

PHILOSOPHERS ON HOLIDAY

Philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday--LW

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THE VIEW FROM NOWHERE

How [can we] combine the perspective of a particular person inside the world with an objective view of that same world, the person and his view included. It is a problem that faces every creature with the impulse and the capacity to transcend its particular point of view and to conceive of the world as a whole. Thomas Nagel, The View from Nowhere

Peg writes: I have always wanted to go on a balloon ride, ever since my brother and I read *Around the World in Eighty Days*. That book was magic to us; Phileas Fogg was our hero. Balloons are majestic and fantastic. I also like that they are relatively low tech. A wooden basket is held aloft by a bunch of cables and ropes that are attached to the inside of the balloon. To the casual observer, balloon technology has not changed all that much since Jules Verne wrote *Around*.

My interest in balloons was re-ignited when Lisa and I were driving around one day doing the sorts of errands one does on a Saturday when one is trying to grow seedlings in the basement. We came to a field where fifteen balloons were being prepared for takeoff. I had never seen a balloon on the ground before. My conception of balloon was that of a colorful speck high in the sky. I longingly said to Lisa that I would really love to go on a balloon ride someday. So imagine my surprise when I received a gift certificate in the mail for a ballooning adventure!

See Balloon, p.12

From the Editors

Welcome to our (end of) Spring issue, which marks the end of our second full year of production. (And they said we wouldn't last!) This issue brings you both new writers and new features from familiar writers. In the former category, we welcome "Tiny" Jim Robinson to the PonH stable of writers; his too-true-life adventure story of drama and pathos on the high seas can be found on the next page. And in the former category, Barb the Brief comes to us this issue with her report on the CIA. And of course your faithful editors check in with several features of their own.

As always, we remind our readers that, without you, this 'zine just wouldn't be possible. (Okay, maybe it would, but we'd probably quit a whole lot sooner than we intend to.) So, keep those contest entries, restaurant recommendations, letters, submissions, picture postcards and subscription checks coming!

PHILOSOPHERS ON HOLIDAY

A quarterly 'zine

Editors Peg O'Connor and Lisa Heldke
Staff Columnist Abby Wilkerson
Movie Reviewer, Roving Reporter Barb Heldke
Cub Reporter Emma Gehrman
Logo Design Cindy Herb, Mark IV Printing

Subscriptions Send your check for \$10 (made out to Peg O'Connor or Lisa Heldke) for a one-year subscription.

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

Direct all correspondence to:

Philosophers on Holiday
1002 Riverview Hills South
St. Peter, MN 56082
Poconnor@gac.edu heldke@gac.edu

TRAVEL NOTES

Reader's Query

Sandra Bartky, of the University of Illinois at Chicago, requests information about bed and breakfasts in Trinidad and Tobago—and also more recipes. If you can oblige her, please send your reply to *PonH*, Reader's Query Department, and we will see that Sandra gets the information.



The Department of Previously Unknown Sources of Worry

Wherein are revealed facts, events, and states of affairs heretofore unheard of, and guaranteed to bring you at least a soupçon of worry.

The portable toilets in the parking lot at the Split Rock Lighthouse on Lake Superior list the usual information about how one can rent one's own portable toilet, how to open the door, and like that. But they also helpfully inform the user (in large, bold print on the outside) that they are "fully insured." Against *what*???



About the motto

We borrow our motto from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Wittgenstein suggests 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 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.

At Sea with the Mouse

Our pal Jim Robinson, who, in previous lives has served as a therapist and a psychology professor, is spending six months as an improvisational comedian aboard the Disney Cruise Ship. No, we are not making this up. He sent us the following posting during one of his infrequent days on dry land. We thought it only appropriate to preface this piece with a quote from Michel Foucault. The reasons will become apparent.

“Discipline... is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a ‘physics’ or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology. And it may be taken over either by ‘specialized’ institutions (the penitentiaries or houses of correction’ of the nineteenth century), or by institutions that use it as an essential instrument for a particular end (schools, hospitals)....

Michel Foucault,
Discipline and Punish

**Ahoy, Lisa and Peg
(leg):**

Greetings from Deck A, Starboard Midship on the Disney Magic, “the most magical ship on the high seas.” I’ve been trying to write something for *PoH* for almost three months now, but I end up frustrated because I’m not able to capture the essence of life aboard this cruise liner. My friend Deborah is always telling me that “a fish doesn’t know it’s wet,” and even though that phrase usually implies that I’m engaging in some unexamined and unattractive behavior, I think it applies here. I’m too much in the middle of this “experience” (Disney offers “experiences” to its “guests”) to get an overarching view of it. So, I thought I’d send some impressions that may give you and your readers an idea of what it’s like to

throw over one’s entire life just months before turning 40 to pursue a career as a comic actor on board a family cruise line owned by the most exacting and insidious company on the face of the earth. Folks should feel free to generalize from my particulars.

When our cast went through “Traditions”—Disney’s two-day training workshops/ propaganda sessions for its new employees--we were told very emphatically that the Disney Magic was NOT the Love Boat, and that if we harbored that illusion for

any length of time we would be fired without a return ticket home. Disney spoke the truth. Being a crewmember—even a lucky one such as myself—is like being a seventh grader at a floating junior high school. There are rules beyond all belief, and the reprimands are swift and constant; every 48 hours we get some new memo detailing the privileges that are being revoked. Officers in white uniforms watch to see that we are properly dressed (no denim, jewelry, beards, slogans, cut-offs...it’s like the dress code at the roller rink, actually), to make sure that we aren’t fraternizing with the guests, to discourage us from eating food outside of the mess, to check our cabins weekly to ascertain that they are, indeed,

“ship shape.” To be fair, I can see why it’s important to have a very orderly vessel given the fact that we’re all in close quarters out in the middle of the ocean, but at times the restrictions are suffocating. Fortunately, I have my own cabin with a porthole at sea level, so when I think I’m about to snap and go running wildly in nothing but a tank top that says “Mickey Sucks” through the guest lounges, I can hole up in my room and watch the magnificent ocean pass by just inches from my bed. This soothes me.

Floating around this authoritarian atmosphere are some pretty funny details, a few of them



intentional. Some examples: Disney pipes in music from its films at all hours on every deck. During one of our numerous crew safety drills, the song "Under the Sea" from *The Little Mermaid* competed with the safety officer's instructions on how properly to board the life raft in the unlikely event of an emergency. I sometimes laugh in the crew mess, if only to keep from crying. We've had ox tail in brown gravy four nights this week. Luckily we had a break from this and had liver strips last night. Disney must own pineapple plantations (they are acquisitive), because nearly everything is coated with a pineapple glaze. So far the ox tail has escaped. I work six nights a week in the "Off Beat Comedy Club," an adults-only nightclub that features "wacky" comedians. It's great making my living doing improvisation. I am grateful for that. The parameters of our shows are "Disney appropriate," which means we can engage in light satire that doesn't offend anyone(?) and must avoid swear words; we also have been told that Disney "holds Mickey in the highest esteem," so the mouse himself is sacrosanct. Needless to say, knowing this makes us veer dangerously close to violating Mickey's image in every way imaginable. We have explored that fine line.

Apart from the rigors of the ship and Disney's piercing gaze I've found the Bahamas and the ocean to be wonderful. A group of us have befriended some monks in Nassau who live at St. Augustine's, a monastery run by the College of St. John. It's great to talk with them about Minnesota while we're staring at the beautiful, sparkling water and the AMAZING red poinciana trees. At night I sometimes sit on the aft deck and stare at the stars and the moonlight on the water. I'll never get tired of that. On the way back to central Florida (lots of chain link and oleander) we pass by Freeport, Grand Bahama and the town looks like a huge display of Christmas lights strung out in the middle of the dark ocean. This stuff keeps me sane; I'd forgotten how powerful homesickness could be and how much I took simple personal freedom for granted. Sobering.

I am co-hosting a game show tonight called "Walk the Plank," so I'd better put on my pirate costume (complete with neckerchief) and go upstairs to "preserve the magic." I'll explain later. This comes to you with love from a true landlubber...

Jim.



I Fought the Law and the Law Won: Or, How I Almost Spent My Spring Vacation

No, not in jail, dear readers; on a jury. I (Lisa) was selected to execute one of my solemn duties as a citizen of a democracy. I got called to jury duty.

In Nicollet County, Minnesota, jurors are called to a *four-month* jury term. This means that, every Friday night for four months, you have to call a phone number in the Nicollet County courthouse and listen to a scratchy answering machine tape. The tape tells you whether there are any jury trials the following week, what days those trials are and which juror numbers have been called to the jury pool. (I was number 42.)

When I received my summons, I was ecstatic. Readers who are philosophers-for-a-living know what I'm talking about; the idea of serving on a jury is one of the most exciting prospects in the lives of many a philosopher. Where else do you get to listen to, and assess the credibility of, *arguments*?¹ Okay, so I had to call this answering machine every Friday night for four months, and, if chosen, I would have to figure out how to get my classes taught while I sat in a courtroom. But I would get to sit on a jury! I *would*, wouldn't I? Surely a little thing like a Ph.D. in a discipline devoted to the study and analysis of argumentation wouldn't render me unattractive as a potential juror—would it?² Please, please, please pick me!

My hopes rose when I was called for duty within the first two weeks of my term. Here I was, only an eighth of the way in and I was already being called for the jury pool! I was so confident that, when the court administrator told us during our initiation that there had been no jury trials in Nicollet County during the first nine months of 1998, I wasn't phased a bit. That was then; this is now. We were going to see a lot of trials this term.³

My already elevated hopes reached as high as a hot air balloon when we entered the courtroom for jury selection process and it was revealed that there were only 31 people in the pool, and 24 of them would be selected—through a random drawing—to be questioned further. Twelve lucky members of that group would make up the jury. I waited, breathlessly, while the court reporter drew numbers from a twirly little wooden box that looked like it had a second career at the bingo parlor.

Are you going to believe it? I was one of the seven not chosen. When are you *ever* in the seven instead of the 24, I ask you? Never—that's when. But there I was. I still wasn't entirely out of the

See Juror, p.9

Junior Philosopher on Holiday

Ed note: For the second year in succession, we took a camping trip with niece Emma, who is now nine years old. This year's trip took us to Gooseberry Falls State Park, on the north shore of Lake Superior. What follows is Emma's report of the trip, from her travel journal.

Emma's Trip to
6-9-99 Lake Superior! 1

Today we drove from Lisa & Peg's house to Lake Superior! When we got here Lisa set up our campsite. Peg and I got to know the place better! When Lisa was done setting up our campsite we all went on a hike. First we went to the lake. I took my shoes off and walked in the water. Lisa told me it was about 40° in the water. my feet felt like I had frost bite. Next we hiked to the water falls. They were very beautiful!! When we got back to our site Lisa made dinner. We had Mac and Cheese! They were shaped like cartoon characters.

Then Peg washed the dishes and Lisa made a fire. After Lisa said the fire was ready I got sticks to make smores. My smore was very good. Now I'm here writing, and I have nothing to do! Lisa and Peg went to get some drinks. I'm in the campsite here alone. The weather here feels like late fall. I thought I came here for a nice warm vacation, not a cold one! While Lisa was making dinner something fat went under Peg's truck. I think it was a woodchuck. I have seen many squirrels here.

6-10-99

Today I got up before Lisa and Peg! We went to Split Rock LightHouse. I learned a lot about Lake Superior! We went on a tour of the light House and

of the houses of where the people lived. I can't believe that men really built a Light House on a cliff! We went down by the lake and plopped rocks. [See accompanying article.] Tonight Lisa, peg and I are going to go to a nature show. The show is going to be about Loons.

Emma



While she was visiting, Emma was introduced to the idea of a "life list," the list on which avid birders record the species they have seen, and the dates and places they have seen them. Emma adapted that concept to her own purposes, with the following list of animals seen.

Animals Seen

Mager	Miner
black bear	chipmunk
Loon	sea gulls
Franklin ground squirrel	geese
woodchuck	red squirrel
raccoon	
raby throated	
Hummingbird	

Continue your own list!



Rock Plopping: A Primer in Several Parts

Ed. Note: While visiting Lake Superior, our intrepid trio spent considerable amounts of time throwing rocks into Lake Superior. While we spent a small portion of that time working on our skipping—the traditional rock throwing skill—we invested far more time in the exploration of another, underappreciated rock art form, Rock Plopping.

Glossary of Rock Plopping Terms

The Slice “The rock plover that makes no sound as a spinning rock cuts crisply through the water. There is no splash on the water as the rock lands. The sound disappears.” (PO’C)

“The sound that you make when you are sucking the air out of a ziplock bag in order to lock in freshness. That last little sip of air is the sound of a slice.” (LMH)

“The slice is when the rock cuts through the water really fast. It sounds like when a frog quickly shoots out its tongue to get a fly.” (EJG)

The Glub “The rock plover that makes a deep, almost guttural sound, as the rock cuts through the water. The traditional glub often has a bubble of water come to the surface.” (PO’C)

“The sound that you learn to make at camp, to imitate the bullfrogs, only longer. A deep-in-your-throat swallow.” (LMH)

“The glub is when the rock goes into the water, and makes a bubble after. You can sometimes mistake the slice as a glub.” (EJG)

The Combo “In rock plopping, there is a continuum between the slice and the glub. A particular rock may be closer to one end of the spectrum.” (PO’C)

“A bit of high sip with some deep swallow riding underneath. Amounts of each may vary from plover to plover.” (LMH)

“The combo is when the plop is in between a glub and a slice. The plop may be closer to a glub or a slice.” (EJG)

The Splash “In rock plopping, this is an inelegant, unfortunate event when the rock makes a big splash.” (PO’C)

“You’ve heard it. It’s the sound that amateurs, unschooled in the craft of rock plopping, make all the time, unless they *accidentally* produce a slice, a glub or a combo.” (LMH)

“A splash is when a rock hits the water hard and doesn’t make a combo, slice or glub.” (EJG)

The Clack “A rock plover that lands in very shallow water. The clack sound results from the rock plover hitting another rock.” (PO’C)

“Not without a certain satisfying resonance, the clack is sometimes mistaken for a combo. But there’s also the unmistakable metallic sound of rock on rock. Painful.” (LMH)

“A clack is when the rock lands somewhere in shallow water. You can tell when it is a clack when the rock hits another rock.” (EJG)

Necessary and Sufficient Conditions

Earnest study has produced large numbers of hypotheses, none of which can be described as proven, regarding the conditions that are necessary and/or sufficient for producing the slice, the glub and the combo. In the spirit of Descartes in his *Principles of Philosophy*, we invite experimenters, wherever they are found, to do the work to ascertain the foundations of successful, replicable rock plopping. If all of us do this together, no one’s rotator cuff will be torn. Here are some of our findings to date:

Rapid end-over-end action works well.

[Caveat: Lisa has had success with slow. It’s about control]

Angle of entry should be 90°. [Caveat: some of the most right-angled entries produced splashes, while some rocks that entered at a dangerously acute angle produced a highly satisfying slice.]

All techniques work best in calmer water.

[This hypothesis comes closest to being unfalsifiable; among other things, only the quiet afforded by relatively calm water allows the researcher to ascertain just which rock plover has been produced.

A flat rock with a point seems to be the most reliable. [However, when the authors initially began their research, some years ago, they used cobblestones

Overhand and underhand both work, however O’Connor has had most success with right [dominant] handed overhand cast. (She has, however, been working on her left-handed release pattern, in her attempt to execute the extremely difficult two-handed plop. The possibilities for this particular maneuver have

See Rock Plopping p.8

Disseminated by Manny

Several years ago I spent a week in Florida. One of the things I really wanted to do while I was there was to spend as much time as I could seeing manatees (the enormous, gentle sea mammals that are on the endangered species list) in the "wild"—or what passes for the wild in Florida. (One such "wild" spot was the outflow of a power plant, where approximately forty manatees basked in the warm water pouring from the cooling tanks.) I'd done my research, and had located several locations for prime manatee viewing. But while reading the in-flight magazine on the plane trip down, I was surprised to learn of yet another location, a place where people were still allowed to snorkel in manatee territory. I was thrilled—and worried.

A bit of background: because of their endangered status, combined with their very gentle, trusting natures, manatees are protected by stringent federal guidelines. For the most part, these regulations are enforced by the simple device of prohibiting people from swimming wherever there are manatees. When I began the trip, I was under the impression that it was no longer possible to swim with manatees anywhere in Florida—and I was pretty glad about that fact, despite how often I'd fantasized about doing just that. But, as it turns out, there are (or at least there were then) still a couple places where you can strap on a snorkel, don a wetsuit and graze with the sea cows.

The opinion of at least some manatee experts (and all the guys who sell swim-with-the-manatee boat tours) is that allowing human contact with manatees is good for a couple different reasons. First, some manatees actually enjoy interaction with humans (and we will forego here the obligatory discussion of whether one can actually know that a manatee is experiencing pleasure—let's take it as a given that manatee pleasure qualia are a lot like human ones, shall we?). Furthermore (and here's where salesmanship comes in), such human-manatee interactions actually promote the manatees' welfare, because it makes "manatee advocates" out of the humans.

I was highly disposed to be convinced by such arguments; I desperately wanted to touch a manatee, for reasons I still haven't quite been able to dissect. Nevertheless, I approached the adventure with considerable concern: would I be entering a three-ring circus, in which frightened manatees, surrounded by flashing neon lights, struggled to

escape the grasping hands of scores of "nature lovers?"

I needn't have worried. I saw very few manatees that afternoon (and even fewer snorkelers, by the way). The manatees I saw kept a respectful distance from me, and I from them. I saw six or seven noses poke up out of the water, a few fins and tails, and once, for a fleeting instant, the looming bulk of a body, but for the most part, the manatees gave me a wide berth. Was I disappointed? No. Despite the overwhelming desire I'd had to touch a sea cow, and to see its entire body underwater, that desire evaporated once I actually got into the water "with" them. In fact, I gave *them* a fairly wide berth also. By conventional reckoning, the day was a gigantic anticlimax; I'd seen more manatees far more clearly on the day I'd stood on the platform at the power plant and watched them frolic in runoff water. But I ended the day being very happy that the manatees had remained so elusive, so difficult for me to see. I felt like it was appropriate.

There is surely something Calvinist about my happiness at being foiled in my attempts to fulfill a dream (a dream I'd previously believed was absolutely unfulfillable due to government regulation). But I think there may also be something quite healthy about it.

I analyze the experience and my response to it like this: in deciding to snorkel with manatees, I was taking myself partially out of my own setting, and placing myself partially in theirs. (I say "partially," because, while I was leaving land and air to enter the water, I was still equipped with a boat, wetsuit, fins, mask, and snorkel, to modify that water environment for my use. Furthermore, the environment they inhabit is only partially theirs in that it is filled with all sorts of human contraptions—docks, rafts, boats, etc. This is not a world of the manatees' creation or for their use.) I am not very skillful in their setting; I'm a good lap swimmer in a pool, but I can't see well in murky water, and my skills with snorkel equipment are rudimentary. In short, I'm gawky, clumsy, and loud in the water. Manatees are not—they are astoundingly graceful, and much faster moving than they appear to be from above. Given the differences in our aquatic skills, it seems entirely appropriate—indeed, expected—that we would have only minimal contact with each other. In short, the excursion was a gentle reminder that I don't really belong there. To "be there" would require me to develop my abilities in the water, to be patient, to take time.

The experience was, then, rather unusual in the contemporary world of tourism, a world in which

"tourist destinations" are constructed in just such a way as to ensure that every tourist has the maximal experience—that is, to ensure that every tourist will continue to believe they have the right to be where they are, and the right to expect a "complete" experience of that place (whatever sort of experience that might be). Disneyland is perhaps the paradigmatic example of such a place, but one may also find this attitude preserved in (apparently) far more "natural" settings. I got this sense of things when I went on a short safari in Kenya, for example. I was astounded to see lions on our very first game drive in Masai Maara National Park, having come on the trip thinking I would be lucky if I saw any. However, that first lion viewing was followed by countless more—so many more, in fact, that the other members of my tour actually got bored with them and asked not to see any more. I almost got the sense that our entire trip had in fact been staged by the Disney folks, that the lions had been hurried into place just minutes before our truck lumbered into place. Of course they hadn't, and of course the animals on the game park were living "freely"—or as freely as it is possible to live when surrounded by minivan. But of course the guides and drivers carefully noted their movements and locations, so that they could make sure all their customers got to see all the "major" animals inhabiting the park. That is what the tourist expects, so that is what the tourist must be given. We presume we can be insiders, and our presumption is fulfilled. Were it not, we would be disappointed, we would complain and demand our money back, and we would tell our friends not to use their safari company.

I'm glad the manatees gave me the cold shoulder.



CONTEST RESULTS

Our last issue included three readers' contests, which produced a dentist's-office-worth of toothbrush winners—all in response to just two contests. Surprisingly, no one volunteered a theory of not dancing, so that contest is still open.

Applied Ontology

From **Mary Palmquist** (Le Center, MN): Applied ontology is making the most efficient and productive use of ontols, of course.

From **Jean Jacobi** (Mankato, MN): A philosopher whose area of concentration is in applied ontology is one who is a Shakespearean expert—as in, "To be or not to be..." (an ontologist, I presume)

From **Samantha Brennan** (University of Western Ontario) and **Douglas Lewis** (University of Minnesota): Visit <http://wings.buffalo.edu/philosophy/faculty/smith/> for a description of applied ontology.

Jesse the Cartesian

From **Jay Benjamin** (Red Hook, NY): Could it be the link between Jesse Ventura and Rene Descartes is implicit in the claim, "*Je pense, donc je suis*," attributed to Descartes?

You're exactly right, Jay! The day after the election, Jesse announced to the assembled members of the press that, from now on, he was "Jesse 'The Mind' Ventura," making him a philosophical relative of Monsieur Descartes.

Even more recently, he's become "Jesse 'The Doll'"—perhaps the first elected official to become their own action figure. (Although Spiro *did* have that watch....) Lisa was the delighted recipient of the gift of a Jesse doll, clad in his governor suit. She was pleased to note that the doll is "fully articulated." If only the governor were....

Plopping, cont.

yet to be fully explored. Combinations such as the simultaneous slice-glub or the double slice, have yet to be sounded in this hemisphere.

[Caveat: underhand also tends to be hazardous, as Heldke has found; release at the wrong time can bring the rock down to earth behind you, or worse, on you.]

The authors suspect that **some rather precise combination of rock shape, spin, speed, distance and altitude** is actually required to reliably produce any given sound. Obviously, the number of variables here is enormous. We urge all rock ploppers with an experimentalist bent to participate in this study, and send their findings to **PonH, Foundations of Science Division**.

Rock Plopping Spectroscopy

True Slice	Slice Combo	Combo Slice	Full Combo	Combo Glub	Glub Combo	True Glub
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This graph illustrates the spectrum of entry styles for a rock plover, ranging from the True Slice to the True Glub.

Juror, cont.

running; and I held my breath during the questioning, hoping that a whole bunch of them would reveal that they all knew the defendant (an underage kid on a DWI and marijuana possession charge), or were constitutionally unable to sit on hard chairs, or something—*anything*—to require them to dip back into that twirly little box to select the final jury. Alas, it was not to be. The jury got made without me. We rejects were invited to remain and watch the trial take place, but I left. My heart just wasn't into being a spectator.

Months passed before I got my second chance. The answering machine tape announced that juror 42 should come down to the courthouse the following Wednesday, for a two-week jury trial. Gulp. Two weeks! That would stretch right over my spring break—during which I was supposed to go to a conference in D.C. But democracy isn't always convenient. My professional life would simply have to take a back seat to my civic duty.

Wednesday morning, I arrived at the courthouse promptly at eight, dressed in the most bland professional clothing I own, my usually spiky hair slicked down into something approaching small town midwestern respectability. I went through the orientation rigmarole, and filed into the courthouse with the other 36 potential jurors. The attorneys and the defendant were already seated at the table. The judge came in and announced that the case we were being called to serve on (oh, *please* pick me!) involved conspiracy to commit murder. (Perfect! A serious, interesting case, but nobody really *did* get killed; someone—namely this guy sitting not six feet away from me!—just tried to get someone to kill someone. Ideal. I'll be perfect for this.)

It happened again. Twenty-four times the court reporter twirled the little box, and 24 times, someone *else's* number was called. But never mind. Surely with a case this serious, some folks will get recused right away! There's still a chance.

The questioning for this trial was long and involved. During the DWI trial questioning, I'd been struck by the absurdity of some of the questions asked ("Are any of you Grateful Dead fans?") was the clever question the prosecuting attorney used to try to flush out the pot smokers in the pool.)—but also by the deeply personal nature of many of them. (Several fathers in that group were forced to admit that their sons too had DWI offenses on their records.) This session followed the same pattern. Jurors were informed that they were going to watch roughly six hours of surveillance tapes, and asked if they understood that unedited surveillance

tapes collected during a stakeout would be different in kind from real-life television shows like *Top Cops*. (Really?) They were informed that, in those tapes, they would hear the defendant "use the f-word upwards of 350 to 400 times—will this bother anyone?"⁴ Then there were the painfully personal questions about people's lives—questions so personal that I have already blotted out both the questions and the answers in order to protect the innocent. Minnesotans are not the sorts of persons to go on Sally Jesse Raphael and tell the world about their weirdnesses. We are even less likely to sit in a roomful of people *we might see again in the grocery store* and report the intimate details of our lives. I was almost glad I wasn't up there. Almost.

After a few hours of this, they selected the jury. It included the guy who'd lived on the same street with the defendant when the defendant was a kid—his son had played with the guy.

I went home and flew out the next day, happy to go to my conference, but disappointed all the same. I called the machine for the remaining four Fridays, but my heart wasn't in it. I was starting to think it wasn't meant to be. One of my students, doing an internship at a local law office, told me point blank, "I've seen how they make jury selections. They aren't going to pick you."

Maybe it was fate that my number never even came up. I mean, if I wasn't going to be chosen, at least I didn't have to tell a roomful of total strangers, all of whom I would immediately start seeing regularly at the gas station, how I *really* feel about the Grateful Dead.

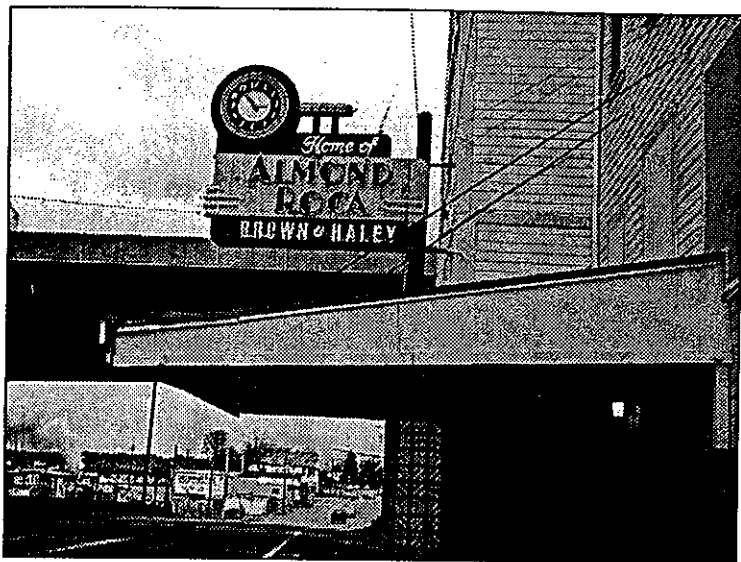
¹Then add in the remarkably stirring lecture I heard about what an incredibly important part of our democratic system are jury trials. The increase in the number of cases being settled out of court thus represents a serious erosion to that system—not simply a "reduction in expenses," as it tends to be seen. To legal professionals, jurors are unknown commodities, loose cannons that may go off at any moment. Why risk a trial in front of twelve of them, loaded for who-knows-what, when instead you can settle the thing among colleagues?

²Okay. I wasn't naive here. I'd heard the stories; heard them since graduate school. Philosophers don't get picked for juries; it's that simple. But not six months earlier, none other than Doctor Abby "World" Wilkerson herself had been selected to serve on a jury. If it could happen to her, it could happen to me, I reasoned.

³As it turned out, democracy was pretty safe in Nicollet County for this four-month period. There was at least one jury trial every week for the whole four months.

⁴The only juror eliminated from the pool during questioning was excused when she announced that she wasn't up for this. 349 times, maybe, but 350—that was her breaking point

Pantheon Gastronomique



In each issue, Pantheon Gastronomique brings you news about the really good food that is being served Out There, unbeknownst to the majority of the population. In the past, we've confined ourselves to reporting on restaurants. This quarter, we'd like to tell you about an outlet—a candy outlet. How many of your grandmothers had tins of Almond Roca candy on their coffee tables at Christmastime? Okay, ours didn't either, but they should have. Almond Roca is the grownup's Heath Bar; a chunk of brittle toffee, sheathed in a thin layer of chocolate and then rolled in nuts. Exquisite. Hard on your teeth. Made in Tacoma. Yep, that's right; in Tacoma, at the Brown and Haley candy factory, an old-fashioned factory that looks like it was the model for Willy Wonka's.

While visiting Pacific Lutheran University this spring, Lisa's host, Erin McKenna, took her to the B&H outlet, where they stocked up on price-slashed tins of Almond Roca, peanut butter Mountain Bars (grownup Reese's cups—notice a theme here?), and those little tins of mints that B&H is now producing, in an effort to bust in on the Altoids market.

Almond Roca may not be an unsung confection, but this outlet sure is. Next time you go to Seattle, take that extra day to visit Tacoma and go to the Almond Roca factory. (And while you're in town, go visit their wonderful art and history museums.) The Almond Roca factory outlet store: yet another gastronomic find, brought to you in the pages of *PonH*

errata

Uma Narayan, philosopher at Vassar College and a "native eater" of South Indian food, caught us in a couple food boo-boos regarding our piece on Udupi Palace restaurant in the last issue. Uma writes:

Idlis are served with **sambar**, not **sambal** as the article states. A quick look in a Southeast Asia cookbook suggests that sambal is Malay/Indonesian, and is a kind of dish that uses a combination of chiles and shrimp paste. Sambar, on the other hand, is made from lentils and tamarind juice and spices. [*Yep. That's exactly right, Uma. And while I can plead "typo" on this one, the next one was brand new news to me.*]

The masala-dosa is described as a "chickpea-flour crepe." While I honestly have no clue as to how restaurants make their dosas, when we make a dosa at home, it is from a paste made of rice and white lentils that are soaked, ground and allowed to "rise" or ferment. So I'm curious to know whether the restaurant said its dosas were made from chickpea flour. In that case I would learn something I didn't know about "commercial" dosas. As a good South Indian who misses her mother's homemade dosas, I would love to know. [*No such luck, Uma. I just didn't know what I was talking about. The Udupi Palace menu specifies chickpeas as an element of the dosa, but I made up the part about flour. Thank heavens for assiduous and knowledgeable PonH readers.*]

READER ALERT

Help desperate travelers avoid McDonald's. Send your favorite food finds to Philosophers on Holiday, Department of Gastronomy. If we publish your tip, we'll send you the coveted PonH dental hygiene pak.

Submit early!

Submit often!

Do you like to write? Would you like to see your work in a font other than courier? Do you need a line on your C.V./resume? Well, *Philosophers on Holiday* may be just the ticket. We'll soon be listed in the *Philosopher's Index*.

something to do with the sauce. I didn't use it. The knife worked fine; the fork tines for this course were long enough to use to pick the teeth of the patron across the table.

Other diners had Lamb Chops, a small pile of fettuccine surrounded by three kinds of steamed vegetables for the vegetarian, a major beef thing for the guy from Australia who is the most brilliant young man on the planet to hear him tell it. (I was trying to carry off the image of participating in the conversations going on without actually opening my mouth...)

Course 4

Next I believe they forgot to give us a stab at a cheese and fruit course. This has been described to me as the best part of the meal in the Escoffier Room and it was nowhere to be found. I'm not sure, but I think they may have handed out the silverware for it and then collected it again. By this point all was a blur.

Course 5

The dessert cart was brought in and required three trips around the table. The younger of the two "important" women (and also the vegetarian) made much fanfare about choosing a dessert and studying the situation from every angle and brushing aside her "I don't eat eggs" line when it came to desserts. She and the male on the other side of her each got a chocolate thing and shared. I got chocolate, the other "important" woman and two other "important" men got chocolate things. We decided that would be the solution to any future negotiating difficulties, since it seemed to be the thing more of us agreed upon than anything else.

Coffee/after dinner drink orders were taken and the coffee/drinks were delivered first. More waiting, silverware.....finally we got the desserts and it was worth at least one percent of the waiting and nervousness.

I had chocolate pots de creme - the stuff with the hard crust on top made with the blow torch? I believe I watched them make this on "Cooking Secrets of the CIA" on PBS once. You must learn to make that—it is exquisite. I wonder if you can swing by the CIA on the way home for a PdC to go?

Eventually it all ended and the "trip" was over. Did I say I endured the whole 3.5-hour ordeal without getting up to go to the john? That's a long time. I postulate that bread soaks up any effect the water may have on you.

Was I impressed? Not really. I do like the effect of a nice charger though.

Will I go again? I'm not sure. But they could just as well serve half as much bread and give the

rest (and maybe some spare vegetables) to the mother who sits by the highway directly across from the entrance nearly every day holding a "NEED FOOD" sign.



Balloon, cont.

We had a stormy, windy spring, so I had to wait until early June. On the day of my flight, I was giddy, and not the least bit afraid. We passengers help to prepare the balloon for takeoff by first unfurling the balloon. Our balloon was at least thirty yards long uninflated. Blowing up the balloon is relatively easy; two people hold the mouth of the balloon wide open so that a big fan can pump air.

While another passenger and I were doing that, our pilot was walking around inside the balloon checking the various ropes. It was really odd to see someone walk around inside the balloon to its top where the panels can be opened to release hot air so that the balloon can descend. When the balloon is sufficiently inflated, the pilot turns on the gas jets and the rest of us hold onto the basket so that he doesn't start to fly away. When all systems are go, we hopped into the little basket (four people was cozy) and were off.

The ascent was graceful and gentle. It felt as if we were very gradually rising, but we had to be going faster than I realized because all of a sudden we were at 700 feet. Our cruising altitude was 1200 feet. We sailed around at that altitude for almost an hour. From this vantagepoint, houses did look like Monopoly houses. The fields, so precisely plowed by farmers, looked like those Zen gardens popular with the Sharper Image crowd in the late 1980s.

While I was busy flying the friendly skies and enjoying my view from nowhere, Lisa was in the chase car. Lisa hates to fly, so cruising around in a balloon holds no appeal for her. The chase car is a very important part of the ballooning operation. A good chase crew is in regular contact with the pilot, and is in place and ready when the balloon finally lands. Our chase crew had a little trouble with the radio. Actually, the trouble involved dropping the radio while driving.

Obviously, landing a balloon is not an exact science. Having a spot picked out and being able to hit it are two very different things. One time when a balloon was carrying a couple to their wedding and had to land, the chase car driver was met by a man with a gun. The man insisted that he ride in the chase car and insisted on taking his gun. So for all of you who think being in the chase car is safer than being in the balloon, think again. But most often, landing on someone else's land isn't a big deal.

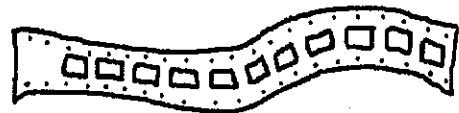
Our pilot was a wonderful source of information. He informed us that balloons can continue to fly even when they have significant rips in them. One time a balloon was seriously torn by one of those radio-controlled toy planes. The man allegedly controlling the plane thought it was really funny to send it really close to the balloon. His other important points of information included not leaning out of the basket (I didn't need to be told that) and bending your knees when we land (it can be a bit of an impact).

The descent, like the ascent, was quite graceful. The area in which we were flying is being rapidly developed. Farmers are selling off their land to

developers who are putting up huge houses (three-car garage required) on tiny postage stamp lots. As we were looking for spots to land, we passed quite low over these new big houses with their new big windows into which we could see quite easily. So from my view from nowhere, I could see a lot. So beware if you have balloons passing over your house—people can see you.

Our landings were a bit bouncy. The first place we tried landing was in a bulldozed field that was on its way to becoming a golf course. We hit the ground three times and bounced right back up. Finally, the pilot decided this was not a good place to land because the chase car might not be able to drive on such loose dirt. That would mean that we would have to carry the balloon and the basket a far distance. We passengers were happy to try another location. Finally, we did find a good spot, and there was our chase car. Packing up the balloon took about twenty minutes, and then it was back to takeoff location for the celebratory sparkling cider.

I would happily go for another balloon ride, but my mother has instructed me that such behavior will not be tolerated. My advice is not to tell your mother.



barb's briefs

Waking Ned Devine: A travesty. A stupidity. An absurdity. A waste of my precious time. Don't waste yours!



And now, in her continuing effort to better serve you, the movie-viewing public, Barb presents reviews of movies she hasn't yet seen.

Tea with Mussolini: Judi Dench, Cher, Joan Plowright, Lily Tomlin. Franco Zeffirelli directs.

I'd add Dame Maggie Smith, and put the English Grand Dames in 1, 3, 5 position, Cher in 2 and Lily in 4. *NY Times* review calls it a "diva derby."

One can only hope the tea is decaffeinated.



Three Out of Three famous Beauties Agree: You should subscribe to *PonH*