

# The Box City Bulletin

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If you would like to receive this publication please write to:

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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.

## The History of The Box City Bulletin

It all started back around 1979 when we owned a company called California Moving & Storage. We were a small company with about 15 to 20 employees. Everyone knew everyone else. We thought a company newsletter with personal news such as whose birthday was coming up, anniversaries, weddings, friendly gossip, and company news would be fun and help to bind us all together. It was one sheet printed on two sides. It was distributed to employees, suppliers, friends and relatives. The mailing list consisted of about fifty names.

*The California Moving & Storage Journal* became so popular that it eventually grew to two sheets, or four pages. Friends and employees contributed news items and jokes, which we all shared.

In 1985, Box City was born, as an offshoot of California Moving & Storage. *The California Moving & Storage Journal* became *The Box City Bulletin*. As the Company grew, we kept

adding customers and new suppliers to the mailing list, until our mailing list grew to 1,500. Since by then most of our readers did not know one another, we discontinued the birthdays and other personal information. The "*Poetry Page*" was born. Then the "*Science Page*." Then "*A Wise Man Says*", until eventually it evolved to the format you are holding in your hands right now.

Every now and then, a Bulletin is returned because someone moved and left no forwarding address. However, we receive new requests for the Bulletin from all over the Country and even some foreign countries. Our subscription list keeps growing.

So we want to thank you, our loyal friends, suppliers, employees and others who are responsible for the growth of Box City and the Box City Bulletin. We realize that without you there would be no Box City . . . And no Box City Bulletin.



## THE BOX CITY BULLETIN IS ABSOLUTELY FREE !!

We want you to know that. You are under no obligation to pay or send any money.

That being said . . . Every year at this time we do give everyone (who can afford it) an opportunity to voluntarily contribute in order to offset the expenses of publishing and distributing the Box City Bulletin. With the rising costs of labor, printing, folding and postage, it costs about \$30 per year to distribute the Bulletin.

We also realize that there are some people who just don't have time to read publications such as this. Therefore some issues wind up in the

"round file."

If you would like to continue receiving the Box City Bulletin please fill out the enclosed card and return it to us. **You don't have to send any money.**

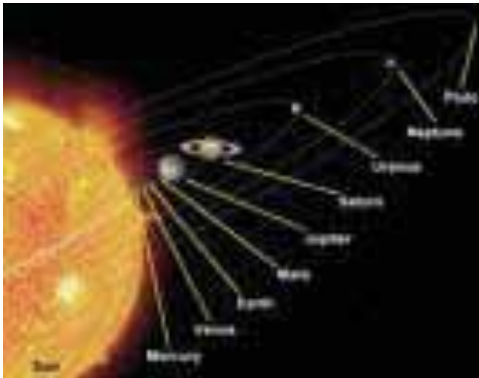
For those of you who would like to contribute any amount to offset the costs there is also a space to indicate your gift.

Please remember . . . The Box City Bulletin is a labor of love; there is no obligation on your part.

# The Box City Science Page

## Welcome to The Solar System

When you think of our solar system, you immediately conjure up the image of a glowing sphere representing the sun with nine smaller spheres circling around it. (representing the planets).



Well folks . . . as they say, “that’s just the tip of the iceberg.” As for the size of our very own, intimate solar system, hang on to your seats because this will blow you away.



**Our sun - The center of our solar sys-**

In order to properly draw to scale, the small star we call “the Sun” and the nine small planets orbiting around it, you couldn’t do it on a piece of paper the size of this page. As a matter of fact, if you drew our earth the size of a pea, Jupiter would be over one thousand feet away, and Pluto would be a mile and a half away, and you would need a microscope to see it because it would be no larger than a bacterium. Using the same scale, the closest star in our galaxy, Proxima Centauri, would be ten thousand miles away (requiring a really large piece of paper),

Pluto was discovered in 1930, and most recently has had its status as a planet chal-

lenged. Pluto does not act like the other planets. Whereas the other eight travel on more or less the same plane, Pluto’s orbit is very irregular. For most of the 1980s and 1990s, Pluto was closer to us than Neptune. On February 11, 1999, Pluto returned to the outside lane, where it will remain for the next 228 years.

Let’s imagine that we could travel to Pluto. From Pluto, our sun would appear to be a tiny pinhead somewhat like a small star in the universe.

So you see, the solar system is quite enormous, and if we could travel to the edge of our solar system, we would go far beyond Pluto. Sure, on the schoolroom charts, Pluto is the farthest point, but the system doesn’t end there. In fact, it isn’t even close to ending there. We have to pass the Oort Cloud, a vast realm of drifting comets that orbits our sun, stretching about two light years out into the cosmos.

Traveling at the top speed of our current space ships, it would take twenty-five thousand (that’s 25,000) years to reach Proxima Centauri (our closest star), 4 1/2 light years away.

That’s right, traveling at 25,000 MPH, it would take 25,000 years to travel to the closest star in our own galaxy, the milky way (see picture to the right). → . . . And when you got there, you would be in the midst of nothingness, with the next landmark star 4.6 light years farther away.

When you think about how big an undertaking it was traveling to the moon (a mere 240,000 miles away), you will realize that it is highly unlikely that in our lifetime we will ever have man travel to another planet, no less to the edge of our solar system.

Isn’t it entertaining to think of exotic visitors traveling so far from a planet orbiting a distant star, just to make circles in a wheat field in England, or to scare the dickens out of a farmer on a lonely road in Kansas?

After reviewing all of that, I find it absolutely fascinating that our sun has the gravitational pull to hold all of the planets, moons, meteors, the ort belt and countless other space debris in orbit around it. Our earth, for example is traveling at an extremely high speed, trying to escape from its captor. But for billions of years it has been held in a controlled orbit that was able to provide the sun’s warmth and atmosphere that sustains life.

Since the beginning of the recorded history of man, we have looked at the heavens and tried to understand what it was all about. In recent years, with the invention of the telescope, radio telescopes, spectroscopes, and all the other scientific equipment to look at and measure outer space, we have come to realize that we understand very little about our universe. There are black holes, dark matter, anti matter, and other inexplicable objects that we know nothing about.

Great physicists have theorized mathematically what it’s all about, and they are not all in agreement about it.

Sometimes, on a clear evening, I will look up and my heart will beat a little faster as I perceive with awe that which we know so little about.



**Our Galaxy — The Milky Way**

**Editors Note:** This science page was inspired by, and contains excerpts from the book, “A Short History of Nearly Everything” by Bill Bryson.

Thanks again to my dear friend Michael Miller for sending that wonderful book to me.

# The Box City Poetry Corner

## The Creation

Author Unknown

When God made the earth and sky  
The flowers and the trees,  
He then made all the animals  
The fish, the birds and bees.

And when at last he'd finished  
Not one was quite the same.  
He said, "I'll walk this world of mine  
And give each one a name."

And so he traveled far and wide  
And everywhere he went,  
A little creature followed him  
Until its strength was spent.

When all were named upon the earth  
And in the sky and sea,  
The little creature said, "Dear Lord,  
There's not one left for me."

Kindly, the father said to him,  
"I've left you to the end.  
I've turned my own name back to front  
... And called you 'dog' — My friend."



## VICTORY

(At Last)

By Harry Purcell

(Inspired by the passing of my dear friend Mike Homer)

**A**m I to be the selected one,  
To stay behind from sun to sun?  
Only by your grace I tarry,  
Assigned to the supernumerary.

Is it your will that I stand by,  
To praise my comrades as they die?  
This is an honored role I play,  
To sadly send them on their way.

Adieu to those who travel west,  
To some Valhalla's final rest.  
A slow salute with trembling hand,  
Tho I am bent I proudly stand!

Old soldier's memories unsung,  
Gave it all when they were young.  
I will now do your bidding lord,  
To hold aloft your shining sword!

Should you be the last GI standing,  
Completed duties so demanding;  
Whether it be day or night,  
Don't forget . . . Turn off the light!



**Editor's Note:** Harry Purcell is a friend of mine. He is an 85 year old WWII veteran. His poetry comes from his heart.

# A Box City Furry Tale

## The Potato Puppy

Author Unknown

**M**y four-year-old son, Shane, had been asking for a puppy for over a month, but his Daddy kept saying, "No dogs! A dog will dig up the garden and chase the ducks and kill our rabbits. No dog, and that's final!"



Each night Shane prayed for a puppy, and each morning he was disappointed when there was no puppy waiting outside. I was peeling potatoes for dinner, and he was sitting on the floor at my feet asking for the thousandth time, "Why won't Daddy let me have a puppy!"

"Because they are a lot of trouble. Don't cry, maybe Daddy will change his mind someday," I encouraged him.

"No he won't, and I'll never have a puppy in a million years," Shane wailed.

I looked into his dirty, tear-streaked face. How could we deny him his one wish? So I said the words that were first spoken by Eve. I know a way to make Daddy change his mind."

"Really?" Shane wiped away his tears and sniffed.

I handed him a potato.

"Take this and carry it with you until it turns into a puppy," I whispered. "Never let it out of your sight for one minute. Keep it with you all the time, and on the third day, tie a string around it and drag it around the yard and see what happens!"

Shane grabbed the potato with both hands. "Mama, how do you make a potato into a puppy?" He turned it over and over in his little hands.

"Shh! It's a secret!" I whispered and sent him on his way. "Lord, you know what a woman must do to keep peace in her home!", I prayed.

Shane faithfully carried his potato around for two days, he slept with it, bathed it and talked to it.

On the third day I said to my husband, "We really should get a pet for Shane."

"What makes you think he needs a pet!" my husband leaned against the doorway.

"Well, he's been carrying a potato around with him for days. He calls it Wally and says it's his pet. He sleeps with it on his pillow and right now he has a string tied to it and he's dragging it around the yard," I said.

"A potato!" my husband asked and looked out the window and watched Shane taking his potato for a walk.

"It will break his heart when the potato gets mushy and rots," I said and started getting food for lunch. "Besides, every time I try to peel potatoes for dinner, Shane cries because he says I'm killing Wally's family."

"A potato!" my husband asked. "My son has a pet potato?"

"Well," I said shrugging, "You said he couldn't have a puppy. He was so disappointed, in his mind, he decided he had to have a pet . . ."

"That's crazy!" my husband said.

"Maybe you're right. But explain to me why he is dragging that potato around the yard on a string," I said.

My husband watched our son for a few more minutes. "I'll bring home a puppy tonight. I'll stop by the animal shelter after work. I guess a puppy can't be that much trouble," he sighed. "It's better than a potato."

That night Shane's Daddy brought home a wiggling puppy and a pregnant white cat that he took pity on while he was at the shelter. Everyone was happy. My husband thought he'd saved his son from a nervous breakdown. Shane had a puppy, a cat and five kittens and believed his mother had magic powers that could change a potato into a puppy. And I was happy because I got my potato back and cooked it for dinner.



Everything was perfect until one evening when I was cooking dinner, Shane tugged on my dress and asked, "Mama, do you think I could have a pony for my birthday?"

I looked into his sweet little face and said, "Well, first we have to take a watermelon . . ."

~

# Interesting Word Origins

## BLURB

American humorist Gelett Burgess was once more widely known as Charles W. Fairbanks—who spent eight years as vice president under the shadow of Teddy Roosevelt.



Burgess, who was never more than a minute in any man's shadow, delighted readers and listeners throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Some of his gags were so preposterous that at first they were taken seriously.

Poking fun at techniques used by advertisers, Burgess prepared a dummy book jacket for use at a publishers convention. He stole a sketch of a lovely young woman and displayed it prominently. Beneath the picture he put a brief endorsement of the book by "Miss Belinda Blurb."

His prank was so successful that Burgess is credited with getting an artificial word into the English language singlehandedly. Soon after Belinda Blurbs fake enthusiasm was circulated in 1907, any short laudatory notice of a book, a record, or a song came to be known as an advertising "blurb".

## BRaille

Every reader of Braille, along with most of us who don't have trained fingers, is aware that the system of communicating by means of raised dots was devised by Louis Braille.

Born sighted, little Louis like to play in his father's leather-working shop. It was there that he was blinded by an awl at age three. His parents sent him to a special school, where he learned to recognize huge embossed letters in books so big he could not lift them.

One day an army officer came to the school to demonstrate a system of raised dots and dashes. Since his message could be punched out in the dark, inventor Barbier called his system "night writing." Though Louis was only fifteen, his imagination was fired. Within five years, he had improved and simplified the Barbier system. Braille's new unit of raised dots, three high and two wide, afforded 62 combinations.

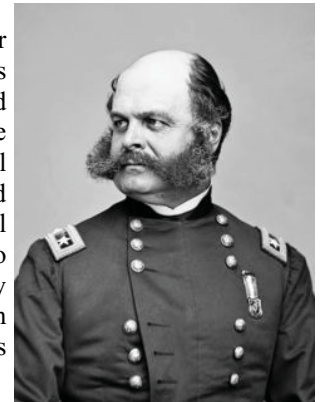
It took decades for the system, worked out by the 20-year-old to win acceptance. Once it did, Braille dominated communication of the blind until the use of audio equipment became widespread.

## SIDEBURNS

Civil war General Ambrose E. Burnside was almost as dashing a figure as was George Armstrong Custer. In most public appearances, he sported a hat so flamboyant that it took his name. Defying established custom, Burnside shaved his chin smooth while displaying a full mustache and side bar whiskers.

Thousands of men started wearing Burnside hats and adopted the Burnside style of facial hair. But reversal of syllables is a common form of wordplay. Thus, many a dashing fellow who prided himself on his lovely burnside's inverted the general's name and called them *sideburns*.

The vogue for side whiskers has waxed and waned. Since then, the colorful name adapted from that General has been used to designate any patch of hair in front of a man's ears.



# The Dead Sea Lives

Fish cannot live in the super salty waters of the Dead Sea, but some salt-tolerant microorganisms thrive there. One of these is *Halobacterium halobium*. It contains a purple pigment that, like the chlorophyll of green plants, enables living cells to photosynthesize—to absorb the energy of sunlight and use it to convert water and carbon dioxide to energy giving carbohydrates, such as glucose. Another salt-tolerant microorganism found in the Dead Sea is the alga *Dunaliella*, from which petroleum can be made.

Thus the Sea is not dead—and neither is it

a sea. It is a salt lake occupying the northern extension of the Great Rift Valley on the Israel-Jordan border. Its shore, 1,302 feet below the sea level of the eastern Mediterranean, is the lowest place on the earth's land surface. Summer temperatures along its shores frequently exceed 104° F. The Dead Sea is the world's saltiest body of water, some seven to eight times more salty than sea water. Nearly 30 percent of the water is dissolved salt and other minerals, such as potash and bromides, which are extracted for the chemical and fertilizer industries. The extraction plant is at the village of Sodom, in the region of the biblical

Sodom, near which Lot's wife is said to have been turned into a pillar of salt.



# Editorial

## A Rebuttal to Shantytown Editorial

By Koorosh Zartoshty

I am a big fan of your Bulletin and I look forward to it every month. I also enjoy discussing things with you because you are open to hearing the other side. I do have to say that this particular editorial, I feel is really not up to par. I think you did not really do your research on this, and are speaking purely from emotion. And the example of Bear Sterns that you use to stimulate the reader is not true.

Bear Stern was a victim, not the culprit that you are trying to show. The image of the culprit that you paint is the same heavy from "It's a Wonderful Life." That guy tried to get everyone to get mortgages from him, so he could take over their homes. However, Bear Stern was not an underwriter of individual home loans, they were the purchaser of these loans.

What do I mean by that? Most of these loans were originated by a smaller lender, then packaged together and sold to investment banking firms to diversify their portfolios. So who is the real culprit? I believe there are 3 groups responsible here.

1. **The Mortgage Broker:** How many people gave up their jobs and all of a sudden became mortgage brokers (some had the audacity to call themselves financial advisors). These guys were there only to line their own pockets. They misrepresented the loan to the prospective client, especially the "sub-prime" clients; and they misrepresented the client to the underwriter. The terms and conditions were not disclosed properly, and the worse the loan was for the client, the higher the commission. Where was the mighty Elliot Spitzer then to fight the truly shady salesman. Oh yes, he was on his crusade fighting mutual fund companies, one of the best self regulated and fair industries in the world.

Why? To get elected of course.

2. **The underwriter of these loans (the lender):** They didn't care. They were packaging them off and selling them to companies like Bear Stern, and Countrywide. Hey, didn't they find it odd that everyone was making an "undocumented" \$200,000 per year? "NO DOC LOANS" —are you kidding me?
3. **The poor guy who got sold these rotten loans (the Borrower:** Howard, I feel bad that people did not really know what they were going to get themselves into, but then again, I don't. You are signing a document and borrowing \$500,000. Don't you think it would be prudent to figure out what the terms of the loan are? My friend, this group was greedy. They didn't want to wait for their piece of the American Dream. Some of them really wanted a much bigger piece than they had saved up for.

Bear Sterns did not fall due to a bad economy as you described it. I believe it was a case of very bad timing. They made some good investments and tied up their money; and at that moment, their clients were about to panic and have a "good old fashioned run the bank" (a new version of a bank run). If liquidity was not such an issue for them, I believe they could have ridden it out.

The other thing I had a problem with in your editorial was your reference to the Great Depression and "the crash of 1929." You did not directly blame the depression on the crash, but you hinted at it (Hoover was also blamed for the crash). My good friend, most of the people in the Roaring 20's were not investing in "the market." That was really for the wealthy. This was the way before the Investment Act of 1934, which created mutual funds, and before Charles Schwab and E\*Trade. Most people had to use stock brokers (what are those?) who charged pretty high commissions at the time.

We can have the discussion on the Depres-

sion another time, but I feel the main reason was the dust bowl crisis (we were still largely an agricultural country), the lack of government spending and monetary policy. But we'll leave that for another day.

I understand your issue of the growing lower class and homeless people, and I believe it is a valiant cause. More of us need to be aware of our own people. I believe we need to do something about this crisis, but I don't think we need to blame investment bankers, and I don't think the government should protect us from ourselves (making bad investment decisions). I think they should make sure the game is fair, and lend a helping hand so that our fellow human beings don't have to live in such rotten conditions, and feel humiliated just because they are down.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Yesterday I went to a pet fair in a local park.

There were many booths of pet food and pet supply vendors. However the booths and tents occupied by dog rescue agencies were heart wrenching.

Some agencies had rescued dogs from the shelter that were scheduled to be euthanized. However, I found the saddest to be the dogs that were abandoned by their owners because their home had been repossessed, and they could not find an affordable place to rent that would accept a pet.

Let me tell you, if my home were foreclosed and I found myself in that predicament . . . Miko and I would sleep in the park together. He has been my best friend for 10 years, and there is no way I would ever abandon him.



# Why We Say It — (Phrase Origins)

## Ferret Out

Crusaders who had been to Africa brought one of the strangest animals back to Europe because it made a good pet. But the new-comer to England and Europe was so fond of eggs that it was often caught stealing them. From a corruption of an old expression used to describe “a thief with fur,” the egg stealer came to be known as the *ferret*.

Easily trained, the pink-eyed imported animal was widely used to hunt rats. Eventually, it became both a serious pursuit and a popular sport to ferret for rabbits and other burrowing animals.

Charles Dickens’ imagination was fired up by the egg-stealer’s name, so he picked it up and applied it to detective work. As a result, we now say that a searcher for hidden things *ferrets* out secrets.



## Playing Second Fiddle

Most early fiddles were small and high pitched. They were used along with the lute and timbrel as early as the 15th century. But the instrument didn’t come into its own until Claudio Monteverde began using it in 17th century orchestral pieces. By the time first and second violin arrangements became common, the musician who played first violin was the most honored member of the orchestra.

Popular music followed much the same course as classical, with the person who played first violin taking the lead role.

Today, any person . . . musician or not, who plays a subservient roll is said to *play second fiddle*.



## Best Foot Forward

This expression dates back to 15th century Europe, when noblemen and wealthy gentry were greatly concerned about beauty of person. They affected ruffled sleeves, powdered wigs, black satin knee breeches, and full length hose above buckled shoes.

Many of the idle rich were quite vain, and took pride in showing off a good pair of legs. Some went so far as to give preference to the one leg which they perceived to be most attractive. Such a fellow wanted to make the best possible sensation at levees and balls. So he found a position where he could stand with his best-looking leg and foot in front, where it could attract many glances.

By the 16th century, any person who wanted to make a good impression was said to “put his best foot forward.”



# A WISE MAN TELLS YOU



*“We are inclined to believe those we do not know because they have never deceived us.”*

—Dr. Samuel Johnson, 1709-1784

*“Clever liars give details, but the cleverest don't.”*

—anonymous

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

—Luc de Clapiers de Vauvenartues, 1715-1747

*“All men are tempted, There is no man that lives that can't be broken down, provided it is the right temptation, put in the right spot.”*

—Henry Ward Beecher, 1813-1887

*“As soon as we attract enough attention in the world to play a part in it, we are set rolling like a ball which will never again be at rest.”*

—Charles Josef-1735-1814

*“Most men pursue pleasure with such breathless haste that they hurry past it.”*

—Soren Kierkegaard, 1813-1855

*A very popular error—having the courage of one's convictions: Rather it is a matter of having the courage for an attack on one's convictions.”*

—Freidrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, 1844-1900

*“The greatest pleasure I have known is to do a good action by stealth, and to have it found out by accident.”*

—Charles Lamb, 1775-1834

*“You must not pay a man a compliment, and then straightway follow it with a criticism.”*

—Mark Twain, 1835-1910

*“Ridicule often checks what is absurd, and fully as often smothers that which is noble.”*

—Sir Walter Scott, 1771-1832

*“Chi Wen Tzu always thought three times before taking an action. Twice would have been quite enough.”*

—Confucius, 551-479 B.C.

*“Serious things cannot be understood without laughable things, not opposite at all without opposites.”*

—Plato, 428-348 B.C.

*“A committee is a cul-de-sac down which ideas are lured and then quietly strangled.”*

—Barnett Cocks, 1907-1989

*“Necessity never made a good bargain.”*

—Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790



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# Cartoons of The Month

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**“Just a salad for me. A vanilla ice cream salad with hot fudge dressing and marshmallow croutons.”**

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**“Gasoline prices are determined by supply and demand. We supply our paychecks, credit cards, retirement funds and life’s savings and the oil companies demand more.”**