Oakland proposal be given more consideration, for I believe that there is a strong rationale to agree that BEV or Ebonics is indeed a different language from SAE.

Consider this. Slaves began to be imported into the American colonies from Africa and the Caribbean in the seventh century, in fact as early as 1619, a practice which continued for two centuries. These slaves were plucked in Africa from their tribes and separated from their families either before or after shipment. The mixing of members of different tribes on the Middle Passage and afterwards meant that people who could not readily communicate were mingled in bewildering and often horrific circumstances. Once landed in the colonies they were purchased and set to work in both plantations or towns, but primarily in isolated plantations. They were certainly not educated. Indeed, the owners were determined not to educate their slaves. Those slaves who did become literate, such as Frederick Douglass, did so by dint of enormous effort, and they were by far the exception, not the rule.<sup>8</sup>

In these circumstances, the English language would have been acquired in a haphazard way. In fact, acquisition of English would have been for strictly utilitarian purposes, to make possible the conduct of everyday life and to manage the contact with the masters whose language was English. This situation gives rise to the development of what are called pidgins, situations where speakers of languages come into contact with speakers of initially alien languages, usually in the process of colonization by one group of the other or in the conduct of trade.<sup>9</sup>

The best known of these interactions is in the development of Tok Pisin, which means "pidgin talk." Tok Pisin resulted from the contact of British colonizers and traders and the native residents of Papua New Guinea over a century ago.<sup>10</sup> In the development of these contact languages, one language serves as the base, almost always the language of the dominant group, in this case English, and the other language provides features. The pidgin language which results is always much

simpler in vocabulary (which is called lexicon), word order (which is called syntax), and morphology (the features of words which determine things like tense, number, case, and other aspects) than either of the two or more languages which produce the pidgin.<sup>11</sup>

Consider the situation of the slaves in the colonies. It is entirely possible that the first languages that slaves had in common with each other, and were able to use with their masters, was a form of pidgin, with an English base and African language features. Certainly, very few if any were afforded the opportunity to acquire the standard English of the period.

Pidgins are languages developed to permit communication between disparate language groups which come into contact. If pidgin languages develop further, they do so by becoming what are known as creoles, languages that are used within families as well as for contact between different language speaking groups. That is, they become the everyday languages of their speakers rather than languages used for specific purposes like trade.<sup>12</sup> Tok Pisin has become a creole. It is now the most widely spoken language in Papua New Guinea. Indeed, it is one of the official languages. As a pidgin develops into a language, it necessarily acquires a richer, more complex, lexicon, syntax, and morphology. After all, the language is now required to convey information beyond the impersonal of business or master-slave interactions to the personal and emotional features of family and community relationships.

And what if something similar happened in the black slave community of our country? Still debarred from education, segregated in most ways that matter from white standard English speakers, blacks necessarily developed their own variety of English.

From examination of the developments of pidgins around the world, and there are many, linguists note how rapidly they acquire grammatical complexity. Within just a few generations pidgin languages have virtually every characteristic of long-established languages pidgin languages have virtually every characteristic of long-established languages like English, French, Chinese,

and so on.<sup>13</sup> Yet pidgin languages have in their origins features which distinguish them from other languages. For example, if one can accept that BEV or Ebonics is a possible development from a pidgin, then the phonology (or sound patterns) characteristics of a majority of black American speakers may be the product of their language's origins, as may be the use of "be" in ways that the majority of English speakers in this country do not use, such as "I be coming home," for example. This is a morphological feature. Some syntactic aspects of Ebonics may also have resulted from a possible pidgin origin, as may some remaining lexical features.<sup>14</sup>

As groups come into increasing contact, as has been the case for blacks and whites in the history of this country, their languages grow increasingly similar. Yet some basic features of each group's language may remain (after all, most of the most commonly used words in English are words that originated in Old English, nearly 1,500 years ago, despite several successful physical and linguistic invasions.) So, in fact, those who argue that Ebonics is indeed a separate language may be correct, and the position of the majority in this country—that speakers of Black English should simply learn to speak in the way that the majority do—may be yet another instance of bigotry.

Let me elaborate upon this claim of bigotry. You will remember that late in the winter of 1996-97 the Ohio River flooded, driving thousands of people from their homes and even submerging entire towns, including several on the Kentucky side of the river. On television a number of displaced families were interviewed. In almost every case the phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon (these are the components of speech) of those interviewed were radically different from what we are accustomed to, from Standard American English. Understandably, our concern was for these unfortunate people. But in no case did I hear a comment on their unacceptable use of language or that they needed to alter or remedy it.

Some people may argue that if Black English Vernacular, or Black English, or Ebonics has developed from a pidgin then

we should be able to trace that. But should we? Modern linguistics began in 1789 when Sir William Jones, an Englishman in India, revealed his observation that some languages, a few of what we now know as the Indo-European family of languages, had a number of features in common. He made this correct assumption on the basis of written records.<sup>15</sup> By that time a black pidgin in America would have already been established. Tok Pisin is about a hundred years old, and because of the establishment of linguistics as a field of study we have attempted to keep a record to ignore their existence and, as I said earlier, definitely a virtually successful effort to prevent their education. Few blacks were able to read and write and keep records, and certainly far fewer whites would have been concerned or knowledgeable about recording the features of their speech in any scientific way. If fiction, which often includes the speech of its time, is a guide, and fiction developed in the mid-eighteenth century, the behavior and language of servants are rarely chronicled in early fiction. Thus it is not reasonable to expect that slave language and behavior would play a substantive role in early fiction. It would not have been recorded, let alone examined.

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**"Perfect," from page 10**

opposites. I felt like I was worthless and had lots of flaws. He saw I wasn't perfect, so he tried to make me be perfect by creating rules."

In her current relationship, Angelique has created someone she calls her perfect mate. When asked what that meant, she replied, "He is someone who thinks I walk on water, doesn't criticize me, accepts me for who I am, warts and all. Most of all, he accepts what I can give—love, laughter, and a sense of caring about someone." It sounds as if Angelique is willing to accept the concept of being perfectly imperfect.

I have covered a lot of territory here and there is so much more that could be written about this subject. For instance, how do you explain the misspelling of perfect in a book on perfection? Can a picture be perfect? Is there such a thing as a perfect size eight or the perfect child. But then, real or not, that perfect child is something all parents

In fact, the earliest recorded dialog in fiction of black people is probably by Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mark Twain in the nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup> So any conclusive proof one way or the other that the African-American speech of today has as its origin a pidgin established in the seventeenth century is not possible.

The majority reaction to the notion that Ebonics is a language is the demand that a lot of people abandon the speech of generations, if not of hundreds of years. It is a contention that this speech lacks rules and structure, a grammar, worthy of close analysis. This attitude may be as narrow-minded and as ignorant as many in this country believe the Oakland Board of Education has been.

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<sup>16</sup> Crystal, 85.

.....  
 have, don't they? And while Hitler may be gone, there are still among us those who would like to see his dream of the perfect race become a reality.

In closing, perhaps we can take to heart the words of Nicholas Berdyaev who said, "The too perfect cease to create." Maybe we can create a good world in which in which to live, in pursuit of excellence, despite the imperfections.

Oh yes, those two items on the menu I mentioned in the beginning—the crab legs and scallops. I did not order either entree so I cannot tell you if they were done to perfection. Nor did I take the time to question other patrons whether they ordered those items and, if so, were they steamed or sauteed to perfection. However, I can tell you the Italian sausage sandwich I ordered was very tasty and satisfied my hunger. That, along with the good company, was all that really mattered to me.

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**"Accident," from page 15**

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## "Campaign," from page 7

the Civil War; "still possible"—he continued—"to imagine a single battle leading to negotiations, with compromises and evasion, as so often in the past, that would restore the Union."

The desire for such a resolution was expressed in a political slogan of the time: "the Union as it was; the Constitution as it is"—and the sentiment included the acceptance of slavery, as the Constitution then did, at least where it already existed. The desire was expressed by McClellan in a letter delivered to Lincoln when they met, in July at Harrison's Landing. Known as the Harrison's Landing Letter—an incredible mixture of political and military advice from a general to a president—it urged Lincoln to fight a limited war, to seek only the restoration of the Union; to refrain from taking Southern property without compensation; and, in particular, to leave intact the peculiar institution, for there could be no negotiated peace if the objective was the abolition of slavery.

Lincoln read the letter in McClellan's presence, thanked him, but otherwise never responded to it. Had the letter been delivered at the war's outset, or within months thereafter, it might have found a more

receptive President. Repeatedly, as in his inaugural address, Lincoln had then stated his objective to be the preservation of the Union, making clear his willingness to leave undisturbed Southern institutions where they existed. But with the uncontrolled rush of events—notably the Peninsula Campaign and its resolution—the dynamics were changing; and the adage that sees war as a continuation of politics suggests a causal relationship that may flow in either direction, so that events in the field may drive political decisions in ways unanticipated by those who make them.

In September 1862, within a month after Harrison's Landing, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It was justified, under the then Constitution, on grounds of military need, and, as the chronology makes clear, the failures of the Peninsula Campaign supported the legal reasoning. That its immediate consequence was nil—freeing the slaves only where it could not be enforced; leaving them in bondage, when it could—does not minimize its importance. For with the Proclamation, Lincoln crossed the Rubicon on the issue of slavery. For him, there could be no turning back; and it meant an all consuming war; no longer a limited effort at putting down an uprising, but

instead a revolutionary conflict.

And so the political slogan was wrong on both counts. The Constitution, viewed from that time, would not remain "as it is" but would reflect a changed relationship in our governmental system, so that every amendment for 60 years after the War would enhance the federal power to the diminution of the states, whereas the twelve amendments before the war had just the opposite effect; and there would be no return to the Union as it was, but instead the emergence of a nation recreating itself as never imagined before the War. Lincoln came to embrace this perception, partly because he had always thought it morally right—if politically premature—but also because the drive of events. The uncontrolled flow of history, created conditions that compelled new thinking.

In a little more than a year he would immortalize that perception through words of simple yet timeless eloquence, when he stood at a graveyard site in a small village in Pennsylvania, and in that mythic moment spoke to the ages of the nation then engaged in a great Civil War—said of that nation that it would not perish from the earth, but more than that, that it would have a new birth—a new birth of freedom.

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## "Movies," from page 21

were quite capable of hauling their own ashes or shovelling their own sidewalks but chose to let us do it because they felt some sense of responsibility for all the children in the neighborhood. An old African proverb says "It takes a whole village to raise a child." Our "village" included our neighbors, our parents, our school teachers, our Sunday School teachers and our Boy Scout leaders. They all taught us the same things and we believed them and we respected what they taught us. But it was our cowboy hero who personalized all of their teachings in his actions and gave us incentive to personally measure up to their standards using him as an example.

As we grew older our attention turned to other things associated with growing up and so our attraction to the cowboys began to fade. Peter Graves said recently in narrating the biography of Roy Rogers, "Losing these heroes is like losing a part of ourselves but becoming what we are because of them." With their passing we have lost our "Age of Innocence." Maybe we did lose

our "Age of Innocence," but Jonathan Rosenbaum argues that "what is designed to make people good has a profound relation on what they think and feel about the world around them." Perhaps it can be said, then, that these heroes had served their purpose by reinforcing the fabric of the value structure we got from other sources and then it was time for us to move on.

Willie Nelson sings a song which says "Mamas don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys. Let them be doctors and lawyers and such."

Well, we didn't grow up to be cowboys. We became doctors, lawyers, teachers and architects and accountants and managers and such. But whatever we became, our characters, our personal behavior codes, and our integrity were built on what we learned at the movies—doing something because it was the right thing to do, being just and fair in our dealings with others and believing that to be like a cowboy was to be a real "man" in every sense of the word.

Yes we became doctors and lawyers and teachers and architects and such, but I am

sure that deep in the recesses of one of the closets of our minds, there is probably a well-worn old pair of boots or a broad-brimmed Stetson hat. And every now and then, just for a moment, we take it out and try it on, and for that fleeting moment, we're cowboys again. Happy trails Partners!

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# Call to Annual Business Meeting and Torch Convention

The annual business meeting and convention of the membership  
of the International Association of Torch Clubs  
will be at the Radisson Hotel, Toledo, Ohio, June 24-27, 1999.

The official agenda follows:

## Schedule of Events

### Thursday, June 24th

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. International Association of  
Torch Clubs, Board meeting  
12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Conference Registration  
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Business Session I  
5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Welcoming Reception and  
Cash Bar  
7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Dinner with Toledo Torch hosts  
and thereafter return to hotel

### Friday, June 25th

7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. Breakfast (on your own)  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Conference Registration  
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Torch Club Officers Round  
Table (training session)  
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Meet the Editor  
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Torch Foundation Board and  
Officers Meeting  
9:05 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. Business Session II  
10:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Coffee Break  
10:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. Convention Session I: **Torch  
Paper I *The Sixty Years  
Struggle for the Great Lakes***  
by David C. Skaggs  
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Luncheon  
1:15 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Tours provided as individually  
selected  
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Convention Session II: **Torch  
Paper II *Erie: Rebirth of a  
Great Lake***, by Elliot J. Tramer  
9:00 p.m. - 11:00 pm. Social time

### Saturday, June 26th

7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. Breakfast (on your own)  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Conference Registration  
8:00 a.m. - 8:45 a.m. Vision 2000 Implementation

9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Convention Session III: **Torch  
Paper III *Northwest Ohio:  
From Rust Belt to Boom Belt***,  
Moderator: Edward F. Weber.  
Panel Members: Dick  
Anderson, Glen Hiner, Edward  
Reiter, Norman Thal.

10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. Coffee Break  
10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. Membership and Club  
Development Round Table  
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Luncheon  
1:15 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Tours provided as individually  
selected  
6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Reception and Cash Bar  
7:00 p.m. - 10:30 p.m. Annual Banquet, Torch  
International Awards, **Torch  
Paper IV - The Paxton Lecture**

### Sunday, June 28th

7:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m. Breakfast Buffet (provided by  
Torch)  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Registration Desk open for  
year 2000 Torch Convention  
in Winchester, VA  
8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Optional Interfaith Worship  
Service led by Rev. Stanley D.  
Schneider  
8:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Convention Session IV: **Torch  
Paper V *A Lumpy Stew -  
Ethnic Identity in Northwest  
Ohio***, by David Beckwith,  
Center for Community Change  
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Business Session III and  
Convention Close  
11:15 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. International Association of  
Torch Clubs, Board Luncheon  
and Meeting

# The Torch Club of Toledo - 1999 Convention Registration

International Association of Torch Clubs, Inc. - Annual Convention

Toledo, Ohio June 24-27, 1999

Please complete this form and return it (with your check) to:

Torch Club of Toledo, Ohio  
c/o Glenn Fitkin, Jr.  
4911 Derby Road  
Toledo, Ohio 43615  
(419) 537-6942

Make checks payable to "Torch Club of Toledo, Ohio"  
and indicate "Torch Convention '99" on the check

## REGISTRATION RATES

\$250 (U.S.) - After March 31, 1999

## REGISTRANT INFORMATION

\_\_\_\_\_ Persons @ \$\_\_\_\_\_ (U.S.) Total \$\_\_\_\_\_ (U.S.)

Name(s) & Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Torch Club: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Needs: \_\_\_\_\_

## Instructions for Hotel Reservations at the Radisson Hotel - Toledo, Ohio

Call the Radisson Worldwide  
Reservation Desk at:

**1-800-333-3333**

Inform the Reservations Agent  
that you are with the  
International Torch Club.

Tell the Reservations Agent  
when you plan to arrive and  
when you will depart.

A block of rooms are reserved  
at the rate of \$88.00 per night.  
This rate will also be offered for  
attendees wishing to extend  
their stay.

## About the Saturday Panel

The Saturday panel of nationally known business executives, describing an economic turnaround, will be a highlight of the 1999 Torch Club convention in Toledo, Ohio. Working under the title "Northwest Ohio: From Rustbelt to Boombelt," the group will give a variety of views of factors involved in that transformation.

Glen H. Hiner, President and CEO of Owens Corning, Inc., will explain why his firm decided several years ago to construct its new World Headquarters in Toledo. He also will talk about the influence of location on a large company's production facilities.

Edward J. Reiter, Chief Executive of Mid Am, Inc., a rapidly expanding regional bank holding company, will look at the financial aspects of the dramatic turnaround. He'll talk about the importance of banking and quasi-governmental organizations in stimulating existing businesses and attracting new business to the area.

Norman R. Thal, Jr., is the former President and Chairman

of Inshield Die and Stamping, a family owned small business. His comments will focus on how the business climate is changing from manufacturing to services, and with it, the changing role of small business.

Richard P. Anderson, chairman of The Andersons, a regional agribusiness and retailer, will show the importance of Toledo as a transportation hub...via water, rail, and air.

Each of the speakers has a long list of involvement in various civic organizations, and each has a broad knowledge of and experience with Toledo's economic situation.

Moderator for the panel discussion will be Edward Weber, former U.S. Congressman from Toledo, and past president of the Toledo Torch Club.

The Saturday morning panel discussion is expected to generate a number of questions from the audience, and the panel members are uniquely qualified to explain how the economic fortunes of Northwest Ohio were dramatically reversed in a relatively short span of time.

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## Discrimination Against Bipedes

A squirrel arrived at our house.  
It came to us by cable.  
I'd love to run from pole to pole  
If only I were able.

Two legs are not as good as four  
For Sam and me and Mable,  
Especially when we try to make  
Our way across a cable.

--Bruce Souders

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