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Dear Readers,

This issue of your beloved Axes and Alleys is lovingly dedicated to the Children of the 1980s. Truly you have made pop-culture your own. Yours is Star Wars, yours is The Smurfs, yours is Charles in Charge, Punky Brewster, Saved by the Bell, and everything in between. Our blessings unto you, oh noble ones.

Delores R. Grunion.

WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCES FROM GOOD NATURED GENTLEMEN WHO HAVE READ OUR PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS AND WISH TO COMMENT ON SOME ASPECTS THEREOF.

To The Esteeméd Editors,

In June's issue (Vol. 456-br7, Issue 04), you carried an advertisement for H.B. Industrial Systems' "Imagine" line of products. I am concerned that you might be misleading your readers by the inclusion of this marketing ploy. "Imagine Time," one of the background lines of the image is a dangerous thing to say. You see, time is not part of the imagination, but a constant of our Universe (I'm not sure about other Universes, but they're pretty much on their own lookout, aren't they?). Do you realize the many lives that have been ruined by this capitalist plea? Doctor's appointments missed, aeroplanes launched at the wrong moment, scientific timetables ruined and all experimental data void, leaving one at the cruel ignominy of peers and colleagues who ridicule at the university dining hall tables usually reserved for one, but now no seat is to be found as they laugh and laugh (this was my particular predicament). All because one sits comfortably, or stands, or lays awkwardly astride the couch "imagining time." Keep such considerations in mind the next time Axes & Alleys is accepting advertising money.
Regards,

Walton Shuffle, Ph.D

Dear Axes & Alleys,

Do you remember the time we lay in the grass, enjoying the interplay of light and shadow from tree and cloud? Do you remember how I gently opened you beneath the grand oak on the hill, stroking your luxuriant pages with my verdant eyes? I didn't think so. However, in the future, remember this: the attentions of a scorned reader past come back ten fold in future retribution.

Yours truly,

Joe Lapinski, Ret.

Dear Ms. Grunion,

I would like to thank you for the wonderful History of Tractors article (Issue 24). That was perhaps the foremost writing of the subject I've seen in two years. I once had a tractor and would very much like to have one again, therefore the entire issue, returning to the Roots of Axes & Alleys was quite a boon for me when I saw it in the gutter last Thursday. Someday, I too will be a tractor pilot and I will have you to thank.

With Effulgence,

Morty

Dear Sirs,

We were always destined to see this sad day. Set aside the cost of victory and the anguish of defeat; we're going to wind up with a renamed overpass everyone hates. Our town is more divided than ever over this issue, especially since the overpass cuts through the geographic center of town.

Overpasses have a way of not traveling the expected route. Not a one of us who desired to see our overpass renamed in honor of this city's longest-serving alderman, Chet "Hoe Boy" Addison, is happy with the result.

Nor, I'm sure, are the proponents for the winning name, that in "honor" of God almighty. You see, I was traversing the overpass, when I noticed that all the signage upon, around and pointing to the overpass had it listed as the "Godd Overpass." It seems there will ever be more conflict as it is now impossible to change the name.

Sincerely,

William C. Stosine
Belfry Nave, IW

Dear Ladies and Gentleman,

It bothers me that you continually ignore the Gods throughout this publication. To you, I suppose, it is all just science, facts, figures and bunson burners. Does science bring you the weather? Huh? No, it is Neptune. Does science strike you dead with lightning bolts? No, that's Jupiter that does that. And who do you think brings us wine? Science? Think again, people. That would be Bacchus. Remember that from now on please.

Ajax Muhammad.

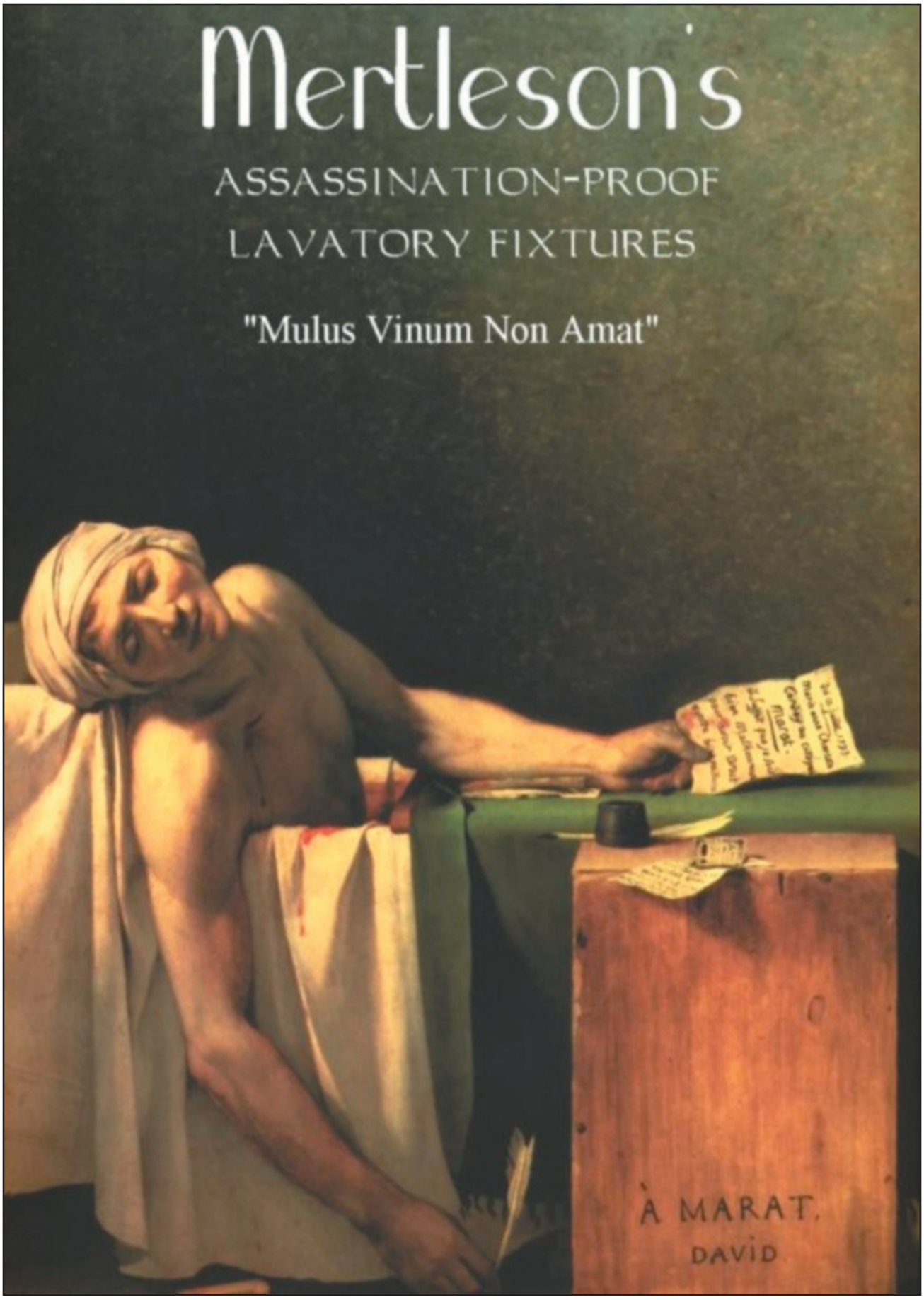
TABLATURE O' CONTENTS

TO ASSIST YOU IN THE NAVIGATION OF THIS PERIODICAL

Mertleson's

ASSASSINATION-PROOF
LAVATORY FIXTURES

"Mulus Vinum Non Amat"



INTERESTING BITS FOR LEARNED GENTLEMEN

ROMMEL BEST LOOKING WWII LEADER

At their annual summit last month, the Ancient Guild of World Historians released new findings which indicated that German Field Marshal Erwin "The Desert Fox" Rommel was by far the most handsome military leader of the Second World War.

Not only, the Historians say, was Rommel tall, strong and striking in his full Field Marshal uniform, but he had the piercing eyes of a poet; at once soulful and powerful. Other parts of the release referred to the Marshal as "dreamy, keen and stoic in very cool way." Although Rommel was unable to defeat Patton and Montgomery in North Africa nor overcome the Allies in the Battle of the Bulge, he looked so beautiful when the sunlight hit his long eyelashes, giving them a glittery appearance. Also noted were his well built arms, strong legs and firm buttocks, all well accentuated by the crisp lines of his always well maintained and resplendent uniform.

Historian (Second Order of the Griffin) Doctor Hubert Van Tuyll stated "Many of the generals of World War II were down right homely; Montgomery was a skinny little man with a big nose and beady eyes, while Omar Bradley just looked like a potato with glasses. Without a doubt, Rommel is by far the most handsome of the lot."

American General and future president Eisenhower was generally given second place, although historians were quick to note that his was a more boyish look, while Rommel had a much more manly handsomeness. The Historians did note, however, that most of the leaders of the Second World War were older, often grizzled men, the really attractive people during that time were the young soldiers; ruddy and tanned barrel-chested young lads fresh from muscle-building farm labor and crisp and striking in their new uniforms.

Most Handsome:

Erwin Rommel (Germany)
Dwight David Eisenhower (United States)
Ozawa Jisaburo (Japan)
Douglas MacArthur (United States)
Georgi Zhukov (Soviet Union)

Least Handsome:

Omar Bradley (United States)
Benito Mussilini (Italy)
Nikita Kruschev (Soviet Union)
Henrich Himmler (Germany)
Charles De Gaulle (France)

POETISTICS OF THE MASTER
MR. H.G. PETERSON

H.G. Peterson is a world-wide literary phenomenon as well as being inventor of the extra-supercollider.

Inundation of Shame, Part I

There are a dozen little building bricks
For of quarks and leptons there are each six
Quarks come in their flavors, there are three pairs
Up-Down, Strange-Charmed, and Top-Bottom are there
Now the six leptons you have in this batch
Each has a neutrino type that they match
The electron, muon, tau are the three
These with their partners all six leptons be

There's a group like these with opposite charge
Though their numbers are not very large
These are the antiparticles, you see
They do not make up things like you and me
But when matter and anti-matter meet
They blow up each other which is quite neat
There may also be sparticles somewhere
That's not proven so you don't need to care

That's what makes up matter, like dogs and suns
They are called fermions isn't that fun?

Inundation of Shame, Part II

Matter alone doesn't the cosmos comprise
There's energy too, in four-forcéd guise
Electromagnetism is a force
And gravity is also one of course
Two nuclear forces, the strong and weak
Round out the four forces of which we speak
Yet perhaps they are all one and the same
If one figures that out, they'll get much fame

You know forces come from particles too
Ws, Z, and eight gluons that glue
Photons make up light, we can't leave them out
So that there are twelve, or so there about
These particles can pop in from nowhere
And disappear again, without a care
Larger they are, the less time they are here
Stronger forces only work when they're near

These force particles, bosons they are known
Make the sun shine and spin like a cyclone

A SPECIAL EDITORIAL

CRUCIBLE OF SILVER

BY NOTED
RAIL AND OIL PARTY
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE
KATIE HARRISON-GARGOYLE

I would be presumptuous, indeed, to present myself against the distinguished gentlemen to whom you have listened if this were a mere measuring of abilities; but this is not a contest between persons. The humblest Robber Barron in all the land, when clad in the armor of a righteous cause, is stronger than all the farmers of error. I come to speak to you in defence of a cause as holy as the cause of liberty — the cause of The Gold Standard.

In 1904, the white men of this Nation will select our next President, and it is on this occasion that I must offer forth grave warning of the desolation which shall be brought about if that Pugilistic Poacher Mr. Roosevelt of New York is once again to have power thrust so ignobly upon him.

Nay! Let not America melt herself into the Crucible of Silver! We shall not abandon the Gold Standard which has brought about so noble a Nation from such a verdant land, which the savage Red Man had let go to waste.

Must the Rail Road Tycoons who unite our cities with their endless lines, and the Oil Barons who fuel our great Mother Industry be made to suffer at the whims of those idle and wretched dirt farmers in the West, who out of jealousy, seek to destroy the Bankers and Barons of the prosperous East with its wealth that Providence has provided?

These dirt farming vagabonds desire a devaluation of the dollar so as so escape the interest payments on their loans. I suppose that they must hold to the belief that Bankers need to feed their children's hungry mouths.

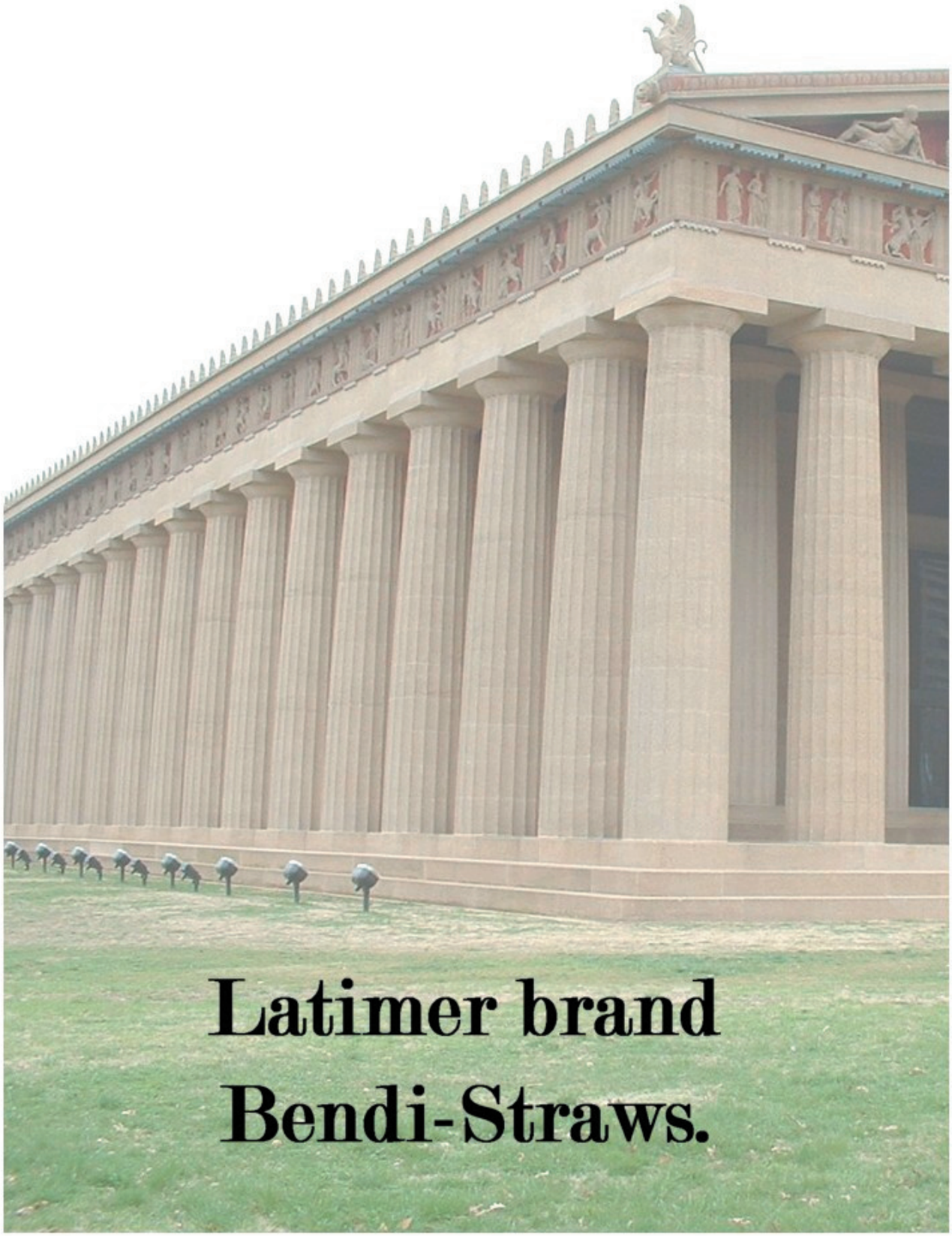
Perhaps these farmers sought out loans only so that they could strike against the industrious Bankers, Oilmen and Railroaders of the East, so as to destroy Mother America, leading our proud Nation into the depths of filthy poverty, moral decay and wretched abasement.

My friends, we declare that this Nation's Industrialists are able to legislate for their own people on every question, without waiting for the aid or consent of any other class, especially the working classes who are indeed drowned in sinful poverty. It is the issue of 1776 over again. Our ancestors, when but three millions in number had the courage to declare their political domination over the poor of the earth. Are we, their descendants, when we have grown to two hundred and seventy millions, going to declare that we are less independent than our forefathers?

No, my friends, that will never be the verdict of our Nation's great Industrial Plutocrats. Therefore, we care not upon what lines the battle is fought. If they dare to come out in the open field and defend this so called working-classism as a good thing, we will fight them to the uttermost. Having behind us the Wealthy and Mustachioed Autocratic Rulers of this Nation and the world, supported by the Commercial interests, the Rail Road interests and the Bankers everywhere, we will answer their demand for this currency devaluation by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of the Industry this crown of thorns, you shall not melt America in this crucible of silver.

So, let us put forth our support of the Gold Standard and waive that banner aloft. Vote for the Rail and Oil Party, the party of the true American.

Perfection by Design.



Latimer brand Bendi-Straws.

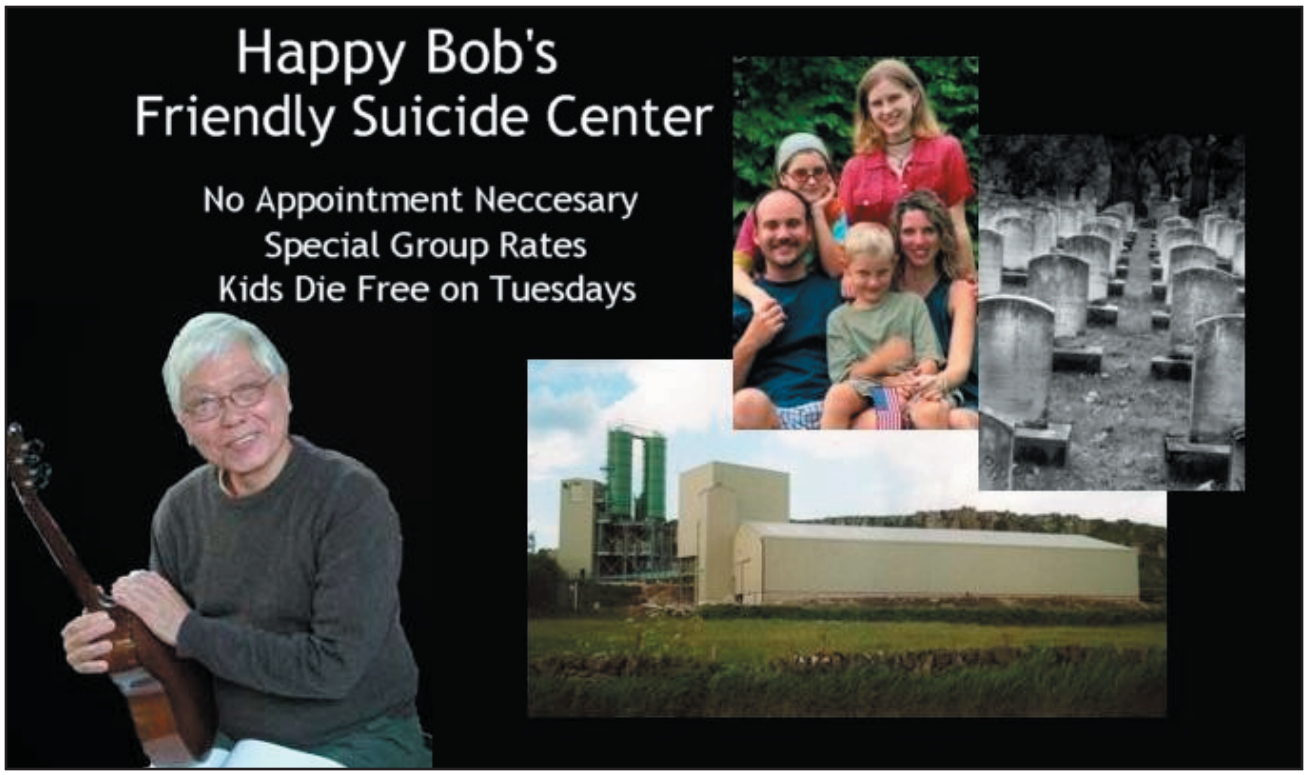
THE WORLD OF HISTRONOMY
WITH DR. SCOTT G. BIRDSEYE

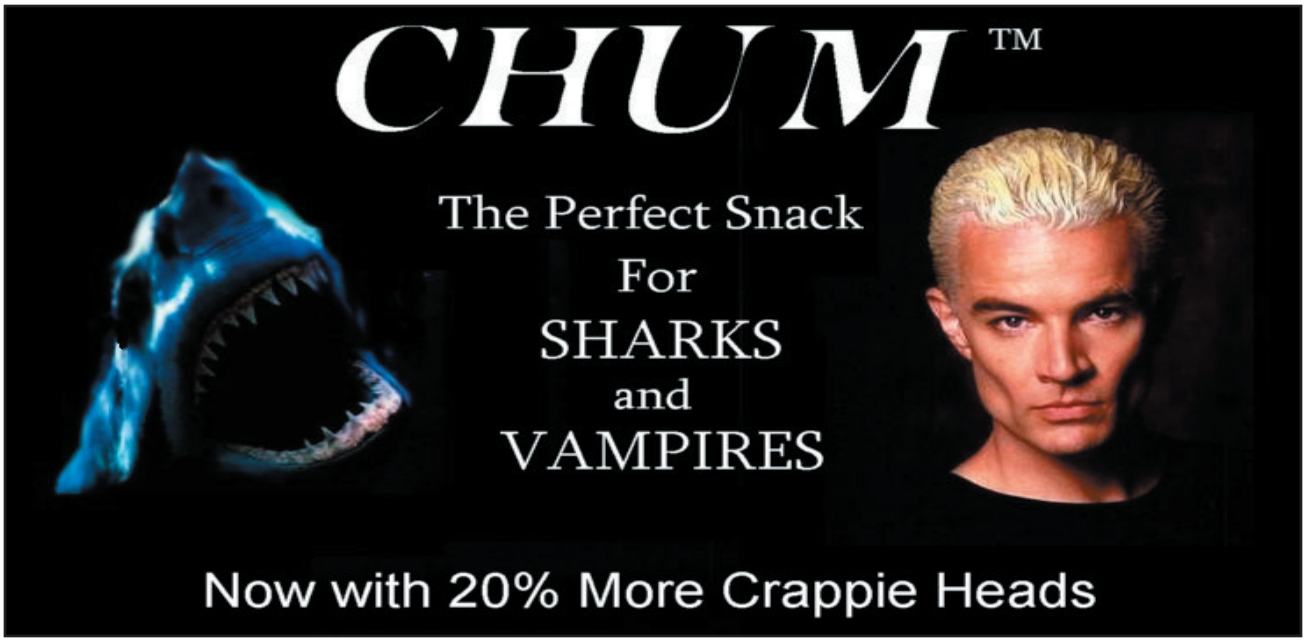
ON THE SUBJECT OF FORTS AND FORT-LIKE THINGS

Scott Birdseye is a professor at the world-renown Botham University in Himmot, Acadia. Throughout his life he has traveled to various countries, written various things and seen up to seven different types of brickwork. He does not enjoy mushrooms; both the flavor and texture, in his opinion, are entirely unappetizing.

Just as weapons can be divided into two distinct classes: shock and missile, so can military tactics be divided into two different categories: the light, fast and maneuverable and the heavily armored yet. There are abundant examples in the history of warfare of instances wherein different categories of weapon or soldier were able to claim supremacy of the field, whether shock troops such as the Medieval knight, missile troops such as the longbow, or fast, light troops such as guerrilla fighters. Each specific attribute provides both strengths and weaknesses, as is the case with heavily armored yet slow troops, an example of the sacrifice of mobility for protection. The ultimate example of this sacrifice is the permanent fortification. Completely lacking mobility, permanent fortifications, though their imposing strength could prove themselves nearly impossible to capture, producing a system of combat dominated by the prolonged siege. Although the development of artillery caused the decline of the castle system, it also generated the invention of new forms of fortification, typified by the works of French engineer Vauban, whose contributions to the art of defensive construction and siege-craft would dominate that field for nearly three hundred years.

The system of permanent fortifications for military defense is as old as recorded civilization. The earliest stone wall structures of Asia Minor and the Southern Caucuses slowly developed over thousands of years into the architectural marvels of the massive walled cities of Classical Greece and Rome. Forming the basis of the early Medieval permanent fortification, the city wall concept dominated the field of strategic defenses until the later rise of the Norman military concepts. The Franks and Normans were the first group in Europe to modify the non-permanent wooden mot and bailey design into the permanent stone castle concept, which was a direct response to Viking coastal raids. Soon after their development, castles began to dominate the military landscape of Europe, which was, in the Middle Ages, under constant threat of internal war and external attacks by Vikings, Mongols, Muslims and others.





With imposing size and simple basic design, the castle was popular with Medieval nobles. Castle walls were generally about fifteen to twenty feet thick and used height as a defense against scaling and mining, two of the prominent siege tactics of the time. The strength of castles depended not only on their size, but also on the relative weakness of the available siege weapons. Economics also added to the defense strength of castles, as prolonged sieges were often too expensive for Medieval feudal lords, thus insuring the near invulnerability of castle defenses.

While castle based defense dominated the Medieval world, developments of the High Middle Ages reduced the invulnerability of castles, and forced defensive strategists to adopt new methods of permanent fortification. The introduction of gunpowder weapons to Europe represented one of the most significant events in the history of the Western world, as it brought about the restructuring of the military and political systems of the continent. Distinctly tied to these changes was the revolution brought about in fortification architecture in response to gunpowder. The early to mid Fourteenth Century witnessed the introduction of gunpowder technology into Europe.

The first recorded use of artillery as a siege-craft weapon occurred in 1362, although the outcome of the siege is unknown. Fifteen years later, however, the Duke of Burgundy besieged Odkruik using over one hundred cannon and succeeded in breaching the castle's walls. The effectiveness of early cannon in destroying castle walls was not due to the greater force of the projectiles, but instead to the straight, rather than arched, trajectory which allowed the missiles to be aimed directly at specific weaknesses. Primitive artillery did not provide greater force than traditional missile based siege weapons, but rather used the force in a more effective manner, thus destroying the previous near-invulnerability of castle defenses.

The full capability of cannon against traditional defense systems was blatantly illustrated for the first time in the year 1453 when the Byzantine city of Constantinople fell to an Ottoman army equipped with the most modern weapons then available, including a twenty-five inch cannon which could fire projectiles weighing more than half a ton. Situated on the Bosporus, Constantinople not only provided control of the Black Sea trade routes, but was also seen as the most important defensive position against Ottoman expansion into Europe. As the center of the Orthodox Church, Constantinople was also one of the most important cities in Christendom.

While other cities and castles in Europe had suffered attacks and successful sieges by artillery equipped armies, non were as strategically and psychologically important as Constantinople. The loss of Constantinople to the armies of Mahomet II opened the Balkans, Greece, Italy and Austria to direct Ottoman aggression and threatened Central and Western Europe with foreign invasion, reawakening the fear rousted by Viking and Mongol invaders in earlier eras. Thus, the conquest of Constantinople instigated a massive build-up of new work, in both theory and practice, on ways to improve permanent fortification defenses throughout Europe.

Fortress construction was expensive, and many Europeans were unwilling to abandon traditional castles. Nobles often utilized low-cost modification of existing structures in favor of exhausting their treasuries in the undertaking new projects. Platforms for defensive cannon were built, often on the remnants of razed towers and rocks and dirt were pushed up against walls to increase strength against bombardment, in a manner which became known as rampiring. Defensive artillery, however, was of little use in the hurriedly modified castles, as light cannon lacked the range to bombard enemy positions and the recoil of heavy cannon endangered the stability of the castle foundation. In battle, these modifications, which were often jury-rigged and hastily erected, did not stand up well to artillery bombardment, as illustrated by French King Charles VIII's invasion of Italy in 1495. During the fighting between French and Spanish forces in Italy, several Italian castles were successfully besieged, prompting the Italians to undertake a major defensive buildup.

Engineers in Pisa, Venice and Naples such as Antonio de Sangallo and Michele di Sanmichel developed entirely new concepts in defensive fortification. Pisan Style fortresses, as they became known, emerged as a direct result of the ferocity and effectiveness of French artillery siege-craft. Among the advancements created within the Pisan Style were a system of parallel ditches surrounding both sides of the main wall, a design which mean that, even if an attacker managed to destroy a portion of the wall, they could not move a mass of troops through the gap. The walls of the Pisan Style fortress were sunk, so as to provide little target area for straight trajectory artillery, and the walls were defined by short wedge shaped towers called bastions which were placed in symmetric and geometrically precise positions to provide overlapping fields of fire. Thus, if an enemy reached the wall, they would find themselves, irrespective of their point of attack, in the range of defensive fire from at least two bastions. Roundels, short stone platforms designed for placement of defensive artillery, replaced traditional towers in the Pisan design.

Traditional castle walls, which were tall and thin, were replaced by low, thick walls, the thickness of which could often reach up to sixty or seventy feet. Outworks were also developed with the Pisan Style, for the purpose of preventing enemy artillery from gaining access to positions outside the walls during a siege.

These new designs were put to the test in 1502 when Louis XII, successor of Charles VIII, invaded Italy in response to the civil war in Naples. In 1504, the city of Pisa was besieged by a combined French and Italian army. The French artillery inflicted a massive bombardment on the cities defenses, which had been rebuilt according to the new advancements in fortification technique. The failed attack forced the French into making peace with the Pisa and resulted eventually in French withdrawal from Italy and leaving Naples under Spanish control. After the success of the Pisan Style, the peculiar yet effective star-shaped fortress design spread throughout Europe in the latter half of the Sixteenth Century. Gonzalo de Cordoba, Spanish military commander during the civil war in Naples, recognized the effectiveness of the new fortification technologies and the Pisan engineering advances were readily adopted by Spain, directly contributing to Spanish military supremacy in Europe during the Sixteenth Century.

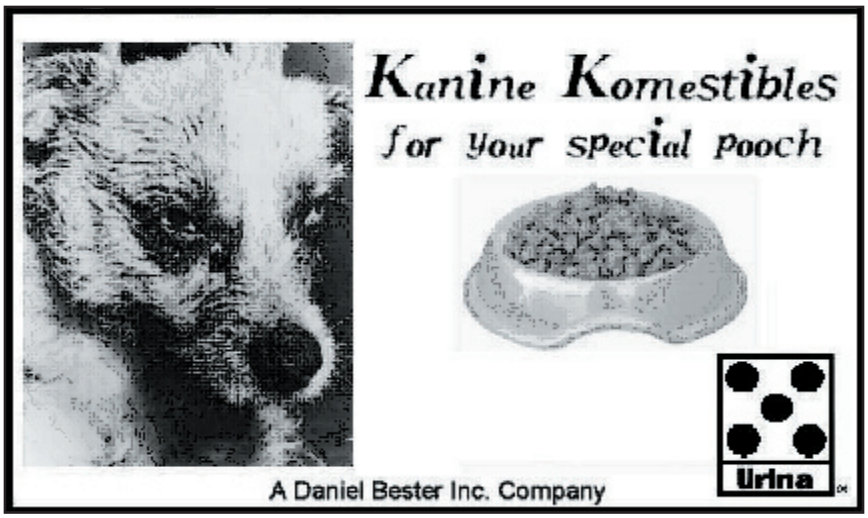
Although the innovative star-shaped fortification of post-Medieval Europe saw its origins in Italy, the design is often incorrectly attributed to French strategic theorist and military commander Sebastian le Prestre de Vauban. Working for Louis XIV at the height of the French monarchy's power, Vauban, as a military advisor, conducted and oversaw many of the French army's siege battles. It was in the course of these operations that Vauban first began to explore the engineering principals of defensive fortification. After extensive study and observation, Vauban drew basic designs for over one hundred fortresses and port works. As siege warfare was the dominant form of combat in Europe at the time, Vauban wrote countless treatises on fortification design and, through letters, consulted the king on the subject. Throughout these early works, Vauban discussed neither specific aspects of military engineering nor precise elements of strategy or tactics. Instead, Vauban reiterated and supplemented the concepts first envisioned by early Seventeenth Century theoretical engineer Blaise de Pagan, who, in his *Les Fortifications du Compte de Pagan*, promoted the use of Enlightenment science and mathematics in tactical and strategic military design.

Despite the fact that Vauban was not the principal developer of the post-Medieval fortification technologies, it was he who, through his expansion upon the basic concepts of the design, enabled the innovative engineering concepts to be used to their greatest effect. Although Vauban never laid down exact rules or laws governing defensive science, his modifications and improvements of the early works produced a set of principals by which he forever changed the construction of defense works and the battle tactics which revolved around the siege and protection of such works. Vauban's innovations of defensive technology are divided into three Systems, each of which, at its own specific time, dominated the construction of fortifications in Europe.

The First System used Pagan's ideas in concert with the modernization techniques of the Pisan style. While Vauban retained the polygon, or star-shaped, design, he improved greatly in the area of the fortresses' outworks. Trenches were augmented by sloping earth called glacis, which provided better protection against small-arms fire. The counterscarp, or main walls, of the fortress were also enhanced by larger earthen glacis to provide greater protection from straight trajectory artillery attack than had been provided by the earlier simpler sunk design. Extension of the outworks also made assault mining almost impossible, as the distance from the fortress to the enemy position was increased, in some cases, to a mile or more.

The hallmark of the Second System was the enlargement and detachment of the bastions. By separating the bastions from the main unit of the fortress the range of defensive cannon was extended and the overlapping of the fields of fire was greatly increased, making close assault of the fortress even more dangerous for the enemy army. The Third System, of which there is only one example, was only a slight modification of the Second. Changes within the Third System included the alteration of angle of the bastions, which was made more acute, modifying of the shape from a solid wedge into a more pointed spike, further increasing the overlap of defensive fire. The overall size of the fortress was also increased, and underground tunnels were extended and enlarged to increase the ease of supply and reinforcement within the structure.

The success of Vauban's modifications of the preeminent fortress design of the time resulted once again in the near invulnerability of defensive works on the battle field. The strength of the new fortifications is fully illustrated by the Spanish assault of Santhia, where a newly constructed fort survived several thousand artillery hits with its walls still intact to a high enough degree to repel the attack.



Field commanders lacking in arms or who had been outmaneuvered had only to retreat to a fortress position, consequently, siege warfare became more common than battles in the field. Thus, at the bequest of the Crown, who sought to ensure French military supremacy in Europe, Vauban set about to create complete and precise guidelines for fortress assault.

Using scientific principals, in the manner of Pagan's works, Vauban helped to develop what became known as the Scientific Siege. New tactics set forth by Vauban consisted of a series of predetermined movements and advancements, by which were detailed the positions of all assault units and bombardment artillery groupings. The attack of the fortress, according to Vauban's works, was conducted by means of a complicated and precise preordained timetable. Vauban dictated that forty-eight days should be the exact length of a well directed siege. The first action of the siege tactics which Vauban pioneered involved the disruption and severing of supply routes to the fortress, prior to actual assault. Smaller field fortifications would then be built, often over a mile away from the fortress, for the placement of heavy assault guns. Under the cover of massive artillery bombardment designed to check defensive fire, infantry and engineers would construct a series of parallel zigzag trenches. The zigzag arrangement was utilized to prevent defensive small-arms fire from penetrating the length of the trench. When the assault trenches had reached the outer limits of the defensive fortifications, smaller artillery pieces were moves into close proximity to the walls in order to produce a breach, while larger artillery in the rear changed from straight trajectory to arced fire in order to lay down fire on top of, rather than into the side of, the fortress. When the walls were breached, infantry would directly assault the fortress, although it was often more beneficial for both sides, if the fortress were surrendered before the final assault. Thus, most sieges of the period ended with a truce rather than a pitched battle.

The scientific principals set up by Vauban for conduct of siege warfare became very well known throughout Europe, and over time, sieges became less about fighting and more about show and display of power. With precise timetables for assault, defensive commanders had only to wait until the final moment to honorably surrender. Louis XIV held elaborate parties at the expected final moments of sieges and assault gradually evolved from a battle into a formality of warfare, given over to gentlemanly displays of honor and refined courtesy. Observing the gaiety and ceremony which began to dominate the conduct of siege-craft, Horace Walpole, Earl of Oxford complained that "War has become so peaceful that when a city is besieged today and falls, the women inside can't even hope for the benefits of a good rape." Despite the protests of Oxford and others of the same mindset, the advancements brought about Vauban's defensive and offensive tactics caused warfare in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries to develop from a ruthless contest of arms into an elaborate game of check and evasion.

This development is likely the result of Vauban's own work. It is peculiar that Vauban, the day's leading master of defensive engineering, was also the chief architect of the premier fortification assault tactics. The cordiality which began to dominate siege-craft was directly due to the inherent lack of advantage afforded both the offensive and the defense in the field of siege warfare. Artillery, which had brought down the rule of the castle system, was the central weapon of the assault forces, however, the growing complexity and effectiveness of artillery weapons was equally matched by continuing improvements to fortification design. In the early days of the Vauban assault tactics, before battle gave way to pageantry and ceremony, prolonged sieges often became pitched trench battles, as defenders emerged, under cover of artillery, from their fortified positions into their own forward ditches to use small arms fire to repel enemy infantry and engineers. Thus, the system of trench warfare was born, as elements of defensive and offensive forces skirmished on the outworks of fortresses for control of tactically important positions. With such close-in, bloody fighting dominating the siege battle, it can be clearly seen why commanders would prefer honorable surrender, particularly in a time when highly trained soldiers were thought too valuable to risk losing unless victory could be completely ensured. As neither side could find a clear advantage, siege warfare became a choice between a prolonged, deadly, and possibly futile struggle or a martial formality which ensured survival of both the army and the fortress.

While in the following centuries, field tactics were modified, advanced and improved upon countless times, the methods of siege warfare and the tactics for fortification defense underwent no such revolutionary progression. Thus, at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, when new technological developments such as the repeating rifle, brought to an abrupt end the domination of the innovative field tactics which had been wrought by the Wars of Napoleon and the U.S. Civil War, among others, the armies of Europe were forced to rely once again upon the tactical systems developed by Vauban. The static tactics of trench warfare, envisioned by Vabaun in the Seventeenth Century, were once again brought to bear in the First World War. The result of this archaic approach to warfare was a stagnant and bloody form of battle, a perverse, yet direct descendant of the military style created by Marshall Sebastian le Prestre de Vauban nearly three hundred years earlier, an sinister display of the importance and longevity of the man who was, at one point, the world's foremost military engineer.


fOAM
engage your senses

ON THE SUBJECT OF TURTLES

A LEARNED DIATRIBE BY D.B. COOPER

D.B. Cooper (Whereabouts Unknown) is a seasoned air traveler.

I knew a turtle once. His name was Larry. Unlike a lot of guys named Larry, he didn't wear glasses. He had really good vision and could see almost five feet in front of him (or to his left or right if he turned his head that way). Larry had a big brown shell. You could knock on it and he would let loose such a string of expletives that there was no doubt he came from an aquatic environment. Just tape a sail to his back and call him Seaman Larry. The truly strange thing about him was that he had a writing desk at which he was working on a 27 volume philosophy of turtles. He called it Philosophiae Pan-Testudines and it covered all aspects of turtleine existence, morality and belief.

The major thrust of his work came in Volume 5 On Emigration. In this work, Larry proposed the mass emigration of the turtle family from its mother planet Earth. Using high technology borrowed from Man, turtle life would leave the great confines of the planetary sphere, sheltered in personal vehicles no thicker than a molecule.

They would then form a large sphere about the orbit of the Earth, absorbing nutrients from the raw power of the Sun through chloroplasts engineered through gene-splicing to be formed naturally in the turtle's body. This theme was put aside for the place of the turtle in world history in Volume 6 The True Foundations of the Earth, but was brought up again in Volumes 7, 8 and 9 (A Parable, The Carapace of Freemen and Control From the Heavens, respectively).

Turtles, Larry proposed, would rule most of the inner planets by controlling the sunlight that reached them. He imagined billions of members of the family Testudines adjusting the temperature of Venus, making it habitable. Mercury would be turned to higher revolution by the pressure of millions of turtlenauts. The once-mighty lords of Gaia, Man, would be brought to heel when their planetary atmosphere was gradually dropped in temperature.

I agree with the pundits on most of the middle volumes of Philosophiae Pan-Testudines; they are dry, uninspired and mostly concern the place of vegetable matter in the Universe. It's understandable that vegetable matter, particularly lettuce and cabbage, would take an important role in the turtleine lifestyle. One can even account for the focus on the intended audience of the work, Chinese pediatricians. Most of Volumes 10 (The Leafy Benefactor) through 21 (Dialog with a Cabbage) however, may be passed over for the juicier bits in Volumes 22 (Mounting, Mating and Matrimony), 25 (Thoughts on Tortoise Sperm), 26 (The Pleasure of the Pond) and the ultimate volume 27 (Putting it All Together: The Destruction of Man and the Sultry-Clawed Sex).

I only read through it once, but it was worth an afternoon's read. Larry was not eager to know what I thought about the work, though he often asks me to comment on his lithography. I have never quite seen pond-scum rendered in such an ornate fashion. You won't either if you visit the Maximus Gallery this weekend, where Larry is having the opening for his new show Nordic Lake Experience. Donald Sutherland will be there to give opening remarks and Madonna will perform a Kabbalic blessing over the assemblage. At the end of the evening, the Lake McMurtry Marching Turtles will perform a fanfare composed in honor of Larry by John Adams.

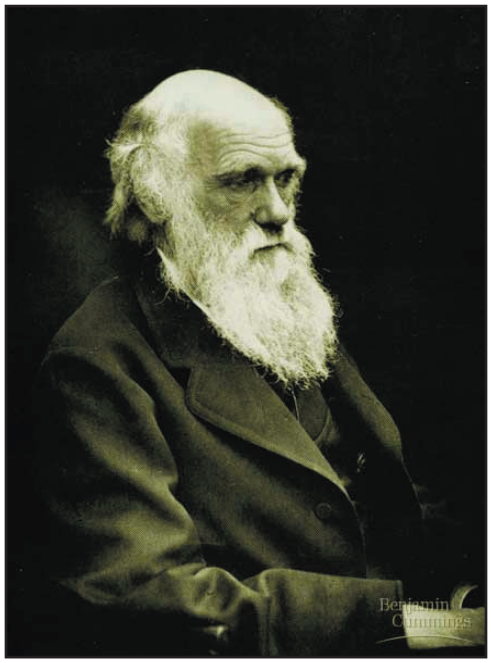
CONDENSATIONS OF LITERATURE

LESSER KNOWN QUOTES OF THE WELL KNOWN FROM THE TOME BY

DAVE GHANA

Dave Ghana is head of the Custodial Department's Mopping Division at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Huntsville Space Center.

A can of WD-40 is your best defense against squeaky hinges.
-Marilyn Monroe



On your life, underestimating the proclivities of finches is likely to lead to great internal hemorrhaging.
-Charles Darwin

Today I feel like a sleep machine.
-Sir James Brown

Tasmania is ours, too?
-John Howard (Australian Prime Minister)

Move it 20 spans that way.
-Khufu

Seek the lower road lest ye be sought upon the left one.
-St. Paul

Pound the metal. Pound the metal. Pound the metal!
-Admiral Zheng He (Last Words)

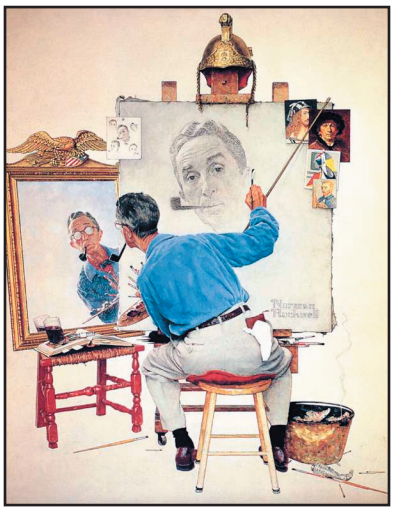
Hmm...that's a good one.
-Will Rogers

I said the green sash, moron.
-Emilio Zapata

Yes, you do need to see my identification.
-Sir Alec Guiness (1991 traffic stop)

Stabbing them with a spear might work.
-Shaka Zulu

Oxford shirts. Definitely more oxford shirts.
-Mao Zedong



I keep the pornographic stuff in a bus station locker.
-Norman Rockwell

Can I please have 50 cents?
-John F. Kennedy

What does Bindusara want this time, clean sheets?
-Ashoka the Great (Upon being called back from exile.)

Hey buddy, can I get a leg up?
-Napoleon Bonaparte

Avalanches of potatoes, rivers of vodka, fusillades of borscht. Your destruction comes!
-Nikita Kruschev

I still think Ned Beatty should've played Don Corleone.
-Francis Ford Coppola

And don't forget to load the couscous.
-Richard I (On his retreat from Palestine.)

Eventually they run out of bullets.
-General Hideki Tojo

If you pick a pineapple in the morning, you're sure to have a Yankee sniffing your pants in the afternoon.
-King Kamehameha

By any means necessary.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

I don't know how to say it either.
-Ernesto Guevara

15 concubines ain't nothin' to sneeze at.
-Gary Coleman

It's just a dirty rock.
-Cecil John Rhodes

Numberless times have I told you that ostrich feathers applied to a small boy's behind will not create the desired effect.
-Tiberius

Splendid is the court of Kublai Khan, with anal cleaning papers for all.
-Marco Polo

If the replanting plan of the north Essex grasslands goes forth, all will pay dearly the price of that emerald weed.
-Winston Churchill

I think a robot could knock out Cassius Clay
-Isaac Asimov

Tight pants are just uncomfortable.
-Samuel Longhorn Clemens

If I could have three wishes, one would be to take an '88 and shove that barrel up Hitler's ass so that cocksucker can cry like the little goddamned girl he is. And hell, after that, I wouldn't need two more wishes.
-General George Patton

HOW TO DO IT
WITH REGULAR COMMENTATOR
LEMUEL LEBRATT

By Permanent Guest-Commentator
Marcia Spatzelberg

Greetings, boys and girls. This month's fun project is going to be totally fun. I'm going to teach you how to make a bird feeder out of an important French Enlightenment figure.

Materials

One Rene Descartes' skull

Two feet of aluminum wire

Two ¾ inch washers

Two ¾ inch wood screws

Two ¾ inch wing nuts

One remains spatula

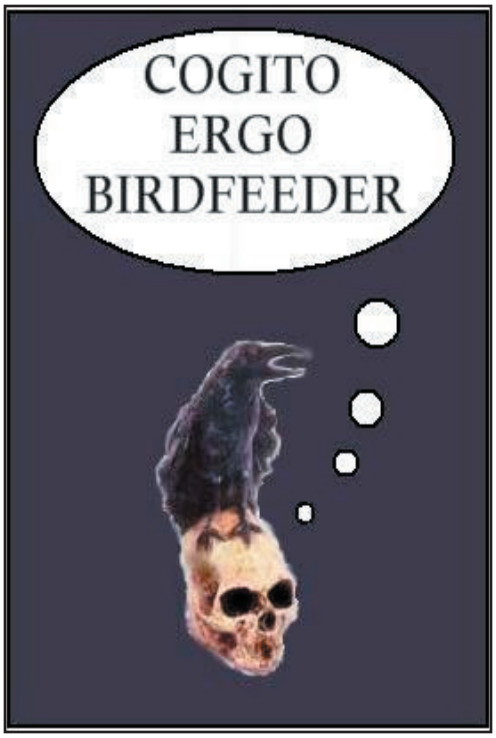
Step the First:
Use the handy remains spatula to clear away any three-hundred-year-old bits of rotted, decrepit flesh. Although it isn't necessary, you may want to snazz up Mr. Descartes' with some water-proof varnish or skull wax.

Step the Second:
Turn the skull upside down and use a handsaw (sorry, the handsaw should have been mentioned in the Materials section above) to remove the skull cap; the first two centimeters of the domed top of Mr. Descartes' earthly remains.

Step the Third:
Use the other items to make a handle.

Step the Fourth:
Fill with birdseed and hang from a tree.

Step the Fifth:
Enjoy watching birds eat from one of the world's greatest philosopher's heads.



THE MARCH OF PROGRESS

THOMAS ALVA EDISON AND THE NEW ELECTRO-ETHEREAL POWER

Jeremy-Joseph Rosen is the greater Katharinetowne City Council member for Ward 14 and Chairman of the Council Sub-Committee on Modern Powering Systems. In 1997, he won several prizes in the Grand Nationals of Underwater Floral Arrangement.

Great advances come to the Paris of the Pine Trees which promise to invigorate our bustling municipality. A few years ago the process of refitting and upwardly mobilating the gradient of lighting and power systems was begun by fellow members of the Pluto-Theosophy party. These have come to a fortuitous and American conclusion with the ignition of our very own direct current power station, provided with the good graces of famed constructomaton Thomas Alva Edison.

It has been bandied about, with no lack of help from the craven Oligo-Unitarian Party, that alternating current, not direct current, is the proper and patriotic current. Such specious remarks are patently false, unabrigedly non-sacrosanct and perhaps incorrect.

While alternating current, like the party which supports it, changes direction many hundreds of times a second, direct current efficiently and continuously (except during recharging) flows in one direction, directly into your own home! One wouldn't be desirous of a type of current which scores of times plied the ether in a direction not that of one's fine Bethany's lamps, would one?

Whereas alternating current, like the Oligo-Unitarian party, requires miles and miles of wiring and urban sprawl to function, direct current satisfies one's power needs with a fraction of the wiring and no such ungainly sprawl. Alternating current is the power of filthy immigrants. One can only imagine such generating stations powering and protecting growing Katharinetowne for true-born West Dakotans in the years to come!

A complicated system comprised of scary items; dynamos, mutable amalgams endowed by their decidedly European creator Tesla with the moniker "transformer," the enigmatic a.c. motor; is clearly not the system for greater Katharinetowne!

Clearly a system involving a simple battery is better. Batteries recall patriotic visions of our forefathers battling the scourging British and lobbing liberty shells from their batteries. Such is the American-accepted, American-invented system supported by the Pluto-Theosophy party; a system made by an American.

Direct current is the American current.

ASK MONTEZUMA
ADVICE FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

This month's "Ask Montezuma" will be written by guest-columnist Montezuma I, as Montezuma II, wife Trudy and their children are taking a much-deserved vacation in Asia.

Montezuma dispenses advice every week on his National Public Radio program *Mentor-Montey*, which can also be heard on Radio Free Bulgaria.

Dear Montezuma,

My Mom and Dad have been planning on buying me a pony for the last three years. I'm only six years old and I don't want a pony, I want a Steven Wolfram cellular automata set with the French Riviera play set. I even wrote to Dr. Wolfram, but he never answered my email or my letter. Once I saw him on TV and he picked his nose. It's funny to think of this famous brain guy sitting in the bathroom, thinking up a new kind of science. I do that sometimes. Am I going to have a little brother or a little sister?

Mondays Are Really Yesterday

Mary,

What in the blazes are you going on about. First it's the stupid pony, then you go on self-ishly about some washed up MacArthur genius. Since when did "Dr." Wolfram get involved with Mattel anyway? So you wrote the guy? Big deal. I write people all the time. Look at me now, I'm writing to you. You're pretty stupid for a six year old. You're probably not done picking your own nose yet. I can't even make sense of your letter. You start out with one thing and the,

Oh Montezuma,

Please don't shoot the messenger here but I have a dumb question about Legionnaire's Disease. I currently work for a company I shall not specify and we have recently issued a corporate policy on Legionella, the bacterium which causes Legionnaire's Disease. My question regards tropical fish tanks. The water temperature 22C - 45C. Some rather gross sediment has built up on the bottom of the tank. That tank is an optimal place for nutrients feeding bacterial growth. As you know, probably, water condenses and evaporates, but the tank recirculates the water. I don't know the volume of water in the tanks because they're all different, so if you need to know that, just let me know. A lot of these tanks are at nursing homes, so a lot of old people are put at risk. Obviously this tank is the perfect place for Legionella to thrive! Give me some peace of mind here.

Robert U. Belknapp, New York

Rube,

I'll give you some piece of mind and a bullet, to boot. Why the hell are you asking me? You're the expert, apparently. I don't even know what a legionella is. You build up all this talk of some awful disease and then throw the fish tank thing at me. Now I've got a wonderful description of some god-awful fish tank in the middle of wrinkly old farts who can't wipe themselves. And if I were going to answer your mongoloid question, it would be nice if you took the time to find out the volume of water in the tanks. You've read the magazine, you know the format for the column and you leave out what might be a critical piece of information. I ought to slap you.

Dearest Montezuma,

Why is the sky blue?

Ornithal Jones, Aged 44

Orny,

Well, looking up at it, I'd say it's a nice shade of black right now. You're probably thinking during that day time part of the day. Well, I don't usually see the bright side of sunrise, so I couldn't tell you. However, I can take a whack at figuring out why the sky is black. As I see it now, it's black because it's got a black color to it. So, I would assume that during the day it's blue (if it is blue) because the sky is colored blue. Now that I think about it, the colors could just be painted on the back of your eyeball to make the sky look like that. I'm really the wrong person to ask, but hey, you have a good one.

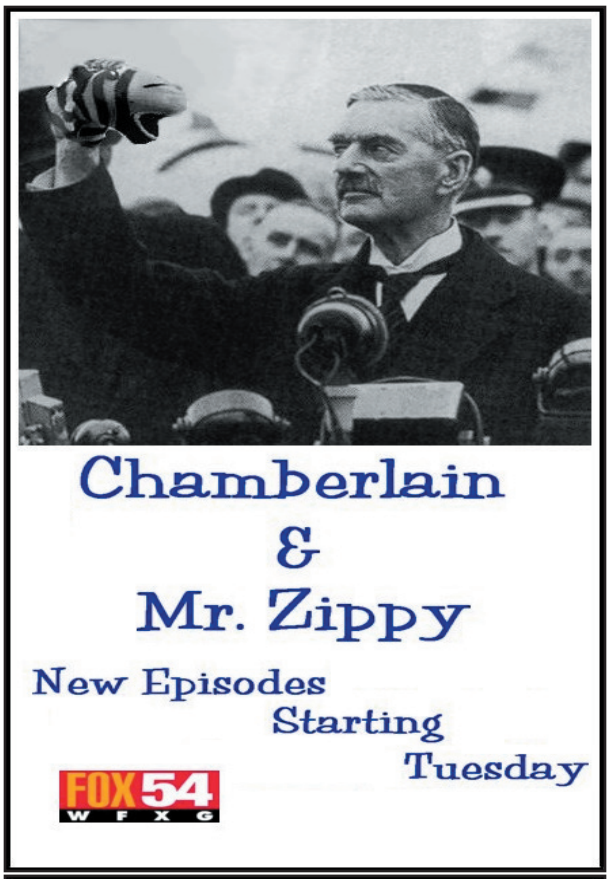
Dear Montezuma,

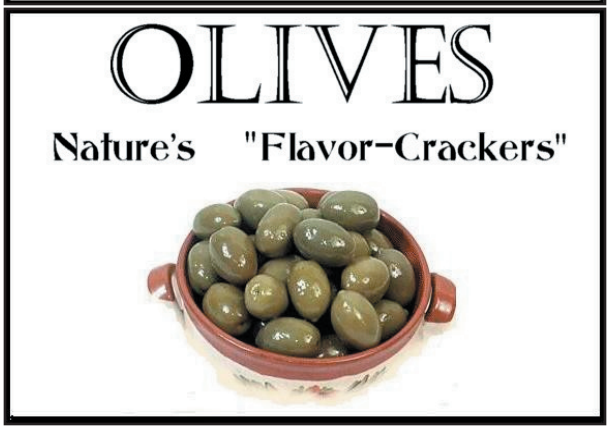
Why did Kiley never call me and ignore me that one night after she was all flirty two days earlier.

Albert Redmon Nadler Isaac Edmonds

Arnie,

That was so not an anonymous letter. I just told you yesterday I was going to be covering this gig. And that fake name really sucks. I figured it out right away. Anyway, I don't know why she didn't call you. Probably because you only really saw her the once when you guys were drunk. There was obvious chemistry before you got drunk, but then you only saw each other the once. Like you said, the second time you saw her she was performing and all and it was a birthday party for her friend. You just met, so she was probably running around taking care of that. And you didn't make any effort after that. I would've. She was hot, guy. Of course, it could've been your smelly feet. I think that was the week you lost your pumice.





Dear Montezuma,

Recently I was dining at a well known establishment, when my wife hit me with the difficult news that she wanted to get a divorce. I'm not really sure how this started. Back when we first met at Canasta Camp, we hit it off perfectly, bonding over our love of Dutch Cuisine, Canadian horror movies, the color mauve, and of course canasta. Our early time together was just magical and, dare I say it, perfect. We were wed after dating for a few years, and while we had a couple of fights during these times, they were of short duration and quickly resolved. Barely did we ever have trouble. After marriage, we got along even better, or so it seemed. Sure, there were difficulties; the time she wrecked my car after running a stop sign, it was so clearly her fault and she refused to admit it, even after the police report, the civil suit and all of that. I just wanted an apology for wrecking my car, but she said that I should apologize for not supporting her. I'm all for supporting her, but it was a difficult time for us both. Then, the next month, she accused me of wanting to cheat on her because I checked out this girl at the WalMart. Then, she threw all this stuff at me, claiming that I flirted too much with my co-workers and with the check out girl down at the supermarket. I think she was just trying to justify her own thoughts of cheating, and I told her that and she got really mad and stormed out. Later that night she came back drunk and I told her that it was irresponsible for her to drive drunk, but she claimed that she had only had a couple of drinks and was fine. I claimed that it wasn't the amount of alcohol that mattered, it was the whole situation. You shouldn't get behind the wheel if you've been drinking, period. Sure, I could have spent more time doing things that she enjoyed, but I do really think that she's got a crush on this guy at her new work. See, she changed jobs a couple of months ago and keeps telling me stories about this guy Charlie there. She shrugs it off and even jokes about wanting to have sex with him, and that hurt me. So, last week after I dropped by her office to bring her lunch to her, I caught her seriously flirting with the guy. Yeah, I did a rash thing. I yelled at her in front of her co-workers and caused a bit of a scene. That was a little harsh and probably embarrassing for her, but for Christ's sake, she was sitting in the guy's lap. At work. They were all up on each other, their faces like four inches apart and they were both giggling. It was too much. And to top it all off, now my damn lawn mower won't start anymore and my car's still got a big dent in the right fender. What should I do about this whole mess I've made of my life?

Entropy Only Now

Dear Eon,

Hey, man, that's pretty rough. Especially, you know, the fact you probably had your dinner ruined. I'm kind of curious if she dropped "da bom" after the appetizers. If you dig Dutch cuisine, you know that bad news isn't cool right before the main course. Look on the bright side, dude. She might have just had a bad seafood mixer plate or something. And don't forget that Dutch beer. Maybe she hadn't eaten all day. I'd try dressing real provocative-like and crawling into bed with her. That usually works.

Montezuma II will return next month, with all new advice for the world's confused masses of rabble.

Culvert's

organic corn chips

Our organic corn chips are made without pesticides, fertilizers, or human intervention. Corn is allowed to take its natural course in its wild, unfarmed habitat, then, only ears which have naturally fallen to the ground are collected by local children who do so just for fun. Pushed to our environmentally friendly production facility by elderly gentlemen out for their evening constitutionals. The corn is then ground by Buddhist prayer wheels set in motion by the wind. The meal is collected by Native American college scholarship winners in an effort to increase awareness of Aboriginal rights, then turned into our high-grade corn chips through the tireless efforts of a nearby NGO. The chips ae placed in post-consumer brown paper bags and carried to your local store by Sherpas on bicycles.

30% of Culvert's profits go to freeing
Xizang Province (formerly Tibet)

Axes and Alleys

was

Conceived, Written and Produced

by

Scott Birdseye

and

Jeremy Rosen

2004 A.D.

for more information please consult

www.axesandalleys.com