



THE AVIARY



VOL. I, No. 1 (From Francis Baumli; for friends & associates)

JAN.-FEB., 1984



"... let us now suppose that in the mind of each man there is an aviary of all sorts of birds--some flocking together apart from the rest, others in small groups, others solitary, flying anywhere and everywhere."

Plato (Theaetetus)

The purpose of this communicate is to serve as an occasional letter to my various friends, colleagues, and acquaintances around the country. Insofar as it is personal, call it a letter; if it seem impersonal, then deem it an epistle. Yes, yes; I am very aware that such communicates are often less than pleasurable. They proliferate especially at Christmas time, when the only word you hear from a person you have been pining for, is via a mimeographed list of the year's activities and the current health and accomplishments of the various children. Such letters, I admit, do violence to the human need for affection. They also violate, by arousing, our baser sentiments such as envy. Because (at least this is usually my own experience) it seems that most people who hand out such form letters are people who have become famous, who travel a great deal, etc. They inform us of who they have consorted with, where they have been, and in the end we feel as emotionally lonely as we are physically isolated. So ... I assure you, I have this year traveled little (only trips to Kansas City or St. Louis, both within the borders of my state, and one trip to northwest Missouri and into southern Iowa). And I have consorted with no one more famous than myself. So be assured; this letter attempts to reach you, and to save myself time--i.e., rather than belabor the same news over and over in personal letters, I can dispense with it once and for all, herein, and be on to more intimate things that unite you and I.

... ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU ARE ONE OF THE SUSPICIOUS CHARACTERS, A FAKE SMILE WILL GET YOU BY, BUT A REAL ONE MIGHT GET YOU INTO TROUBLE.

(from When Moses Last in the Dooryard Laughed by Robert D. Nagle, p. 178.)

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF 1983

Feb. 9: This was my last day with the Family Counseling Center in Columbia, Missouri where I had worked since mid-1980 as a counselor and medical consultant. Reasons for terminating were various: primarily, my health was deteriorating at the time, and the stress and requirements of counseling very simply were more than I could offer at the clinic. Also, my work on two anthologies about the male experience, which I had been preparing with Herb Goldberg was taking up a great deal of time, and I simply did not have the energy, nor the time, to devote myself to both avocations.

I have since continued doing some forensic counseling, supervision, and occasional consulting, but for now my work as a counselor and medical consultant is quite minimal.

Apr. 5-29: This was the best gift I've given to myself in years--a time during which I declared a period of ~~oral~~ vocal celibacy. What this involved, very simply, was that for 3 weeks, 3 days, and 3 hours, I did not talk about "relationships," (to borrow the nomenclature which, conventionally vague, seems to have familiar and specific meaning to most people I know). I did not talk about anything to do with my own, or another person's, sexual relating--their love love, or lack of love life, their "problems" with their lover, or their plans for "getting involved" with someone. I confess that, during this period, I might have considered foregoing my vow for the sake of talking to someone about their joys, ecstasies, or such, with their lover or spouse, but reports on such phenomena seem so rare as to perhaps be non-existent in the general locale of Columbia, Missouri and surrounding territory.

This gift, in fact, was so wonderful, that I am seriously considering another such period of celibacy.

One word of explanation is in order. The vow, of course, did not extend to my professional work as a counselor or my work in men's liberation.

"Callous," was how one friend described me. Another angrily retorted, "Well; what else is there to talk about?"

"With you, obviously nothing," was what I wanted to say, but since that day I was pretending to be a wimp, I remained silent.

But ... and this is important, I made it clear to people during that period of time that if they were hurting, they could come to me for comfort. If they were needing what I think a true friend can best give--namely, the silent acceptance of another's suffering, and the willingness to simply take that suffering, help hold it by holding the other person--bodily and spiritually--that I was willing to do. But talk about it, no; I would not do that.

Apr. 16: The "Berndtson Symposium" was held at University of Missouri-Columbia, in honor of the retiring aesthetician, Arthur Berndtson. Because Dr. Berndtson was my dissertation advisor, and has been a consequent friend and colleague, I facilitated the symposium and presented the main address: "Arthur Berndtson: Bon Mots Behind the Prose." Several papers were given; current students and friends, as well as former colleagues and students, attended the meeting and later reception.

Arthur Berndtson's retirement will scarcely be sedentary. Not content with the laurels of his previous books: Art, Expression, and Beauty and Power, Form, and Mind, Berndtson is reputedly working on a third book, this time on ethics. Also he continues to advise several dissertations through the philosophy department, and also continues to hold the title, Professor Emeritus, which he received shortly before retirement.

June 26: On this date, over the air waves of KOPN FM radio in Columbia, Missouri, on my show "Men Freeing Men," I broadcast a two hour show entitled, "The Penis: Pleasure, Health and Social Attitudes." This show, as many of you know, ran into initial opposition. The program director, Bill Wax, had determined that the penis is a foul thing, not appropriate for good programming, and could only be given air time if disclaimers were made about its offensiveness. He had made this decision, citing vague concerns about community standards and FCC regulations, even though, in his chivalrous protection of the feminist programmers, he had allowed them to use the word penis along with references to female sexual and reproductive anatomy--including a 30 minute show on vaginal infections that had been aired from 12:00-12:30 P.M. without disclaimers.

I want to thank Men's Rights Inc. and Fred Hayward for its legal advice and media exposure, the National Coalition of Free Men for personal and

political support, and the legal firm Cronan, Robinson, Lampton, Faber & Pape for their legal advice and support.

July 31:

I aired my last radio show for Men Freeing Men. Its title was, "Toxic Sex Waste: The Scene in Contemporary Music." Special guest was Greg Robinson, attorney and minister.

I decided to retire from radio programming simply because it requires so much time. I consider myself to be primarily a writer, and the amount of time necessary to program a two-hour show was often more than it takes me to write a single article.

Aug. 18: This concerns a topic which it is difficult for me to include in this letter. Because it is both personal and painful.

On this day, a decision was made by myself, Dacia, and Dacia's mother for Dacia to go live with her mother. I had raised Dacia pretty much by myself for the last 5½ years, and it was very difficult to part with her. And it was very confusing, because in the past, Dacia's mother had not wanted to keep her, and her current willingness to keep her was inconsistent, sometimes mixed, and, to my way of perceiving things, token at best. It was a vertiginous time. Dacia's mother had given birth to a new baby by her second marriage just weeks before. Dacia was very upset--jealous, sad, lonely, etc.--because her mother could, and would, spend the entire day with this baby whereas she had not done so for her. I wanted Dacia to go if she could get what she was needing emotionally, but also, I didn't want her to go because I felt she wouldn't get what she needed, and also because I, very simply, want to be the person parenting her.

But finally, Dacia went. And so far, has stayed there. Things have not worked out for the best, I believe, but Dacia is establishing a kind of relationship with her mother. I generally have her on weekends, keep in touch during the week, and am truly able, albeit with ungenerous difficulty at times, to be glad that Dacia is getting to find out what needs she has from her mother can be met.

I am retaining legal custody of Dacia, and think that as time goes by, and as Dacia gets older, that Dacia will be able to divide her time more evenly between myself and her mother.

It was a lonely time for me. Very frightening, and very much a dose of reality. I saw, even more clearly this time, something I am always aware of--how the legal system is so prejudiced against the father's rights. I did not have to fight any legal battles, fortunately, but feeling this vulnerable, and unprotected by the law, was not easy. I needed a great deal of personal support at the time, and, like the crisis I went through when Dacia's mother and I were divorced some years ago, I really found out who my true friends are.

I am more adjusted now. Dacia is getting some time with her mother, which she truly needed. And ... the future will tell more.

Oct. 15: Baumli's 7th annual chili party was consummated. (Surely, nothing more need be said.)

Nov. 22: Before the Missouri Supreme Court, by a unanimous decision, I won the lawsuit against my county, and all Missouri counties, to declare unconstitutional certain Missouri laws which allowed elected county officials to set their own pay-raises.

I want to thank my attorneys Pat Cronan and Greg Robinson for their fine work on this case, and to thank the many people around the state who offered legal advice, and personal and financial support for this undertaking.

Generally: Well, for all my friends who were getting to where they could not stomach hearing me say the word, "anthology," be it known that the books are finished. The final product is two books, currently in to the Francis Greengurger literary agency, being submitted to publishers. There will be a last meeting in New York, some final details to attend to, but, for the most part, the work is finished. And I am glad. It has been an undertaking lasting about three years. While I have learned a great deal, it has for the most part been very uncreative. I could easily have written three or four books during this period of time, with much less time and stressful energy expended. But, as I told most people, it was a labor of love, of dedication and commitment. The men's movement has done a great deal for me--probably saving my life insofar as it has lessened the emotional and physical strain I have been subject to as a man. And I wanted to do my part too. This kind of book was needed, and now it will be available.

As to other things--one of the most important new undertakings I am now involved with (and again, this is very personal in nature) is taking a new attitude in myself, and projecting something of a different image to others, about my health.

To say the least, this has always been a difficult task for me. There

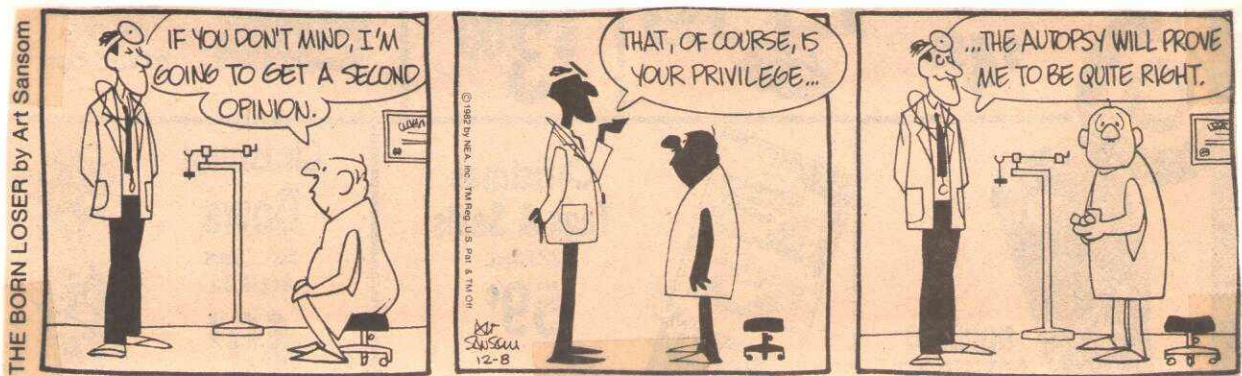
is a real tension in me as to what I feel comfortable presenting to people. On the one hand, I do not want to come across as a sickly, fragile person to people. At the same time, I have to give my health needs sufficient attention to avoid the things that can worsen my health. Hence, I have to let people know my limits, and my needs. Which all vary, and many of which seem rather strange. In myself, I have to be aggressive and energetic enough to be angry with the disease, to fight it, to keep the weariness at bay; and yet, fighting it too hard can easily lead to an exacerbation.

What I'm saying is: I have to strike a balance, that sometimes varies with every day, in myself and with other people. It's not easy; and I understand that sometimes it isn't easy for my friends.

Things have not gone well over the last year. The exacerbation which began around November of 1982, and damaged the 3rd and 6th cranial nerves to my left eye, never remitted sufficiently for healing to take place. Hence, I now have to wear a patch over my left eye, and the chances of ever regaining control over it are virtually nil. My hearing continues to get worse. I am at the hyper-acoustic stage--which means, very simply, that I hear things much more loudly than most people. As a result, I have to keep my ears stuffed with cotton all the time. Eventually, if this worsens--and I have to admit that it likely will--my hearing will become less acute, and then deafness will be the next stage. Not total deafness--this is rare in MS. But still, it's not pleasant. And now, over the last several months, my right eye--my good one--is beginning to have problems. I try to remain optimistic--maybe it will never get significantly worse. On the other hand, I do not want my optimism to delude me--it is highly possible than in the next few years, my right eye will fail also. Which causes many a dilemma--for example, do I really want to read these novels that just came out, when I still haven't read everything by Dostoyevsky? Do I really want to read Being and Time by Heidegger, which I have never read but in part, when I have only read Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind three times? These, I suppose, are the questions one should ask oneself always, but they become more urgent when limitations seem more imminent.

I am doing what I can to combat the disease. Resting, sticking to the modified Swank-McDougall diet, and such. I am going to try to avoid being around people who smoke because that definitely causes problems. I am doing less driving, playing my bass less, and trying to be constructively angry at the disease. Which is helping me accept it more, at an emotional level.

Well ... there, I said it. And it wasn't easy. I usually do not talk much about this except to people I am close to, but I think it's time I remained in the closet less than I have in the past.



NOTICES ABOUT FORTHCOMING EVENTS

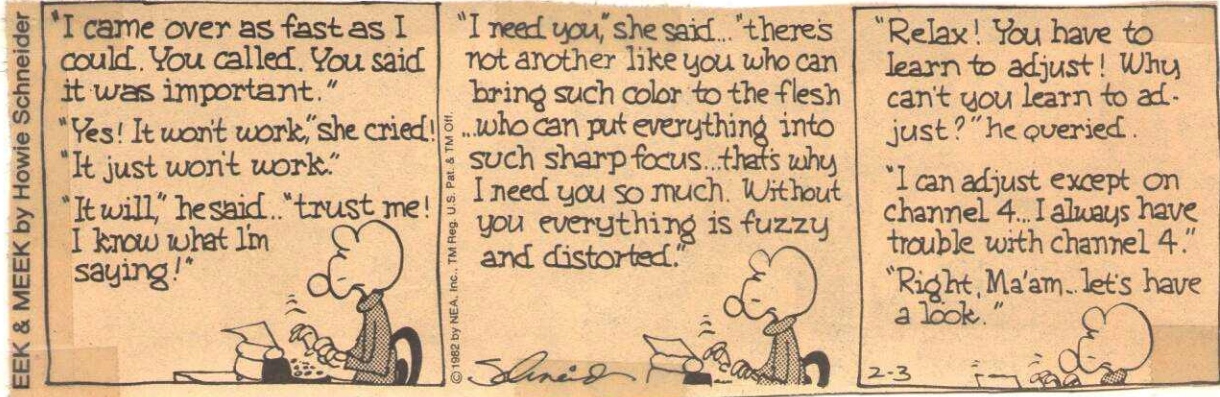
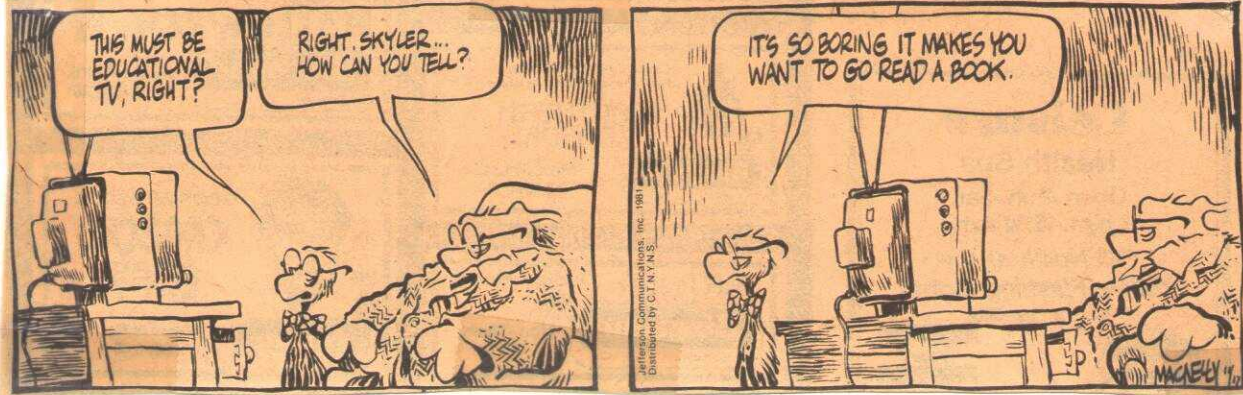
1. I plan to do an even better job this year of being a closet recluse. Any perceptions or beliefs that Baumli is a socialite are misguided, and subject to disappointment.
2. I have not yet made up my mind about this, but I enjoyed the brief period of vocal celibacy this last year so much, that I am thinking of declaring an even longer one beginning with my birthday, May 31. If so, this one will last 3 months, 3 weeks, 3 days, and 3 hours. My only deterrent for declaring such a vow this year would be that, since I have been such a callous buffoon the last few months anyway when it comes to talking about such things, it may not be necessary for my peace of mind.
3. This year I hope to kill a live television. Most of you are aware of my powerful, abiding, and unremitting (not to mention correct) hatred of televisions. However, many people, so disturbed by this hatred and convinced that I am astray in my thinking, have over the last few years given me, if my reckoning is correct, six televisions. All of these I have either sent away, or have promptly sold. This year, however, I

hope to be given another one. What I intend to do is plug it in to an outdoor socket, put it clear out in the woods behind my garage above my private dump, and while a program is showing at night, blow it away with my .44 magnum. I think this will give me more satisfaction than anything I've experienced in a long while.

(A peacenik friend of mine, initially appalled at my plan, reconciled herself to it with the statement, "Well; I guess that means there'll be not only one less television in the world, but also one less bullet. So it can't be all bad.")

So, if you have a television you want to give away, please send it to me. I'd prefer a black and white set since I hate them much worse than color sets.

SHOE



4. Baumli's 8th Annual Chili Party will, in 1984, be held on Oct. 13. Note that this time, and henceforth, it will be on the 2nd Saturday in October, instead of the 3rd as it has been before.

5. I am going to state herein a new rule about my personal, and interpersonal, relating that I want to be taken absolutely seriously by everyone. Namely, do not ask me to promise to keep something in confidence. On asking confidentiality, I may be willing to keep in mind that you wish this--and thereby certainly monitor future communications in that context, but I need such consideration to be based on my awareness of your needs, rather than on a promise I have made.

Yes, I know it; this request may seem somewhat strange. But I just don't want to have to worry about who I have promised what to when it comes to confidentiality. And I find that when people exact such promises from me, I then feel a compulsion which feels constraining, unnecessary somehow, and usually somewhat melodramatic.

If what you want to tell me must be that secret, then I'd rather not know. If, however, you can be content with just telling me that you'd prefer I not tell anyone, then fine, I'll probably never tell anyone. But it's a choice then based on my perceptions of the matter, and not on some duty grounded in a promise I sometimes only vaguely remember the reasons for. (This request of course does not apply to professional rules of confidentiality in my counseling work.)

6. Some of you have already noticed--and are angry about--the fact that I am not returning very many long-distance calls. Very simply, I spend about 15% of my income on the phone already, and that is too much. If I returned every long-distance call that comes in, I would easily spend more than one-third of my income. Please understand that I can not afford this. I would rather you write. Or send me a note, and I'll write back. And sometimes call, when I feel I can afford it.

7. As I stated earlier, I must avoid cigarette smoke. My allergy is going up and up. And the concomitant discomfort. I ask that people do not smoke in my own home. I do not ask the same if I am in their home, but I think I am going to start doing this. Otherwise, we are going to start spending less time together, simply because I will be avoiding your company. Not because I don't like you, but because tobacco smoke makes me that uncomfortable.

(Let me ask you: If you are a smoker, did you, on reading this, find your habit compelled by the very mention of the subject, and begin reaching for a cigarette, which

by now you are likely already smoking. Or, if not, are now beginning to reach for it, since I have thus belabored the subject in a manner which itches your insecure sensibilities?

(It's true, isn't it? The habit is almost as automatic as a yawn.)

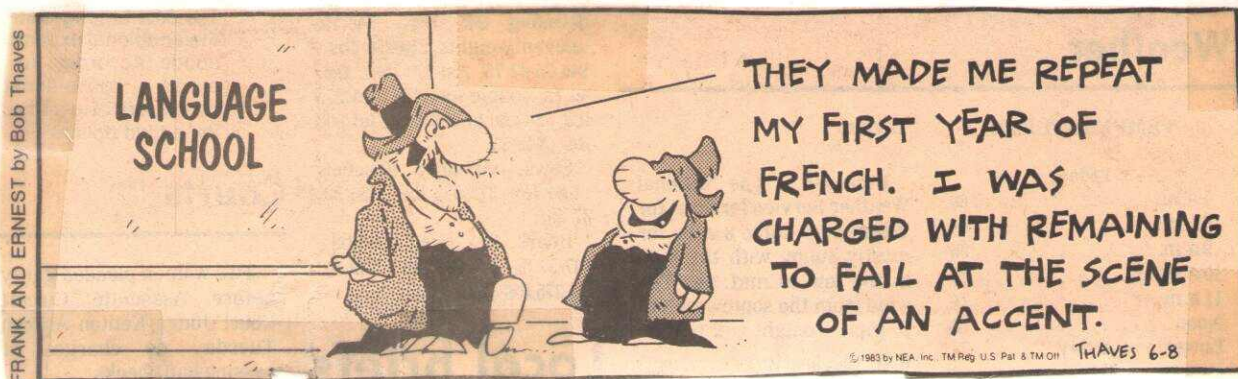
(And how many of you yawned on reading this, or now, being doubly reminded, are finding yourselves about to succumb?)

(If it appeases you any, I admit that I just yawned hugely. It feels wonderful.)

ON-GOING WORK

1. I am continuing to translate Bergson's untranslated works on laughter, comedy, and ethics. Also, I am continuing an in-depth study of Virgil's Georgicon. I may one day wish to translate this work also, although my classical latin is not as good as my medieval latin.

But Berson's french is a joy to translate. He is such a consummate stylist that I have never regretted undertaking him as a project, which will likely last several more years.



2. This year I plan to read a lot of novels. I'm going to start with A Clockwork Orange by Burgess, The Color Purple by Walker, go on to Blue Highways, and then get into some of the classics. It seems that for the last two years I've read little else than psychology and men's liberation. It's time for distraction and fun.

3. I'll be continuing to serve on the national board of advisors to The Institute for Advanced Philosophic Research. This takes up a good deal of time, but it's worth it. They sponsor excellent work, and I feel honored that they value my input as much as they do.

4. I also hope to get some final touches done on my 1955 Cadillac hearse ("Daddy's Beautiful Black Car"--to use Dacia's terminology) so that I can do more traveling in it. The car continues to behave itself beautifully (albeit temperamentally, as all beautiful things are allowed). It needs some upholstery work, some body work, and such, but it's still a wonderful travelling vehicle.

I no longer am able to get the notorious 22 mpg on the highway that I once got, because I can no longer find premium leaded gas for it. If anyone knows of good additives to put in "regluar" gas (those expensive little cans of octane booster that I buy in the stores don't help much) I'd appreciate your letting me know.



5. Also, for those of you of voyeuristic tendencies, I definitely plan to become even more sensually profligate this year. I admit that, at the ripe old age of 35 I am supposed to be slowing down, my testosterone level falling, and my bodily hair thinning. But I have not yet succumbed. The gods have been good to me, my hormones still drive me, and I--not want to rebel overly much against the laws of nature--am thus far acquiescing to the ~~dictates~~ invitation of my biological urges.

6. Although I above stated that I intend to do more reading in fiction, I also want to continue doing preparation for the possibility--still not very definite--that I may want to do my own book in men's liberation. I hope to get through 50 or more books in the area this year, so that when I'm ready to write, I can consider the research of that sort behind me.

The real issue, of course, is--when does the personal research stop? Well; I don't think it does. Hence, both the hesitation, and the need, to write such a book. There are areas which I do not think have been touched on sufficiently in the literature of the men's movement. The topic of friendship (despite a recent book devoted entirely to this issue) has scarcely been touched. I also want to cover such areas as men's attitudes

about pornography, rape, differences between early feminism--which seemed to work for women's rights, and contemporary feminism--which seems to be largely concerned with protecting women as a special interest group--regardless of anyone's rights.

But ... I must wait to see if I have the energy and interest to begin a book in that direction.



(Brooke Shields)

And ... for those of you who are concerned, yes, I may have some things to say about women's liberation too. As well as, if you will allow me, women's responsibilities.

A LAWYER had a 9 a.m. appointment to interview her prospective client. Thinking that an informal setting would be more comfortable than her office, she had the client meet her in one of the firm's conference rooms. He arrived first and, as she entered, he glanced up from his notes and asked, "Honey, will you get me a cup of coffee? Black, no sugar."

Without a word, the lawyer left the room and went downstairs to a coffee shop. She returned shortly with his order, and he thanked her.

"Don't mention it," the lawyer replied. "I charge a hundred dollars an hour. That cup of coffee just cost you twenty-five." —N. Elizabeth Roberts in *Savvy*



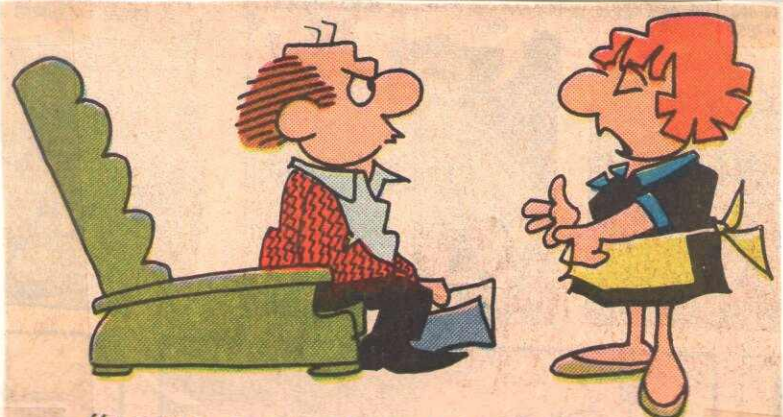
"I'd like people to see me as a real person; I never put on a front. I accept people as they are. I got that from living in so many different places. I can understand that that can be difficult for people who've lived in only one place with one kind of person."

sic!

ha, ha!

STUDENT PRANKS on my campus sometimes seemed reminiscent of experiences my mother recalled from her own college days—especially one night when some young men burst into the dorm shouting, "Panty raid!" The similarity ended there, however. Without even bothering to glance up from her textbook, my roommate calmly directed, "Top drawer—right under my karate clothes."

The raiders retreated without another word.



"LET'S LOOK AT THIS BOTH WAYS..... MINE AND MY MOTHER'S."

READING FOR 1983

For years, it has been customary between myself and certain select friends to, at the end of each year, compare notes about the books we have read--ones we would recommend, those that impressed us greatly, ones that we hated, etc. So ... even though my time with books this year was more limited than usual because I've been reading articles primarily, I did manage to read a total of 23 books. Not bad though, when you consider that the average American reads less than one book per year, and the average college graduate reads less than two books per year.

So ... I'll here list the best books I read:

1. Once Upon Eternity by Francis Baumli (His only 5-act play, as yet unproduced.)
2. The Hollow Mirror by Francis Baumli (A novel written some years ago, currently being refined for possible publication.)
3. Erections, Ejaculations, Exhibitions and General Tales of Ordinary Madness by Charles Bukowski. (A book of short stories, with a reality and daring so raw, that I predict he will be a classic, well-read even 400 years from now.)
4. Inside Out: Becoming My Own Man by Jed Diamond. (Unquestionably the most personable book written in the men's liberation movement. And it says more about jealousy than any book I've ever read.)
5. Real Men Don't Cook Quiche by Bruce Fierstein (This book, the second in the biographical series about Francis Baumli, following the first book, Real Men Don't Eat Quiche by Scott Redman, continues the amazing accuracy of the series. Amazing in that these two authors collected their evidence so discreetly that I did not even know they knew me until these two books came out.)
6. The New Male-Female Relationship by Herb Goldberg (The third in Goldberg's trilogy, following The Hazards of Being Male and The New Male. A truly wonderful book which is as much about women's liberation as it is about men's liberation. Probably Goldberg's best book, it is soon to come out in paperback, and is without doubt the best book in the men's liberation literature.)
7. Knots by R.D. Laing (A wonderful book of poetry, as vertigenous as it is beautiful, by my favorite living psychologist. A short book that is a joy, which you'll likely want to read over and over. If I'm ever crazy or daring enough to get married again, I think I'll insist that it be read in its entirety at the ceremony.)

Out of 23 books, that's only 7 that I think were great. This year, in fact, I managed to even read one book that I detested utterly all the way through. On the advice of a friend, who assured me that it would constitute a great spiritual odyssey, I continued to believe, right up to the end, that I was in the midst of a dark night of the soul that, to myself--of emaciated spiritual dimension, seemed camouflaged in gray. I truly thought that the blinding light of realization would be upon me before the end, but no, it didn't happen. The book, for those of you who would like to be forewarned: The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge by Rainer Maria Rilke.

I was so full of venom toward this author that, when I had finished, I added it to the list of books that I would definitely recommend to people that they not read. For those of you who are interested in said list, it follows:

1. The Confessions of St. Augustine
2. The Second Sex by Simone de Beauvoir
3. Nichomachean Ethics by Aristotle
4. The Critique of Teleological Judgement by Kant
5. Theory of Literature by Welleck and Warren
6. Death in Venice by Thomas Mann
7. Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour: An Introduction by J.D. Salinger
8. The Ambassadors by Henry James
9. If It Die by Andre Gide
10. The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge by Rainer Maria Rilke

And, as long as I'm doing lists such as this, someone suggested that I send out my list of favorite movies.

Now I confess that this is a medium that I am no expert in, and my opinions are quite unpopular among friends who are movie buffs. Nevertheless,

I will abide my friend's wishes. My ten favorite movies are:

1. The Last Movie (not to be confused with The Last Picture Show)
2. Scarecrow (there are two movies that bear this title; I am referring to the one starring Gene Hackman and Al Pacino which won a Cannes film festival award)
3. Face to Face
4. Midnight Cowboy
5. Heavy Traffic
6. Hara-Kiri
7. My Dinner with Andre
8. Satyricon
9. The Clowns
10. All That Jazz

(I don't know very much about movies, producers, etc. I do know that #s 8&9 are by Fellini; and # 3 is by Bergman.)

My friend who suggested this list, also asked me to write out the movies I've seen that, because they are so good, I would recommend almost as highly as those on my "10 Favorite" list. There were five others that come to mind:

1. Five Easy Pieces
2. A Clockwork Orange
3. L'Etranger
4. Ordinary People
5. Taxi Driver

And as long as we are on the subject of lists, I can give you another. This one came out of a bet with a friend, who challenged me to come up with a list of the 10 best prose fiction works I have ever read.

Prose, it was emphasized, not poetry. And fiction, not nonfiction. They could be novels, short stories, or novelettes. It was very, very difficult. I managed, however, to shorten my list to ten, although I confess that the slightest change in circumstances--e.g., whether or not I had just had a bowel movement, if I had just re-read one of the books that almost made the list, or if I were in a bad mood toward a short story I had just read--any of these very slight exigencies could have sufficed to make the list different than it is. But, as well as I can judge for the present, my "10 Favorite" works of prose fiction are:

1. Seven Who Were Hanged by Leonid Andreyev
2. The Plucked Chicken by Francis Baumli
3. Erections, Ejaculations, Exhibitions and General Tales of Ordinary Madness by Charles Bukowsky
4. The Stranger by Albert Camus
5. The Brothers Karamazov by Dostoyevsky
6. Sometimes a Great Notion by Ken Kesey
7. Tropic of Cancer by Henry Miller
8. The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupery
9. Adventures in the Skin Trade and Other Stories by Dylan Thomas
10. The Death of Ivan Ilych by Leo Tolstoy



There were other books which came very close. Other books, as well as a few short stories which are of such quality that they rival the quality of even great books. Just to make things complete, or, to indicate how my selection might vary were I in a

different literary mood, I'll here list the ones that came very close to being put on this list:

1. "The Atheist's Mass" by Balzac
2. "Three Versions of Judas" by Jorge Luis Borges
3. Pavilion of Women by Pearl Buck
4. "Notes from the Underground" by Dostoyevsky
5. "The Legend of Saint Julien the Hospitaller" by Gustave Flaubert
6. The Thief's Journal by Jean Genet
7. Lord of the Flies by William Golding
8. The Power and the Glory by Graham Greene
9. "The Bucket Rider" by Franz Kafka
10. Zorba the Greek by Nikos Kazantzakis
11. One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey
12. The Rosy Crucifixion Trilogy (Sexus, Plexus, Nexus) by Henry Miller
13. Zantippi's Revenge by Robert D. Nagle
14. Zen Flesh, Zen Bones ed. & compiled by Paul Reps
15. "Imelda" by Richard Selzer
16. Rituals of Surgery by Richard Selzer

I confess that there are other books which I have not read, and even believe that I should have, which might be on this list had I better discharged my literary duty. Books I suspect might be here, and which I have never read, include, War and Peace by Tolstoy, Finnegan's Wake by Joyce, One Hundred Years of Solitude by Marquez, and others.

There are other books which, even though they are not fiction per se, it was difficult to not put in because they have a quality so akin to fiction--e.g., Plato's Symposium (which, incidentally, I believe is the greatest piece of literature ever written), Anaïs Nin's Diaries, and such.



*****ARTICLES*****

Many of you periodically enquire with, "What are you writing these days?" I usually suggest that you look in certain magazines, or I zerox something I've recently published and send it along. So, in this "letter," I will include three short things that were written over the last few years. Each of them was a "letter to the editor," which, because it therefore did not receive much attention, may deserve a bit more here. Some of you, because of interests that vary from mine, will find certain or all of these not interesting. That's okay; by now you likely have read enough as it is.

SEXUAL NEURAL COMPONENTS AND DOPAMINE LEVELS

BY FRANCIS BAUMLI, PH.D.
(OCT. 16, 1980)

In "Women in Love," (Continuum, "Omni Magazine, Sept. 1980), Prescott's observations about men's psychomotor reflexive neural components in sex, and the direct relationship they supposedly have to dopamine levels in the brain, are interesting. But the implied conclusions are questionable.

There is no scientific evidence that men's sexuality is as irretrievably identified with that of the lower mammals as Prescott claims. Men's sexuality, if limited, is so only as it has been learned in terms of other goal oriented social confines: the male as worker, provider, and the unfeeling macho stud. But the men's liberation movement is encouraging men to explore new dimensions of their sexuality. As a result, more men are now able to enjoy sex that is not goal oriented, and they, like women, also report altered states of consciousness during sex: absorption into the

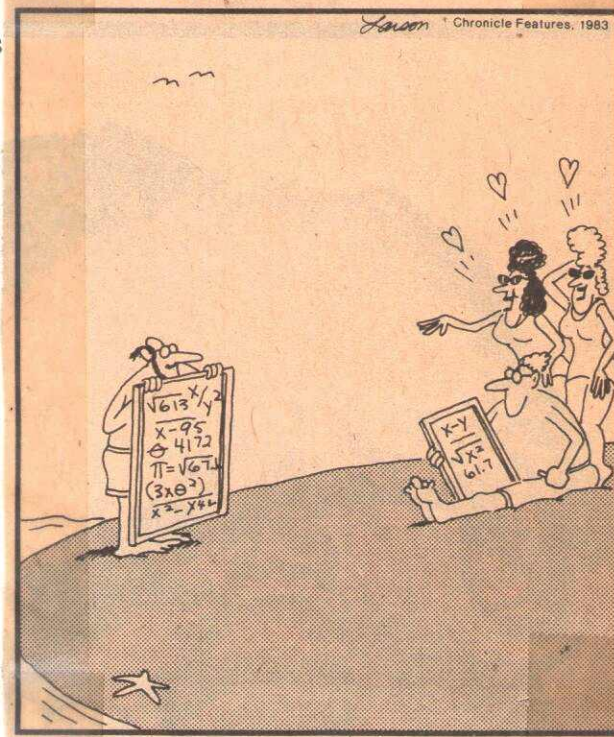
partner, feelings of floating, higher states of consciousness, or an ecstatic merging into a spiritualized state of being.

Perhaps, in decades past, men have indeed used primarily psychomotor cerebral centers during sex; but this is no reason why they cannot learn to draw upon the vestibular-cerebellar system and other areas of the brain that associate emotional and sexual states. Thus reorienting their sexual behavior may eventually (if it does not already) have the concomitant effect of equalizing dopamine levels for both sexes.

But let us all--including Prescott--beware of deciding too hastily which areas of the brain are associated with ultra-sexual dimensions. The popularized, and often erroneous, assumptions which grew out of the bicamerality fad should caution us about these latest speculations.

The scientiest must keep in mind that neural pathways develop not only congenitally, but also in conjunction with learned responses. Human "facts" metamorphose as people learn new behavior. Therefore, any avenue of scientific discovery that is directed toward humans, whether it be hypothesis or established theory, can never be a straight and narrow path. It must adjust itself not only to new data, but also to mutations of existing data.

THE FAR SIDE



A REPLY TO TIPLER: ON VONNEUMANN MACHINES AND EXTERRESTRIAL LIFE

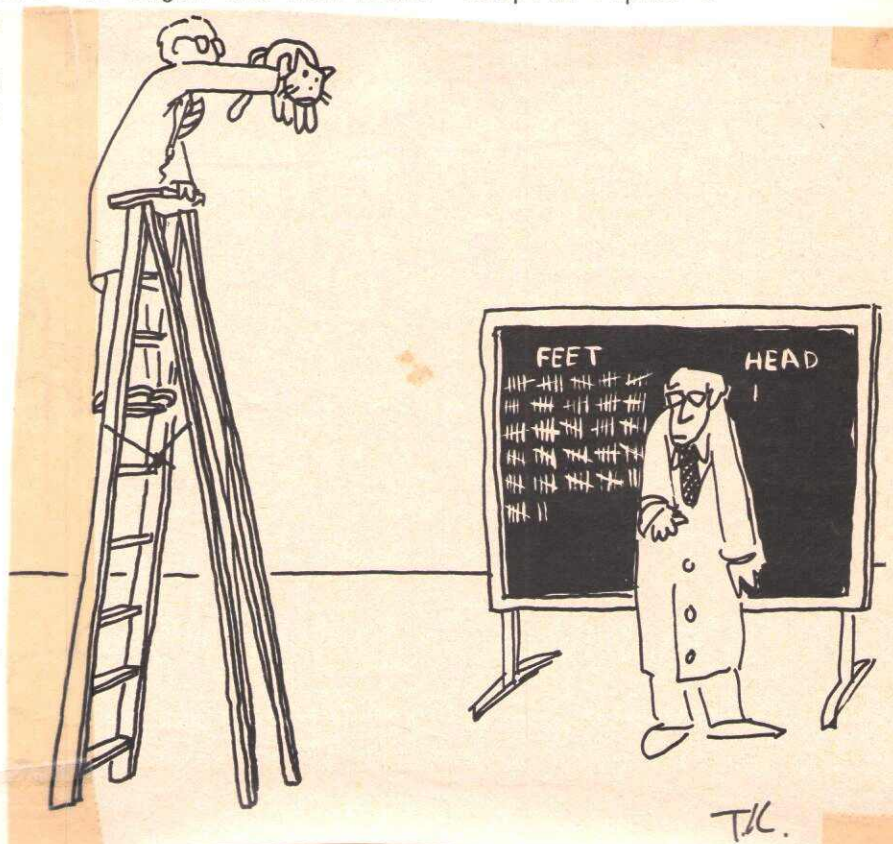
BY FRANCIS BAUMLI, PH.D.
(AND) FRED DITTRICH, A.B.

(PREPARED FOR): THE AMERICAN INST.
OF PHYSICS

(MAY 28, 1981)

Frank Tipler's article, "Extraterrestrial Intelligent Beings Do Not Exist," (*Physics Today*, April 1981), is no more conclusive with regard to the question of extraterrestrial life than are the "proofs" of Sagan and Morrison. Despite Tipler's footwork with equations, his contention that if there were other intelligent beings in the universe, then they would already have communicated with us, does not stand both for technical and for theoretical reasons.

Even if we accept the probability value assigned by Drake to the $f(c)$ variable, we have a problem with the von Neumann machines (hereafter referred to as vNms). If we design vNms with a finite stack, then we would have to presume that we could predict all the variables beforehand which they would encounter during exploration, self-maintenance, reproduction, and communication. However, if we could predict all of these variables beforehand, then we would already know what they are: i.e., absolute predictability would mean complete fore-knowledge, which would obviate the necessity for exploration. We, therefore, would have no reason to build a finite stack vNm in the first place, unless perhaps to speed up



communication about what we already know.

But we of course do not know all the unpredictable variables, which is the very reason we want to explore the universe. So that vNms could prepare for the infinite number of unpredictable variables they might encounter, we would have to design them with infinite stacks at least. We can not do this, however, because it is physically impossible to build an infinite stack vNm. The requirement for more memory elements than integers would pose storage problems--an integer for each atom and a new atom for each new integer, ad infinitum--thus taking up more volume than the universe itself.

We, therefore, cannot use either a finite or an infinite stack vNm to explore the universe as per Tipler's hypothesis. But these objections to the vNm problem are technical only, and do not exhaust the substance of Tipler's argument. Consider an alternative intelligent architecture: the human brain is wired to make use of parallel processing, content addressable memory, and the ability of self-reference in less than an infinite volume.

Therefore, a similar machine of such capabilities theoretically could someday be built although not using contemporary computer architecture.

This machine could have a computer intelligence similar to, or greater than, human intelligence; or, as a short cut, it could be under the direct control of onboard human beings. Certain problems, however, might arise with these self-conscious exploratory module automatons (hereafter referred to as scemas) once they are sent on their way. Here we arrive at problems with the substance of Tipler's argument.

First of all, it is the nature of life on earth to evolve, and it is the nature of self-conscious, terrestrial inhabitants to change their minds. Suppose, in another thousand years, we terrestrial inhabitants decide we really would rather not have little green men coming down to visit us: "We don't want green men living on the block! Property prices will drop! Our children will be corrupted!"

Moreover, these scemas may pose problems of their own. If they are powerful enough to not only do what they are told to do, but also handle the unpredictable, then they themselves are unpredictable, and may decide to disobey original orders. Perhaps they will, in the vast reaches of space, encounter existential despair and commit suicide. Or, just as likely, attain an inward depth of nirvanic self-consciousness and decide to meditate in solitude for eternity. Or, in the pursuit of pleasure, add to their reproductive hardware an elaborate libido and means of birth control which allows them to idle away the light-years in unreproductive, but nevertheless very conjugal, cosmic fornication.

A totally unforeseen moral dilemma may also materialize. The initial civilization which sends out the scemas must be willing to allow them to advance their own weaponry technology for legitimate self-defense reasons given that they may encounter enemies of unpredictable capabilities. Such scemas may take on a war mongering attitude. Jealousies might arise between them, and an inter-scema war begin; or, they may decide that they do not like either the mission or the people who programmed the mission and turn back toward their primogeniturs to destroy them. Given this possibility, the civilization sending out the scema must be willing to engage in a perpetual arms race with the potentially military minded scemas who will have an unknown level of science and technology at their disposal. Or ... able to foresee such catastrophic possibilities, people capable of building scemas may decide to never build them in the first place since prudence would dictate that they dare not send an intelligent, communicative being beyond the sphere of their own control.

By way of summary, we see that if finite functional capabilities would suffice for vNms, then we would never need to build them except to speed up communication, since finite programming would presume prior knowledge of what we want to know. But we cannot treat the vNm as an absolutely complete logical system; hence we would want to build it with infinite stack functioning, which however is a practical, i.e., physical, impossibility. So we look at the option of an alternative architecture--scema--which avoids the technical objection to the infinite stack vNm and proceeds with the attempt to test Tipler's hypothesis. These scemas, however, are amenable to further completion--or accrement; which, however, invites inconsistency. But, if scemas are inconsistent, we can not definitely rely on them. We thus encounter the simple tautology: you can not predict the unpredictable. Tipler's hypothesis is, therefore, stymied because, even by using scemas, the hypothesis does not contain a means of guaranteeing that it will test itself.

The question is left where it began. Tipler claims that if it is theoretically possible for intelligent life to explore the universe, such life would already have explored our planet and would have communicated with us. They have not yet introduced themselves; they, therefore, do not exist.

We, however, claim that, given the breadth of Tipler's theoretical possibility,

FRANK AND ERNEST

by Bob Thaves



it unwittingly allows the equal possibility that the universe would not yet be explored, and may never be fully explored, even if there is other intelligent life. Not so surprisingly, this antinomy, namely, that an attempt toward absolute completeness within the parameters of a mathematical system allows inconsistency, is but another instantiation of Godel's unyielding theorem, this time in meta-disguise.

"The Bible is a wonderful source of inspiration for those who do not understand it." by George Santayana, The Birth of Reason & Other Essays, p. 98

THE RIACE BRONZES AND PRAXITELES:
NOTES TOWARD SOME IDENTIFYING CRITERIA

BY FRANCIS BAUMLI, PH.D.
(SEPT. 19, 1983)

Re: "Warriors from a Watery Grave" by Joseph Alsop, National Geographic (June 1983).

Unlike most texts in art history, the National Geographic allowed science to prevail over prudery by printing Joseph Alsop's observation that the two warriors are likely by the same sculptor since the scrotal skin on each of them is carefully striated with a detailed texture not observed elsewhere in Western sculpture. I might add that such detail, although not quite as distinct, characterizes the scrotum of Praxiteles' Hermes and the Infant Dionysus. This feature is unique to these three pieces of sculpture, as are two other features: First, the anterior relief of the scrotum, i.e., the distance the scrotum is set out from the thighs rather than pressed against the body, is more pronounced than in any other sculpture of the time. Second, in all three statues the left testicle is lower, more posterior to the right testicle, more markedly separate from the other, and given much clearer form within the scrotum, than in any other sculpture during this period. These observations not only give weight to Alsop's theory that both statues are by the same sculptor, but also support theories that the two bronzes, like Hermes and the Infant Dionysus, were done by Praxiteles.

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Well people, I hope this has been somewhat enjoyable, and has served to help bridge a gap in my tardy correspondence this last year.

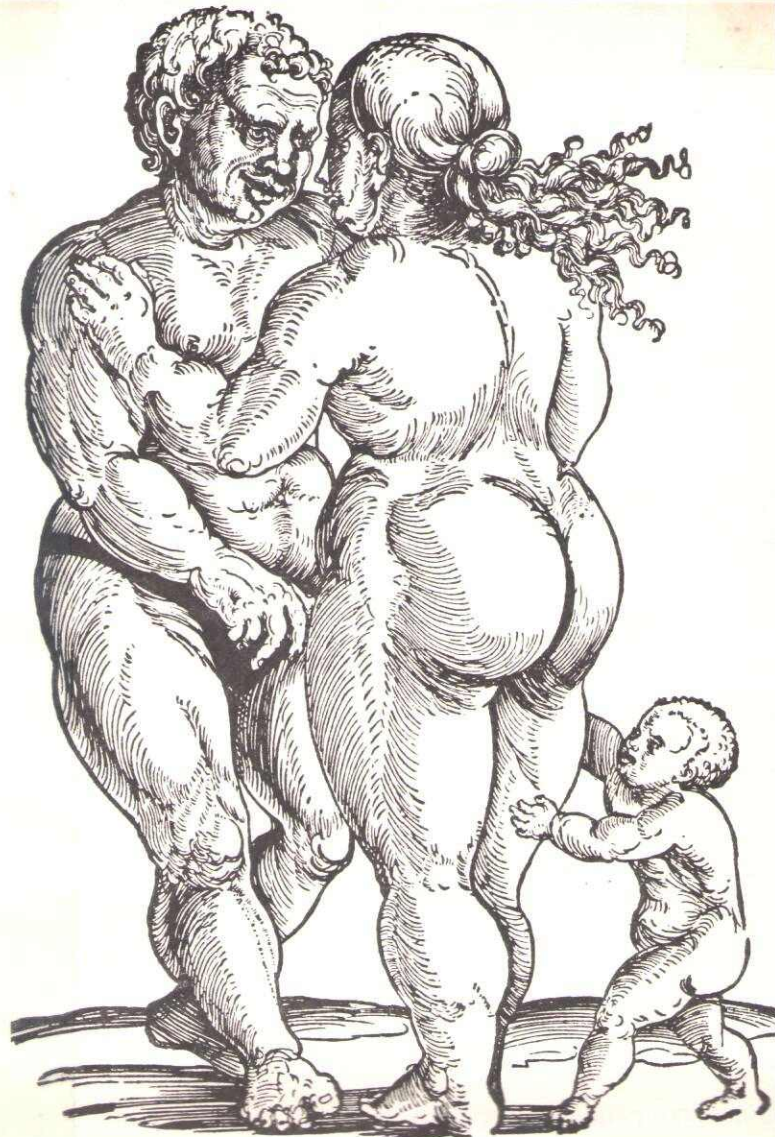
I will be continuing my political work with Divorced Dads Inc. and as the Missouri representative for the National Coalition of Free Men during 1984. Also, as I stated, I plan to be more sensually profligate, and at the same time (not so paradoxically) more secluded. As Henry Miller said in Big Sur, "Artists never thrive in colonies. Ants do." (p. 13).

My best to all!

Yours somewhat truly,



Francis Baumli



"Mom, MY WEDDING has to be perfect," said the bride-to-be. "We mustn't overlook the most insignificant detail."

"Don't worry, dear—he'll show up!" —Kenneth E. Hall in The American Legion Magazine