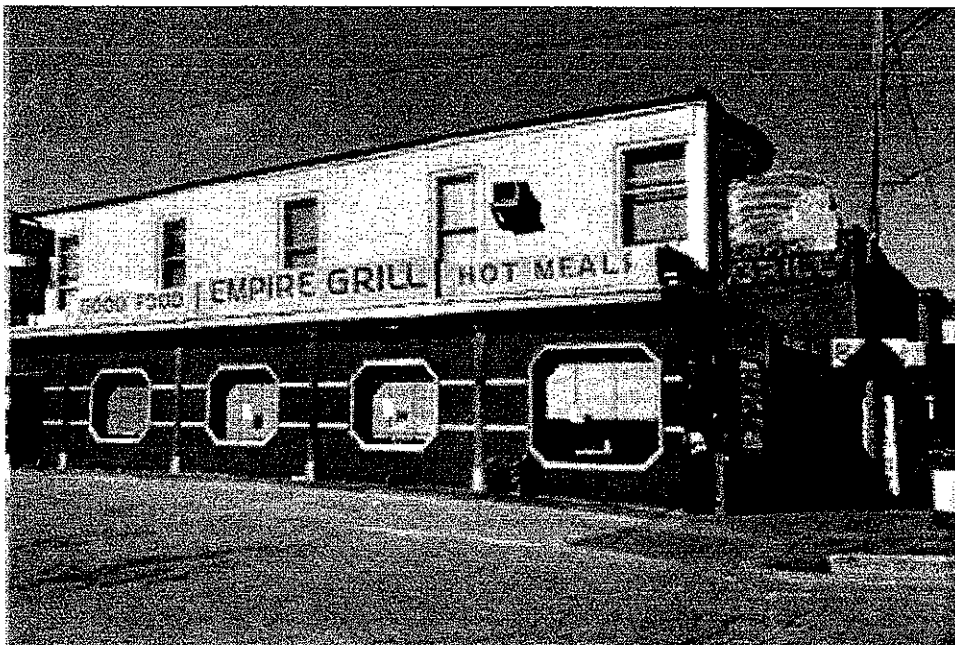


Philosophers on Holiday

Philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday.--LW

Number 23
Summer, 2004

Appearance and Reality: The Movie



Peg and Lisa write: On the last leg of our journey to Blue Hill this year, we found ourselves at mid-morning in need of a snack. Toast, we thought, would be just the ticket. It just so happened that we were near the town of Skowhegan, which seemed like the sort of place to find a suitable diner. With Peg driving, Lisa scanned the main street looking for a likely candidate. Lo and behold, we spotted what had to be the definitive diner on the right. We quickly pulled over into a parking space right in front of an adult bookstore; we figured business wouldn't be booming at 9:30 a.m.

It was the diner's sign that we first noticed—a neon sign of a Native American in full, white-man's-vision headdress. That sign bore the ear-

marks of being a carefully preserved relic from the 1950s. As we walked in, the Empire Diner seemed just fine, a little worn, certainly retro, but clean. Well preserved, as if someone had very carefully worked to keep everything intact for fifty years or more. Here were the requisite booths with formica tables along the walls, the long counter, and almost more knick knacks than could fit on even the sturdiest shelf. The windowsills were wood, and looked as if their edges had been rounded by years of arms resting upon them. There were various photographs on the wall, including one of a police officer standing by his cruiser—from a town called Empire Falls. We thought it was a little weird that the man had signed his name to the photograph (as if a police officer would be giving autographs) but decided perhaps it was a local custom or a joke of some sort. Or perhaps the town had experienced a natural disaster and had requested help from neighboring police departments, and this man, from Empire Falls, was one of the heroes who had come to help out.¹

We ordered our toast and peanut butter, and continued our visual inventory of the diner. Something, it seemed, was just a bit off about the place—what *was* it?

“Is Empire Falls a real place?” we asked each other. We had read Richard Russo's book, *Empire Falls*—but surely that was a fictional account of a fictional town. Wasn't it? And yet here we were, looking at a photograph of an Empire

See Appearance, p.4

From the Editors

The unnamed but dominant theme in this issue is the appearance/reality distinction. Several pieces toy with this philosophical distinction. We leave it to the intellectually engaged reader to identify the pieces; that's part of the fun of the distinction, now, isn't it?

We call readers' attention to several special offerings in the latest big, big issue. From the Heldke side of the aisle, Barb the Brief reflects upon thirty years in the mid-Hudson Valley, in her piece "A River Runs Through It." And the Hometown Tourist, Carol, livens things up with a jam session.

We welcome the wry unpredictable humor of Corrinne Bedecarre, a.k.a. CB to these pages; we've long cajoled her to take time away from her day job as a philosopher at Normandale Community College, and her night work as one of the Seven Dwarfs, and put cursor to screen for us. On the way to regularity, Gary Allen returns to these pages with an e-pistle that is not for culinarily fainthearted.

The insightfulness of our extensive movie reviews leaves this *philosophical* publication in the unlikely position of standing as a rival to the Leonard Maltin movie guide. Perhaps only his more regular publication schedule, and his slightly greater circulation secure his continued reputation.

Peg is particularly pleased with the new section she

oversees, a section devoted to philosophical news, announcements and gossip. Now, more than ever, we must call upon you, the traveling philosophical leisure reader, to contribute to this journal. Send us your announcements and calls for papers (real or apparent!) for upcoming conferences, journal issues, and anthologies. Send reports (photos optional, but highly desirable!) of conference doings. Our address, as always, is: Phil on Hol, Box 354, St. Peter, MN 56082. Or send us email at heldke@gac.edu, or poconnor@gac.edu.

Oh, and about that poconnor address. While her email address will remain the same this year, her physical address will move, for the year, to the University of Connecticut, where she will be ensconced as a fellow at the Humanities Institute, working on a manuscript on varieties of Wittgensteinian feminist metaethics. Congrats, PO'C!

Peg here. I had to push Lisa away from the keyboard so that I could write that Lisa was awarded the Edgar M. Carlson award for excellence in teaching this year at Gustavus! This was all the more exciting since she had absolutely no idea prior to the commencement ceremony when it was announced. Congratulations to Lisa!

She just pushed me out of the typing chair.

Philosophers on Holiday: A periodic periodical

Editors Peg O'Connor and Lisa Heldke

Contributing Editor, Movie Reviewer Barb Heldke

Web Virtuoso Jay Benjamin

E-pistler Gary Allen

Spam Filter Corrinne Bedecarre

Hometown Tourist Carol Heldke

Long-absent Columnist Abby Wilkerson

Subscriptions Send your check, payable to Philosophers on Holiday, for \$10 for four issues. [Who knows? That may be a four-year subscription!]

Submissions We always welcome your essays, editorials, artwork, advertisements, photos, puzzles, letters, rants.

Direct all correspondence to *Philosophers on Holiday*, P.O. Box 354, St. Peter, MN 56082

Find us on the web at <http://www.gustavus.edu/~poconnor>
(Email to poconnor@gac.edu or heldke@gac.edu)

We borrow our motto from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Wittgenstein suggests that philosophical problems emerge when we forget how words function in ordinary circumstances. When language "goes on holiday," we create our own thorny, knotty problems—and then we proceed to chew on them for a thousand years or so.

Our 'zine was born out of our recognition that when philosophers go on holiday, we also tend to thrum up thorny little problems that keep us worrying all the way across Montana. Philosophers, unleashed in the ordinary world, are *dangerous*—or, at the very least, highly amusing. Of course on a good day, we can also be rather insightful. (Paying way too much attention to the ordinary can produce real wisdom every once in awhile.) *Philosophers On Holiday* attempts to bring all things philosophical and holiday-related together in one place; the danger, the amusement, the bumbling, and, yes, the occasional pearl of wisdom.

Our readers write

Lisa's "Trail Posturing: A Primer," prompted this reply from **Linda Elvee** (who holds the distinction of being administrative assistant for the largest number of departments at Gustavus):

Another note on looking the part: One should not wear a red shirt when hiking trails when cows/and partners i.e. bulls may be grazing on the land - as in the Black Hills! And [partner] Lee, poor boy, did not want to offend me by telling me I should rethink my "fashion" for the day!



Web guy Jay Benjamin's concert report about David Bowie produced this startling revelation from **Joanna Crosby**, Morgan State philosopher and Baltimore denizen:

I was perusing (finally) my latest issue of *PoH* (yeah, yeah, my check is in the mail) and loved the picture of Bowie. You mentioned that he isn't exactly a philosopher and I thought you might want to know, or tell Jay, that his son did his PhD in philosophy at Vanderbilt. One might argue that, having a degree to VU, he might still not be a philosopher, but you didn't hear it from me.

Amazing! We're doing philosophy even when we don't KNOW we're doing philosophy!

And about that David Bowie photo.... Turns out that we gave Jay credit for the photo when in fact it was his younger brother Mark who took it. That would be Mark the Actual Photographer. Sorry about that, Mark! Thanks for letting us print that great shot!



And finally, Ellen Anthony of Blue Hill sends us the following query:

Storage sheds. They seem to be popping up all over. What does this say about our culture and why now?

Well, readers, what do you think? Has a new U-Stor-It or Wee Stor 4 U popped up in your neighborhood? Got any philosophical insights into this trend? Send your musings to us at **Letters, Philosophers on Holiday, Box 354, St. Peter, MN 56082.**

As always, we welcome your submissions! Check out our website for ideas (<http://www.gustavus.edu/~poconnor>) or just surprise us with your original philosophical, travelogical reflections.

TRAVEL NOTES

Lisa: Driving east this year, we managed to find a route that took us through Bennington, Vermont. After years of duly noting its various accomplishments (getting rid of tenure, having the highest tuition in the country, getting referred to in *Franny and Zooey*), I'm not sure what I expected Bennington, the college, to look like. But I don't think I expected the odd combination of summer camp, old stone manse, quaint New England and *tres, tres* Moderne architecture that actually characterizes the campus. On the other hand, I can sort of imagine it producing women of the sort Franny Glass described to her boyfriend Lane.

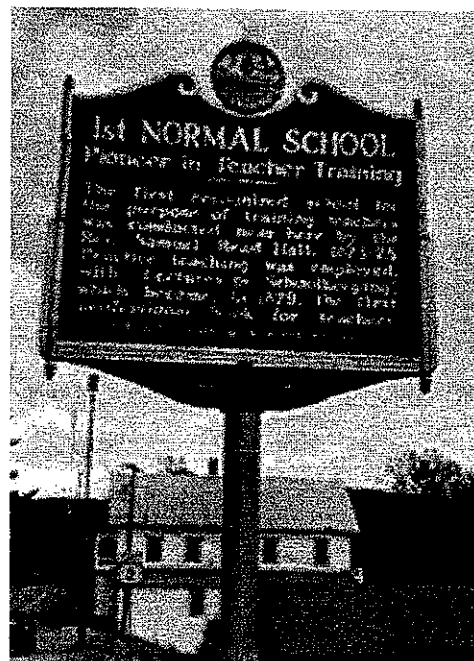


In Birmingham, Alabama for a philosophy conference, Lisa had the opportunity to visit some sites of historic significance in the Civil Rights movement.

I always find myself surprised by the intensity of being in a place of historical significance. In this era of virtual reality, big screen television and embedded war correspondents, what is it about one's own actual, physical presence actually being in a place that makes it so profound? Standing in the basement of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, the church in which the four little girls--Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, Cynthia Wesley, and Addie Mae Collins--were killed, looking at photos not unlike the other photos I've seen of these four girls, I find my breath gone, find myself crying.

FIRSTS

Travelling the blue highways, we've encountered our fair share of historical markers commemorating events that would otherwise have gone unremembered. This summer's trip to Maine took us through Concord, Vermont, where a roadside marker informed us that this town was the site of the first normal school in the country.



A River Runs Through It ¹

Barb the Brief writes: In March I quietly passed my 30th anniversary at my job. The fanfare was quiet, reserved and private. The small number of heartfelt and envious wishes I got (I am now eligible to retire) was appreciated. And then April arrived and I realized that I have now lived in the Hudson Valley of New York for a good bit more than half my life. More interesting (and inspiring a move into the center of the river?) is the fact that 15 years of that time were spent on the west side of the Hudson River² and 15 years on the east side.

I grew up in a town with a big lake in the center of it. So “the other side of the lake” or “go around the north end of the lake and then...” kinds of directions were not unfamiliar. We had the Red Cedar River too – meandering thru the county and teaching me about canoeing rules as we neglected to think about how to get back home after we canoed downstream. But these experiences did not prepare me for the impact that the Hudson River has had on my life for 30 years. In the most subtle ways. And it’s begun to teach me geography. Now, instead of imagining myself at my desk in my childhood bedroom remembering that “towards uptown is north, the back yard is east, Main St. is west, so that leaves ‘south’ behind me,” I use the river to map my rather inferior sense of N-S-E-W. And which bridge crossing is closest to the “other side of the river” destination dujour.

Recently, in a discussion of the globalization of the economy, someone commented that ‘geography no longer matters.’ I laughed secretly, believing that at long last I didn’t actually need to learn geography. It no longer mattered. In the next hour I was asked where “customer xyz” was and the answer “England” didn’t suffice. They wanted to know WHERE in England and that place’s relationship to something well known, like the city of London (where is that again?).

My peculiar uninterest in geography was instilled in me by my mother, who probably still says “I know two directions—up and down” when the topic comes up and though her rather considerable map reading ability guided us through many a summer vacation I always cling to the idea that I don’t have to worry about geography—“Mom doesn’t.”

When I first moved to the Hudson Valley in 1974, the idea of “crossing the river” seldom came up. It was a faraway place and I only did it with friends to go shopping in far away Fishkill. Or to go into the wilds of New York City to visit previously “distant” relatives who now were close at hand. The fact that the nearest bridge crossing the Hudson—the Kingston/Rhinecliff bridge—was only about 2 miles from my office didn’t seem to faze me in my sense of remoteness.

I have a vivid memory of calling a friend the day someone asked in a business meeting whether the CIA³ was on this side of the river or the other. Things like that are humorous now. Then they were embarrassing and proof that geography does matter.

On September 11, 2001, I was on the east side of the river and my partner Jay was on the west side. The separation seemed immense and the added knowledge that the hijacked planes had used the Hudson to guide them to New York City put a new fear into us. Since then, each time I cross the river, I think of that horrible day. I wonder when the State Police stationed at the ends much of the time will actually find someone doing mischief to the bridges.

But I love the river and its influence on my life, my sense of “place” and connectedness to history. Jay still laughs at me when I draw a map placing myself at the bottom of the page and drawing up the page as if I’m going to lay it out in front of me as I drive along, but I place my internal compass along the edge of the river and imagine the map and plot my way. I still get lost regularly, but have begun to say aloud that I never get too lost even in the bowels of Poughkeepsie because I can always sense where the river is and just edge over to it.

¹ As the resident “movie critic” for this publication, I have the editorial license to borrow freely from movies in all allusions, similes and character assassinations.

² The Hudson River is actually an estuary, flowing both north and south through the effect of ocean tides, and is salty all the way to our beloved Poughkeepsie.

³ As in Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, NY. For a view of this author’s first trip to THAT CIA, see <http://homepages.gac.edu/~pocconnor/features/cia.html>.



Appearance, continued

Falls policeman. The evidence pointed in one direction, but knowledge and intuition pulled us in another.

Lisa announced that she needed to powder her nose, leaving Peg to continue studying the décor. On the wall in the booth behind ours she spotted a plaque honoring the Empire Diner as the Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the year 1969. "Ahh, so it must be real," Peg thought. "Or at least this diner has been around for 35 years!" Her conclusion found more weight when she spied an 1899 map of Empire Falls area, stationed above the plastic pedestal cake holder (filled with donuts). You don't have a map of an imaginary town, do you? And this award—it was for a business in which we were currently sitting, eating entirely non-fictitious toast! Imaginary diners don't get Chamber of Commerce awards!

Well, it depends on what you mean by real. A movie set, for instance, is real, in one sense of the word. And about this time, Lisa returned from the bathroom, where she'd seen the newspaper article on the door, discussing a town celebration to be held in August. A celebration commemorating the one-year anniversary of the filming of the movie *Empire Falls*. Okay, so Empire Falls is not real. But what about the Empire Diner—the one we were sitting in, the one that had received the 1969 Chamber of Commerce award? Seems that, prior to Hollywood's arrival in Skowhegan, the Empire Diner sailed under the name Patrick's Pizza. There never was an Empire Diner until the movie set, but now the movie set is the real Empire Diner, serving real food.

What do you say when artificially constructed history is more convincing than the real stuff? When a diner constructed for a movie is more appealingly realistic than the ones that have really existed since 1950? Of what use is our much-vaunted distinction between appearance and reality?

¹ This was Lisa's hypothesis; she's never quite gotten over all the rescue workers who came to help out in St. Peter after the tornado. If she had a café, their signed pictures would be on its walls.

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In the next issue...

We of course have no idea whatsoever when we'll publish the next issue of *Philosophers on Holiday*. But when we do, here's some of what you can look forward to:

1) A report on a field trip taken by Your Fearless Editors, plus the Web Guy and BTB,* to Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the birthplace of W.E.B. DuBois. Tombstone rubbing techniques using a lipstick pencil will be discussed.

*Good heavens! We just realized we were all travelling in the same car! What if there'd been an accident? The future of philosophical travel writing would have been gravely imperilled!

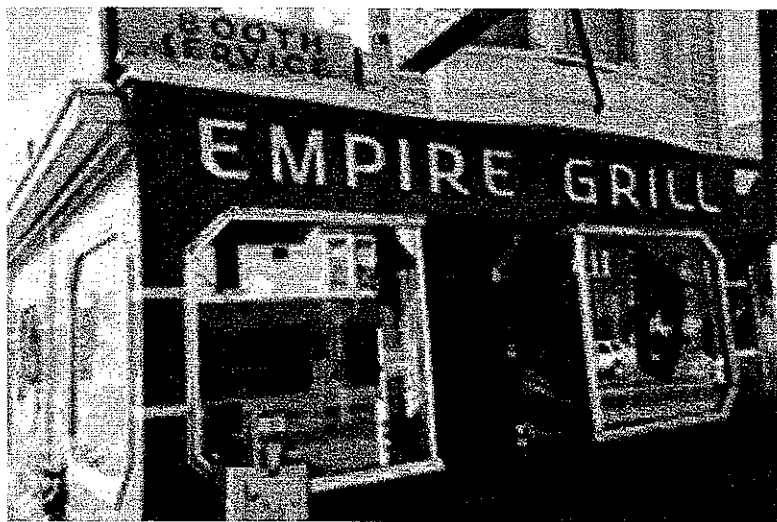


2) And just what *else* do you have in that purse, oh Brief One, besides two lipstick pencils, a Leatherman, and the title of a book Lisa has been looking for since 1989? Read the next issue to learn all about the fantastical contents of Barb's purse.

3) Maybe in this next issue, Lisa will finally write that piece about the new Helen Keller bio she's been threatening to write. Well there, now that she's put it in writing she will, won't she?

4) Hate Mapquest? We do too! Write and tell us why; we'll cite you in our "We Hate Mapquest" essay.

5) "Don't trash Oklahoma," and other nearly-clever state ad campaigns.



Loon Learnings

Hence the fact that they [animals] do better than we do, does not prove that they are endowed with mind, for in this case they would have more reason than any of us, and would surpass us in all things. It rather shows that they have no reason at all, and that it is nature which acts in them according to the disposition of their organs, just as a clock, which is only composed of wheels and weights is able to tell the hours and measure the time more correctly than we can do with all our wisdom..... For next to the error of those who deny God, which I think I have already sufficiently refuted, there is none which is more effectual in leading feeble spirits from the straight path of virtue, than to imagine that the soul of the brute is of the same nature as our own, and that in consequence, after this life we have nothing to fear or to hope for, any more than the flies and ants.

Rene Descartes, Discourse on Method

The child learns this language from the grown-ups by being trained to its use. I am using the word "trained" in a way strictly analogous to that in which we talk of an animal being trained to do certain things. It is done by means of example, reward, punishment, and suchlike. Part of this training is that we point to a building stone, direct the attention of the child towards it, and pronounce a word. I will call this procedure demonstrative teaching of words.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, The Blue Book

Peg writes: We are spending the month of July in Blue Hill, renting a house that sits right on the water's edge of Third Pond. The lake is beautiful, and has a reputation for loons. Our cottage is on Loon Lane, as a matter of fact. We are fortunate to have two adult loons and a chick living on the lake this summer. No matter what we are doing, when one of us spies the loons, our work stops and rapt observation begins. We've watched them from the living room, but our best observations have come when we are in the canoe.

Watching the chick and the adults, I have no question that the adults are training and initiating the chick into full loonhood, and that the chick is actively learning. I know that some very eminent philosophers have argued that animals are not even sentient beings who can feel pain. Others have argued that animals are sentient (at least they can feel pain) but that their development into adulthood is purely an instinctual matter. On this

instinctual view, the latent potential simply begins to unfold itself, with no prompting or help from anything external. Nothing like teaching and learning transpires between adult animal and offspring. The natural unfolding may be impressive on some level—even Descartes admits this—but its impressiveness shows that animals are capable of only mechanical movements.

Descartes' discomfort with the possibility that animals could think stems from his view that only things that think can have souls. Allowing for animals to think would entail that animals have souls. Having souls, they would thus be candidates for admission to heaven. And as Descartes intimates, we really do not want bugs in our eternal afterlife.

Had Descartes' stove-heated cabin been on a lake populated with loons, he may have been led to revise his opinions. Watching the loons, I find Descartes' argument to be a feat of hubris. It takes audacity to conclude, as Descartes does, that our superiority is evidenced by our being inferior in certain regards.

The training and education of young children and loon chicks do bear similarities, especially in the earliest stages. Ostensive training plays an important role in the education of young children: we point at an object while saying its name. And parents and teachers intentionally engage in training and initiating the young into membership into the community. Parents and educators have plans and methods. They read books, count objects, say words, and do all sorts of things that are so familiar that we fail to notice them. They move from simple picture books to books that challenge the child more. How about the loons?

The loons clearly have an educational curriculum and set of lesson plans that would satisfy the most stringent measures of the (grossly misnamed) Leave No Child Behind legislation.

They have a pedagogy. Over the nine days, we have watched various teachings and learnings. One day was diving day: the adults would, with ease and grace, dive under the water immediately next to the chick. The chick tried and tried to get all the way under the water, but could



Hometown Tourist:

Carol and Peg have a real "jam session"

The Hometown Tourist and her husband (a.k.a. Carol and Richard Heldke, a.k.a. Lisa's mom and dad) have lived in the same house for fifty-one years, and have always had a raspberry patch in the back yard. In fact, we can't imagine living here without a raspberry patch. Consequently, jam has become a trademark for us; nobody turns down a jar of homemade raspberry jam. One of our favorite customers is Peg, but she is not alone.

One fine spring day when Peg and Lisa were visiting the homestead, the idea of Peg learning how to make the jam herself came up in conversation. Good idea! These two "cookin' women" can create wonderful meals, so a simple batch of jam should be a snap. And furthermore, they have bags of berries in their very own freezer, ready to become jam, or a pie, or whatever.

So we start. Get out the largest kettle in the kitchen. Copper bottom, Revere Ware. Gather measuring cups, bowls, spoons, Sure-Gel and berries. The recipe says five cups mashed berries, seven cups of sugar. (Does that tell the diabetics in the audience to keep their hands off this one? Just a little won't hurt....) Mash the berries in a bowl and measure five cups, put them into the kettle and springle the Sure Gel over them, mix thoroughly and turn on the stove to a high heat. Add one teaspoon butter (no substitutes) to keep the foam down. When it comes to a dancing boil,* add the sugar all at once. This was the fun part; Peg, being several inches taller than her teacher, could easily look into the kettle and see how well the berries were dancing. When the waltz turned into a polka, we added the sugar and proceeded to watch once more for a vigorous boil. Then the recipe says "boil rapidly for one minute," well I like to take two minutes, just to be sure it will jell. By now it is squirting all over the stove, the cook, the teacher, and a little on the floor. But it sure is dancing.

The jars are standing on the counter, after being properly washed and scalded. So Peg proceeds to ladle, or pour the boiling contents into the small jars and put the covers on tightly. No problem; she's an athlete, so she can tighten a jar lid the way it should be tightened.**

Lined up on the counter, glowing red and smelling heavenly, the jars of jam are done and the results were perfect. End result—Peg gets to make her own jam from now on. Perfect Jam Session, and not one note of music the whole time.

*Editor's note: THIS kind of dancing we approve of.

**Not so fast! Let's not forget "Thumb as Tool." These days, Peg's thumb isn't much good for jar tightening. Perhaps she'll have to call upon her lovely assistant for this stage.

What Comes After Heirloom Bonnet?

And from another hometown, Barb the Brief checks in regarding her own educational opportunities:

So the new Rhinebeck Continuing Education flier arrived today. The inside pages (this is a 17 by 11 inch affair, with the inside sheet done the long way) has the following classes listed in a row:

- Heirloom Bonnet (baby—for christening gowns)
- Movement Ritual
- Renaissance Painting Techniques
- Gold leaf technique
- Voice-overs as a profession: getting paid to talk
- Philosophy for everyday life
- Beginning Tap Dance
- Swing and Latin Style Dancing
- Intermediate Level Ballroom Dancing

No, I'm NOT making any of this up—the order is not alphabetical, date, class number.... I HAVE NO CLUE what the order is from!

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Loon, continued

barely manage to get its head into the water on that day. A week later, I saw the chick dive. It was swimming along when it tipped its head and managed to get its tail under water. Was it smooth and effortless? No, but it was a successful dive. Check that requirement off the list.

Another day was location and distance day: the adults would dive and surface varying distances from the chick. If the chick moved in the wrong direction, one adult would make a sound, which appeared to my ears as a very simple and gentle Aha. As this training session progressed, the adults increased their distances from the chick. We found the "Aha!" sound quite useful too; we often needed more help than the chick in locating them. When the chick and adult met, the adult nudged the chick in what appeared to be a gesture of reward.

Adult loons have clear calls that reverberate in a resounding manner. There is no mistaking the calls of a loon. The chick, on the other hand, could easily be mistaken for a squeaky toy. It sounds like an inflatable kayak that has a tiny hole (a sound we know well). While the adult loon is calling, the little one squeaks along with the same cadence. These must be the voice lessons. We hope for a solo performance by the time we leave.

We have not seen any take off and landing practice yet. We have no doubt that our chick will acquit itself quite well in that skill set.

I certainly do not feel threatened by acknowledging the fact that animals train and educate their young, and that do it amazingly well. Unlike Descartes, it does not challenge my humanity. It does, and it should, challenge easy presumptions of human superiority.

Message in a SPAM CAN

We are tickled to death to welcome Corrinne Bedecarre, philosopher of Normandale College, to our stable of unstable writers. We've been trying for years to cajole her to submit, as it were. Here's the first of what we hope will be regular offerings from CB.

I am trying to communicate with the universe and I have been using many of the standard techniques with mixed success. I have concentrated on transcending competing and chaotic modes of contact. The clarity of my intentions resonates with the light of pure reason. My message has been distilled to a pure expression of my emotional and actual state. I have turned myself into a complete vessel of iterative luminosity. And yet the universe is resisting the Absolute Truth of my facticity while continuing to barrage me with its bad faith project.

I have worn the T shirt with my message. My bumper sports this theme. I have added it as a tag line to my emails. I have told known gossip mongers and compulsive talkers. It has been sung, written, prayed and chanted.....and yet the relentless attack continues. You are perhaps my last hope. So with what little strength left, I squelch my feelings of despair and pass this on to you:

I do not have a penis.

There it is. No, no, that is confusing. There it isn't, it isn't there. But see how it is impossible to state this? No, it is not missing, gone, lost, destroyed. It was never there but it was not NOT there—it never should have been there. I am not a presence with an absence so don't send me a viable substitute for 29.95. I just happen to be a creature born with an entirely different configuration.

And thus, you see, my configuration does not Need enlargement. No artificial engorgement, synthetic augmentation, mechanical stimulation, special motivation, or chemical activation. None. No, I am not in denial. I am an innie not an outie, genitally speaking. It is not broken, aged, failing, shrinking or freezing. I am intact, and without worries in that department. I don't miss it or want it if IT is a penis attached to me in a subjective, first person personal sort of manner.

But evidently I am erroneously misattributed with said penis or penis lack or penis envy. The entire universe must believe this at the subatomic level as well as the explicit verbal level. Because I am not just on one penis list, my god, I must be on every penis list. There is not a penis related enterprise in the universe which is not after me.

If there is any influence you have on the powers that be bigger, please transmit my message.

I don't suppose this would be a good time to mention that I do not want to view HOT HOT HOT....

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Going to Extremes, Or: True North

Lisa writes: There's this impression we have about some states, this sense that, not until you're in the middle of them (or, in some cases, not until you have reached some extreme—usually northerly—point in them) are you really in the state. Consider the following illustrations:

Maine, the Kittery area, just across the border from New Hampshire, "isn't Maine." Culturally (or, perhaps more to the point, retail-ly), Maine isn't like this further downeast on the coast or further north into the mountains and forests. Ergo, according to the received view, Kittery isn't Maine.

While it's true that, say, Baxter State Park contains no profusion of outlet stores, why does this more northerly geographic locale define the Maine standard? History, you say? Or ubiquity? The prevailing historical identity of Maine is not Kittery's outlets but Baxter State's lakes and mountains and forests? Or Camden's charming harbor?

Sometimes, yes, history can account for the claim that *this* place manifests the true state identity, while *that* place doesn't. Shopping malls, while ubiquitous in some side pockets of the state, are simply too recent, too localized—and too contested—to be the defining images of the state. Point taken. But history and prevalence alone don't tell the tale either. If they did, surely potatoes would be a bigger part of Maine's identity than, say, coastline. Laid end for end,

Aroostook County's rows of potato plants undoubtedly stretch far longer than the state's much-vaunted coast.

Bottom line: neither potatoes nor outlet malls are as a) picturesque and quaint; b) remote and rugged; or c) simple and unassuming as (our visions of) sweet little harbors or forbidding miles of forest wilderness. And to an outsider (or a romantic insider), *these* are the qualities that we use to define the *true* nature of a state.¹ (Or at least a northern state; I have a feeling that another different, but related, set of qualities defines states in other parts of the country. Care to tell me about them? You know the address.)

Consider another northerly example near to my heart: Minnesota. It's *all* northern pine forest and lakes to a non-Minnesotan;² indeed, the northeastern parts of the state define its identity for many residents as well. Never mind that far more of the state was covered in tallgrass prairie (a fact to which at least one public radio program pays homage). And never mind that, these days, vast expanses of the state are covered in soybeans and corn (a fact to which Cargil, the sponsor of the aforementioned radio program, pays homage). Our state bird (the loon), our state flower (the showy ladyslipper) and our state muffin (yes, we have a state muffin, and it's the blueberry, thank you very much) contrib-

See Extremes. next page.

Extremes, continued

ute to the sense that the state is just one giant Boundary Waters. We do not have a state grass; if we did, would it be Big or Little Bluestem? Probably neither; it would be wild rice—another northern lakes denizen. (Don't even ask about the fight over the image on our quarter!)

It's interesting that, in the "extremes" approach to state identity (the belief that the further downeast, the further north you go, the "truer" it is to what a state "really" is), there operates an implicit belief that what the state "really" is like, is what we believe the next state (or country) beyond it is like. So, for instance, Minnesota is "really" like Canada—or like what we take western Ontario to be like.

Such a belief helps take care of the paradox that arises from the Extreme view: the paradox that, if you go far enough "in" to a state from this side, you end up on your way "out" the other side. That's not a paradox, if it turns out that the place into which you're exiting has even more of the identity you're ascribing to the state you're in than does the state itself. There's no paradox at all to the claim that the Boundary Waters are what Minnesota is "really" like—no paradox, that is, if you accept the notion that "really" Minnesota is a U.S. version of far western Ontario. If that's the case, then of course it will be its most Minnesotan right at the border.

But I do wonder what the Canadian perspective on this is? Do Canadians think Minnesota, and those other states that border it, are "really" like Canada? And if so, do they have the same Canada in mind when they envision it? I'm guessing no, given the evidence found in this last illustration. One year, I left Maine on the most northerly route you could take in an ordinary vehicle, via some logging roads up near Moosehead Lake, I went thru some fairly rugged and beautiful country. The farther north I went, the wilder and more remote it got. "Just think what it will be like when I cross the border!" I remember thinking, "How wild will it be there?" Well, had I applied even ten minutes' rational thought to the matter, I would have realized that, given that I would be entering the province of Quebec, and given that 90% of the population of Canada lives within 100 miles of its border with the United States, the answer is "not very wild at all." I crossed over onto a four-lane highway with flowers planted in the median.

¹ Note that insiders are often entirely uncompelled and unromanced by outsiders' images of the real charms of their state. I heard a story once about the Pine Barrens of New Jersey that illustrates this point quite well. Apparently some journalist or anthropologist set out to write about that area of the state. As he drove from north to south, asking people in small towns where the Pine Barrens were, they kept sending him further south—until he reached a point at which, suddenly, they started sending him north. Sometimes, of course, the people who live in the definitive place don't want to own up to it.

² Barb the Brief was once heard to insist that Minnesota didn't have a southern part—thus St. Peter *couldn't* be in it.

Relative Time

BtB writes: When two sisters spend time together with mad dogs and Englishmen and talking about work projects in far away China, philosophical challenges can emerge.

Lisa and I recently spent three spectacular weeks sharing a common living space (our home in Red Hook) and interleaving various projects in our lives.¹ One involved an interesting debate about how far it was—time-wise—to China. China is the scene of my most recent conference calls with teams setting up supercomputers. I said "I think it's more than 12 hours." Lisa insisted that that was geographically impossible. After a lot of to and fro I produced a meeting notice identifying at least one case where "I was right" (a thirteen hour difference for some phone conference I had to attend). This concrete example (isn't it great how concrete can cement a debate!?) allowed us to get to the nub of the confusion. Lisa was referring to relative time; me to clock time. So, conveniently, we were both right.

The importance of knowing which is which was evidenced last night at one a.m. when brother-in-law Mark received a call from his son who has just gone on a semester abroad in New Zealand. Lisa remarked "it may be sixteen hours later on the clock, but his body thinks it's 8 hours earlier." So since at 1 am in western New York, it is 5 pm in New Zealand (a rather civilized time to be calling your parents if you use Lisa time and think that it must be 9 am instead of 1 am if you allow for thinking about it backwards), Daniel was being perfectly considerate.

You may recall that, in the Winter 2003-04 issue, Lisa attempted to suggest that *Phil on Hol* was a quarterly 'zine—if you use the year on Jupiter as your measure. I submit that something similar is afoot here.

¹ The outlaws—Peg and Jay—were also present but are incidental to this "relative drama."

Are you reading someone else's
issue of *Phil on Hol*?

Buy your own, cheapskate!

Buy one for a friend too,
and save money.

See the order form on the back cover.

What Year are You In?

An update on the calendar of the years project (a.k.a. the Jesus Year Project, a.k.a. the Mr. Salteena Project), dedicated to identifying a special person (real or imaginary) whose most notable achievements are associated with each age in a human lifespan. When we last left our heroine, Lisa, she was out on a limb, waiting to find the character who would define for her her 43rd year. As it draws to a close, she would belatedly like to announce that it is her Field Marshall Tagart year. Tagart is 5'6" tall, and commander of Ulmerad's foot soldiers. His favorite weapon is the broadsword. He is also a Lego character; in actuality, he stands about three inches tall. Lisa is not altogether sorry to see the back of Field Marshall Tagart and turn 44.

Forty-four has some more interesting possibilities. For instance, the average age of a farmer doing Community Supported Agriculture is...ta da...44! (Note that this is considerably younger than the average age of a conventional farmer in this country; consider that sobering thought.) Here's another sobering fact: 44 was the age at which John Dewey *left* the University of Chicago and went to Columbia. By then he'd already founded the famous Lab School at the University, and written 80 or 90 books. Guess Lisa will be busy.

Peg will soon enter her Sir Brockram year (39, since you asked). Her "yearsake" is Commander of the Knights of the Storm Crow. His choice weapon is Sword of the Water.

Barb the Brief and Abby "World" Wilkerson added a few other names and ages to the list (noting, as they did, that dying was the "most notable achievement" being identified here in most cases):

- 31 Bob Marley died
- 40 Amelia Earhart died
- 43 Anne Hutchinson landed in Boston from England
- 47 Jack Kerouac died

And this, from Angela Janda (who's roughly half an Amelia Earhart):

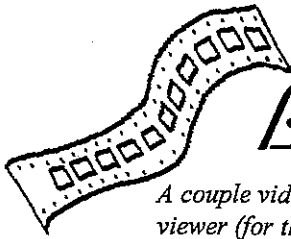
Part One: Last night my friend Aaron expressed some apprehension about his upcoming 29th birthday, about being so late in the twenties, knocking on 30's door, and so on. "And," he said, "29's supposed to be a year of big decisions, of major life changes. It's the year the Buddha reached enlightenment, after all." Your Buddha year! I thought. So there it is, 29: The Buddha Year. A bit daunting, that. I'm glad mine's a ways off.

Part Two: no actually I'm mistaken. He didn't attain enlightenment until the age of 35. But at 29, he left his left his kingdom and began his life as a wandering ascetic. So maybe there's something about the years between 29 and 35... In any case, the path you choose when you're 29 really could lead somewhere.



Inapt Names Department

Somehow, we just don't think we'd do it.



Barb's Briefs

A couple video possibilities from our Brief Reviewer (for those of you who are fully caffeinated, or at least well rested).

"Lost in Translation"

Director Sofia Coppola emerges as an interesting mix of Woody Allen and Robert Altman in a movie that is beautifully assembled, has interesting actors (BtB loves Bill Murray) and is worth seeing. However, any movie that says "I wish I could get some sleep" three or four times inspires me to take a small nap in the middle so you'll have to let me know how that part went.

"Something's Gotta Give"

"Just a little ditty, about Jack and Diane" should be playing in the background in this movie. By now we all get that this is Jack Nicholson—not Jack acting, but Jack Being Jack. Enough already. Diane should have said "la di da" a time or two to keep me awake. I didn't see the ending (fell asleep) but I'm told that parallels to the last episode of "Sex and the City" can be drawn without benefit of a straight edge. Frances McDormand (reprising her "Laurel Canyon" persona) was interesting but irrelevant. Yawn.



Barb shares her column with a new reviewer even briefer than The Brief: Corrinne Bedecarre, of Lauderdale, MN and Normandale College. CB reviews this winter's Big Controversy Flick.

"The Passion of Christ"

I saw the Jesus movie. He died.

STILL NOT DANCING

Faithful readers of this unfaithfully published "quarterly" will recall a piece Lisa penned some years ago, explaining her Theory of Not Dancing—the line of theoretical defenses she has built up as protection against the pressures to yump and yort when music is being played in a crowd of people. Recently, she encountered a new theoretical approach to Not Dancing, an approach that she cannot actually condone, but that certainly wins big Chutzpah Points for the boldness—nay, the reckless near-foolhardiness—of its approach. Here is a theoretical approach to Not Dancing that, for all the world, appears to require its holder *to dance*. Call it the "I'm Not Dancing, This is a Competitive Game" Theory of not dancing, and understand, at the outset, that it's the most perverse, paradoxical approach to Not Dancing one is likely to encounter.

To see this theory in action, so to speak, make your way to the nearest large movie multiplex or mall, and locate the video arcade. (Lisa unwittingly chose the arcade at Camp Snoopy in the Mall of America; all she had intended to do was find a bathroom. She hadn't known she was setting off on a research junket. Such is the life of the philosopher of travel-and-leisure; a routine trip to answer the call of nature must be interrupted in order to answer the higher calling of theory.) Once there, look for the biggest machine in the place, a machine that seems to include a kind of small dance floor—though one mustn't call it that, of course.

You will notice, on inspection that the machine actually consists of two separate "dance floors," each of which has several special foot-shaped pads built into it. In front of these special floors stands a kind of console from which one reads a sort of script or (better) list of commands. The commands, which have been specially mastered to coordinate with a particular song, scroll down as the song plays, and instruct the player or players how to tap their feet on the special pads. The more advanced the player, the more elaborate the series of instructions, and the more rapidly they must move their feet—both feet—back and forth between and among these various special touch pads.

You can see why the uninitiated bystander might think they were viewing dancing: Music is playing. The person's feet are tapping rhythmically (alas, there is no other word for it) on the touch pads. A further effect of all this foot movement is that the person's legs, torso, and yes, even arms and head, move in equally rhythmic fashion, as the person struggles to keep pace with the instructions scrolling by.

I was initially taken in myself. But then I reassessed the situation, taking note of the identities of the apparent "dancers." "Think about it, Lisa," I asked myself, "would 13- or 14-year-old white adolescent boys of rather unprepossessing physical appearance *really* be *dancing* in a giant shopping mall, on a Saturday afternoon, in broad daylight, in front of anyone who happened to be walking by on their way to the roller coaster—an 'anybody' that might include, say, their mother's best friend from work, or the cute girl who babysits for the little kids next door? Or their algebra teacher, entertaining out of town guests at the famous mall? Would they *be caught dead* dancing? Of course not! There must be some other explanation."

And that was when I finally copped to the obvious: this was a *game*. These two boys were keeping *score*. They were *competing* against each other. They weren't dancing.

Pantheon Gastronomique

Eggs at the end of the alphabet

New Prague Minnesota is approximately thirty miles from St. Peter, and is the home of the Omega Family Restaurant.*Our first visit to the café came at the end of a multi-day car trip; we were pretending we were still far from home, so it was a delight to come upon this unfamiliar, promising-looking little spot. It was that betwixt and between time—after breakfast but before lunch on a weekday. The odd hour led Peg to choose an egg salad sandwich—always a safe, if indifferent choice in a family café. She imagined the typical version, in which the eggs are bullied by a pushy and suffocating mayonnaise. To her delight, the Omega egg salad was made with farm fresh eggs, with the tell-tale full yellow yolk. The cook, blessed with a light hand, had chopped but not mashed the eggs. The mayonnaise had such a subtle presence that it was nearly elusive. The sandwich was sublime, mountainous yet delicate.

Lisa too opted for eggs but in the form of an omelet. To be more precise, she ordered a cheese and mushroom omelet. In many restaurants, this means a slice of yellow cheese accompanied by canned mushrooms (which have the appearance of mushrooms but none of the reality). At the Omega, she could choose from among five or six different cheeses, *one of which, astoundingly, was Asiago!* (And none of which was “sliced American, by the by—even more astounding.) The mushrooms were fresh, the eggs cooked to a delicate fluffiness, and the overall effect stupendous.

Naturally, our second foray to the Omega was a bit disappointing. Passing though early one Saturday morning at a more traditional breakfast time, we found ourselves ordering different kinds of pancakes. Lisa chose potato pancakes, reasoning “if they serve omelettes made with Asiago cheese, they must make a heck of a potato pancake, right?” Wrong. They came from a box. Peg ordered the more traditional buttermilk cakes, which were perfectly competent but not wowing.

We are pleased to report that the homefries were quite good. And the men at the table behind us were going to have a great hunting trip in Montana—they’d worked out every single detail of the trip before they finished their coffee.

*We have reason to believe the name of this place has changed. It’s on the corner. You’ll find it.

Maybe Plato was on to something....

Cookery simulates the disguise of medicine, and pretends to know what food is the best for the body; and if the physician and the cook had to enter into a competition in which children were the judges, or men who had no more sense than children, as to which of them best understands the goodness or badness of food, the physician would be starved to death. Plato, Gorgias

Lisa: There’s a well-known section in the Gorgias in which Plato unfavorably compares the pastry chef to the physician, observing that one has a mere “knack,” while the other possesses true knowledge. One gives you the mere appearance of health, while the other actually produces it. I’ve always dismissed Plato’s view, but you know, there just be something to this appearance/reality thing.

Recently, I was asked to bake a birthday cake for a friend, a particular layer cake of which the birthday boy was particularly fond. I baked the layers and they came out of the pans looking like, well, like something you’d *never* serve to a guest: crusty around the edges, a bit of a gouge in one layer, a little uneven overall.

Whack, hack, saw. Brush off crumbs. Liberally apply rich buttercream frosting. Walla! as they say in Washington State. A really decent looking layer cake! And the report is that it tasted good too.

Plato’s right, isn’t he? There’s something fishy about this so-called art. Something not quite right about being able to take two really homely pieces of cake and make them into a thing of beauty (and a joyous artery hardener forever)

MAKING (MORE) WHOOPEE

In our last issue (Winter 2003-04), we reported to you the results of our scientific study of whoopee pies in Maine. More research has come in.

BTB reports: I had to wrack my brain to remember where I had the whoopee pie—it was Massachusetts (Williamstown)—and my disappointment that it was NOT fabulous chocolate and luxurious frosting.... It’s all about the “whoopee” allusion I think.

LH and PO’C note: The pies were also spotted (okay, okay, by us. And yes, we had one) as far west as Gorham, New Hampshire, which isn’t really all that far west now that you mention it.

CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS: Did you know that, on those blue highway signs that alert you to the services available at a given exit, it is possible for Walmart and Target to advertise themselves as offering *food*???

e-pistle

Hudson Valley's own Gary Allen checks in with a story you may want to read well after lunch....

There is a lesson to be learned from our traveling adventures in gastronomy—that bliss can often be achieved only by willingly courting bodily harm (as in “deciding to risk life and intestinal well-being”).

Once, some sixteen years ago, Karen and I were visiting San Francisco. For some time, we'd been hearing of the culinary wonders to be found at a place that didn't seem to have a real name. The piece de resistance, as far as I can remember, also lacked a formal name. Both the menu item and the place were simply known to all their adoring fans as the “Fat Lady Burrito.” (In recent years, I've heard some talk about “El Famoso,” which may—or may not—be the same place/dish.)

We decided that it would be a sin to miss such a treat—so, on our last day in SF, Karen and I walked over to the little shop with its steamed plate glass windows. I mean LITTLE: the space for the customers was about the same width as the door, and was long enough to fit maybe eight Mexicans or five Dr. Sanscravats (this was, as I've said, sixteen years ago—when I was merely large—today, it would only fit four of me). In front of this standing area, was a glass barrier, and behind that was about three feet of counter space. Behind that was an aisle, one Fat Lady in width, then another counter with coolers and jars and bins and such.

The preceding paragraph was larger than the Fat Lady's place.

We ordered, then watched as she assembled our lunch. She started out by spreading two warm flour tortillas, side by side, on the counter. These were huge, maybe two feet in diameter. I've heard, since then, that these are known as “armpit tortillas” because they reach from the fingertips of an outstretched arm all the way to—well, you get the idea. If this sort of culinary detail has not put you off your feed, read on. She then proceeded to lay out a bed of fillings on each of the tortillas, starting with something that looked like taco meat. On top of that she spread a layer of beans. After each layer, she would turn and reach into some previously un-noticed cubbyhole for another ingredient. She repeated this process about a dozen times, sometimes fetching cheeses, sometimes peppers, sometimes vegetables. It took a long time, partly because she fit so snugly in the aisle that considerable friction was generated by each ingredient search.

I had watched, in awe, for nearly fifteen minutes—but Karen's attention had already wandered away. (I think she feels that if she never finds out what actually goes into cooking a meal, she will never be asked to do it herself. So far, she's been right.) Anyway, by this time, it began to look

like the Fat Lady would have to apply for a building permit before she could add anything else to the massive piles before her. Visions of men who build boats in their basements—and cannot get them out—passed through my mind.

She looked at them critically, as if wondering if she had omitted anything. As she did so, her eyes seemed to lose their focus—or rather, they looked as though they were trying to examine their own retinas. As she slowly twisted her body ninety degrees to the right, I imagined her tiny feet planted firmly on the floor behind the counter, her ankles subjected to incredible torque as her upper body rotated. She raised her hands, forming a bowl that covered her face, and sneezed. She untwisted her body, wiping her hands on her apron as she turned, her eyes refocussed on the burritos before her.

Karen didn't notice any of this.

The Fat Lady tapped a bit of the filling into place, making an adjustment too fine for my untutored eyes to detect. Her freshly wiped hands then folded the edge of the tortilla nearest her over one of the piles of assorted ingredients. Deftly tucking in the sides, patting and tightening as she rolled, formed a perfectly packed cylinder. She repeated the process for the second burrito.

She packed them up, we paid for them, and we carried them out of the tiny storefront.

Each burrito was a little bit larger than a submarine sandwich, but much heavier. When I bit into it, delicious orange-reddish fat ran down both cheeks. I ate the whole thing—enough food for a family of four—and probably finished Karen's (as is my wont). The Fat Lady Burrito was everything we'd been told it would be—and a little bit more.

Not wanting to spoil the moment, I did not tell Karen about the sneeze until years later, when the statute of limitations had run out.

Dr. Sanscravat

(“To me, truth is not some vague, foggy notion. Truth is real. And, at the same time, unreal. Fiction and fact and everything in between, plus some things I can't remember, all rolled into one big ‘thing.’ This is truth, to me.” Jack Handey)

From our much-beloved, long-silent, new-home-owning columnist Abby “World” Wilkerson, comes this gemlet (or was that a gimlet?):

I spotted a sign in the airport that said:

“Alcoholic beverages *must* be consumed here.”



Are These Tomatoes Local?

A tongue-in-cheek rumination

Lisa, Midsummer, 2003: This spring, I acquired some tomato plants—about five or six, I guess. Three or four of them came from Tom, a colleague, who'd grown them in the greenhouse at school. Two of *those*, I believe, came from seeds he'd saved from the previous summer's crop in the St. Peter Community Garden. The third probably came from seed he'd gotten through the Seed Savers Exchange, an organization headquartered down the road from us in Iowa. The other two or three plants that weren't from Tom came from a greenhouse some twenty miles up the highway (or down the Minnesota River, if you want to think in watershed terms), a place that specializes in heirloom varieties. I don't know where the seeds for those plants came from. I do want to say, however, that the plants themselves grew up in a different climatic band than the one I live in. The stretch of highway on which that greenhouse is located is *notorious* for freak snowstorms and strong winds. Any seed that sprouted there—even inside a greenhouse—had to be made of stern stuff.

Where did those tomatoes come from before that—before the current generation landed itself in Minnesota? Where are they from Originally? Mostly, I don't know—although Tom did tell me that some of the varieties he grew came from Siberia. That's significant, I think; one of my other colleagues always likes to point out that our climate is just the same as the climate of Siberia (cold winters, hot summers), so those tomatoes should have felt right at home. Had they stayed there.

I brought the plants home and put them into buckets I scavenged from the school cafeteria. I filled the buckets with some fancy potting soil from a bag. (I know, I know; heaven only can tell where *it* came from, and what went into the making of it. Probably some peat bog in northern Canada went dry in the process.)

Then I put the whole lot of them in the car. Three buckets, one or two tomatoes per bucket. I drove as far as northern Wisconsin, before giving one of the buckets to my parents to adopt. They report, three weeks later, that their plants are doing well. The Wisconsin air agrees with them, apparently. That and my parents' careful ministrations (and infusions of Miracle Gro, I'm betting.)

The other two buckets came with me here to Maine. And what a long, strange trip it's been. Turns out it's a lot of work hauling a plant across the country. The biggest challenge is to keep the leaves from burning up, due to the intensity of the sun pounding through the windows of the car. We made roadmaps into shades by cranking them up into the window frames. This was a great solution, but because the road kept turning and the sun kept moving across the sky, it was a solution that required frequent re-jiggling to get it right. (Peg, I must admit, was the soul of patience, honoring nearly every one of my requests to stop

and tend the "babies.").

Because we traveled through Canada on our way here, the plants had to pass through customs. Turns out the Canadians care about things like plants coming into their country. We solemnly swore that we were just passing through, that we had no intention of leaving either plant or dirt on the fair soil of Our Neighbor to the North. (I guess I should have mentioned to them that the dirt was probably Canadian in the first place.)

The U.Sians, on the other hand, didn't care a fig about our tomatoes—didn't ask a single question about them. (I guess infectious plant diseases have sort of fallen off their radar screen these days. I'm not so sure that's a good thing, given the state of industrial agriculture, but never mind....)

Eighteen hundred miles later, the plants had arrived at their new home—their new locale, if you will—the sunny (well, sunnier) side of the big old Colonial house we are living in for the summer. They looked pretty good after their car ride—even though I'd slammed one of them in the car door at one point. (Just limbed it a little bit—just a flesh wound, as Monty Python might say.)

Since our arrival, I've been tending the plants faithfully, picking off the suckers, putting on my morning's tea leaves for mulch, and talking sweetly to them. Oh, and punching holes in the bottoms of the buckets, in order to drain off some of the gallons of water that they collect each day, due to the torrential rains we've been experiencing. It's not really working. The plants are getting yellow and droopy looking, and the few green tomatoes on them look like they are threatening to fall off.

Maybe I should have looked for a variety of tomato that grows well in a subarctic rainforest. (*Are there subarctic rainforests?*)

Maybe I should put these plants back in the car. And take them back to Minnesota, where they belong (sort of).

Summer, 2004: Irony: As it turns out, the whole question of whether or not my tomatoes were local was purely, utterly academic. Theoretical at the most abstract, metaphysical level. Because I never ate a single one of those tomatoes.

When we hosted a gathering for friends in mid-August, I was able to serve *someone's* local tomatoes in a salad. But not mine. And even the ones I served were hothouse grown. Maine, shall we say, is not tomato growing country. (At least not *outside*. Apparently the gardening Wunderkinder Elliott Coleman and Barbara Damrosch can grow all sorts of things in *their* plastic-encased gardens in the middle of the winter. Probably even tomatoes.)

When we left Maine, near the end of the month, we bequeathed our plants to our friend Ellen. At that point, not a single tomato had ripened. We never heard whether she was able to coax any of them to ripen before the first frost.

I note, with regret, that: I did not repeat the experiment this summer.

Philosophy News and Announcements and Gossip

New Book!

The editors of *Philosophers on Holiday* are proud to announce the publication of *Hunger and Thirst* by **Daniela Kuper**, friend, *Phil on Hol* reader (and, we hope, future contributor!). Here's what the publisher, St. Martin's Press, has to say about the book:

Hunger and Thirst chronicles the rise and fall of the Trouts as they live out the longing, betrayal, and precariousness of family life in the Chicago Jewish culture of the fifties. Rich with period detail, the novel is a fierce exploration of a family that loves deeply, even as they are compelled to destroy.

A funny, sad, relentlessly clear-eyed story that marks the debut of a most gifted writer.

Look for *Hunger and Thirst* in your local bookstore.

Calls for Papers

(Real! Not Apparent or Virtual or Satirical)

The spring meeting of the American Philosophical Association will be held in Chicago, April 27-30. The Radical Philosophy Association will host a session at the conference, and Peg and Lisa are gathering submissions for that session. Send us papers for consideration (20 minute reading time) by October 1. Email preferred: send to heldke@gac.edu and poconnor@gac.edu.

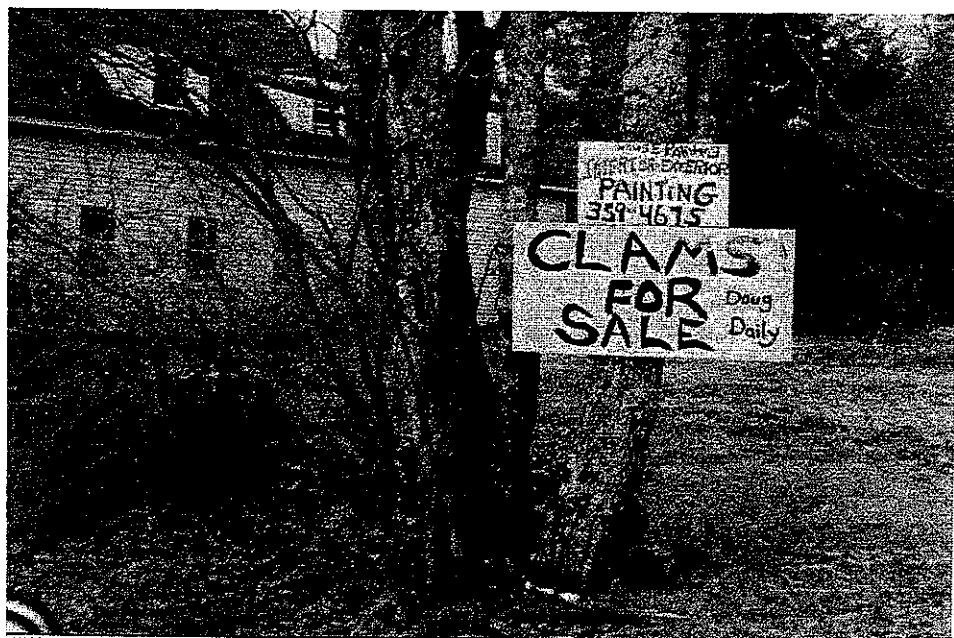
Conference Sitings and Citings

It was a busy month of June for the editors of *Philosophers on Holiday*. Early June found Peg at the University of Western Ontario at the Society for Analytic Feminism (SAF) Conference. The conference program was exceptionally strong and interesting. **Samantha Brennan** was a most gracious host, especially given the fact that she had just returned from another conference. **Ann Garry** was spotted with two bread items in the breakfast room. **Tim Horton** made daily appearances as well as morning snacks at the conference. Peg is still nursing her black and blues from kicking herself so hard for not having joined this organization sooner.

Following the SAF conference, these two philosophers continued east to Red Hook New York, the home of **Barb the Brief** and **Jay the Web Guy**. We were joined by **Abby "World" Wilkerson**; the three philosophers attended the joint conference of the Association for the Study of Food and Society (ASFS) and Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Association (AFHV) held at the Culinary Institute of America, the sometimes hangout of **Gary Allen** (look for him in the "Pantheon" this issue). There too, the program was interesting and strong. The food was overwhelming, as befits a culinary institute. **Alice Julier** gave a fine presidential address for the ASFS. **Netta Davis** (inventor of last summer's hit beach cocktail) did a wonderful job in arranging the banquet keynote speaker, **Daniel Pinkwater** of NPR and literary fame. We were fortunate to make the acquaintance of **Jill Pinkwater**, with whom we shared a post-conference lunch date along with her old college chum (and contributor to these pages), **Sarah Verone Lawton** as well as **BtB** and her IBM compatriot, **Janet Gauland**.

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