

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.

So let's hear from you!

~

This Bulletin is Free . . . But!

For more than 25 years, this publication has been informing and entertaining our friends and customers. It's free. —And we have always loved sending it to you.

During those years postage rates have risen dramatically, as well as the cost of labor, materials and printing. However, during that same period our business has grown and we have been able to continue to absorb those rising costs.

This year, for the first time, our revenue is down while costs keep rising.

Therefore, we are asking for your help to offset the costs of the Box City Bulletin.

If you are able to, we would appreciate a voluntary contribution toward the expenses of publishing this newsletter.

If you cannot send anything, we will continue to send your Bulletin without charge as long as it is feasible. It has always been our intention that the Bulletin be a free publication.

The annual cost to provide the Box City Bulletin is about \$30.

Want To Keep Receiving The Bulletin?

We are aware that many people receive lots of junk mail that winds up in "The Round File".

Therefore, every year at this time we purge our mailing list of people who do not want to receive *The Box City Bulletin*.

We love sharing our views, news, and information with you, so please take a moment to fill out the enclosed postcard and send it back with your comments.

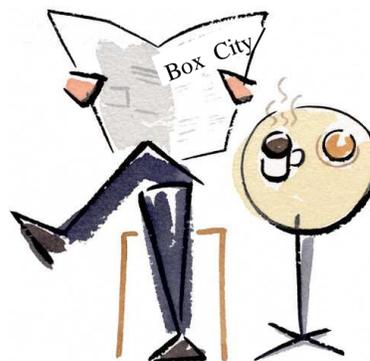
We really do want to hear from you.

Remember, there is no charge for the Bulletin. It's free! (unless you feel compelled to help out with a voluntary donation).

Please send the postcard to us to let us know that you would like to continue receiving the Bulletin (or whether you would like us to remove your name from our mailing list).

I personally get so many newsletters and "junk mail" that I will understand if you don't have time to read ours.

Sincerely,
Howard



The Box City Science Page

Could Food Shortages Bring Down Civilization?

These Are Four Key Concepts

- **F**ood scarcity and the resulting higher food prices are pushing poor countries into chaos.
- Such “Failed States” can export disease, terrorism, illicit drugs, weapons, and refugees.
- Water shortages, soil losses and rising temperatures from global warming are placing severe limits on food production.
- Without massive and rapid intervention to address those three environmental factors, a series of government collapses could threaten world order

- Zimbabwe
- Chad
- Iraq
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Afghanistan
- Ivory Coast
- Pakistan
- Central African Republic
- Guinea
- Bangladesh
- Burma (Myanmar)
- Haiti
- North Korea
- Ethiopia
- Uganda
- Lebanon
- Nigeria
- Sri Lanka

Source: “The Failed States Index 2008,” by the Fund for Peace and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.



Hand of a street boy holding a piece of bread

In six of the past nine years, world grain production has fallen short of consumption. When the 2008 harvest began, the amount in the grain bins was at a record low (only 62 days of consumption). As a result, world grain prices in the spring and summer of last year climbed to the highest level ever.

The number and percentage of undernourished people in the world’s 70 least developed countries are climbing rapidly, while the world’s backup food supply is declining.

Here, ranked from worst to better are the 20 countries closest to collapse, based on 12 social, economic, political and military indicators.

- Somalia
- Sudan

tive fuel demands. The grain it takes to fill a 25 gallon SUV tank with ethanol would feed one person for a year.

It’s simple economics. If the food value of the grain is less than the fuel value, the market will move the grain into fuel instead of food.

Further, in agricultural grain producing countries, there are three critical environmental factors; freshwater, topsoil and temperature. The effects of global warming have caused a shortage of freshwater, the loss of topsoil and rising temperatures, with the water shortages posing the most immediate threat. Irrigation consumes 70 percent of the world’s freshwater. Millions of irrigation wells in many countries are pumping water out of underground sources faster than rainfall can refill them. You can see where that is leading.

When a nation’s government can no longer provide security or basic services for its citizens, the resulting social chaos can have serious adverse effects beyond its own borders:

- Spreading disease
- Offering sanctuary to terrorists and pirates
- Spreading the sale of drugs and weapons
- Fostering political extremism
- Generating violence and refugees which can spill into neighboring countries.

A little known factor contributing to the world food shortage is the conversion of grain to automotive fuels.

A quarter of this year’s U.S. grain harvest — enough to feed 125 million Americans or half a billion Indians at current consumption levels—will go to fuel cars. Yet even if the entire U.S. grain harvest were diverted into making ethanol, it would meet at most 18 percent of U.S. automo-

Editor’s Note: This information is condensed from an article in *Scientific American* May, 2009 by Lester Brown.

The Box City Poetry Corner

The Cremation of Sam McGee (Part 2)

By Robert Service

Now a promise made is a debt unpaid, and the trail has its own stern code.
In the days to come, though my lips were dumb, in my heart how I cursed that load.
In the long, long night, by the lone firelight, while the huskies, round in a ring,
Howled out their woes to the homeless snows—O God! how I loathed the thing.

And every day that quiet clay seemed to heavy and heavier grow;
And on I went, though the dogs were spent and the grub was getting low;
The trail was bad, and I felt half mad, but I swore I would not give in;
And I'd often sing to the hateful thing, and it hearkened with a grin.



Till I came to the marge of Lake Lebarge, and a derelict there lay;
It was jammed in the ice, but I saw in a trice it was called the "Alice May."
And I looked at it, and I thought a bit, and I looked at my frozen chum;
Then "Here," said I, with a sudden cry, "is my cre-ma-tor-eum."

Some planks I tore from the cabin floor, and I lit the boiler fire;
Some coal I found that was lying around, and I heaped the fuel higher;
The flames just soared and the furnace roared—such a blaze you seldom see;
Then I burrowed a hole in the glowing coal, and I stuffed in Sam McGee.

Then I made a hike, for I didn't like to hear him sizzle so;
And the heavens scowled, and the huskies howled, and the wind began to blow.
It was icy cold, but the hot sweat rolled down my cheeks, and I don't know why;
And the greasy smoke in an inky cloak went streaking down the sky.

I do not know how long in the snow I wrestled with grisly fear;
But the stars came out and they danced about ere again I ventured near;
I was sick with dread, but I bravely said: "I'll just take a peep inside.
I guess he's cooked, and it's time I looked;" . . . then the door I opened wide.

And there sat Sam, looking cool and calm, in the heart of the furnace roar;
And he wore a smile you could see a mile, and he said: "Please close that door.
It's fine in here, but I greatly fear you'll let in the cold and storm—
Since I left Plumtree, down in Tennessee, it's the first time I've been warm."

Box City Furry Tales

Editor's Note: Instead of a Box City Furry Tale in this issue, we are publishing this bonus poem.

The author is unknown, however it is such a moving poem we couldn't resist it.

The Final Inspection

The Marine stood and faced God,

Which must always come to pass.

He hoped his shoes were shining,

Just as brightly as his brass.

"Step forward now, Marine,

How shall I deal with you?

Have you always turned the other cheek?

To my church have you been true?"



The soldier squared his shoulders and said,

"No Lord, I guess I ain't.

Because those of us who carry guns,

Can't always be a saint.

I've had to work on Sundays,

And at times my talk was tough.

And sometimes I've been violent,

Because the world is awfully rough.

But I never took a penny,
That wasn't mine to keep—

Though I worked a lot of overtime,

When the bills got just too steep.

And I never passed a cry for help,

Though at times I shook with fear.

I've wept unmanly tears,

I know I don't deserve a place,

Among the people here.

They never wanted me around,

Except to calm their fears.

If you've a place for me here, Lord,

It needn't be so grand.

I never expected or had too much,

But if you don't, I'll understand."

There was silence all around the throne,

Where the saints had often trod.

As the Marine waited quietly,

For the judgment of his God.

"Step forward now, you Marine,

You've borne your burdens well.

Walk peacefully on heaven's streets,

You've done your time in hell."



Interesting Word Origins

Turkey

The turkey was named in error.

When the early settlers arrived in America, they saw a wild fowl that reminded them of the guinea fowl of Turkey. So they named this strange American fowl “turkeys.” This name turkey appears as early as 1607 in the writings of Captain John Smith. Later on, it was discovered that this American fowl was an entirely different species, but we still call them turkeys just the same.



ANNOY

In the 16th century the English had a jury of *annoyances* to deal with public nuisances such as “*the slaughter of bestes within the cyte.*” The word annoy was much stronger then. An attacking enemy would “*annoy a town.*” This term traces back by changes of spelling to the Latin phrase in *odio* which meant “in hatred”. The French took the Latin word over in the derived form *enuier*, “displease.” From this term we inherited in English the words *annoy* and *ennui*, the first meaning “to displease” and the second, “an act of being bored by unpleasantness,” or just boredom in general. Another useful word comes from the same Latin parentage. The word could have been *annoy-some* but we reduced it to the less awkward word *noisome*, meaning “disgusting,” offensive,” which is the extremity of *annoyance*.

TEMPERAMENTAL

When we speak of an actress as *temperamental* we are recalling a belief of olden times. The medieval philosophers thought that four qualities — hot, cold, moist and dry — blended in varying quantities were what determined the nature of things. The Latin word for this mixture was *temperamentum*. So, if anyone became *temperamental*, it meant that the mixture of these elements were a trifle askew.



Giants of The Forest

Trees, not whales, are the largest living organisms on earth today. In volume, the biggest of all is the giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) “General Sherman” in California. It is 280 feet tall. Native to the western United States, giant sequoias can have trunks 36 feet in diameter and weigh over 6,000 tons—more than 30 times as much as the largest known blue whale.

Trees are also enormously strong. Some



tropical forest giants carry a tangle of vines, creepers, and epiphytic plants (which grow on the tree but do not feed of it) whose weight is more than twice that of the tree. The world’s tallest tree—as distinguished from the largest, the giant sequoia—is also a western U.S. species, *Sequoia sempervirens*, the redwood (also called the California redwood). The tallest specimen is in Redwood Creek Grove, California. Its tip, which is slowly dying back, reaches 362 feet.



Editorial

You Can't Go Back

By Howard Suer

This was inspired by a poem I recently discovered. It was written by Abraham Lincoln. I was unaware that he wrote poetry.

In the fall of 1884 Lincoln went to visit the neighborhood in Indiana where he grew up. He was 35 years old, and he had been away for almost twenty years.



MY CHILDHOOD HOME

By Abraham Lincoln

*My childhood home I see again,
And sadden with the view;
And still as memory crowds my brain,
There's pleasure in it too.
O Memory thou midway world
'Twixt earth and paradise.
Where things decayed and love ones lost
In dreamy shadows rise.*

*And freed from all that's earthly vile,
Seem hallowed, pure, and bright,
Like scenes in some enchanted isle
All bathed in liquid light.*

*As dusky mountains please the eye
When twilight chases day;
As bugle-notes that, passing by,
In distance die away.*

*As leaving some grand waterfall,
We, lingering, list its roar —
So memory will hallow all
We've known, but know no more.*

*Near twenty years have passed away
Since here I bid farewell*

*To woods and fields, and scenes of play,
And playmates loved so well.*

*Where many were, but few remain
Of old familiar things;
But seeing them, to mind again
The lost and absent brings.*

*The friends I left that parting day,
How changed, as time has sped!
Young childhood grown, strong manhood gray.
And half of all are dead.*

*I hear the loved survivors tell
How nought from death could save,
Till every hound appears a knell,
And every spot a grave.*

*I range the fields with pensive tread,
And pace the hollow rooms,
And feel (companion of the dead)
I'm living in the tombs.*

*And now away to seek some scene
Less painful than the last —
With less of horror mingled in
The present and the past.*

*The very spot where grew the bread
That formed my bones, I see.
How strange, old field, on thee to tread,
And feel I'm part of thee.*

For me it had been over 50 years since I visited 192nd street in The Bronx, where I grew up.

I was filled with nostalgia as I walked down the street toward the apartment building where I spent my childhood. I remembered all of my childhood friends, and wondered where they were now.

I sat down on the stoop in front of the building and a great sadness came over me as I realized that all those 'kids' no longer exist. Those that are still alive would be grey haired men and women. Sure we can share memories. However — in this ever-changing world, those parents and kids with whom I shared my early life no longer exist.

Then I stepped back — into the street to look at 'my' building. It had been my castle for many years. Today, it was an old building in a state of disrepair. I remembered the 'super', Mr. Bunda, carting those heavy ash cans up from the basement filled with ashes from the coal he burned to heat our 5 story building. Those galvanized metal ash cans were gone. The trash from the building was now stacked in black plastic bags.

Even the people had changed. During 'my time' it was a "middle class" neighborhood, occupied predominantly by Irish and Jewish families. Today, as the "middle class" has slowly disappeared, the ethnicity of the old neighborhood evolved to lower income minorities. It was then that I realized that *you can't go back*. Sure, you can visit a place where you once spent time, but that's all it is — a visit. You can't go back because the time is different, the place is different, the people are different. . . . Or as Abe Lincoln so aptly put it, "*O memory thou midway world — 'twixt earth and paradise*".



Why We Say It — (Phrase Origins)

A Bird in The Hand is Worth Two in The Bush

This phrase is from a British folk ballad — *The Vocal Songster*, 1781. The lyric is from a song entitled *A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush* and is listed as being sung at Vauxhall (London).

Gay Strephon declares I'm the girl in his mind,
 If he proves sincere, I'll be constant and kind,
 He vows that tomorrow he'll make me his wife,
 I'll fondly endeavor to bless him for life,
 For all other swains I care not a rush,
 One bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

The Whole Nine Yards

This phrase has many disputed origins. The most common is that 9 yards is the length of a WWII machine gun belt. However, there is no reference to that in the hundreds of thousands of pages written about the war.

The earliest known reference comes in May 1960 when Ralph Boston broke the world long jump record with a jump of 27 feet and 1/2 inch. That was big news at the time and cried out for a headline reading, "*Boston goes the whole nine yards.*" . . . BUT there is no record of any such headline.

There are pages and pages of other theories, but no one knows the real origin of the expression, *the whole nine yards*.

The Third Degree

In Masonic lodges there are three degrees of membership; the first is called Entered Apprentice, the second Fellowcraft, and the third is Master Mason. When a candidate receives the third degree in a Masonic lodge, he is subjected to some activities that involve an interrogation, and is more physically challenging than the first two degrees. It is this interrogation that was the source of the name of the US police force's interrogation technique that is referred to in a 1900 edition of *Everybody's Magazine*.



A WISE MAN TELLS YOU



Quote of The Month

"We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office."

"Until a child is one year old it is incapable of sin."

—The Talmud, c. 200

"More than any time in history mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness, the other to total extinction. Let us pray that we have the wisdom to choose correctly."

—Woody Allen, 1935-

"The young man who has not wept is a savage, and the old man who will not laugh is a fool."

—George Santayana, 1866-1952

"There is no kind of dishonesty into which otherwise good people more easily and frequently fall than that of defrauding the government."

—Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790

"Religion is what keeps the poor from murdering the rich."

—Napoleon, 1769-1821

Democracy substitutes election by the incompetent many for appointment by the corrupt few."

—George Bernard Shaw, 1856-1950

"Treaties are like roses and young girls— they last while they last."

—Charles de Gaulle, 1890-1970

"When there is no middle class, and the poor greatly exceed in number, troubles arise, and the state will soon come to an end."

—Aristotle, 384-322 B.C.

"It is horrible to see everything that one detested in the past coming back wearing the colors of the future."

—Jean Rostand, 1894-1977



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Cartoons of The Month

