

The Box City Bulletin

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

Always remember, this is your Bulletin. If you disagree with any editorial content, we welcome opposing points of view as well as comments on public issues.

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

Shipping to Mexico and Latin America

Shipping to Mexico? Moving to Mexico?

Your Box City stores will now ship anything directly to Mexico and other Latin American countries.

We have made affiliations that will enable us to provide door-to-door service for packages, household goods, and any other commodities directly to the residence or other designated destination.



The good news is that we will provide a fair price which includes:

1. Door-to-door package service with a single factor rate.
2. The single factor rate includes:
 - a. Customs duties
 - b. Insurance

- c. Door-to-door transportation.
- d. 15 day delivery period.

3. Household goods moving price will include;
 - a. Customs brokerage service.
 - b. Insurance
 - c. Door-to-door service on the same truck.
 - d. Single carrier responsibility.

Please see your local Box City store for rates and more information.

An Ode to Box City Shipping

Hey Box City, way to go!

Now we're shipping to Mexico.

To all of our wonderful Latino friends,
You'll find that our service never ends.

You pickup the box and take it home,
Fill it yourself with stuff and foam.

Then bring it back without much fuss,
And leave the rest of it up to us.

The very next day we'll be on the go,
Shipping your stuff to Mexico,

In a couple of weeks it'll be at the door,
In Mexico City . . . Or El Salvador.

The Box City Science Page

A Short History of Nearly Everything

EDITOR'S NOTE: Not too long ago, my long term and dear friend Mike Miller sent me a book titled "A Short History of Nearly Everything," by Bill Bryson.

About 25 years ago, Mike Miller came into my office to quote on our business insurance. I was so impressed by his demeanor, his integrity, (and the fact that he saved us a small fortune in premiums) that we switched all of our insurance business to him.

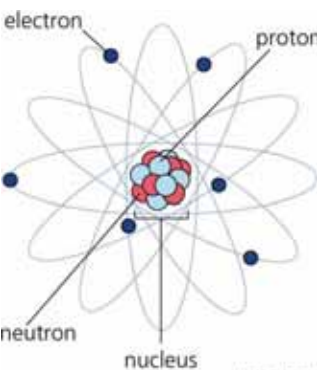
As I said, that was 25 years ago. Over those years we've become good friends, although we don't see too much of one another since he moved to Sacramento.

I'm going to share a few excerpts from "A Short History of Nearly Everything" with you, with the recommendation that you buy this fascinating book for yourself.

Part 1. LOST IN THE COSMOS

"No matter how hard you try you will never be able to grasp just how tiny, how spatially unassuming, is a proton. It is just way too small.

A proton is an infinitesimal part of an atom, which is itself of course an insubstantial thing. Protons are so small that a little dib of ink like the dot on this i can hold something in the region of 500,000,000,000 of them, rather more than the number of seconds contained in half a million years. So protons are exceedingly



AN ATOM

microscopic, to say the very least.

Now imagine if you can (and of course you can't) shrinking one of those protons down to a billionth of its normal size into a space so small that it would make a proton seem enormous. Now pack into that tiny, tiny space about an ounce of matter. Excellent. You are ready to start a universe.

I'm assuming of course that you wish to build an inflationary universe. If you'd prefer instead to build a more old-fashioned, standard Big Bang universe, you'll need additional materials. In fact, you'll need to gather up everything there is—every last mote and particle of matter between here and the edge of creation—and squeeze it into a spot so infinitesimally compact that it has no dimensions at all. It is known as a singularity.

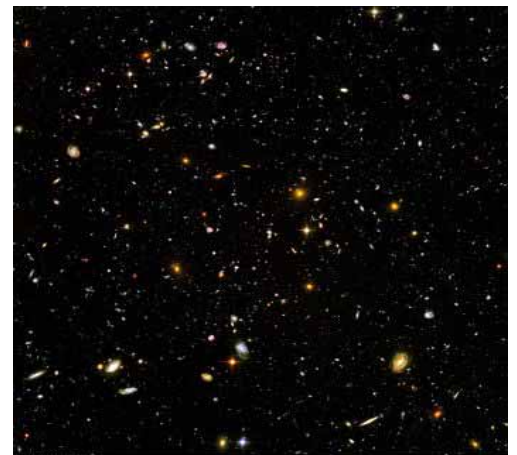
In either case, get ready for a really big bang. Naturally, you will wish to retire to a safe place to observe the spectacle. Unfortunately there is nowhere to retire to because outside the singularity there is no *where*. When the universe begins to expand, it won't be spreading out to fill a large emptiness. The only space that exists is the space it creates as it goes.

It is natural but wrong to visualize the singularity as a kind of pregnant dot hanging in a dark, boundless void. But there is no space, no darkness. The singularity has no "around" around it. There is no space for it to occupy, no place for it to be. We can't even ask how long it has been there—whether it has just lately popped into being, like a good idea, or whether it has been there forever, quietly awaiting the right moment. Time doesn't exist. There is no past for it to emerge from.

And so, from nothing, our universe begins.

In a single blinding pulse, a moment of glory much too swift and expansive for any form of words, the singularity assumes heavenly dimensions, space beyond conception. In the first lively second (a second that

many cosmologists will devote their careers to shaving into ever-finer wafers) is produced gravity and other forces that govern physics. In less than a minute the universe is a million billion miles across and growing fast. There is a lot of heat now,



ten billion degrees of it, enough to begin the nuclear reactions that create the lighter element—principally hydrogen and helium, with a dash (about one atom in a hundred million) of lithium. In three minutes, 98 percent of all the matter there is or will ever be has been produced. We have a universe. It is a place of the most wondrous and gratifying possibility, and beautiful too. And it was all done in about the time it takes to make a sandwich.



Editor's Note: The book contained many more subjects, but this is all we had space for.

The Box City Poetry Corner

A Sister is Forever

By Bruce B. Wilmer

A sister's a sister forever,
A bond that diminishes never,
A friend who is kindly and caring,
A sibling God chooses for sharing.

Few ties are as deep and profound,
And with so much affection abound,
Though some thoughts are seldom expressed,
Love endures and survives every test.

One of the constants that rest in the heart,
A sister's a primary part.
She'll always be there when you need her—
You listen, you value, you heed her.

As growth, independence you ponder,
Your feelings grow deeper and fonder;
And life tells you one thing that's true:
A sister's a large part of you.



The Sailor's Grave

By Eliza Cook, (1818-1889)

Our bark was out-far, far from land,
When the fairest of our gallant band
Grew sadly pale and waned away
Like the twilight of an autumn day.

We watched him through long hours of pain,
But our cares were lost, our hopes were vain;
Death brought for him no coward alarm,
For he smiled as he died on a messmate's arm.

He had no costly winding sheet,
But we placed a round shot at his feet,
And he slept in his hammock as safe and sound
As a king in his lawn shroud, marble bound.

We proudly decked his funeral vest
With the English flag upon his breast:
We gave him that as the badge of the brave,
And then he was fit for his sailor's grave.

Our voices broke-our hearts turned weak—
Hot tears were seen on the brownest cheek—
And a quiver played on the lips of pride,
As we lowered him down the ship's dark side.

A plunge-a splash-and our task was o'er,
The billows rolled as they rolled before;
But many a rude prayer hallowed the wave
That closed above the sailor's grave.



A Box City Furry Tale

Miko

By Howard Suer

Our Box City office was on the ground floor of a building that surrounded a courtyard. It was on a busy street, but once you entered the courtyard you were in a quiet and secluded place. There was a picnic table with benches there, where one could enjoy a leisurely lunch on a warm day.

It was just such a warm day when I received an urgent call from Andi, my wife. "There's an injured dog under the picnic table!" she shouted. I dropped what I was doing and within ten minutes I was at the building. There he was, a fairly large shepherd type puppy about 6 months old. He was indeed injured. He was bleeding and whimpering.

He had apparently been hit by a car. Frightened and hurting, he sought comfort away from the traffic in our quiet alcove.

He let me pick him up. Cradled in my arms I carried him to my car, and we drove to the nearest veterinary clinic. We sat in the examining room for about ten minutes waiting for the doctor. —\$232 later he was patched up and ready to go home . . . But where was home? We drove back to the office where I inquired of the other tenants if anyone knew who owned the pup. Somehow I was hoping to recover my \$232.00.

As I stood in front of the building I observed the traffic whizzing by. Then I had a vision of what probably happened to this hapless pup. He was most likely riding in the back of a pickup truck. As young, inexperienced and energetic as he was, he probably jumped out of the moving truck and injured himself as he bounced on the pavement. His owner, unaware of the incident kept on going. By the time he noticed the puppy was missing he would have no idea where he lost him.

Meanwhile, what was I to do with this poor creature? Well, for starters he looked hungry. We stopped at the market and picked

up a few cans of dog food. Then we went home where I planned to keep him until we could find his owner.

For the next few months we looked in the newspaper for any missing dog ads but there were no ads with his description.

Over those few months I bonded with this wonderfully friendly guy. He was apparently a mixture of Akita and German Shepherd and since the Akita is a Japanese breed we named him *Miko* which was a Japanese sounding name.

As time passed, Miko and I developed a close bond. We went everywhere together. When someone saw me alone they always asked, "Where's Miko?"

He loved to chase a ball. One day I had a great idea. I rolled the newspaper up and secured it with a rubber band. Then, I threw it out the front door onto our walkway and said, "Go get it Miko" Miko ran, bringing it back in his mouth. After only two tries, he immediately brought the paper in when I said simply, "Miko, get the paper please." (I always said please when I gave him a command).

Some time later I did the same thing with his plastic food dish. After only a few times he learned to bring his food dish on command.

One day, I came downstairs without my shoes. Never having trained him to bring shoes, I said, Miko, go get my shoes please." Miko looked at me inquisitively. I repeated it several times, when suddenly he ran upstairs, returning with a shoe in his mouth. Surprised and delighted, I said, "Go get the other shoe please." He ran upstairs returning with another shoe. Sadly, they were not from the same pair,

but his heart was in the right place.

To this day, Miko has never brought me two shoes from the same pair. I will never let him know that however. And on the rare occasion that the shoes are not both for the same foot I will wear two different shoes praising Miko all the while.

One day we visited our West Los Angeles Box City store. It was plain to see that Peri, the store manager was deathly afraid of dogs. She stood with her hands up near her neck with fear in her eyes. Nothing I could say would alleviate her fear.

The following week, after a little training, Miko carried the store's paychecks in envelopes bundled together with a rubber band. He walked into Peri's office and dropped them at her feet, looking up at her with his big brown eyes. I was amazed to see Peri drop to her knees hugging Miko and making such a fuss over her newfound friend. To this day, Peri has no fear of dogs and is disappointed when show I up without Miko.

Miko was once tested at Holy Cross hospital for their program "Pets with a purpose." He passed all of their tests with flying colors qualifying him to visit sick patients in the hospital.

Frequently, if I am preoccupied at feeding time, Miko will bring his food dish to me, dropping it at my feet. We have somehow breached the language barrier and developed a way of communicating that few people have mastered with a species that speaks a different language.

It's been ten years since that warm April day that Miko appeared as an injured puppy in our courtyard. I really didn't want a dog then. . . . Today, I can't imagine what life without Miko would be like.

~



Interesting Word Origins

PUNCTUATION

Early English manuscripts had no punctuation. They often didn't have spaces between words. Punctuation became a convention only when reading aloud . . . There was a great deal of experiment. Over thirty marks can be found in medieval manuscripts—various combinations of dots, curls and dashes. Most of them disappeared after the arrival of printing. Some of them looked like modern marks, but their function was not the same: a point, for example represented a pause, rather than a sentence ending, and the height of a point would vary to express the degree of pause.

Printers had to make decisions about punctuation and capitalization as well as about spelling. The earliest European printers generally followed the marks they found in the manuscripts, the actual shapes depended on the typeface used. Most recognized three kinds of pause, represented by a point, a virgule (/) and a mark of interrogation. William Caxton chiefly used a virgule and a point (.), occasionally a colon (:), and a paragraph mark. Word-breaks at the end of a line

were shown by a double virgule (//). The comma began to replace the double virgule in the 1520s. . . . Towards the end of the fifteenth century, semicircular parentheses. The question mark, and the semicolon, as well as the comma, were introduced in Europe, however it took some time for them all to appear in England.

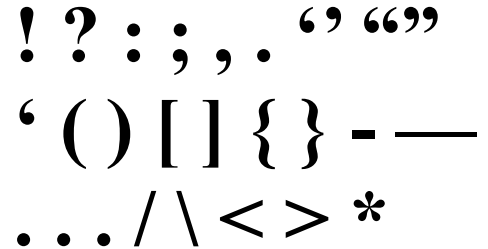


There was a great deal of inconsistency of usage, especially when several people worked on the same book. Even in modern editions a comparison of two editions (e.g. of Shakespeare's Sonnets) will bring to



light a remarkable range of differences. In the sixteenth century there was a great confusion among compositors over the use of the apostrophe. At first they only used it as a marker of possession came much later, in the eighteenth century. It took a long time for the use of these marks to achieve some sort of stability. In fact, of course, they never did totally stabilize. Publishers compile guidelines to ensure consistency. It is one writer's opinion that no two publishers have the same list.

The history of punctuation shows that the complexity does not disappear. Rather, it changes as time goes by. And it is continuing to change. The biggest punctuation changes since the Renaissance are about to hit us, because of the Internet.



The Little Known Battle of Greenland

The Nazi invasion of Denmark in 1940 put the island of Greenland in an awkward situation. As a Danish colony, technically they should have surrendered to Germany following the German occupation of Denmark. But that might have allowed the Nazis to set up bases along the island's expansive coastline and relay information to their submarines. Eske Brun, the chief administrative officer of Greenland would not allow it.

Brun decided to fight. He put together an army to resist any Nazi attacks. (The "army" consisted of a grand total of nine

men, traversing the snow covered coastline on dog sledges.) Dubbed "the Sledge Patrol," the Greenland army radioed weather data to the Allies and kept an eye out for Nazi invaders. And they soon arrived. In 1943 a small German naval detachment was sent to establish a weather base and battle the mighty Greenland army.

The invading Nazis and the Sledge Patrol spent more time fighting snowstorms than fighting each other. But in the end, the Greenland army was triumphant and the Germans were prevented from establishing a permanent weather base.

The sledge Patrol still exists—they consist of one small squad under the command of the Danish Navy, performing surveillance duties along Greenland's coast. And yes, they still use dog sleds to get around.



Editorial

The Pothole in The Street

The Pothole in The Street

By Howard Suer

“Everyone complains, but no one does anything about it.” How many times have you heard that? It’s so true of our culture. After a rainy period a while ago I was in our Van Nuys store. The rains had washed away some of the loosened asphalt on the street near our store leaving sizeable potholes.

During the first hour I heard several people complain about it. “The city doesn’t maintain our streets! There is a huge pothole in front of your store!” they would complain. After hearing that complaint repeatedly I thought to myself, *‘Is that true? Doesn’t the city give a damn about those potholes in front of our store?’* Then it occurred to me, perhaps they don’t even know the potholes are there.

I picked up the phone and called the street maintenance department. The very next morning a truck pulled up and a crew of men filled the holes with fresh asphalt, tamping them down firmly. The entire procedure took about an hour, and they were off to the next reported pothole. Those potholes taught me a valuable lesson. I was always one of those guys who was outspoken about complaining how our government doesn’t attend to things properly. It was at that time I realized that I was one of the whiners — not one of the fixers.

Since that time, whenever I saw something that needed fixing, I made sure I brought it to the attention of the ones responsible for fixing it.

It was after that, when I discovered that there are certain things that the government really doesn’t give a damn about.

Example #1: Some years ago the city repaved Vanowen street. During the process they covered the striped crosswalk at the corner of Forbes Avenue.

Since I used that crosswalk frequently I found that without the painted, striped crosswalk, cars didn’t even slow down for a pedestrian. (even though in California the pedestrians always have the right of way).

I wrote a letter to street maintenance formally requesting that the striped crosswalk be replaced. As unbelievable as it sounds, I didn’t receive

a reply to my letter until a year-and-a-half later. The response stated that “There is an implied crosswalk at every intersection” and that cars must yield to pedestrians. It went on to say that the city’s studies indicated that there were fewer automobile/pedestrian traffic accidents at unmarked intersections than at striped crosswalks. And that my request for a crosswalk was denied.

I wrote back challenging those statements by citing my personal daily experiences that most traffic doesn’t even slow down for a pedestrian, no less stop. Further, I stated that if you find fewer accidents at unmarked crosswalks, then why do you delineate any crosswalks at all.

I never received an answer to that letter—

Example #2: The Post Office:

This is an ongoing problem. Of the almost 1,500 Box City Bulletins we mail every month a dozen or so are returned for various reasons. When this happens, if there is no forwarding address indicated we remove the name from our mailing list. Frequently we hear from some of our customers stating that the address was correct, and that there was no reason for mail being returned.

During the past few years we have had to stop payment on a number of checks because the recipient never received them. In one instance, the landlord of our Van Nuys

store didn’t receive the rent check. We had been mailing that check to the same address for over 22 years. I asked them to wait another week, after which we stopped payment on the check and mailed a new one. THREE WEEKS LATER, the check was returned to us marked, “unable to deliver, reason unknown.” (The address was correct, with the same mailing label our computer had been printing out for years).

We mailed a check to our accountant in his own pre-printed return envelope. He did not receive it. Once again, we stopped payment, issuing a new check. A week later the check was returned to us with the same notation. The explanation from the post office — They have new equipment. The second line of his address stated “accounting services” The post office’s new equipment couldn’t read that as an address so it was returned to us. (two weeks later).

As recently as last month, an envelope containing six checks for substantial amounts, to one of our suppliers here in Los Angeles, was not received. When they called us we said, “The check is in the mail. (How many times have you heard that before?) Well . . . After waiting two weeks we stopped payment on those checks issuing new ones . . . mailing them via Certified Mail. Several days later they received the envelope we had originally mailed.

The United States Postal Service, a quasi government agency, is not responsive to complaints. They keep raising postage rates while at the same time giving less and less quality service.

I guess there are some potholes we cant fix.



Striped Crosswalk



Why We Say It — (Phrase Origins)

“A Drop in The Bucket”

This metaphor first appeared in the English translation of the Bible by John Wyclif in 1382 in Isaiah ix, 15: “Lo! Jentiles as a drope of a boket, and as moment of balance ben holden.” In the King James version the passage reads: “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. Charles Dickens gave impetus to the further alteration or expansion in *A Christmas Carol* (1844). In the first conversation between Scrooge and the ghost of his deceased partner, Marley, the ghost says: “The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business.” And nowadays the “drop” may be of any liquid into any proportionately great body.



“As Clean as A Whistle”

Robert Burns, (1759-1796), in his poem, “Earnest Cry,” used *toom* (“empty”) rather than “clean”—“Paint Scotland greetan owre her trissle; Her mutchkin stoup as toom’s a whistle”—and other writers have had the whistle clear, dry, pure, or other adjectives. The basic intent, however, is to indicate that, for a sweet, pure sound from a whistle or reed, the tube must be clean and dry.



“A Fish Out of Water”

One out of one’s element or the setting or environment to which one is accustomed. But unlike the aquatic animal yanked from the sea, the person who feels like a fish out of water rarely suffers death from the sensation. The metaphor in English is found as far back as the *English Works* of John Wyclif (c. 1380): “And how thei weren out of their cloister as fishis withouten water.” Amusingly it is connected with the Latin expression *mus in matella*, a mouse in the pot: said of a person who finds himself in a pretty predicament.



A WISE MAN TELLS YOU



“Eminent posts make great men greater, and little men less.”

—Jean de la Bruyere, 1645-1696

“Never engage in a battle of wits with an unarmed person,”

—Anonymous

“There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.”

—Edith Wharton, 1862-1937

“The graveyards are full of indispensable men.”

—Charles de Gaulle, 1890-1970

“The wicked are always surprised to find that the good can be clever.”

—Luc de Vauvenargues, 1715-1747

“Fortune does not change men; it un-masks them.”

—Suzanne Necker, 1739-1794

“Rudeness is the weak man’s imitation of strength.”

—Eric Hoffer, 1902-1983

“Conscience is the inner voice that warns us somebody may be looking.”

—Henry Louis Mencken, 1880-1956

“It is no tragedy to do ungrateful people favors, but it is unbearable to be indebted to a scoundrel.”

—Francois Due de La Rochefoucauld, 1613-1680

“To the man who is afraid everything rustles.”

—Sophocles, 496-406 B.C.

“That all men are equal is a proposition to which, at ordinary times, no sane individual has ever given his assent.”

—Aldous Leonard Huxley, 1894-1963

“Endurance is frequently a form of indecision.”

Princess Elizabeth Bibesco, 1897-1945

“One’s real life is often the one that one does not lead.”

—Oscar Wilde, 1854-1900

“We have to serve our self many years before we gain our own confidence.”

—Henry S. Haskins, 1878-1957

“A loving person lives in a loving world. A hostile person lives in a hostile world: Everyone you meet is your mirror.”

—George Herbert, 1593-1633



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