Greetings, Readers,

Welcome to the first ever totally literary Newsletter. In past years the July and August issues have been combined, but this year we have separated them and include in the latter just writing, both prose and poetry. Beside contributions from Emeritus College members we include some from students of writing classes of the regular College. In this way we hope to familiarize ourselves with each other's activities and also demonstrate our unity.

Special thanks is due Art Ravicz, who is responsible for layout and can fit any amount of text neatly into any size space. Paul Gruner designed and drew the front and back page illustrations. Submitted articles were carefully reviewed and the most appropriate selected by Iris Tandler, Alicia Warcholski, and Barbara Tarasoff.

Don Polhemus, Editor (dondorpol@aol.com.)

The Liberator

A hefty American war plane, a four-engine heavy bomber
One of two types of heavy bombers we had during WW-2
With a wingspan of 110 feet - and a range of 2100 miles
Its four bomb bays can carry a bomb load of 8000 pounds
It carried 2364 gallons of fuel including its two wing tanks
With bombs, fuel and crew it weighed over 65,000 pounds

After our mission briefing at 5 AM we climb into our plane
I get a go signal and pull the aircraft out onto the runway
I lock the brakes, and slowly rev the engines to full power
The ship is now shaking and trembling like a caged monster
I release the brakes and we slowly start down the runway
A 5000 foot steel-mesh runway, much like a country road

Now we all hold our breath as we roll towards the far end
This aircraft will not start flying until we reach 110 MPH
With a 5000 foot runway we can't get more than 95 MPH
I haul back on the yoke and pull the plane off the ground
As we struggle upward, we see a priest below, blessing us
We are a lethal machine, being blessed on our way to kill

V. DeMaio

[Vince is a professional poet and a long-time friend of Emeritus.]
I live in a world where everyone has pretty feet but me. This is absurd, I know, but I am convinced of its truth because my husband is in the health business. To test his clients, they must bare the right foot so that he may apply transdermal patches, which are attached to an electronic device that measures and calculates the percentages of water, fat and cell mass in the client's body. These and several other measures tell how young and how old, and how healthy you are. You can be seventy and have the stats of a forty year old, or vice versa. All it takes is a few seconds of testing, after which the machine prints out the results. This is followed by a consultation, all without disrobing, except for that one foot. But back to my toes. They are the exclamation marks at the end of a long foot, one that is narrow at the heel and broad at the ball. If a shoe doesn't fit my heel snugly, my foot runs a ski slope to the front, where my toes get scrunched up like little snails. Two of them are crooked. I ran into the chest at the end of the bed one night, and a week later, ran full tilt into its reciprocal on the other foot. I am a habitual complainer about how difficult it is to find cute shoes that also fit. My size, ten and a half, was impossible to find when I was in my twenties. I squeezed into tens, hence the snail toes, or, at the Tall Girls Shop, tried size elevens, which were usually too wide. I assumed that the designers and manufacturers were in collusion: If girls were tall, they must also be broad. I once looked down at my feet, which were fashionably shod in boots, and saw that the right boot was on the left foot and pointed outward, as did the left boot on the right foot. I did not walk very far.

Dr. Scholl's has benefitted by the hundreds of dollars from my purchases of sponge insoles, heel huggers and ball cushions. With more tall girls populating the world, matters have improved. But it is still difficult to find my size, especially in the hallowed shelves of Ross and Marshall's, where I have occasionally found that perfect combo of size, price and style. Example: tennis shoes by Guess, covered with silver sequins. They beckoned me from the shelf at Ross. They were my size. But I, in all my life, would absolutely never – NEVER – wear sequined shoes. I'm much too sedate. Then I looked at the price – an unbelievable eight dollars! For eight dollars, it was only logical that seniors especially, ought to allow themselves a little silliness. The best part? I've never had a pair of shoes in any style that received more compliments.

I have in my closet some very uncomfortable shoes, purchased on sale in a fit of self-delusion, with the help of a very nice, not pushy, sales person named Maryann. I said to her, while studying myself from the knees down in the little tilted floor mirror, that I had complained to my husband that high heels might be sexy, but that they were not, NOT comfortable; that he had looked at me, shrugged, smiled and said, "So?"

Maryann looked at me with just a touch of pity. She might just as well have said, "There, dear. Follow me. I will show you the True Way."

Shoes in hand, she led me to the sales desk, which explains why I have in my closet, a pair of Michael Kors, clear acrylic, high-heeled sandals with shiny, bright red straps.

I remain convinced, wrongly, but convinced that my husband only applies those transdermal patches to women with beautiful feet and nail polish in a red that perfectly matches the Michael Kors sandals. The facts tell a different story: Not all of his clients are women and, most of his clients are middle-aged or beyond, and have been on their feet for more than a few years. They have stood on them for long hours, waited table, worked in health care as nurses and physicians, taught ballroom dance and modeled in spike heels; they have gardened, cleaned house and carted the children off to school. Those ubiquitous pretty toes and feet are all in my imagination. In my growing wisdom, while I slip willy-nilly into my advanced senior years, I try not to complain about price and style. For one thing, unless I want to email the designers and shoemakers and start a mini-revolution, it would be merely stressful to do so. Another reason is that every time I complain, I

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run into someone with problems far greater than my own.

I know where pretty toes and high heels belong on the scale of what matters in the world.

Today, emitting a sigh of frustration after an unsuccessful fashion footwear foray into Macy’s, I pondered the matter of feet and shoes while I went up and down the aisles at Safeway, able to afford what my husband and I need for the house, debating — twelve rolls of regular-size towels versus nine of the super — and privileged to be able to afford to buy shoes and then complain about them.

It is winter, and everyone is wearing raingear. While I studied the merits of Yoplait-plus versus Dannon activia, I moved my grocery cart from the middle of the aisle to give a young woman more room. When she thanked me; her demeanor was sweet, her smile genuine. She walked normally with her right leg. Her left leg was folded under her and was supported by a kind of scooter, like a small shelf on wheels. The leg support made it awkward for her to get around, to turn a corner without getting her leg bumped by people rushing into their own important life issues — What’s for dinner? Do we need milk? A grey haired man, breathing with difficulty and leaning heavily into his cart, grudgingly let her by, as if his life were already difficult enough without his seeing this younger reflection of his own condition. The young woman did not respond to his rudeness. She seemed to have moved beyond the arena where her major concern was her leg and would she get knocked over by an over-zealous shopper. She was focused on her task and at ease, as if the core of her being, the Who of who she is, was centered and intact regardless of her dependence on the little electric half-cart, or on whether or not her feet were clad in high-heeled acrylic and her toenails painted red.

[Barbara joined Emeritus recently and is a published writer.]

MY LIFE IN THE GHETTO
by Iris Tandler

The “empty nest syndrome”. That’s the term that was used in the 60’s. Your children were away at college, your husband was deeply immersed in his career, and the dog had died. I hunted up my teaching credentials and decided to return to work.

The only job available to me at that time was in a Catholic Junior High School, replacing a nun who went home to help two ailing parents. Each day I had five eighth-grade classes of bright, well-behaved children with a large support group of parents. I took my students to Mass each morning. There were two priests in the parish, an elderly priest who preached fire and brimstone and a younger priest who preached brotherhood and equality of all men. I loved every minute of it. In fact, I loved it so much that my mother was afraid that I was going to convert from Judaism to Catholicism.

Before I came to this school, a day trip had been planned to one of the local colleges to see an off-Broadway play “Indians” which had won the Tony award the previous year. We set out for this beautiful “theater in the round”, about forty students, six parents and myself. The Indians in this production entered from the sides and the rear of the auditorium. The settlers were having a high old time shooting the Injuns and the Injuns were having a high old time shooting the settlers. My 8th grade boys, who had come well-prepared were having a high old time shooting the Injuns who were wearing nothing but loin cloths and were easy targets for my students pea shooters.

Me – I was oblivious. I love cowboys and Indians.

We returned to school. There stood Sister Dominica in all her glory, starched white wimple three feet wide, cross blazing on her ample bosom, black habit, eyes glaring. The heavens shook. “What happened at the theater?”

“Honestly, Sister, I do not know.”

This Jewish lady bowed her head in shame.

“Consider yourself served,” she snapped. She called every eighth grade boy to her office, kept
them there until their fathers picked them up, and suspended them for three days.

Thus endeth my relationship with the Archdiocese of St. Louis. My second job was not so easy.

St. Louis was in the midst of a program of integration, and the County, which was primarily white, would only hire black teachers, and the city, which had a primarily black population, would only hire white teachers. If I wanted to teach I had to work in the city, so I was assigned to one of the oldest schools in the city, 800 students in the most dangerous area in the city, all black, staff 50% black, 50% white. The building was locked down (against all fire regulations) because major trouble came from the outside and one entered through a metal detector and a purse inspection (if female) at the front door. The police came through regularly, about once a week with dogs for locker inspections for drugs and alcohol.

Being the newest member of the staff, I was assigned the freshman classes with the roughest and toughest students. This was a rite of passage for new teachers. Many of my students could not read. Often they would be in class for six weeks and go to jail for a six week detention period.

Teachers were told immediately that if there was a fight in their room to get out of the way and that is exactly what I did. I had a panic button behind my desk and a guard in the hall. There is nothing that compares to a girl/girl fight. Hair is pulled out by the roots. Boys' fights are mild by comparison.

About two weeks after I started teaching, I announced a test for the following Monday. One of my scruggiest students, weighing in about 110 lbs, 5'1", soft-spoken, stopped after class.

“I won't be in class on Monday, Mrs. T.”

“What’s the problem, Robert?” I questioned.

“I'll be in court,” he said, “armed robbery.”

“I'll schedule a makeup.”

We had one shooting a year in the building, usually by a mother who came in to shoot the girl who had taken her daughter's boyfriend away.

In my ten years at this school I don’t believe I ever had a student come to class with a pencil. I became a master at begging, borrowing, and renting pencils. The Supply Department saw me coming and closed their window. Finally, in frustration I said to one of my classes one day, “You kids have money for everything you want. Did you ever think of buying a pencil?”

“You can't get high on a pencil, Mrs. T.”

The best hospital in St. Louis sat in an area which divided the city and the county, and as the population changed much of this area had become dangerous. Many of my students worked here after school, serving dinner and setting up breakfast trays. I must have written 1000 letters of recommendation and my students always came off sounding like models of society. My mother was quite ill during several of the years I was teaching, and I would often go from school (which let out at 2:15 PM, to visit her and have dinner with her). In the three years my mother was in and out of the hospital, I never walked alone. Intuitively, a student was at my mother's door and someone was there to walk me to my car. I will never forget them for this.

For most of my students, graduation day was a monumental, historic event. No one in their family had ever graduated before. The young men would arrive in their three-piece pastel suits, brilliantined hair just so, or white tie and tails, limo waiting outside, and the girls, all cleavage, sequins and lace with their own toddlers clinging to their legs, their own frilly lace dresses, carefully braided hair and tiny ruffled socks and white shoes. Nothing more lovely than the a cappella voices. I cried every time.

About a week after I retired I volunteered for a program to help inner-city youths. The first morning I appeared at the County Jail, I identified myself, went through two lock-down facilities, and sat in an empty room, two chairs, one table, a dingy window high up in the corner. I wondered if this was what I really I wanted to do. An armed guard brought my first student. Dressed in the standard orange cotton uniform and handcuffed, he looked me up and down. It was one of my former students.

“What are you doing here, Mrs. T?”

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"What are you doing here, William?"

People still ask me why I stayed. Do I think I did any good? Some reasons are too personal to discuss. When I visit St. Louis, I occasionally see one of my former students working security at the airport, or when visiting someone at a hospital I may also see one of my students, a little taller and better groomed, and I know I had a part in that. Did I do any good? Maybe a drop of water in the ocean. I still miss my students. Would I do it again? ABSOLUTELY.

[Iris is on the writing staff of the Newsletter.]

### A DIFFERENT NIGHT

by Donna Terdiman

Why is this night different from all other nights? As a child, the first night of Passover meant a journey to a different world. Our family of four, my parents, my older brother and I, would leave our Queens neighborhood, with its small homes, tidy yards and quiet streets, and drive through the honking traffic of Manhattan into the Bronx.

Since Passover begins at sundown, we always arrived in the late afternoon when the slanting rays of the sun would cast mysterious shadows from once-elegant apartment buildings on noisy streets teeming with life and commerce. The scene was as exotic and exciting to me as the fabled city of Jerusalem.

Our destination was one of those once-elegant apartment buildings just off the Grand Concourse. We would enter the dark paneled lobby, with its tarnished gilt mirrors and crumbling tile floor, get into the tiny birdcage elevator - with barely enough room for the four of us - and creak up to the fourth floor. The apartment we came to displayed the same faded majesty as the building. To the right of the front door hung a large Mezuzah, which means doorpost in Hebrew, an affirmation of faith in the God of Israel. My best friend Elaine had a Mezuzah at her front door. We didn't, but I wanted one too.

Unlike our modern, sunny little house, the apartment was crammed with dark, ponderous furniture, heavy red-purple drapes and velvet upholstery, fringed lampshades, dark shadows. It was crammed also with more than thirty people, too many for the small space, but filled with warmth, laughter and welcome even - especially - to me, by far the smallest and youngest of the celebrants.

This night was indeed different from all other nights in my young life. My parents were secular Jews. They did not light candles on Friday night or belong to a temple. They felt themselves to be Jewish, however, and strongly identified with Jewish culture and history. The Passover feast as a celebration of freedom was especially meaningful to them in the years following the horrors of the Nazis, but much about this family ritual was puzzling to me as a child. I was puzzled by the contrast between my rational secular parents and our deeply religious hosts, who, though the same generation as my parents, spoke with heavy East European accents with liberal sprinklings of Russian and Yiddish words in their everyday speech. My parents used Yiddish only when they didn't want the children to understand what they were saying.

What was clear to me, even then, was the closeness of the bond between my family and our hosts. Our hostess Ruth Dimendorf, and her brothers Joseph and Connie Krendal, had, like my mother, spent a portion of their early childhood in a tiny settlement for Eastern European Jewish immigrants on the Canadian prairie. The town was called Hirsch, after the philanthropist who had founded it. After their own mother's death from cancer, my mother's mother, my Bubby, despite little money and her own large family, had taken them in and cared for them. Ruth, Joseph and Connie had adored her all her life, and by extension, all her children and grandchildren.

Ruth was a large woman, with swarthy skin, a loud voice and an earthy laugh, who used to complain-boast that she looked more like a gypsy than a Jew. Indeed she did, and dressed the part, with vibrant colors and dangly jewelry. I was drawn by her warmth and fascinated by her looks. I remember her round face and the huge hoop earrings escaping from beneath her wild dark curls. I thought she was beautiful and...
strange and more than a little frightening. Her husband, by contrast, was a small, quiet, gentle man, who used to take me on his lap and call me by the pet name "Pookie." Joseph, the older brother, was quiet and stern. He was a Rabbi and always led the Seder. The younger brother, Connie, was dashing and romantic looking with dark skin, thick black hair and eyebrows, charming and gregarious. He would swing me around and up on his shoulders putting at risk all the chatchkas on every surface in the apartment.

Our hosts' two children, Rya and David, were close to ten years older than my brother Michael, who was five years older than me. There was no other young child to giggle with and no room to run around and let off excess energy. Almost immediately, we squeezed ourselves around the large table in the small dining room and like everyone else, I was expected to remain there quietly throughout the long service.

Ruth was a balabusta, the ultimate Jewish housewife. She kept her apartment spotless and prepared the entire Seder meal, including the ceremonial dishes, the chopped liver, the gefilte fish, the matzo ball soup, the roast chicken, the brisket, all from scratch, with no help, every year. Of course she had separate dishes for Passover and kept kosher at all times. My mother did neither and freely admitted that she would not have known how to prepare a Passover meal.

The results were prodigious; the aroma of this massive feast made the mouth water. But before we could eat there was the long ceremony conducted with the utmost gravity by Joseph the Rabbi. Joseph's Seder was largely in Hebrew, left nothing out and was interminable. I was required to sit still, wait for the parts I could understand and for the occasional sip of grape juice, hoping, hoping for the matzo ball soup. I often wondered what would happen if I had to go to the bathroom in the middle of this endless ceremony. I imagined slipping under the table and crawling out among the celebrants' feet. I wondered if I could accomplish this without being noticed. As the youngest child, I always read the Four Questions, in English of course, after the Dimenburgs' son David read them in Hebrew. It was my big moment, and I enjoyed the attention.

As I grew older, I began to sense the tension between our hosts' ardent Zionism, their pro-

found belief that Israel belonged by right and God's will to the Jews, and my parents' deep ambivalence about the displacement of the Palestinian Arabs. These political differences never openly disrupted the bond between our families, but were an undercurrent to all the Seders of my childhood.

At the end of each Seder, Joseph presented a special prize. It was always a book, and it always went to me. I still have my copy of "The Jew in American Life," inscribed:

"To Donna Miller for being the most attentive celebrant at the first Pesah since Israel's liberation. Signed, Joseph Krendal."

I was particularly attentive at that Seder in 1948 when Joseph said, "At last, 'Next Year in Jerusalem' has come. Israel is free."

"Yes, but," my father started to say. My mother silenced him with a discreet poke of her elbow. The ceremony was not a place for the kind of hot-headed political debate that my dad was prone to.

I have a vivid memory of another book given to me at an earlier Passover. It was called "A Children's Village in Israel," and described a kibbutz, which served as an orphanage for children who had lost their parents in the war. I no longer have this book, but I remember clearly reading and re-reading the text describing the daily life of the children and poring over the pictures of their idyllic little village with its cottages, gardens, farm animals, and common areas. I remember envying those children their communal life and the many loving adults who looked after them. But even the thought of losing my own parents terrified me, nor could I imagine the suffering that had brought those children to that village in Israel.

On the cover of the book was a photograph of a little girl, with fair skin, dark eyes, and thick dark hair cut short and blunt. She was smiling, her face at an angle as she squinted up at the sky. My parents had a photograph of me that was almost identical to the one on the cover of the book, even the pose and the grin and the haircut. The thought struck me then and has stayed with me all my life: it could have been me.

[Donna is a student of COM Writing Instructor Jacqueline Kudler.]
Fail Safely

The force that in the sinew slows the muscle
Destroys my weak will; that heaves the splintered rock
Is my indirection
And I neglect to tell young lovers
Of lives cut short by the same wintry reaper.

The blade that ploughs through granite soft with rot
Marks my skull still; that lulls the trusting eye
Carves mine of sight.
And I am mute to tell the roaring wind
How blind, content, I hear him still.

The lens that bends the rays of warming sun
Excites the waiting fire; that reflects the stars in heaven
Is my black hole.
And I am dumb to tell the rising traveler
How space will rob his time of love’s desire.

Spring is quick, then summer rushes to embrace
Our spinning earth. The wind is gentle, the waters calm --
The sun does heal....
And I neglect to tell reluctant lovers
The prize they seek in search itself is found.

And I am dumb to tell my sinews force
How sloth and indirection guide it still.

by Len Pullan, Newsletter Staff

[Inspired by The Force That Through the Green Fuse
Drives the Flower by Dylan Thomas.]

Black Silver

I don’t know about you
But my arms are too short
To embrace this magnificent body
Of the whale
Who nudges up to me
His body like black silver

We look at each other in wonder
I from the land
He from the sea
Our eyes rest in each other
Searching, searching deep,
Deep like the sea.

Charlotte Schmid

What She Said

I had not seen her for a while
She was too weak for a visit
Still her eyes do not focus well
One at a time I take her hands
Fold them in both of mine
Slowly the bones feel warmer
Time shared, sacred and fleeting
Mysterious land awaiting
She says with wonder and surprise
You know, it’s all so new
It’s all so new.

Charlotte Schmid

[Charlotte is a student of Instructor Prartho Sereno]
THE QUEEN'S HAT
A Memoir by Saundra Rosenberg

In my youth I trod the boards. That is to say I was involved with several amateur theater groups; one, in New Jersey was housed in a rededicated Fire House situated on Old Kinderkemack Road, the other in Connecticut, was connected to the University. For me it was a pleasant and stimulating avocation. I was not looking for stardom, but a little applause was not unappreciated. Mostly it provided escape from my primary occupation at that time, family and kids ... playing at being other people. This was about the time Brando was howling lustily for Stella in his undershirt as Blanche, the delicate Southern Flower languished in the humidity. We offered no imminent challenge to Lunt and Fontanné. Olivier and Gielgud were safe, but there was a surprising amount of talent in these little theaters, perhaps underused and some maybe hoping for the big time. In fact, we did offer suburban audiences fairly sophisticated and fairly professional performances. And they did not have to cross the River into the Big City to see good theater.

I remember doing the "Madwoman of Chaillot". I was one of the other Madwomen. I was the lead in the Greek Chorus in Robinson Jeffers' blood-chilling "Medea". I was still in my twenties with chestnut hair when I played Thomas Wolfe's mother, a 60-year-old hill woman in "You Can't Go Home Again" and gratified no one in the cast recognized me in my grey wig. We did some urbane Noel Coward and a fair amount of Shakespeare -- "Taming of the Shrew," "Merchant of Venice" etc.

Recently I saw a performance of Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra" and was reminded of the time the Firehouse Players served up scenes from that marvelous play. Once more I was entranced by the delightfully devilish Egyptian Queen who, according to custom, to clear the field of rivals, had a habit of disposing of inconvenient siblings and who teased, tormented and captivated her lovers; first Caesar then Mark Antony, "who, with her clever wiles, won and lost an empire and ultimately her life". Shakespeare immortalizes this seductive woman thus: "Age cannot wither, nor custom stale her infinite variety". History tells us that if Mark Antony had not been so besotted by this fascinating Queen, if he had not lost his heart and his senses, he would not have incurred the enmity of Caesar; he would not have lost the ill-fated battle at Actium, and this glorious love story would not have ended in tragedy, Antony by his own sword; Cleopatra, the bite of an asp.

The actress who played the role of this magnificent Queen was a premier star in our company. She was a woman of commanding presence and proven talent who could transfix an audience. Her reviews in the local papers were glowing. I was Charmian, her devoted handmaiden. We employed the usual theatrical costume house, but the one thing they could not come up with was the typical headdress worn by the Egyptians of that era. (One can see this triangular head gear in bas-reliefs and tomb paintings.) So we were asked to make our own. We thought they looked pretty authentic. I kept mine for years among "things I could not throw away".

And now to the fatal scene! The Messenger arrives from Rome with long-awaited news of Antony, who had reluctantly sailed for Rome to patch things up with Caesar, leaving Cleopatra behind -- desolate and furious. As a matter of political convenience, however, Antony has married Caesar's sister, Octavia, and will not soon be returning to his inamorata. Cleopatra is in a frenzy of anticipation, not knowing yet of her lover's defection; hoping for good news, fearing the bad.

In time honored tradition, what does one do? One beats the Messenger, of course!

Below: excerpts (freely edited):

ACT II, SCENE V. Enter: MESSENGER with tidings from Rome.

CLEOPATRA (in a madness of anxiety):

I have in mind to strike thee ere thou speakest!
Yet, if thou sayest Antony is well
Or friends with Caesar and free of him
I'll set thee in a shower of gold and hail
Rich pearls on thee!

(Continued on page 10)
MESSENGER (quaking before this capricious Queen):

Antony is well and friends with Caesar
And free ... but, yet, not free ...
For he is bound unto Octavia!

CLEOPATRA (The furious Queen strikes him
dawn with a small whip she keeps for such pur-
pose):

A most, infectious pestilence upon thee! Say it is not so!

MESSENGER (cowering at her feet): Gracious
Madame, he is married ...

CLEOPATRA (she draws a small knife):

Horrible villain! I'll spurn thine eyes, I'll unhair thy head.
Thou shalt be whipped with wire and stewed in brine,
Smarting in lingering pickle ....

MESSENGER (Hales him up and down. He is now prostrate.)

Gracious Madame, I that do bring the news Made not the match ....

CLEOPATRA: Rogue, thou hast lived too long!

CHARMIAN (looking on in dismay tries to re-
strain the enraged Queen): He is innocent, Ma-
dame!

Now, in a terrible fury, the Queen raises her whip and attempts to strike the miserable Mes-
senger once more. She lifts the whip and it catches on her headdress and rips it off her head. Her luxuriant dark hair tumbles out ... there is an awful moment of stunned silence ... and another and another ... and the mighty Queen, in an unseemly panic, rushes off stage leaving the two unfortunates, the cowering Mes-
senger and the speechless handmaiden, stranded on the stage with NO EXIT LINES!

I remember a wild mix of emotions: frozen ter-
or, an hysterical desire to giggle and to concoct a miracle and somehow escape from disaster.

It is well known that theater people are supersti-
tious creatures believing in a magic that is meant to portend disaster, such as...falling off the stage, having the scenery drop on you or suffering total amnesia and forgetting all your lines. To avert the evil-eye, the most baffling perhaps is the injunction to "Break a Leg". But, paramount among thespians is the absolute dic-
tum that THE SHOW MUST GO ON! no matter what the catastrophe. This moment qualified without question as 'catastrophe'.

I could hear rustling, restive murmurs from the audience, sounds of insurrection. (In Shake-
peare's time, hurling of missiles at the players by a displeased audience was not uncommon).
It was excruciatingly evident that Cleopatra was not coming back. Not even to finish off the Mes-
senger. It was desperation time! I did the only reasonable thing ... I spoke! I improvised, I in-
vented, of course in the language of Shake-
peare. What lines I spoke lie somewhere hid-
en in memory unlikely ever to be resurrected. The purpose was to provide a motive for the Queen's flight; the intent to make a plausible exit.

What did I say in those awful soul-searing mo-
ments? One of these, I suspect...

Excuse #1: Mme. has been struck with an irre-
pressible urge to inspect the Royal Camels!
Excuse #2: ...build a Royal Pyramid!
Excuse #3: ...oversee a Royal Hanging!

Did I do the Bard justice? Did the audience no-
tice carefree liberty with his immortal words? Did I finish in rhyming couplets? Could I possi-
ibly have improved on Shakespeare? Whatever, it got us off the stage!

The curtain came down and there was an im-
promptu intermission. We found Cleopatra, this formidable Queen, conqueror of hearts and na-
tions, sobbing in the dressing room, humiliated, inconsolable, vowing never to return to the stage. I was deeply disillusioned! The Messen-
ger, still quivering from his harrowing disen-
gagement, fled the theater partially attired, hav-
ing grabbed some lady's coat, six sizes too small with a fox collar, but his headdress still intact.

For the Queen, perhaps only the bite of the asp could provide a proper conclusion to this farrago.

[Saundra is on the writing staff of the Newslet-
er.]
CROSSING PATHS
A Family History by Marlene Knox

Carol stares at her reflection in the mirror and realizes that she is not nearly the age of her Grandmother Goldie who died at seventy. This is hard to fathom. She knows, she places photos side by side to verify that she does not look as old as her grandmother did.

Carol's husband Dave can say the same about himself and his grandfather Frank. She cannot imagine that they will live to be one hundred as did Dave's Grandmother Evelyn. Carol remembers the frail woman, by then blind and barely able to speak, in the nursing home sitting in front of her birthday cake, the candles emitting more heat than the tiny person seated in her wheelchair.

How could they if she and Dave are in the winter of their lives, autumn, if their luck holds. It occurs to them that the story of their beloved ancestors will die when they do. They wonder if their daughters will care enough to resurrect the history of their forebears, whether anyone will remember the great-grandparents and those who came before them. Will their yellowed photos and letters be tossed in the dumpster along with old college books and clothes by then too worn for even the Goodwill, piled high alongside loving greeting cards once hoarded in dresser drawers? Who will remember if Carol and Dave fail to tell the history?

April, 1911. Bristol, Colorado

Though he could have delayed his trip until tomorrow, on this particular day the gentle warmth of spring lures Frank away from the mill at the edge of the plain. He has come to town to sell his alfalfa. Though the warming sun suggests a straw hat, he is wearing one made of felt, as well as his best suit and tie. He must dress befitting his role as a young manager. It is good that for this day he has discarded his casual overalls and cap, given that he is about to meet his future wife.

He makes his way along the wooden boardwalk on the way to meet his buyer but stops suddenly to bend and slap away the dust which has risen from the road and settled on his trousers. When he looks up, directly across the narrow dirt road he sees what he has not before noticed: a bearded man standing beside a horse and buggy. Behind the carriage is a store, a sign above it reading "G. W. Green, Dry Goods." A dog is sprawled on the curb, but Frank's eyes do not remain on the animal. Seated in the carriage, her skirts splayed widely around her, is a young woman looking down at the older man next to the horse. Her light brown hair is swirled in a bun atop her head, the collar of her dress demurely covering an elegant neck. She spies Frank looking at her and smiles.

He tips his hat, and before he has time to think, he is crossing the road and approaching the carriage to try his luck. "Good morning. A lovely spring day, isn't it," he says, purposely looking at both the man as well as the lady lest his remark be interpreted as the overture it is. The bearded gentleman is too old to be her husband, though of this Frank can't be certain. He immediately berates himself for not thinking of anything more profound to utter, but the young woman's beauty stills all the sophisticated words he has amassed since earning his bachelor's degree in English.

The bearded man tips his hat in return. Evelyn Victoria Green does not seem to intercede; she immediately counters, "Yes, a wonderful day it is." In saying this, she tilts her head just a little, which Frank chooses to interpret as a solicitation for another response on his part.

What to say, what to say, to keep this conversation going? Luckily for Frank, the older man at last offers his own words as well as his hand. "George Washington Green, here. And you, sir, are?" He waits, his arm suspended in the air, before, Frank, startled out of his trance, thrusts his arm forward.

"Frank Durham, sir. Pleased to make your ac-

(Continued on page 12)
quaintance." He then dares to fix his eyes solely upon the woman and hears what he has been waiting for.

"And this is my daughter, Evelyn." Evelyn bows her head just the slightest bit forward in acknowledgment, but her eyes remain locked on Frank's own. She worries that this is too bold, but she cannot help herself. She finds the man exceedingly handsome with his square sturdy face and blue eyes. While she is intrigued by his boldness, she is just as shocked at her own response, a departure from her usual reticence.

At first, Frank is too enthralled with the daughter to link the man's name with the sign on the store. It is only when Mr. Green takes leave of the two young people as he senses he should, to enter his place of business, that his future son-in-law makes the connection. It humbles Frank for a second when he compares his role to that of an entrepreneur, but then he recovers his pride at his own accomplishments and begins to court the woman of his dreams.

Six months later, the following announcement appears in the Bristol Herald:

"Green-Durham Nuptials: A pretty home wedding, at which the immediate members of the families of the bride and groom were present, was solemnized on Wednesday afternoon when Mr. Frank E. Durham and Miss Evelyn V. Green took their places in the parlor of the home of the bride's father, Mr. G. W. Green, and responded to the service by the Rev. S. E. Grant, pastor of the Methodist church.

The home had been tastefully decorated with pink and white carnations, and the wedding vows were preceded by the singing of that impressive selection "Believe Me" by Mrs. J. B. Carley, and at two o'clock the bridal party was summoned by the wedding march, admirably rendered by Mrs. Carley.

The ceremony over, the couple received the congratulations of those assembled, and the party sat down to an elegant serving of refreshments.

These two young people are eminently suited to enter upon the matrimonial sea, having many qualities in common, and their future opens very auspiciously for them. The groom is a graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University, with the degree of A.B., the bride having the same degree from Drury College and the degree of A.M. from the University of Denver. They wore their graduating costumes for the wedding ceremony.

The happy couple departed during the afternoon, on a trip to Colorado Springs, through the Royal Gorge and other scenic points in the state.

We join the host of friends represented here in wishing them a long period of life, of usefulness and happiness."

The best of wishes, the most fervent prayers, however, are not guarantees.

March, 1914. Omaha, Nebraska

"I have a man you should meet," her cousin tells Goldie one evening as they are sitting in the living room of Razel's home drinking glasses of hot tea. In the light of day, blue narcissus are beginning to poke out of the hard winter ground. The long green leaves of daffodils hide the bulbs within, a hint of yellow emerging, hungry for the sun.

"A geeta nashumah," Razel tells Goldie. A good soul. Goldie nods her head yes, at nineteen ready for a match. A week later Razel's husband Izzy brings his business partner home to dinner. After meeting as janitors across the street at the Union Pacific office building and saving first pennies then dollars, he and Willie have managed to open a narrow diner on Douglas near Fourteenth. They flipped a coin and Willie won the toss. What they prefer to think of as a restaurant bears a sign that reads, "Bill's Place."
Willie sits next to Goldie on the couch admiring her dishwater blonde hair cut surprisingly short. He thinks her a little ahead of her time and spunkier than a lot of immigrant women he's seen. Her blue eyes smile back at his when he speaks, and at once he is smitten. Goldie laughs easily, not because she is nervous but because she is delighted by the man's kindness. She's attracted to his thick red hair and sparkling blue eyes. Razel speaks the truth; Goldie senses Willie has a good heart. Maybe it is the sweetness of his smile. It helps that he inquires about her family. "Ayer gonsa mishpuchah voynen en Omaha?" he asks, though Izzy has already told him that Goldie lives with her married brother and widowed mother. Willie hopes he is making a good impression.

"Yes," she says, "Ich voynen mit mein Mama un mein breeder," hoping this doesn't sound like she is eager to leave the fold. Willie does not sense she is in a hurry to marry; he is aware only of the sparkle of her being.

The next week, when he comes to call again, he haltingly leans over to kiss her. Goldie wants to kiss him back, but decides he might think less of her if she is too willing. Instead, she lets him put his hand on hers in the space between on the flowered chintz.

They talk of their journeys from Russia, crowded in steerage, rescued by the plains of Nebraska and the relatives who have also made the journey before them. In this cozy house in the heartland of America, the aroma of roasted chicken wafts in from Razel's kitchen. They sing a song in Russian, the lyrics repeating the refrain "Death to the Czar." They are a safe distance from the army where Willie no longer has to fear conscription.

Three months later they are married in Razel and Izzy's living room. A rabbi, his prayer shawl the brightest adornment of the ceremony, conducts the service in Yiddish and Hebrew. Willie stomps with vigor, and the sound of crunching glass is muffled by the dish towel in which it is wrapped. Clapping their hands, relatives crowded into the tiny living room shout "Mazel Tov." Goldie's mother, Antza, her Orthodox head covered by a thick black sheitel which looks more like a hat than a wig, sits on a chair near the rabbi, a tear making its way down her cheek. She wants to be happy for her daughter, but what she remembers is how fleeting love can be, how her own husband died when Goldie was six weeks old. To be too happy invites the evil spirits, so she whispers a 'kinehora' to ward them away.

The only memento of the day is a photograph. Captured from the chest up, the couple stares straight ahead, serious but not stern. Under her thin, wire-framed glasses, the sepia tint conceals the blue of Goldie's eyes. The modestly scooped neckline of the bride's dark dress is adorned by a silver filigreed necklace. Wearing an equally dark suit, Willie appears slightly shorter than his wife, his tie knotted neatly below his white collar. Their solemn demeanor is perhaps added insurance that the evil spirits remain at bay. Once away from the blinding flash, after the photographer emerges from his tented camera, Willie and Goldie dance to the Victrola that Razel has set up in the parlor. The strains of klezmer music float out of the windows in the mellow June air.

Ten months later their daughter Mindel is born. The relatives tease them, asking how it can be possible that a man with red hair and a blonde woman, both of them blue eyed, could have a raven haired baby with big brown eyes. A joke is all it is, since it is obvious that Willie and Goldie only have eyes for each other.

The evil spirits are kept at bay for awhile.

[Marlene Knox is a long-time member of ESCOM and Chairman of the Writers Workshop.]
VIVID
by Jan Dutton

Every other Sunday afternoon faithfully following behind the priest's footsteps leaving the church's center aisle free for the congregation to funnel out; we three sisters obediently returned our red choir robes (hemmed long enough to cover our embarrassing white anklets) to the black thick wire hangers dangling on the barely reachable rod in the dark closet of the refectory next door.

My mother whispered not to tarry, whisking us through a side door ushering us into the back of our family Buick coupe where we sat on the outer edge of the seats covered with the camel color ever-so-itchy mohair; mother dashed down the Connecticut turnpike to our Aunt Helen's house.

It was much more than a house. To us, as children under ten, it appeared from the distance as a sparkling white castle three stories high with red-shuttered windows, maybe a mile wide. It lay nestled in a cluster of pine and acacia trees we deemed as a dangerous but enchanted forest.

We played outside in the gardens that were filled with both rounded and strikingly triangular rocks, jumping across the gushing brooks and hiding from the untrustable trolls we insisted lived under the white wooden curved bridge.

Life inside the home was luxurious resplendent with European porcelain, signed paintings, French brocades and an entire leather-bound library. We all sat for a formal later afternoon dinner at a table set for at least twelve. The help, in black uniform layered with crispy white organdy aprons came out intermittently serving to the left, clearing to the right.

We children loved taking unauthorized turns pressing the buzzer affixed under the table that would call the kitchen to plate the next course, momentarily creating a bustling traffic mishap behind the swinging door. But best of all, permission was given to light the cigarettes of the elderly with the engraved sterling silver lighters poised on either end.

I often retreated upstairs to the end of a great hall to secretly unlatch, one by one, the doors of linen closets which were treasure troves for those who had the penchant. My Aunt had purchased them all in their respective country of origin so I would naturally take worldly trips as I carefully lifted out the linen stacks, folded with precision, running my hand gently along the fabric grain imagining how they might be my bed in the making.

When I inquired of my sister about our every other Sunday outings some fifty years later, she answered her memories were likely as vivid as mine. Her bank pulled up a singular movie of Aunt Helen's two dogs: sleeping soundly curled up together, one shepherd big and mean and one little bull terrier, even meaner.

[Jan is from Robert-Harry Rovin's Write On class]
THE LADY IN THE RED BRIMMED HAT
by Anne Sisler Latta

There is a place where the road rises up just before descending into the hollow of Olema.

Looking right, one can see the sheen of Tomales Bay sliding all the way north. The sad half light of the November afternoon gives the hills and fields a muted sepia tone like a photograph you might find in your grandmother's attic.

I had come here to grieve. I felt I'd been cracked open like an egg and my innards had fallen splat on the earth far below. I was looking for beauty here, some piece of God, anything, that would reach into me and let me know that it was good to still be alive.

The sepia was fading to black when I arrived at Jerry's Farm House, built not long after the Civil War and painted barn red. Its porch extended across the front, and the windows glowed yellow in the dark. There was a line of chattering couples and groups out the door waiting for a table which I joined. I had made it almost to the young, long-haired hostess with glinty, dangling earrings when there was a tap on my shoulder.

"Are you alone?"

I turned. Her blue eyes perked up at me from under the brim of a Christmas-red baseball cap, silver permed hair sticking out on either side of her face. Her red jacket glowed in the light.

"We'll get a table faster if there are two of us. Let's have dinner together."

In five minutes we were seated in one of the crowded warm rooms in the warren of the old house, which buzzed with friendly noise and the clinking of glasses.

"My name is Bella. What's yours?" And then, "Well, Anne, what brings you out today."

So I told her. I told her what had been pouring out of me to my friends, my therapist, and even, just after it happened, to a totally strange woman sitting next to me on the Jitney all the way from Sag Harbor to 68th Street in New York. I told her that my beloved second husband, the man I thought I'd finally found that I could rely on, who charmed me, who charmed my friends with his bigness, his spontaneous joie de vivre, his wisdom, his generosity, his love, turned out to be a swindler, who ran a Ponzi Scheme on me, my family, my friends, some of my clients. All of my feelings of being loved had been false, had been based on an act, an act of treachery.

"The worst part is I still love him." I took a breath and a gulp of wine. "You don't stop loving someone because he's done something heinous. No one understands this. It's like driving a car at 60 miles per hour - when you slam on the brakes it's not an instant stop. It takes time to slow down no matter how much you want to stop." I looked at her expectantly.

The lady in the red brimmed hat listened to all of this. After a moment she said, "My husband of thirty years ran off with my best friend of thirty years. They're in L.A. so I came up here to be near my son."

I reached across the table to touch her hand, ready to commiserate, to share more.

"But," she said, "I'm not going to let what they did define the rest of my life. I'm moving on and putting this in my past now." She picked up her wine glass and looked at me.

She sounded so enlightened, so wise. I felt somewhat rebuked. I'd intended to continue my story, hear more of hers but this stopped me.

Then she said "May they rot in hell."

I was so surprised I started to laugh and sprayed my mouthful of chardonnay across the table.

"And your husband can rot in hell, too!" She

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started to laugh and we laughed until tears came out of our eyes, slapping and banging on the table and spraying chardonnay.

"Do you like to sing?" Without waiting for an answer she got up, took her wine. "Come on."

We sat in the hanging swing on the front porch, the light from the dining room window shining on our backs. We started with "Ohhhhhh, Oklahoma where the wind comes sweepin' down the plain." We went on to "The hills are alive with the sound of music," "Whatever Lola wants, Lola gets," "Bali Hai", "Gonna Wash that Man Right Outta My Hair and send him on his way," "Ol' Man River." We steered clear of "Can't Help Lovin' dat Man," but went for "Thank Heaven for Little Girls."

Friendly people went in and out of the front door; no one seemed to mind the two ladies swinging and singing on the porch and we didn't care. We both had clear voices and could carry a tune and best of all, knew all the words. We sang out into the night unfurling our flags of independence like two Mocking Birds, switching songs and rhythms at will. We ended with "Luck be a Lady Tonight. Luck, if you've ever been a lady, Luck be a lady tonight!"

We set our wine glasses down and took each other's hands. We held on for a minute looking at each other, and then she disappeared into the darkness of the parking lot.

I never saw the lady in the red brimmed hat again. But I've never forgotten that winter's evening. Was she an angel? Was I her angel? I don't know but she reminded me that somehow we get through. I'd like to say I've forgotten my sorrow, but I haven't. It's been many years. I mourn a little still, not for long, maybe fleeting, but it's there. And I always hear her words, "I'm not going to let what he did define the rest of my life!"

And then, a small, impish voice says, "May he rot in hell."

[Anne is a student in J. Kudler's writing class]

PROFESSOR OF POETRY
by Arnie Scher

His name was Senor Amaral. The class was Modern Spanish Poetry. The time was 1959, my second year at Rutgers University.

Poetry was something we memorized in high school: Longfellow, Sandburg, Whitman, and, of course, Joyce Kilmer and his "Trees". A poem was never "as lovely as a tree".

That was true for me until I entered Senor Amaral's classroom. A brown-skinned man, he was always dressed in various tweed jackets, with well-knotted paisley or striped ties. He spoke with a slight lisp to indicate his Castilian background. His hair was full with wisps of gray and his voice was soft and poetic.

Why was I in this class, as I was not a poetry fan? Well, a dorm mate suggested that it was an easy "A" or "B" and it would fulfill the second year language requirement. Throughout that school year I was mesmerized by Senor Amaral's love and appreciation of Miguel de Unamuno, Samuel Calderon de la Barca, Federico Garcia Lorca, and many more.

The fluidity, the rhythm, the cadence, the rhyme; it was all so calming. Senor Amaral had helped me appreciate the language as well as the poetry, as he read poem after poem with his outstretched arm holding the book in front of him.

I am grateful for all of my teachers. But the one whom I can still see and hear so clearly is Professor Amaral with his soft voice and sparkling eyes reading Unamuno's "Que Es La Vida?" with such passion and joy. He was able to make a poem just as lovely as a tree.

[Arnie is a student of COM Writing Instructor Jacqueline Kudler.]
DEFINITIONS QUIZ

CHIMERE
a. South American gopher  
b. Grammar term for double meaning  
c. Garment worn by Anglican bishops

PERF 10
a. Highest score in gymnastic competition  
b. Size of perforations between postage stamps  
c. Apple size best to fit in plastic packing

CHROME DIOPSIDE
a. Insulating material for roofs  
b. Green gemstone from Siberia  
c. Chemical to treat bedbug infestation

NAVICULAR
a. Small wrist bone  
b. Type of engine for military vessels  
c. Poor translation of foreign language

ANGSTROM UNIT
a. A ten millionth of a millimeter  
b. Small apartment in Sweden  
c. Measurement of loudness of sound

KOTO
a. Bedouin headdress  
b. Japanese musical instrument  
c. Central African spear

BEZIQUE
a. Card game similar to pinochle  
b. French equivalent to "berserk"  
c. Town in Mozambique

PRION
a. Earliest philosophical presupposition  
b. Tiny infectious particle without a nucleus  
c. Mythological beast

AGLET
a. The tip on a shoelace  
b. Counter in a game  
c. Small section of a farm

CABER
a. Lock for auto convertible top  
b. Tail propeller on helicopter  
c. Weight used in athletic contest

ANSWERS ON PAGE 19

Reaching for the Moon
Silver luminescence slips through slats in the blinds— the little people are polishing the surface of the moon. French maids dust and powder her face. Moonlight settles on ivory palaces, on marble temples in India where all the surfaces are smooth and white, unlike the cratered moon. I used to think the moon saw every little thing and that’s what kept thieves honest, but I was wrong. When the moon is a crystal ball fortunes are told and fortunes made until it sickles into a crystal boat and slides out to sea. Last month the moon rose close to the earth, lushly orange and throbbing with fullness. In the early morning seven cranes flew up against her, and she smiled. If they ask me when I die what I’ll miss, I’ll say moon... moon. It was my first word. And I reached for it.

Barbara Brooks
[Barbara is a student of Instructor Prartho Sereno]

The Sound of One Hand Clapping
the prince, intent upon escape, crept to the stable where his horse was sleeping in a nest of golden frankincense and myrrh breathed into his ear come, friend of my heart, let us go quickly if they hear us we will be forced to stay angels descended and wrapped Kanthaka’s hooves in scarves of silk so they would make no sound when striking the earth

by true heitz
[true is a student of Instructor Prartho Sereno]
THE GREAT MEXICAN HURRICANE IN WHICH A THOUSAND PERISHED

by Don Polhemus, MD

It was in the winter of 1976, a Sunday morning when I was dressing, that I received the phone call. I was to pack and report to the Air National Guard field in the San Fernando Valley for a flight to Mexico. Of course I was aware of the disastrous hurricane which had just struck La Paz on the tip of Baja, but I didn't expect to be designated to be part of the team to assess the damage and medical needs. I was working in Los Angeles for the State Health Department at the time in an administrative position and happened to be their physician nearest the site. The group assigned to make the trip was headed by the Lieutenant-Governor and consisted of six politicians and two doctors. We traveled in a large C-130 transport plane along with a bulky piece of water purification apparatus which turned out to be the most useful item aboard, including the observers.

When we arrived at our destination it was immediately apparent that something major was amiss. Normally this time of year the streets would be full of tourists enjoying the warm climate and the good fishing. But only a few residents were wandering around, the streets were full of sand, numerous trees were uprooted, light weight roofing, such as galvanized iron, was displaced, large signs had been blown down, and those streets located at lower levels catching the water runoff had been destroyed; even their asphalt surfaces had become impassable due to deep ruts. Power was available to only 20% of the town, and that was intermittent. No water flowed in any pipes. A fecal breeze blew off the bay, where apparently untreated sewage was being discharged. We soon found out that anything clean to drink was scarce. The fine hotels, though undamaged, had no guests and no functioning toilets; there was sufficient food, but in an odd variety.

But we hadn't yet seen the half of the real catastrophe. Most of La Paz is reasonably modern with buildings of substantial construction. But several miles above the town, between two hills, runs a retaining wall ten feet high and more than a mile end to end. This is mainly of earthen construction and its purpose is to retain water which flows from between the mountains. Below lies a wide, dry river bed which leads out to the sea and it is here that thousands of poorer residents built their houses because land was free. These were constructed mainly of wood and corrugated asbestos-coated cardboard, though here and there concrete blocks and cement or plaster were used.

The climate in La Paz is generally warm and pleasant with rainfall averaging only ten inches a year, though occasional hurricanes have occurred with most damage resulting from strong winds. But this time five inches of rain fell in three hours. The water accumulation above the dam was more than it could hold, and at 7:30 P.M., it gave way, sending thousands of tons of water rushing through the old river bed to the sea and demolishing everything in the way of its torrential flow. And now what confronted us was a flat, sandy expanse varying between 200 and 500 yards in width where houses once stood.

For a half mile or so just below the dam no trace of habitation remained. From this point on we saw scattered smashed remnants of heavier household items, such as washing machines or stoves. Numerous autos and trucks were unbelievably compressed, smashed, bent in two, deeply buried in sand, and mostly containing corpses.

Scattered through the riverbed protruding like giant toothpicks were tall sticks with small flags attached. These indicated bodies below the surface of the sand and had been left there by Mexican Army units who had earlier probed for soft spots. In some places heavier roofs had collapsed onto the ground and already in this warm air the aroma of decaying flesh hung around them.

More than 500 bodies had already been recovered and buried. A newspaper woman told us the sad story of how more bodies had been arrayed in a large receiving station where survivors walked between rows and would occasionally scream in recognition, after which the body would be quickly nailed into a coffin and buried. It was estimated that an additional 500 victims had been washed out to sea, mostly women and children - perhaps 80% children - as the men were commonly still at work in town, unable to return home.
Far fewer than the dead were the wandering and shocked survivors who had lost home, family, everything. One unfortunate man told us, with difficulty, how he had lost his wife and all three sons. Another told us of pulling eight people from the water. Numerous bodies will remain forever undetected deep in the sand.

From the standpoint of caring for survivors, it was of importance that severe injuries were not frequent. People either drowned or survived with relatively minor cuts and bruises. We heard of only four fractures, for example. But the lack of water made cleansing of even minor injuries impossible, and many were already becoming infected. Diarrhea was common, though we knew of no severe enteric infections. Just as in underdeveloped countries the main need was for clean water and proper waste disposal. Some wells were deep and said to be clean. No chlorination was available. Our water purification equipment would help a lot. People with empty plastic bottles were already lining up.

Altogether, about 1500 homes were completely destroyed and another 1000 required major rebuilding. Fifteen thousand people were believed homeless. Many of these were housed at twenty emergency stations, but most seemed to have moved in with friends or relatives.

When we met with Governor Aranburu he gave us the following information. Food was brought in by the Mexican Navy and is in adequate supply. Medical personnel and vaccines have been flown in (supplied by the U.N.) and were claimed to be sufficient, though we saw none. He also said that all water would be chlorinated within another 2-3 days and that electric power should be restored throughout the city in about 5 days. The greatest need would be for beds, clothing, blankets, cooking utensils, and kerosene stoves. It was our feeling from on-site observation, that the governor tended to minimize the problems. When we met with the mayor he provided a detailed list of what was needed to get reconstruction under way.

It seems that our government cannot act to send supplies without an official request from President Echeverria. The Mexican government naturally prefers to be self-sufficient and he had not yet requested aid. Thus, the most expeditious way to deal with the problem was via the less formal sister city program, and aid would be channeled through Redondo Beach.

This was a fascinating visit for me and while depressing it was good to be able to report that though La Paz had suffered a true catastrophe it would recover and that there was probably not a medical need which could not be met, nor a substantial risk of epidemic disease.

[Don is Newsletter Editor.]

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**ANSWERS TO DEFINITIONS QUIZ**

A **Chimere** is a lightweight overgarment worn by an Anglican priest.

Stamp collectors measure perforations according to the number in 2 cm., hence **perf.10**.

**Chrome diopside** is a newly marketed gem-stone mined in frozen ground in Siberia.

The **navicular** is one of the eight bones in the wrist.

**Angstrom Units** are the extremely small units for measuring wave lengths of light.

The **koto** is a Japanese stringed instrument played horizontally.

**Bezique** was a popular card game a generation ago.

**Prions** are very tiny infectious agents responsible for mad cow disease.

An **aglet** is a shoelace tip.

A **caber** is the weight resembling a small telephone pole used in Scottish athletic contests.
POSTSCRIPTS

Artist Matthew Silverberg’s Reception will be on Tuesday, September 11, 5:30 to 7:30 PM, with poetry readings at 6:45 PM.

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Join us for Preview Day!

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Saturday, Aug. 4, 9:30 AM - 12 noon
Cafeteria, Student Services Building

Indian Valley Campus
Saturday, Aug. 11, 10:30 AM - 12noon
Emeritus North, Building 10, Room 140

* Meet COMmunity Ed instructors
* Explore new COMmunity Ed classes
* Early Bird registration!
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* Mingle and have a good time!
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This event is co-sponsored by COM Community Education and Emeritus Students College of Marin (ESCOM).