

The Box City Bulletin

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Your poetry, or any interesting submission will be considered for publication. . . .Send it!!

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We have opinions, . . .but no agenda and will print all opposing points of view concerning any issue we editorialize.

Our Valentine's Day Wish For You

Our Valentines Day Poem

By Howard Suer

There comes a day in every year,
That brings the words we want to hear.
With the gentle chirping of a sparrow,
As the mark is found by Cupid's arrow.

The words of course are, "I love you."
And the answer is . . . "I love you too!"
We at Box City can say, So cheerily,
That we love you all, so very dearly.

'Cause nothing warms the heart much more,
Than when true love knocks at the door.
And there in the doorway at your place,
Stands Cupid, with his cherubic face.

So in this month of Valentine's Day,
We'd like to take this time to say,
We wish you love, unbending love,
And many blessings from heaven above.

We want to say before this poem ends,
That you are the ones we love—our friends.
Yes, you are the ones we most adore,
At your friendly neighborhood Box City Store.

A History of Valentine's Day

For eight hundred years prior to the establishment of Valentine's Day, the Romans had practiced a pagan celebration in mid-February commemorating young men's rite of passage to the god Lupercus. The celebration featured a lottery in which young men would draw the names of teenage girls from a box. The girl assigned to each young man in that manner would be his sexual companion during the remaining year.

In an effort to do away with the pagan festival, Pope Gelasius ordered a slight change in the lottery. Instead of the names of young women, the box would contain the names of saints. Both men and women were allowed to draw from the box, and the game was to emulate the ways of the saint they drew for the rest of the year. Needless to say, many of the young Roman men were not too pleased with the rule changes.

Instead of the pagan god Lupercus, the church looked for a suitable patron saint of love to take his place. They found an appropriate choice in St. Valentine, who, in AD 270 had been beheaded by Emperor Claudius.

During the days that Valentine was imprisoned, he fell in love with the blind daughter of his jailer. His love for her, and his great faith, managed to miraculously heal her from her blindness before his death. Before he was taken to his death, he signed a farewell message to her, "From your Valentine." The phrase has been used on this day ever since.

Although the lottery for women has been banned by the church, the mid-February holiday in commemoration of St. Valentine was still used by Roman men to seek the affection of women. It became a tradition for the men to give the ones they admired handwritten messages of affection containing Valentine's name.



The Box City Science Page

Opium - Morphine & Heroin

By Howard Suer

At times throughout history, drugs played a very important roll in American and world commerce.

In the 1800's, England, France and the United States were selling large quantities of *opium* to the Chinese. England had the advantage of its presence in India where *opium* poppies were grown and processed. The United States did not have that luxury. However, since it was such a profitable business, companies such as J. & T. H. Perkins & Company of Boston imported *opium* from Turkey and shipped it to China.

China recognized the terrible problem that *opium* addiction was causing among the populace and outlawed the sale of *opium*. The Empress of China appealed to Britain and the U.S. to stop shipping the drug. However, it was so profitable that the drug laden ships docked at islands offshore and smuggled the drugs in the country.



The Charmer, built for Bush & Wildes of Boston, transported tons of opium.

In 1821, the Chinese seized the *opium* stocks and destroyed them before they could be brought ashore. That, of course, triggered the famous "Opium Wars, where China suffered the most humiliating defeat which resulted in Britain owning Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, *morphine*, which is a derivative of *opium*, was being sold over the counter in drug stores throughout the United States. It was, (and still is), a strong pain killer and euphoric. *Opium* dens were widespread throughout the West.

Then, in 1874, a new drug, *heroin* was synthesized in Germany from *morphine*. This wonderful new drug was hailed as a *safe, non-addictive*" substitute for *morphine*.

This wonderful new "miracle drug" was sold over-the-counter in drug stores to cure everything from alcohol withdrawal, depression, cancer, colds, sluggishness and even the infirmities of old age. In 1898, the German pharmaceutical company, Bayer, started marketing *herion* as a cough medicine.

Thus, at the dawn of the 20th century was born the American *heroin* addict. Since it was not against the law, stores openly sold *heroin* and *morphine* kits, complete with glass barreled hypodermic needles. *Cocaine* was also sold in fancy engraved cases. *Cocaine* was administered to both adults and children much as aspirin is today.

By 1914, *heroin* addiction became such a widespread problem that Congress passed the Harrison Narcotics Act, which was full of good intentions, but so lacking in legal teeth, that it was scarcely better than no law at all.

In May, 1886, Coca-Cola was invented by doctor John Pemberton, a pharmacist from Atlanta Georgia.

It was a prohibition law, enacted in Atlanta in 1886, that persuaded physician and chemist Dr. John Pemberton to rename and rewrite the formula for his popular nerve tonic, stimulant and headache remedy, "Pemberton's French Wind Coca," sold at that time by most, if not all, of the city's druggists.

So when the new Coca-Cola debuted later

that year - still possessing "the valuable tonic and nerve stimulant properties of the coca plant and cola nuts," yet sweetened with sugar instead of wine - Pemberton advertised it not only as a "delicious exhilarating, refreshing and invigorating "soda-fountain beverage, but also as the ideal "temperance drink."



John Pemberton

Though Pemberton died just two years later - five months, in fact after his March 24, 1888 filing for incorporation of the first Coca-Cola Co. The trade mark he and his partners created more than one hundred years ago can claim wider recognition today than that of any other brand in the world.

In 1886, Coca-Cola sales totaled a mere 3,200 servings. Today, the world's most popular soft drink accounts for billions of servings in 195 countries.

Of course, one of the ingredients, *cocaine*, was at least partially responsible for the amazing success of this beverage. By the turn of the century, federal and state officials began writing regulations to ban the sale of coca products containing *cocaine*. Coca-Cola lawyers argued strenuously that their syrup contained only a miniscule flavor extract of the coca leaf.

It is my understanding that after they were no longer allowed to use *cocaine* in *Coca-Cola*, it was replaced with *caffeine*, (another addictive, but legal drug).

~

The Box City Poetry Corner

When Trouble Comes

When trouble comes your Soul to try,
You love the friend who just 'stands by,'
Perhaps there is nothing he can do,
The thing is strictly up to you

For there are troubles all your own,
And paths the Soul must tread alone,
Times when love can't smooth the road,
Nor friendship lift the heavy load,

But just to know you have a friend,
Who will 'stand by' until the end,
Whose sympathies through all endures,
Whose warm handclasp is always yours,

It helps someway, to pull you through,
Although there is nothing he can do.
And so with fervent heart you cry,
"God bless the friend, who just stands by!"



Editor's Note: I have a friend who is fighting a brave battle with cancer. Recently I e-mailed her asking, "how are you." . . . She responded with this poem.

I wanted to share it with you. There is nothing I can add.

Which Are You?

Author Unknown

I watched them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell,
They swung a beam and the side wall fell.

I asked the foreman, "Are these men skilled,
And the men you'd hire if you had to build?"
He gave a laugh and said, "No indeed!
Just common labor is all I need.
I can easily wreck in a day of two
What builders have taken a year to do!"

And I thought to myself as I went my way,
Which of these rolls have I tried to play?
Am I a builder who works with care,
Measuring life with the rule and square?
Am I shaping my deeds to a well made plan,
Patiently doing the best I can?
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town
Content with the labor of tearing down?



Editor's Note:

Thanks to our friend Violet Auerbach for sending us this thought provoking poem.

A Box City Furry Tale

The Duck and The Doberman

By Donna Griswold

Although Jessie, our eighty-pound black Doberman, looked menacing—she snarled at strangers and attacked backyard critters—she was extremely loyal and loving to our family. We wanted a second dog, but agreed that Jessie would be better off alone; We were afraid that jealousy might compel her to hurt any dog that got between her and us.



So when our son Ricky came home from school one day with an egg, we smelled trouble. Ricky's egg came from his second-grade class project: incubating and hatching Rhone ducks. The egg had failed at school, so his teacher allowed him to bring it home. My husband and I didn't think the egg was likely to hatch outside the incubator, so we let him keep it. Ricky placed the egg in a sunny patch of grass in the yard and waited.



The next morning we awoke to a bizarre squeal coming from the backyard. There stood Jessie, nose to nose with a newly hatched peach-colored duckling.

"Jessie will swallow it whole!" I cried. "Grab her."

"Hold on," my husband Rick, said. "I think it'll be okay. Just give it a minute."

The duckling peeped. Jessie growled and darted back to her doghouse. The duckling followed. Jessie curled up on her bed, clearly ignoring the little creature.

But the duckling had other ideas. She had already imprinted on her new "mother," so she cuddled up on Jessie's bed, snuggling under her muzzle. Jessie nudged the duckling out of the doghouse with her nose, only to have the baby squirm back to its place under her muzzle. Jessie gave a big sigh and reluctantly accepted her new role.

Ricky named the duckling Peaches and pleaded with us to keep her. Jessie didn't seem to like having a new baby, but she wasn't predatory toward Peaches either. We gave in and decided to see how things would go.

Surprisingly, over the next few weeks, Jessie really took to motherhood. When Peaches pecked at the ground, Jessie showed her how to dig. When Peaches chased tennis balls, Jessie showed her how to fetch. And when Jessie sprawled out on the leather couch to watch Animal Planet on television, Peaches snuggled right under her muzzle.

After an inseparable year of digging, sleeping and fetching together, Peaches weighed eighteen pounds. She seemed quite happy in her roll as Jessie's "puppy."

Then one day something changed: Peaches innate "duckness" kicked in. She began laying eggs once a day and became obsessed with water. During feeding times, Jessie ate while Peaches flapped and splashed in the water bowl.

One evening Jessie became frantic when Peaches disappeared. We had visions of coyotes lurking, snatching Peaches while Jessie slept. Jessie barked and howled as would any anguished mother who had lost a child. After a thorough search of the neighborhood, we were close to giving up hope. Just then, Jessie sprinted into a neighbor's backyard. We followed her. There was Peaches sloshing and squawking in the hot tub. Jessie hopped in to retrieve her.

As much as we wanted to keep Peaches in

our family, one thing was clear. She needed to spread her wings and join the duck world. Ricky tied a red ribbon around Peaches leg, loaded her and Jessie into the car, and we drove to a nearby pond. During the ride, Jessie curled up with Peaches and licked her head. It was as if she knew exactly what was happening and why.

As we approached the pond, Jessie and Peaches scampered toward the water. Jessie leaped in first. Peaches wobbled behind. They waded out together several yards before Peaches took off—gliding toward a flock of her own. Jessie turned around, trudged back to shore and shook off. She sat for a few minutes watching her daughter. Then as if to say, "It's time to set my little one free," she yelped and jumped back into the car.



Back at home Ricky taped pictures of Jessie and Peaches, digging, fetching and snuggling, to the inside of the doghouse. And for a long time afterward, Jessie made weekly visits to the pond. Although we could usually see the red ribbon, we thought we could also hear Peaches' distinctive squawk, saying "hello" to her birth family.

Motherhood changed Jessie. Once unsociable and intimidating, she soon became a friend to all in the neighborhood. She snuck out at every opportunity to play with other dogs, jumped on visitors and licked their faces. Snarling was no longer part of her vocabulary.

We feared the worst the day we saw Jessie and baby Peaches standing nose to bill. We could never have imagined that an eight ounce ball of downy fuzz would soften our eighty-pound Doberman for life.

Interesting Word Origins

Gymnasium

By nearly every standard the Greeks were the most enlightened people of ancient times. They even developed a program of physical education at public expense because they felt that physical training was essential. It was limited to males, and they trained and competed in the nude to maximize the freedom of movement.

So from *gymnos* (“naked”) the building in which they worked out was called a *gymnasium*. The Romans adopted both the building and the training program. With the efficiency for which they are famous, the Romans built many a new *gymnasium* so their young men might be trained for sports and war. Even the profligate emperor Nero took interest in the program and gave a great central *gymnasium* in the city of Rome.

After the fall of the empire, the concept of physical education was forgotten for hundreds of years. Then, around the sixteenth century English scholars rediscovered the classical word, and now *gymnasium* designates any building devoted to physical education

Infantry

Horses were of immense value to ancient armies. They gave greater mobility to units for scouting and pursuing. Since there were never enough mounts for everyone, soldiers with greatest seniority were usually given the horses. This meant younger soldiers marched and fought on foot. They were younger and less experienced than the cavalrymen and were called *infans*, which is Latin for “boy” or “foot soldier.” Adapted into English, as well as many European languages, any food-bound soldier too inexperienced for cavalry is a part of the *infantry*.



Mahogany

Few words in common use have so obscure an ancestry as *mahogany*. Its origin is a puzzle. The Carib Indians name for the tree was “caoba.”

Sir Walter Raleigh found this fine wood in the West Indies and brought specimens back to England around 1595. He must have misunderstood some native whom he questioned about its name, for he described it as *mahogeney*. Regardless of how the name was found, it stuck.

Within a century English shippers were doing a brisk import business. When the Swedish scientist Linnaeus listed the exotic trees in his famous botanical index, he took the English name as standard. Furniture makers adopted *mahogany* as a major material and the vagrant word entered world speech.



The Atomic Age in Brief

1895 Discovery of X-rays by German physicist Wilhelm Roentgen.

1896 French physicist Henri Becquerel discovers radioactivity.

1897 British physicist Sir Joseph Thomson discovers the electron.

1898 Physicists Pierre and Marie Curie discover radium.

1905 Albert Einstein suggests mass can be converted into energy.

1911 Physicist Ernest Lord Rutherford discovers atomic nucleus.

1913 Physicist Niels Bohr describes the structure of the atom.

1919 Rutherford splits the atom.

1932 English physicist Sir James Chadwick discovers the neutron.

1932 Sir John Cockroft and Ernest Wolton split lithium into two alpha particles.

1938 Lise Meitner, Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassman discover nuclear fission.

1941 Chemist Glenn Seaborg isolates plutonium, the key element in a nuclear bomb.

1942 Physicist Enrico Fermi builds the first nuclear reactor as part of the U.S. effort to produce —the atomic bomb.

1945 U.S. drops atomic bombs on Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

1951 First nuclear electricity generated from AEC’s breeder reactor in Idaho.

1952 Hydrogen bomb detonated by U.S.A. at Eniwetok Island.

1956 World’s first commercial scalt nuclear power plant established in England.

1964 The omega-minus elementary particle, predicted by theory, is discovered launching the search for more elusive subatomic particles.

1979 Accident at 3 mile Island, PA.

1986 Accident at Chernobul Plant, U.S.S.R

Editorial

'Till Death Do Us Part

Editor's Note: There are two poems we publish at least every year or two. One is "Rags" and this is the other one.

About 25 years ago I had occasion to visit the son of a friend who was in jail in Los Angeles. On a table in the lobby of the jail was this poem. It had been written by one of the inmates.

The poem touched me so deeply that I took a copy of it with me.

Worldwide, there are millions of drug addicts, and potential drug addicts. Everyone who has adolescent kids should share this with their children.

"'Till Death Do Us Part"

So now little man, you've grown tired of grass,
LSD, Acid, Cocaine and Hash.

When someone pretending to be a good friend,
Said, "I'll introduce you to Miss Heroin."

Well, honey, before you start fooling with me,
Let me inform you of how it will be.

For I will seduce you and make you my slave,
I've sent men much stronger than you to their grave.

You think you could never be such a disgrace,
'Till you end up addicted to poppy seed waste.

You'll start by inhaling me one afternoon,
Then you'll take me into your arms very soon.

And once I have entered deep down in your vein,
The craving will nearly drive you insane.

You'll need lots of money, (as you've been told),
For darling, I'm much more expensive than gold.

You'll swindle your mother for less than a buck,
You'll end up an animal, vile and corrupt.

You'll mug and you'll steal for my narcotic charm,
And only feel content, when I'm deep in your arm.

One day you'll realize the monster you've grown,
Then solemnly promise to leave me alone.

If you think that you've got that mystical knack,
Just come on and try getting ME off your back.

The vomit, the cramps, your gut tied in a knot,
The jangling nerves screaming for just one more shot.
The hot chills, the cold sweat, the withdrawal pains,
Can only be eased by my little white grains.

There is no other way, there's no need to look,
For deep down inside, you'll know that you're hooked.
You'll desperately run to the pusher, and then,
You'll welcome me into your veins once again.

And when you return as I have foretold,
You'll ultimately give me your body and soul.
You'll give up your morals, your conscience, your heart,
And then you'll be mine . . .
— 'Till death do us part.



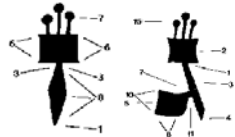
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Why We Say It — (Phrase Origins)

Suites to A T

Ancient Hebrew scribes did much of their writing with little brushes. Numerous letters were distinguished from one another only by patterns of minute brush marks. Because of their shape, these marks were commonly known as “horns.” It became proverbial that a careful scribe copied material exactly—that is, “to a horn.”

A reference to these marks is included in the New Testament (Matthew 5:18). When John Wycliffe issued his famous English translation of the Bible in 1382, he referred to the horn as a “titil.” This word was later spelled “tittle,” and “to a tittle” became a proverbial expression for scrupulous care. Abbreviated in common usage, the phrase lives on. Now when something is done with precision, it is said to be done *to a T*.



Grease One’s Palm

Most modern women spend more time and money on adornment of the body than do men, but for centuries the reverse was true. Kings, knights, and gallants of the Age of Chivalry prided themselves on their appearance as much as on their valor. Soap was almost unheard of, however, so doughty fellows made lavish use of perfumed and spiced goose grease. Charcoal was sometimes added to give the user’s skin a fashionable dark glow.

Packed in membranes, such grease was so highly prized that it was often used as a gift when a favor was desired. By the 16th century, gold, silver or money was used but to designate bribery it was still referred to as *to grease one’s palm*.

Con Man

Hard times following the Civil War forced criminals to resort to all sorts of tricks to gain relatively small amounts of money. One of the most common was the sale of fraudulent mining stock. Investors were reluctant to advance funds without examining the property, so swindlers adopted the practice of asking for a small deposit “just as a gesture of confidence.” the full amount was to be paid after a trip to the west by the purchaser.

A swindler would take the money advanced and decamp. This type of trick became known as the “confidence game” because it worked only if the victim had confidence in the proposal. Anyone who practiced confidence games came to be called a *con man*.

This title is now applied to many types of swindlers and shrewd thieves.

A WISE MAN TELLS YOU



“We all have time for our priorities based on their perceived importance to us.”

—Howard Suer, 1930-

“The graveyards are full of indispensable men.”

—Charles de Gaulle, 1890-1970

“You can pretend to be serious; you can’t pretend to be witty.”

—Sacha Guitry, 1885-1957

“If I had done everything I’m credited with, I’d be speaking to you from a laboratory jar at Harvard.”

—Frank Sinatra, 1915-1998

“If women didn’t exist, all the money in the world would have no meaning.”

—Aristotle Onassis, 1906-1975

“The most remarkable thing about my mother is that for thirty years she served the family nothing but leftovers. The original meal has never been found.”

—Calvin Trillin, 1935-

“When we talk to God, we’re praying. When God talks to us, we’re schizophrenic.”

—Lily Tomlin, 1939,

“My father was frightened of his father, I was frightened of my father, and I am damned well going to see to it that my children are frightened of me.”

—King George V, 1865-1936

“If a child shows himself to be incorrigible, he should be decently and quietly beheaded at the age of twelve lest he grow to maturity, marry, and perpetuate his kind.”

—Don Marquis, 1878-1937

“If you must hold yourself up to your children, hold yourself up as an object lesson and not as an example.”

—George Bernard Shaw, 1856-1950

“A foundation is a large body of money surrounded by people who want some.”

—Dwight Macdonald, 1906-1983

“If Noah had been truly wise He would have swatted those two flies.”

—H. Castle,

“Except for the nine months before he draws his first breath, no man manages his affairs as well as a tree does.”

—George Bernard Shaw, 1856-1950



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Cartoons of The Month

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GLASBERGEN

"That's right, I've decided to give myself a zero pay raise this year."