

Tinkering Around

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Guess what? A trivia quiz

There's something about springtime. Residents of city and suburb notice the changing season when they slow down long enough to realize it doesn't snow into the car when the windows are rolled down. Drivers of air conditioned vehicles usually have to wait until the end of May before they realize winter is over. It takes them a little longer because half the status of an air conditioned car comes from being able to cruise around for years in the machine without ever having to figure out the system for rolling down the window. Needless to say, it's May before they realize the heat in their car isn't emitting from their defroster. Another sure sign of spring is spotting neighbors walking around attired in spanking clean Adidas and jogging suits that will never see a track or a locker room. It's about this time when spring lurks around every corner that it become appropriate to take a leisurely cruise through a garden of trivia. The thank heaven, winter's gone edition of Tinkering Around with Trivia, follows the same basic rules of all the other quizzes in this space.

THIS TIME around, we're going to return you to your school days or at least, remind you that school isn't over yet by giving a multiple guess trivia quiz.

As everyone who's ever been a student knows, multiple guess is the disparaging nick-name of that favorite form of testing, multiple choice. If answer A doesn't tickle you, you can always guess that answers B, C, or D may be the winners. And, for the devious teacher, there was always the delicious option of answer E: None of the above.

So, get out your pencils, dictionaries or budge Aunt Em's memories of old movie stars and begin to tinker with trivia. Mark Twain was a great humorist and observer of human foibles. Everyone knows the writer's

- real name was Samuel Longhorn Clemens. For what else was the pseudonym used?
- A. When Mississippi riverboat captains heard it, they knew the water was only two fathoms deep.
 - B. It served Isaiah Sellers as a pen name when he wrote for the New Orleans Daily Picayune. Sellers, a Mississippi steamboat pilot was a contributor to the paper.
 - C. An expression used by optimists as a reaction against the saying, "and the twain shall never meet."
 - D. Answers 1 and 2.
 - E. None of the above.
 - F. All of the above.
- Cloche cultivation is one of those delightfully esoteric terms. It is used in:
- A. The fashion industry. It's the latest snappy description of the new trend in headgear coined by the people at Women's Wear Daily. In this case, the term refers to the necessity to buy a certain kind of hat this season.
 - B. Gardening. It refers to placing plants in a bell-shaped frame to protect them from the vagaries of the weather.
 - C. None of the above. Cloche cultivation doesn't exist.
 - D. Both A and B.
- Define calumet.
- A. One of the families in Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet."
 - B. Jargon used by scientists as a easy way to describe small earthquakes.
 - C. An American Indian tobacco pipe.
- Define a cold meat party.
- A. Informal type of entertainment that stresses buffet style. It's a hit with the sandwich and beer crowd.
 - B. Black slang for a funeral.
 - C. A real dud of a party where the men are bored and the women are bored.



"Around the edge"

by Jackie Klein

Bias travels fast

Bigotry is alive and well and thriving from Birmingham, Mich. to Florida and Hollywood, California. The reason I didn't mention Southfield is because folks here vehemently deny that they're racists. They get awfully defensive when anyone implies that they are. Birmingham voters last week overwhelmingly rejected a controversial low-income housing plan in a hotly contested election. The vote also crippled a proposal to build a 150-unit senior citizen apartment building in downtown Birmingham. Voters rejected two different proposals for financing the building. One would have authorized a \$6 million bond issue to build the complex. The other would have allowed the project to qualify for state financing if the city rented 50 rehabilitated homes to low-income families. It gives one pause to wonder if the host of Southfield residents, who vowed they would vote for a bond issue to house seniors to avoid the "strings" of housing low-income families, would have gone the way of Birmingham. I am also reminded of the Southfield homeowners who loudly protested low-income dwellings in the city and insisted, "This doesn't happen in Birmingham and other suburbs to the north."

IN THE south, Anita Bryant is shaking in her Red Cross oxford shoes she expects to be knocked off by homosexuals. She makes gays see orange, but she sees black. She lumps them all together with Jews and other non-Christian followers, grinds them to a pulp and would like to make enough orange juice out of them to drown every non-WASP in sunny Florida.

She's really wasting her time, since she believes all these deviates, sexual and religious, will go straight to hell when they die. All she has to do is wait long enough for this happen — that is if she isn't done in first by the gays.

In Hollywood, Vanessa Redgrave talks about "Zionist hoodlums" in the same breath that she

deplores the plight of all Jews in their long struggle against fascism and oppression. When Vanessa financed and narrated a documentary, "The Palestinian," was she fighting anti-Semitism or anti-Zionism? Part of the long struggle of the Jewish people against oppression is their fight for a homeland in Israel. And that's Zionism. These incidents may be isolated and widespread. But hate and distrust have no geographical boundaries. What happens in Birmingham, Southfield, Florida and Hollywood is steeped in racism, distortions, scare tactics, innuendo and fear.

THE ANITA Bryants, the Vanessa Redgraves and the suburbanites of the world are entitled to their opinions and prejudices. But unfortunately, they sow the seeds of hate while protesting they are acting out of love and noble purposes.

In reality, Southfield and Birmingham are saying they have no room for the less fortunate in their affluent suburbs because the poor, especially minority poor, cause blight and crime.

Anita Bryant is saying that all those who don't think like she does, live like she does, pray like she does and love like she does should be victims of mass genocide.

Vanessa Redgrave spews her venom and defends her cause, whatever it is, on national television. She gave a better acting performance when she accepted the Oscar than in the movie for which she was acclaimed. Politics may be theatrical, but theatrics shouldn't be political. It influences too many irrational thinking TV watchers.

Yes, bigotry in many forms and in many places is alive and well. It is fewer less robust, it might respond to treatment and eventually to a cure. But that's not likely to happen when prejudice is so well nurtured and protected by the many, not the few.

The new look of the morning Friendly (the old standby, not the news upstart) graphically demonstrates the latest approach to newspapering.

Graphics is what it's all about. Take a look at the front page. Nearly every story has lines around it. Someone in the marketing field decided that readers have a hard time keeping track of stories without these linear divisions.

Marketing experts also tell us the public favors the "clean" look in its newspapers. Hence the introduction of the graphics editor. Who else could draw all those lines and determine what stories get boxed?

The whole show is for you, dear reader. When you're competing with good-looking anchorpersons and the "electronic" newscasters on TV, you've got to keep up with the Bondises.

Packaging the press has become big business. Consumer advocate Ralph Nader has another approach to improving the press, however.

Naders wants public accountability. He urges more space for letters to the editor, ombudsmen to deal with reader complaints, reader opinion columns, and in-house media critics.

IN-HOUSE media critics we've got in abundance. But Nader makes a point.

No other industry has explicit constitutional protection against government regulation of their product, Nader says. Having a local monopoly in 97% per cent of the towns they operate in without any form of public review is another problem.

In fact, Detroit is one of the few major cities in the United States which has two major competing newspapers owned by different corporations. That kind of nearly unique standing was commonplace 30 years ago.

Competing with TV puts an emphasis on superficial make-up—attracting the reader, rather than informing the public. It's a classier form of tabloid

journalism, but it's still a supermarket approach. Newspapers are businesses, and promotion is part of the game.

Nader's recommendations sound good, with the exception of establishing local press councils to oversee the newspaper's image. That's where I draw the line.

Advisory boards sound like a good way to make a newspaper accountable to its public. But who's the public? Do you restrict the board to those without a conflict of interest, such as advertisers, government officials, and politicians?

NO NEWS is good news as far as most city governments are concerned, unless the news promotes the city. Advertisers seldom appreciate stories that look at both sides of the subject concerning their particular product or industry.

The whole advisory apparatus can get sticky, because accountability is a two-way street. A fascist newspaper can be accountable to its reading public, i.e. it can give the readers what they want to read. That doesn't have anything to do with news.

A house industry newspaper is geared to promoting the company. But promotion is public relations business. Newspapering hopefully aims at objectivity and the presentation of the facts. Newspapers cannot serve the public at large while becoming a mouthpiece for the chamber of commerce or advertisers.

True accountability rests with discriminating readers, which is why I'm convinced the best way to improve newspapers is to improve the public. Learning to read a newspaper and news magazines should be required before a student can graduate from high school.

Graphics are a nice touch; but content should top the list of priorities, for both readers and newspaper people alike.

Guest Columnist

It's the pits, Jesse Pits

Guest columnist Stephen Emelock, Ph.D., is a Troy resident. His article concerns the "Courses by Newspaper" program which runs in the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Haven't you heard? Aged academics never die. Why these old knights in shining eldorado patches just retire on their modesty or reserve, overtaken by the cultural upheavals and ambivalences they once thrived on. But every so often one of their rank, overdue his reward of green, green pastures, comes along who escapulates banality like one of those tinlof snowscenes set in a paperweight.

Professor Jesse Pitts, however, curiously mixes in his social commentaries both reserve andchutzpah (Yiddish for nerve or gall). The Oakland University pedagogic's comments for a "Courses by Newspaper" program more often than not go a leap beyond gall, even by conservative standards.

The dyspepsia dispensed in his so-called mediating remarks resonate eerie tones of professorial flatulence as well as touch—or rather slam—on questionable biases. His sort of opinionated, intransigent in the face of harsh realities, one doesn't expect from a social scientist, particularly one who entrusted to teach college students on whose formulations the future of our national condition rests. And here, precisely, is where his intellectual bearing, in terms of American behavioral phenomena, leaves a lot to be desired.

AT FIRST blush, who can fault Dr. Pitts' opening statements on Jan. 5, 1978? He wrote: "A major purpose of the course should be to develop the capacity of the student to see through special pleading, sophistry and just plain fuzzy thinking."

But, in retrospect, one wonders if that's not just a waft of ill wind projecting his own unfulfilled needs—especially since his arguments hinge on incomplete statistics and eminently biased analyses in his Jan. 26 homily, "Counter Culture Aids Crime," which compares the '68 blackout in New York City with its most recent one. He essentially tells us of no looting

in the first blackout. However, "in 1977, looting and vandalism were common. Yet a majority of the looters arrested in Brooklyn had jobs, and they did not hit the grocery stores."

Now let's digest that one. What has he said? Better yet, what hasn't he said? First of all, he claims the majority of Brooklyn looters had jobs. Maybe so, but does he indicate whether these so-called jobs paid livable wages? Were the looters able to meet their rent? Given they were, did their wages provide for them standard or substandard housing? Has Dr. Pitts demonstrated the differences between both? Does he make us aware that rat and roach-infested living quarters affect not only how humans are, but their actions under stressful or extraneous conditions?

WITHOUT answers to these, we are hard put to reconcile his statement: "Poverty does not cause crime, if by poverty we mean lack of varied clothing, lack of rich foods and overcrowding in a tenement."

So, secondly, we come to find out that less food and more clothing and jewelry were stolen in the blackout—furniture being conspicuously absent from his list, which in actuality wasn't the case. And what about ransacked auto dealerships? Aren't they worth a mention? Also, there's nothing said of the remaining four boroughs which make up the whole of New York City. Can we believe, given they too were in the blackout, that his statistics, "a majority of looters arrested in Brooklyn had jobs," ran true to form elsewhere? It's obvious Dr. Pitts' estimate is of only those arrested. But what about the looters who didn't get caught? Did a majority of them have jobs too?

Looking at it another way, we know, although there were roving bands, the big looting were in ghetto neighborhoods. And there, as in most places, the supermarkets come, by rough but realistic estimates, one for every 10 others. So no wonder fewer of them were robbed. But that they were even sacked at all should shout at us what Dr. Pitts neglects to whisper.

Instead he decries, "Enough of these stories about poverty breeding crime.

Their function, and to often their conscious purpose, are to place American society in accusation and deny it the right to punish looters."

WHAT'S most disturbing, though, is that in Dr. Pitts' exhortation we fail to see a forthright search for the causes of crime. But what we do see is a portent of snake oil nostrums being applied to the dehumanizing factors prevalent in a post-industrial society such as ours. That is, the kinds of remedy which come of a "let them eat cake" attitude imperiously combined with a punitive Hobbesian mentality.

Dr. Pitts' preoccupation with class structure, his Genesis-bent adherence which proclaims, "And God saw that it was good," is displayed in his admirable use of Gunnar Myrdal's term "underclass."

Dr. Pitts' comments of Jan. 26 and Feb. 9 read like graffiti on the porcelain convenience's wall: Crude, scratchy, impertinent, inept. And in his short shrift of the 28th, where he refers to the importance of "rudiments of work discipline," we begin to uncover the source of his atavistic notions.

Echoing shades of Calvinistic repression, they seem to represent certain fatuously imbued Americans who, guilt-ridden in their doctrinized anonymity, cling both fearfully and defensively to the anachronism of America having an egalitarian society, if indeed that's possible anywhere, anytime given the disparity of endowments among people.

IT ISN'T justice that Dr. Pitts seeks; it's inhuman management. The illegal Mexicans around Pontiac whom he examples in glowing terms are obviously under the gun because of their bogus entry into the country. Of course, they have no welfare, no Medicare, no English-speaking skills. So of course they take jobs at \$2.50 an hour, stay clear of the police and keep their children in line. But that they have no choice wouldn't preclude their televised-imbued desire, like for the rest of our underprivileged, they too are mesmerized by a tube that spews the American dream of "more and bigger." But, more to what's implicit in Dr. Pitts' angled prose, they are managed—but inadvertently, we might add for good measure.

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