

ALPHA CHI RECORDER

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Cover design by

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“Formal Construction” is a mixed media collage. See more of Back’s work and a discussion of his “found art” on pages 21-29.

From the Editor

What You've Been Reading

I recently indulged myself in a short trip down memory lane. The *Recorder* (alumni edition) has been around since 1996, but I assumed the role of editor in 1999, and wanted to assess the subject matter of our journal over these eight years and seven issues (we skipped 2005 but will catch back up with another issue in the fall of 2006). I also wanted to see how many Alpha Chi institutions had been represented.

I took this little trip as a prelude to a call for help from sponsors primarily, I suppose, but other readers of the alumni issue as well. Each year we solicit articles on any legitimate academic subject or Alpha Chi related issue or people. The only requirement is that the writer or the subject be connected to the organization. Frankly, we don't always get the hoped-for response from our calls for papers.

We understand this limited response. Sponsors are busy. Their colleagues are busy, and writing is always an unpaid opportunity/burden. This publication is not juried and therefore is not the most prestigious credit for those faculty members who want to publish. Alumni are also busy. Considering these hurdles, we are grateful for the responses we have received. We have printed some well-written articles by folks with impressive knowledge. And we have had the opportunity to inform our readers about some impressive Alpha Chi students, chapters, and fellow alumni.

Political science and literature are the two specific subjects appearing most often in the *Recorder* since 1999. From a speech by John Grisham to a short story by Nevada Barr, we have done our part to stimulate your imaginations. World events have perhaps contributed in part to several articles on topics such as the Iraq War, Machiavelli's influence, and Nixon's legacy in Vietnam. We have been honored to tell you about the lives of such distinguished individuals as Dr. David Clifford, Alpha Chi alum and indefatigable fighter against AIDS, and lawyer Fred Gray, who stood beside Martin Luther King in the early Civil Rights movement.

Over these last seven issues a total of 26 Alpha Chi schools have been represented, either by writers or by having their chapters or students as the subjects of articles. Mary White of Lees-McRae College has been published twice, and her college has seen a total of three articles appear in the journal. Shorter, Stephen F. Austin, Pepperdine, Tarleton State, and Gardner-Webb have been represented in two issues. Harding University, home of Alpha Chi, has been represented the most—a total of six times counting the articles I (and now Executive Director Dennis Organ) have written. Though Harding has many fine professors who write well, in the interest of fairness, I have used Harding colleagues only as a last resort. That brings me back to our need.

This journal exists for Alpha Chi alumni. We hope that sponsors, other faculty, and even alumni will think of us when they hear a good story about an alumnus, or something of merit about a chapter. If they know a professor at a member school who can write well about his or her discipline, we hope they will contact us.

One thing has been true since 1999. I have been a better-informed professional and citizen because of my involvement in the *Recorder*. I'd like to think some readers can say the same thing, if not about the last eight years, then about the next eight.

With Honor and Integrity

Alpha Chi and Academic Honesty

By Dennis M. Organ, Executive Director

A few years ago Alpha Chi suffered the embarrassment of discovering that a recipient of one of our prestigious national scholarships had flagrantly plagiarized the academic paper that was the centerpiece of her winning application. Though the stipend had not been paid, we had publicized the list of winners, and consequently we found ourselves trapped, victims mostly of our carelessness.

The lack of care in assessing the application papers gave the National Council a collective red face. But there was naiveté working too: Who would have guessed that an application would not have been vetted by the forwarding chapter or at least by the professor for whom the paper was originally written? And why would an honor society student be suspect in the first place?

The case remained a private embarrassment for Alpha Chi (until now, I guess) because we decided we had no choice but to award the stipend as announced. In our naiveté we had written competition rules that made no provision for canceling an award for such cause after it had been announced. We concluded that the only justifiable way the

student could be denied the award would be for the local chapter, through the faculty, to withdraw her membership in Alpha Chi—action that the school, for its own reasons, did not take. Our reasoning was that institutions elect students to membership and by inference are charged with withdrawing membership for cause.

I'm happy to report that the experience led us to several reforms in our scholarship process. We now specify in the rules that a stipend can be denied if plagiarism is discovered after the announcement of competition results. On the application form we ask the student to sign a statement that there is no plagiarism in the paper. The selection committees today are certainly more alert to suspicious material in the papers they review. And before the committee gets the papers, the national office evaluates them with the online plagiarism-checking tool Turnitin.com.

Unfortunately, this example of academic dishonesty is unusual only in the high profile of its circumstance. College professors across the country can attest to the discouraging prevalence of cheating. Sometimes the cheating attracts national attention, as with the recent investigation at Ohio University into forty-four possible cases of plagiarism in graduate theses by engineering students ("Engineering School"). Educators are thinking more than ever about this issue—exploring the likely causes, trying to keep up with students whose technical savvy makes it much easier than ever to copy others' work, and devising honor codes and systems to create a campus culture where honesty is seen as the norm.

So too with honor societies. In this climate of ethical controversy, we are looking afresh at the concept of honor. Historically "honor," for us, had the primary meaning of acclaim bestowed on students of exceptional academic achievement. But besides scholarship, from the earliest days of the honor society movement another element was recognized, and that was good character, or character worthy of honor.

Most honor societies, Alpha Chi among them, continue to hold up good character—not so much as provable fact as an ideal for those who aspire to membership.

Although honor-worthy character has certainly never been quantifiable like a grade point average, these days the issue of judging character is an especially sticky matter for colleges and universities and the honor societies that serve them. Yet most honor societies, Alpha Chi among them, continue to hold up good character—not so much as provable fact as an ideal for those who aspire to membership.

The National Council decided last year that one way to promote Alpha Chi's commitment to good character was to create a national theme on academic integrity to be carried out on our 300-plus campuses through voluntary chapter programming. This emphasis also linked Alpha Chi with the sixty to seventy other member honor societies in the Association of College Honor Societies who in 2004 adopted "A Matter of Ethics" as a

national theme to be promoted by each society as it sees fit. Many of the specialized honor societies such as business or nursing are emphasizing ethics as it applies to their discipline. But as an honor society for all fields, Alpha Chi, we believed, could best promote ethics by focusing specifically on academic integrity across the college or university. Academic honesty is the place where Alpha Chi's concern about character intersects most clearly with its commitment to scholarship. This issue touches every student, every teacher, every administrator.

We kicked off our plan at the 2005 national convention in St. Louis through the convention theme "With Honor and Integrity." By happy coincidence, we had already

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selected as our keynote speaker an individual who had made a name for herself in the arena of public ethics and whom Alpha Chi was going to honor as its 2005 Distinguished Alumni Award winner. Colleen Rowley's address at the opening banquet dealt in

broad terms with ethics, drawn from her experience in government service, but she deemphasized her dramatic FBI whistle-blowing story and stressed instead the importance of what she called "ordinary virtue"—doing the right thing in small, everyday choices.

Rowley said, "Such decisions involving 'ordinary virtue' are not only the type of decision most likely to confront everyone all the time, with no prospect of reward and no public recognition, but they are also the only way one can practice, that is, exercise one's muscles ethically in small ways, so that one is better prepared if ever presented with the big ethical dilemma." "Ordinary virtue," her audience realized, has many applications, including the pressures and temptations of academic life.

The next morning of the convention, I spoke on behalf of the National Council to lay out the case for Alpha Chi's sponsorship of a nationwide effort on academic integrity. To establish the importance and the scope of the problem, I drew largely on the research of Dr. Donald McCabe, one of the founders of the Center for Academic Integrity, a national coalition of academic institutions. McCabe is recognized as an authority on the subject of student cheating because of his research since 1990 covering more than 140 colleges and universities (and now high schools as well). His questionnaires for both students and faculty members give an institution its own integrity profile through self-reporting, and the composite data show the national picture.

In a presentation February 23, 2006, at the annual meeting of the Association of College Honor Societies, McCabe updated his findings with data from surveys conducted through the 2004-05 academic year. His summary contains many interesting, though troubling, pieces of information.

Of the more than 50,000 undergraduates surveyed in the past three school years, 21 percent said they had cheated at least once on a test in the previous year, and 47 percent said they had cheated on a written assignment at least once in the previous year. Types of test cheating specified on the survey include copying from another student with or without permission, using crib notes, and using electronic devices during an exam. As for written cheating, specific behaviors include such things as written and Internet plagiarism, copying another's assignment, and falsifying lab or research data. McCabe noted that for this tabulation he included only behaviors that a majority of students agree are cheating—not, for example, getting test questions from someone who has taken the test earlier, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, and copying of routine homework. When those kinds of behavior are included, he said, the numbers increase significantly.

McCabe provided a table summarizing some of the trends in plagiarism since 1999, with the dramatic increase in Internet “cut and paste” as the cheater’s tool of choice.

	1999	2002-05	Fall 2005
Written “cut and paste”	40%	38%	35%
Written plagiarism	16%	7%	5%
Internet “cut and paste”	10%	37%	37%
Internet plagiarism (e.g., term paper mills)	5%	3%	2%

Fortunately, McCabe and the Center for Academic Integrity do not merely wring their hands when facing this national problem. Both the surveys and the publications of CAI go beyond documenting that cheating is a thriving culture; they seek to understand who is cheating and why, and, even more importantly, why some colleges and universities have a healthier climate for academic integrity.

The research indicates that higher levels of cheating occur among business and communications majors, athletes, those holding jobs, and those caring for a dependent. McCabe has also gathered data that suggests a higher incidence of cheating in students with low GPA's and—of striking relevance to Alpha Chi and other honor societies—in those with high GPA's. These categories seem consistent with some of the main motivations for cheating cited by students: the societal pressure to succeed at any cost; the feeling that if the student has to cheat, then the teacher didn't do a good job; and the sense that teachers need to show more that they care about student success.

Such complaints about faculty echo the “us versus them” mentality too often seen in teachers as well as students. Such a mindset obviously runs counter to the goal of a healthy

campus community that nurtures mutual respect and academic trust. It also makes it harder to build a consensus on campus about what cheating is. Although McCabe's research (see the table below) shows basic agreement between students and faculty on the severity of certain cheating behaviors, on others, such as unauthorized collaboration and "cut and paste" plagiarism, students have much less stringent standards than faculty.

	Students	Faculty
Copy on exam/crib notes	91%	98%
Plagiarism	91%	99%
Paper from mill	89%	98%
Collaboration	36%	84%
Written/Internet "cut and paste"	56%	83%
Copying computer program	83%	97%

Before we consider Alpha Chi's response to the problem of academic dishonesty, one final point from McCabe's study needs attention. The researcher has found three institutional factors most closely associated with higher levels of cheating: 1) academic dishonesty is regarded as a campus norm; 2) no meaningful honor code or academic integrity policy exists; and 3) students perceive little support for integrity policies and therefore don't worry about being caught or penalized.

The idea of a campus honor code requires clarification, because to many, the term refers solely to the system that places primary responsibility on students. Such a system is characterized by a strict personal pledge to be honest and to monitor and report the dishonesty of others, unproctored exams, and a judicial process run by students.

In a 2002 article, McCabe and Linda Klebe Trevino distinguish between this traditional model, which is still in place in some schools, and a newer concept they call "modified honor codes." If a school does not already have an effective traditional code, the authors believe it is unwise to attempt to put such a system into place in today's climate, where students are strongly opposed to monitoring and reporting each other. They write, "Recognizing the difficulty of developing a campus culture that can support a traditional code, these [modified] codes aim to develop a sense of community responsibility for academic integrity, particularly among students" (406). Getting students to buy into a modified code requires two critical elements, McCabe and Trevino say: first is communicating to students "that academic integrity is a major institutional priority," and second is insuring student

participation in the judicial process (406). The authors contend that schools of all types can make inroads against academic dishonesty by placing integrity on the table for campus discussion and using a modified honor code to create a climate of integrity.

Progress against what seems to be a tide of cheating (swelled, it sometimes seems, by wave after wave of new technology) is best made one campus at a time. Although Alpha Chi has launched a national project to address academic integrity, the real work will be done at individual institutions. At those schools an Alpha Chi chapter's role could be very small, but it also could be quite significant. To give chapters a start in participating in the discussion on their home campuses, the national convention last spring included brainstorming workshops that generated dozens of ideas—some general and some quite specific—on ways Alpha Chi members could promote integrity at home. Before the workshop sessions began, delegates were given these guiding suggestions:

1. Look at the big picture of the climate or culture of honesty on your campus. Is it a value that is well communicated and supported? If so, think of what contributes to that climate and share it with other delegates. If not, ask what a student group could do to turn this around.

2. Think about collaborating with other honor societies on campus. This is a cause that benefits from having as many as possible working together.

3. Focus on proactive steps. Think of how your campus needs to be educated about academic ethics.

4. Be reactive too. Sometimes the most dramatic effects occur when an immediate problem or crisis is confronted. (As an example, we referred to the case of Alpha Chi students at Gardner-Webb University in North Carolina who successfully confronted the school's administration and board in 2002 over the president's involvement in changing a grade of an athlete to keep the player eligible. A story about the case appeared in the 2003 Alumni Issue of the *Recorder*.)

Ideas generated by the delegates are posted on our web site. And at the 2007 convention in San Antonio, we hope to highlight some of the outstanding programs our chapters have created.

This article began by acknowledging the difficult matter of measuring character. I shall end by noting a related problem—that is, explaining why a certain behavior is considered cheating. Even in CAI circles there is little talk about

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the nature of such judgment, the unexpressed assumption being that everyone at the meetings shares the same understanding about what behaviors are dishonest. And yet research on student and faculty opinion shows that on many points there is not agreement at all. It

makes one wonder how an institution can truly combat certain behaviors unless it also can explain, rather than merely assert, why they are unacceptable.

Some dishonesty has a legal component, of course, but what interests me more is the idea of a moral basis for making ethical judgments about questionable academic behavior. Of course, at many Alpha Chi institutions it is problematic to address policies from this perspective, while at others, especially those with a religious heritage, the moral “why” of academic integrity can well be addressed. A recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* offered a somewhat surprising research finding about the interest of faculty members in students’ moral development. A study by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA concluded that “[m]ore than half of faculty members believe it is important to enhance undergraduates’ self-understanding and to develop their moral character and values” (Rainey). Although that number is said to drop sharply when the term “spiritual” is used, this study suggests that perhaps there is wider readiness among college teachers to speak to moral issues than we have thought.

Of course, discussing morality does not equal convincing students to become moral or ethical. Student sensitivity to moral argument runs across a broad spectrum. On one end, as the list of motivations for cheating suggests, are those devoted to ethical relativism. For some students, clearly, there is no line that cannot be crossed. At the other extreme there are remarkably scrupulous students who resist every temptation to trim their conscience for a grade. Certainly many students possess a moral sense that can be stimulated to help them make right choices; for this, they likely need something other than a merely pragmatic argument about what the academic community has decided to label dishonest.

The majority of students and faculty probably lie in the broad middle, subject to being educated about academic integrity in various ways, including appeals to both conscience and a societal consensus about what is unethical. Alpha Chi has always done a good job of encouraging students to excel academically. Now we have a great opportunity to influence both academics and ethics on campus by calling our institutions to a higher standard of academic integrity. In doing so, we will serve not only our students but also the larger culture in which, for good or ill, these students will someday labor.

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A Review

The World Is Flat

By Thomas L. Friedman

By Linda A. Livingstone

The librarian at the high school where my husband teaches approached him several weeks ago and told him about an experience she had in a local book store. She overheard a small child saying, “This book is a lie—that is not true!” As the librarian walked around the shelf of books, she saw that the child’s mother was holding a copy of the book *The World is Flat*. The mom tried to explain to the child that the title of the book was a metaphor, but in the literal mind of a young child, that didn’t carry any weight—the world is round.

My task in this article is to review Tom Friedman’s book *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*. When my copy of this book arrived from Amazon.com my first reaction was, “I don’t know if the world is flat, but I sure wish this book was flatter!” (given that the book is 488 pages long!) and my second reaction was, “I am really glad Friedman wrote this at the beginning of the 21st century because I would hate to see how long his brief history would be at the end of the century!”

We have a tradition at our house of reading books together before my nine-year-old daughter goes to bed at night. In our nightly reading we have finished *The Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy, read all of the Harry Potter series and are now in the middle of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. We recently finished Book 3, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Interestingly, the book focuses on the journey Lucy, Edmund, and Eustace take with King Caspian of Narnia on his boat, the Dawn Treader. You discover in this book, that in Narnia the world really is flat, and the Dawn Treader sails east to find the edge of the world, the utter east, as C.S. Lewis calls it.

In Lewis' book, the children travel the flat world in a boat taking months to reach the end of the journey, experiencing mysterious and amazing people and lands along the way.

In Thomas Friedman's book, people travel the flat world instantaneously on the Internet, through supply-chains, offshoring, outsourcing, insourcing, and digital, wireless communication, experiencing mysterious and amazing people and lands along the way.

As I reflect on Friedmans' book, two questions come to mind:

a. Is the metaphor of Friedman's title true in any sense? Is the world really flat?

That is, does it offer equal access to peace and prosperity?

b. If it is flat, what will we find at the edge, the utter east, of the world?

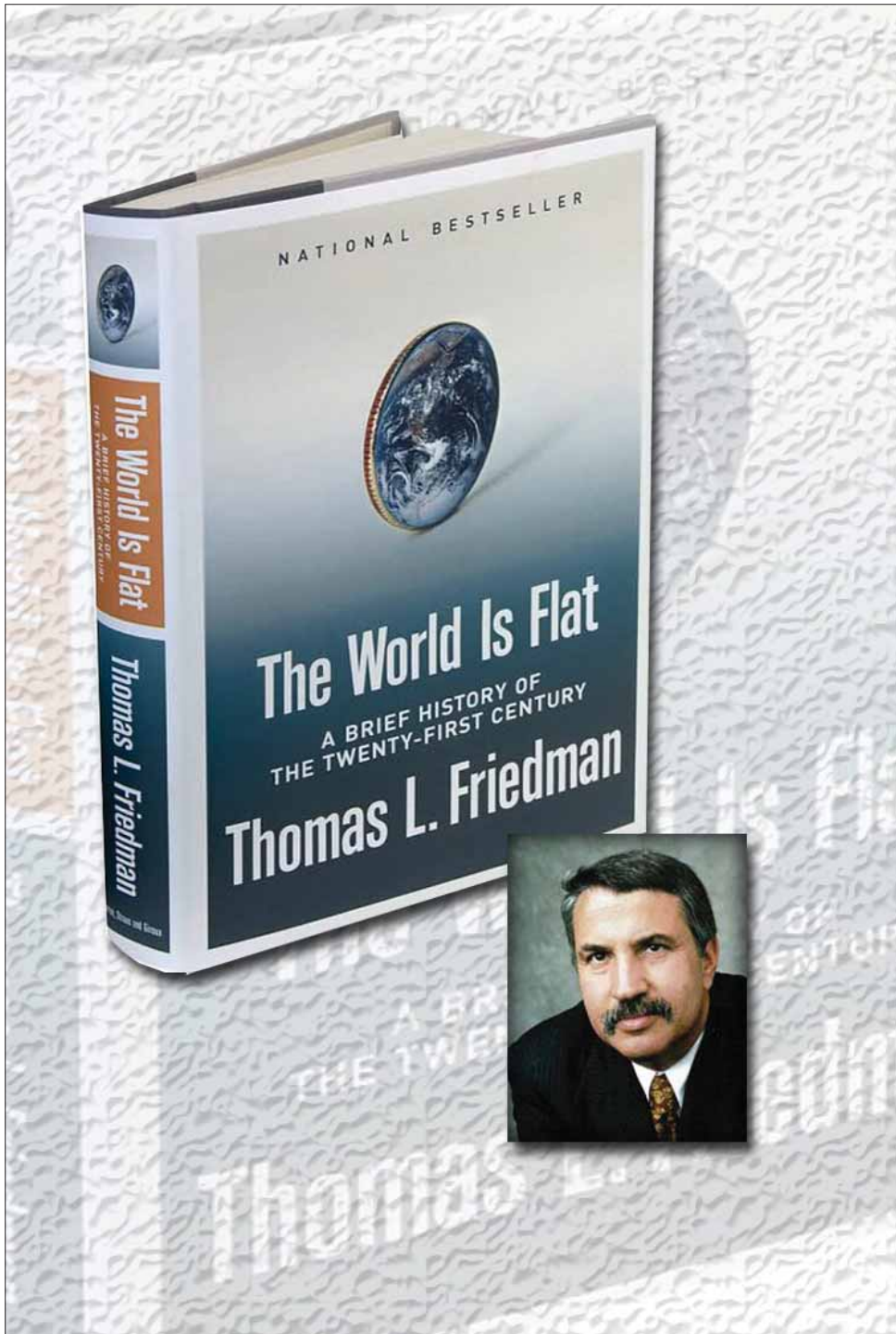
Friedman, among other things, proposes two possible answers to the second question. He calls one the Jet Blue outcome and the other the Al Qaida outcome. Before looking at

According to Friedman, the flat world is one in which knowledge centers around the world are connected in a single global network.

those two alternatives in more detail, let me give you a bit of background on what Friedman means by a flat world, why Friedman believes the world is flat, and what the implications of a flat world are for those living in it.

According to Friedman, the flat world is one in which

knowledge centers around the world are connected in a single global network. Flattening, then, is a metaphor for the comprehensive leveling of competition and capability through globalization. Friedman goes on to identify what he considers three great eras of globalization. Era 1.0 occurred between 1492 and 1800. In this era, countries and governments broke down walls and drove global integration. Friedman notes that a primary question in this era was, "Where does my *country* fit into global competition and opportunities?" Era 2.0 was between 1800 and 2000 as multinational companies went global for markets and labor. A key question for this era, says Friedman, was "Where does my *company* fit into the global economy?" Finally, Era 3.0 began in 2000 and is a time in which individuals go global to collaborate and compete. The question for Era 3.0, according to Friedman, is "Where do *I* fit into the global opportunities and competition of the day?"



Friedman goes on to identify forces that he believes are causing the world to flatten.

Flattener #1: The Fall of the Berlin Wall 11/9/89 — because it let loose forces around the world that supported democracy and free, market-oriented governance. It encouraged global unification under the umbrella of capitalism.

Flattener #2: Netscape going public — Netscape made the net accessible to everyone, and it helped make the internet interoperable. Internet-email browser confluence along with overinvestment in optical fiber produced a new template for economic activity. It is important to note at this point that in Friedman's view, the world is flat only if you have access to the internet and various technologies.

Flattener #3: Workflow software —we went from an internet that only connected people and people to their applications to an Internet that could connect one person's software programs to another person's software programs so everyone could really work together from almost anywhere.

Flattener #4: Open-sourcing — exists when individuals or companies or groups of people make source code available online so that anyone who wants to can contribute and improve upon the code. Because open source code can be downloaded free almost anywhere in the world, self-organizing collaborative communities become possible.

Flattener #5: Outsourcing — occurs when a company takes some specific, focused function that it was doing itself like research, call centers, or accounts receivable and has another company perform that same function and then reintegrates the outsourced work back into the original company's operations. According to Friedman, the implosion of the dot com bubble turbocharged outsourcing.

Flattener #6: Off-shoring — occurs when a company takes one of its factories that is operating in its home country and moves the whole factory to another country. When China joined the World Trade Organization, international competition began to run "faster and faster" according to Friedman. Interestingly, Friedman makes no mention of Mexico and the maquiladoras that have been in place for years performing this same off-shoring function.

Flattener #7: Supply-chaining — a method of horizontal collaboration occurring among suppliers, retailers, and customers that creates value. One key for success in supply-chaining, says Friedman, is finding a way to gain efficiencies that can exist in a strong global supply chain to improve lives instead of relying on cost-cutting and high profit margins, strategies that often work against the goal of amelioration.

Flattener #8: In-sourcing — a form of collaboration and value creation that occurs horizontally when one company visits another to perform a selected set of operations for the host. Friedman uses the example of UPS, which serves as a third party logistics manager for many companies.

Flattener #9: In-forming — searching for new knowledge and having tremendous power “to build and deploy your own personal supply-chain” because now almost anyone can access knowledge—discrimination no longer exists. In-forming is possible because companies like Google, Yahoo, and TiVo have democratized information.

Flattener #10: The steroids — new technologies that amplify and turbo-charge the other flatteners. These steroids include exponentially growing storage, file sharing, multi-purpose devices, VoIP, videoconferencing, wireless and other forms of new technology.

The true impact of these ten flatteners is felt, however, only because of three convergences identified by Friedman:

Convergence #1: Around 2000 all ten flatteners began to converge and work together in ways that created new, flatter, global playing fields that allow multiple forms of collaboration.

Convergence #2: Businesses and individuals began to adopt new habits, skills, and processes to get the most out of the first convergence, moving from vertical means of creating value to horizontal means of creating value.

Convergence #3: After convergence #1, a new group of several billion people walked onto the playing field. They came from China, India, Latin America, Central America, and the former Soviet Union.

Thus, the triple convergence of new players, a new playing field, and new processes for horizontal collaboration is, according to Friedman, the most important force influencing global economies and politics in the early 21st century because it allows globalization to be driven by the individual rather than by the country or the company.

Friedman goes on to outline a number of implications that arise from the flattening of the world. He begins with general implications and then moves

on to implications for America, for developing countries, and for companies. First, as suggested above, he expects that there will be a “great sorting out,” and the world will

A new group of several billion people walked onto the playing field. They came from China, India, Latin America, Central America, and the former Soviet Union.

move from a primarily vertical value-creation model based on command and control to an increasingly horizontal value-creation model emphasizing connections and collaboration. Second, he believes that the flattening of the world will eliminate inefficiencies and friction in ways that will be good for global business but may pose threats to the distinctive places and communities that give us our bearings in the world. He notes sources of inefficiency

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such as cultures, habits, and traditions that people value because they help develop and maintain social structure and cohesion. The real issue, notes Friedman, is how to determine which frictions are true inefficiencies and which should be protected because they are important sources of identity and be-

longing. A third general implication is the need for a system of global governance. The flatter the world becomes, according to Friedman, the more need there is for a centralized system to keep up with all of the new legal and illegal forms of collaboration. Because of this, Friedman believes that political science may be the most important discipline for the future.

More specifically, Friedman identifies some implications for America arising from this new, flat world. In particular he believes that Americans must build new skills to succeed in the flat world, but they must be skills for jobs that cannot be outsourced. Friedman identifies four classes of jobs that he believes cannot be outsourced. He labels them the “Untouchables”:

- 1) *Special people* like Michael Jordan have a global market for their skills and thus can never be outsourced.
- 2) *Specialized people* like certain lawyers, brain surgeons, cutting edge computer architects—those with skills that are in great demand and for which there are no substitutes.
- 3) *Anchored people* like barbers, chefs, plumbers, and nurses whose jobs, at least for now, must be done in particular locations using face-to-face interaction with the client/customer.
- 4) *Really adaptable people* constantly acquire new skills, knowledge, and expertise that facilitates their permanent ability to create value. Friedman notes that to fall into this category, “You have to be skillfully adaptable and socially adaptable.”

If this implication is true, it raises an important question: Are educational institutions, particularly institutions of higher education, preparing people in a way that will prevent their jobs from being outsourced? Can they develop *special people*? Probably not. Can

they develop *specialized people*? Maybe a few. Can they develop *Anchored people*? Probably some. Can they develop *really adaptable people*? Probably so.

Friedman also outlines implications for developing countries in the flat world. He believes developing countries must engage in what he calls “reform retail,” not just “reform wholesale.” A country engages in “reform wholesale” by engaging in foreign trade and investment and making macroeconomic policy changes. “Reform retail” occurs after a country engages in “reform wholesale” and begins to look at infrastructure, regulatory institutions, education, and culture. Countries best able to take advantage of the flat world are those whose cultures can easily assimilate foreign ideas/best practices and integrate them with their own customs and traditions. In Friedman’s view, cultural tolerance is the foundation for trust, and trust is the foundation for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Interestingly, while Friedman focuses on implications for the United States and developing countries, he makes almost no mention of the impact of the flat world on Europe.

The next implications outlined by Friedman concern companies. He identifies seven rules in this new world that they must obey:

Rule #1: “When the world goes flat—and you are feeling flattened—reach for a shovel and dig inside yourself. Don’t try to build walls.” One of my favorite lines from this book notes, “There is no future in vanilla for most companies in a flat world. The commercial future belongs to those who know how to make the richest chocolate sauce, the sweetest, lightest whipped cream, and the juiciest cherries to sit on top, or how to put them all together into a sundae.” *Is your organization serving vanilla ice cream or hot fudge sundaes?*

Rule #2: “And the small shall act big One way small companies flourish in the flat world is by learning to act really big. And the key to being small and acting big is being quick to take advantage of all the new tools for collaboration to reach farther, faster, wider, and deeper.” *Does your organization take advantage of new technological tools to innovate in what it is doing?*

Rule #3: “And the big shall act small One way that big companies learn to flourish in the flat world is by learning how to act really small by enabling their customers to act really big.” Customers act big when they can serve themselves when they want to and how they want to. *Can your customers create the experience they want to have?*

Rule #4: “The best companies are the best collaborators. In the flat world, more and more business will be done through collaboration within and between companies, for a very simple reason: The next layers of value-creation—whether in technology, marketing, biomedicine or manufacturing—are becoming so complex that no single firm or department is going to be able to master them alone.” *How well does your organization collaborate across boundaries within the organization or with other organizations?*



Rule #5: In a flat world, the best companies stay healthy by getting regular chest X-rays and then selling the results to their clients. Constantly identify and strengthen niches and outsource the stuff that is not very differentiating. *Do you know what your niches are? Are resources directed towards the factors that differentiate your organization?*

Rule #6: The best companies outsource to win, not to shrink. They outsource to innovate faster and more cheaply in order to grow larger, gain market share, and hire more and different specialists not to save money by firing more people. *What role should outsourcing play at your organization?*

Rule #7: Outsourcing isn't just for Benedict Arnolds. It's also for idealists. According to Friedman, these idealists are social entrepreneurs who combine business-school brains with a social worker's heart. *Is your organization nurturing social entrepreneurs?*

Friedman then goes on to present an interesting model for preventing conflict that he calls the Dell Theory of Conflict Prevention. He believes that the development and proliferation of global supply chains made possible in a flat world are a significant restraint

Friedman goes on to present an interesting model for preventing conflict that he calls the "Dell Theory of Conflict Prevention."

on geopolitical adventurism. In fact, he believes that no two countries that are both part of a major global supply chain, like Dell's, will ever fight a war against each other as long as they are both part of the same global supply chain. Countries and workers who are interconnected in a significant global supply

chain know that they cannot take time to participate in war without disrupting major economies and thus risking loss of their place in the supply chain, potentially for a significant period of time. Friedman does acknowledge that this doesn't mean that war is obsolete because the Dell Theory cannot restrain mutant supply chains made up of non-state actors who are criminals/terrorists. Regrettably, the flat world embraces Dell and al-Qaeda.

To underscore the fears about a flat world and to reassure us that they need to be reconsidered, Friedman cites Rabbi Tzvi Marx from Holland, who says the flat world reminds him of the Tower of Babel:

The reason God banished all the people from the Tower of Babel and made them all speak different languages was not because he did not want them to collaborate

per se. It was because he was enraged at what they were collaborating on—an effort to build a tower to the heavens so they could become God.

According to Friedman’s interpretation of Marx, “This was a distortion of the human capacity, so God broke their union and their ability to communicate with one another. Now, all these years later, humankind has again created a new platform for more people from more places to communicate and collaborate with less friction and more ease than ever: the Internet. Would God see the Internet as heresy?”

“Absolutely not,” said Rabbi Marx. “The heresy is not that mankind works together—it is to what ends. It is essential that we use this new ability to communicate and collaborate for the right ends—for constructive human aims and not megalomaniacal ends. Collaborating so mankind can achieve its full potential is God’s hope.”

One of Friedman’s closing insights is the importance, particularly at this point in history, of stimulating what he calls positive imagination, a mindset that uses “imagination to bring everyone up to the same level” rather than using it to “bring everyone down to the same level.” Friedman asks, “How do we go about nurturing a more hopeful, life-affirming, and tolerant imagination in others?”

It is at this point in the book that Friedman contrasts Jet Blue and al-Qaeda. David Neeleman used his imagination to create Jet Blue, an organization that lifts people up, while Osama Bin Laden used his imagination and many of the same tools Neeleman used, to create al-Qaeda and to cause a terrible human disaster. Infosys CEO Nandan Nilekani says, “From the primordial swamps of globalization have emerged two genetic variants, one is al-Qaeda and the other is companies like Infosys and Jet Blue. Our focus therefore has to be how we can encourage more of the good mutations and keep out the bad.”

To begin this summary of *The World is Flat* I posed two questions:

1) Is the metaphor of Friedman’s title true in any sense? Is the world really flat?

That is, does it offer equal access to peace and prosperity?

Friedman admits the world is not yet completely flat, but that it is on its way there, and he recognizes that there are many in the world not benefiting from the “flattening of the world.”

2) If it really is flat, what will we find at the edge, the utter east, of the world?

As noted previously, Friedman contrasts the Jet Blue outcome resulting from positive imagination and an al-Qaeda outcome following from destructive imagination. Friedman believes hope lies in a Jet Blue outcome. I propose a third alternative by returning to C.S. Lewis.

As the *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* ends, Lucy, Edmund and Eustace have sailed to the utter east, the end of the flat world and learned that they are seeing beyond the end of the world into Aslan’s country. Let me share a passage from the end of the book where Lucy, Edmund and Eustace have met a Lamb who invites them to breakfast:

“Please, Lamb,” said Lucy, “is this the way to Aslan’s country?” “Not for you,” said the Lamb. “For you the door into Aslan’s country is from your own world.” “What?” said Edmund. “Is there a way into Aslan’s country from our world too?” “There is a way into my country from all the worlds,” said the Lamb; but as he spoke his snowy white flushed into tawny gold and his size changed and he was Aslan himself, towering above them and scattering light from his mane. “Oh,

Alsan,” said Lucy. “Will you tell us how to get into your country from our world?” “I shall be telling you all the time,” said Alsan. “But I will not tell you how long or short the way will be; only that it lies across a river. But do not fear that, for I am the great Bridge Builder. And now come; I will open the door in the sky and send you to your own land.”

I believe that whether the world is really flattening or not, our hope is not in a Jet Blue use of positive imagination alone, but rather our hope is in the great Bridge Builder who, as Rabbi Marx said, desires to see mankind achieve its full potential. Certainly this is a hope to which each of us can contribute through the work that we do and the lives that we lead each day.

The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century. By Thomas Friedman. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005. 488 pp.

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Trash into Beauty

Art as Nostalgia and Transformation

By Adam Back

For the last few years I have worked in the medium (or rather media) of collage. Collage is, for the most part, a twentieth century creation. It has been called the artistic paradigm of that century, meaning that, with the advent of first modernism and then postmodernism, the rules no longer apply.

I love being an artist NOW because the doors of the art world have been thrown wide open on exploration. Anything one could imagine is now possible because anything goes in the process of making art. Any material can be used: postage stamps, sheet metal, McDonald's Happy Meal boxes, jigsaw puzzles and old shoes. In my own work, I use books, old photographs, pages from old encyclopedias, and any other kind of interesting piece of trash I can lay hands on.

Making art out of the waste of our culture has a great many implications about who we are as human beings. There are implications about relationships, about how things and people are connected. Implications about time and age and the transitory quality of human life. Trash itself connotes frailty and brokenness. Because they bear the marks of time, the

things I use in my collages always carry with them a visible history of use. I like old things because they have been a part of our story longer than I have. They have been handled and touched and used by people I never knew, who experienced life differently than I have.

These things passed through their hands, through their lives and, for the most part, did so arbitrarily. The items are largely inconsequential and have little monetary or even sentimental value. At the Goodwill store in my town, I can buy old Encyclopedia Britannicas for a dollar each. Yet each thing, each little shrivel of paper retains the fact that it passed through another person's life.

I search out and love these things: old envelopes found in the attic of a house in town that contain someone's bank records from the 1950s; moldy books that have been read by people long dead. All things that people have used and then left behind. All things that speak of the existence of men and women. And now one more person will handle these discarded things. They have picked up by a quirky artist fumbling his way through the world the way all those other people did. By taking things manufactured, then used, I turn them into records of existence—not of humanity in general but of particular people.

This way of working has helped me clarify my own connection to art, which has to do with a deeply rooted sympathy for people dealing with the raw realities of life. Art is an expression of what it means to be human, not only because it has been made by human hands, by a person looking at the world and using what it provides, but also because it is a catalogue of our existence and experience: who we have been, who we are, who we are becoming. It shows us what we value, and maybe what, at some particular place or time, we did not value.



LONGING FOR THE SEA
Mixed Media on Panel, 11x16", 2004

Constructed from old encyclopedia pages about shipbuilding, this work became something of a visual pun on being discontent with where we are in life at a given stage. I think that most of us want to be further along in life, to have reached more goals sooner, or to have found something to be a part of that is bigger and more important than just ourselves. Here, the contrast between the dying trees and ground they are rooted in evokes this sense of human longing.

I also find a correlation between hope and the process of making a collage. I take the junk, the waste, the trash—the things that we put in the attic and forget—and try to create something beautiful from them. To do this requires that I transform them. They have to be cut or sewn, ripped up and wounded, taken apart and then put back together. They have to be transformed from the ordinary thing about which nobody cares into something that people will see again. Not just see, but notice. And maybe beyond that, to value again.

The idea of creating beauty out of trash and worn-out, discarded things is intensely personal to me. Lately I have come to believe that we live within a paradox. We all long for something more out of life, something beautiful (not pretty), something transcendent, but all of us to a degree have some kind of pain in life, some hurt that goes on. One philosopher has dubbed this chronic awareness of suffering as “the tragic sense of life.”

In my work, I am trying to deal with this dichotomy between brokenness and beauty. I believe that in the tension of those two aspects of human nature—the desire for beauty and the struggle with our brokenness—exists the possibility of genuine, authentic hope, not phony optimism or defeatist cynicism.

Let’s face it; we all hope for something more. We would all like to believe that there is something better; I mean, why do we daydream? Why do certain movies or stories stir up the deep things of souls? The fact that we have places in us where the inarticulate persistently dwells seems to me a clue that there is something more that we can long for, as though we have lost something we never possessed, knowing only intuitively it was there.

One way to label that absence in us is to call it nostalgia, and I believe that it is one root of hope. It is something far more fundamental to our humanity than an idea often confused with it: sentimentality. Sentimentality is simply denial, the endless search for an emotional massage or anesthetic for a hurting heart. Nostalgia carries with it a deep sense of loss for what could have been. Sentimentalism covers thing up. Nostalgia squarely faces what is and calls things what they are.

I believe that nostalgia as I have described it spurs our intrinsic longing for beauty and that this unique desire finds expression in art because it defines our humanity. Beauty is a fundamental human need. So we create it.

But why? Why do we work to create things of beauty? What lies behind the nostalgia? I believe that the hidden mainspring of nostalgia, as someone has explained, is the pain of longing for God. I believe that man is the *Imago Dei*, the image of God, and that man therefore has the capacity as well as the need to create and delight in beauty even as he longs for more. The highest achievement of art is the creation of something beautiful that points to something beyond itself. C. S. Lewis once said, “It was when I was happiest that I longed most . . . The sweetest thing in all my life has been the longing . . . to find the place where all the longing came from.”



WHAT REMAINS

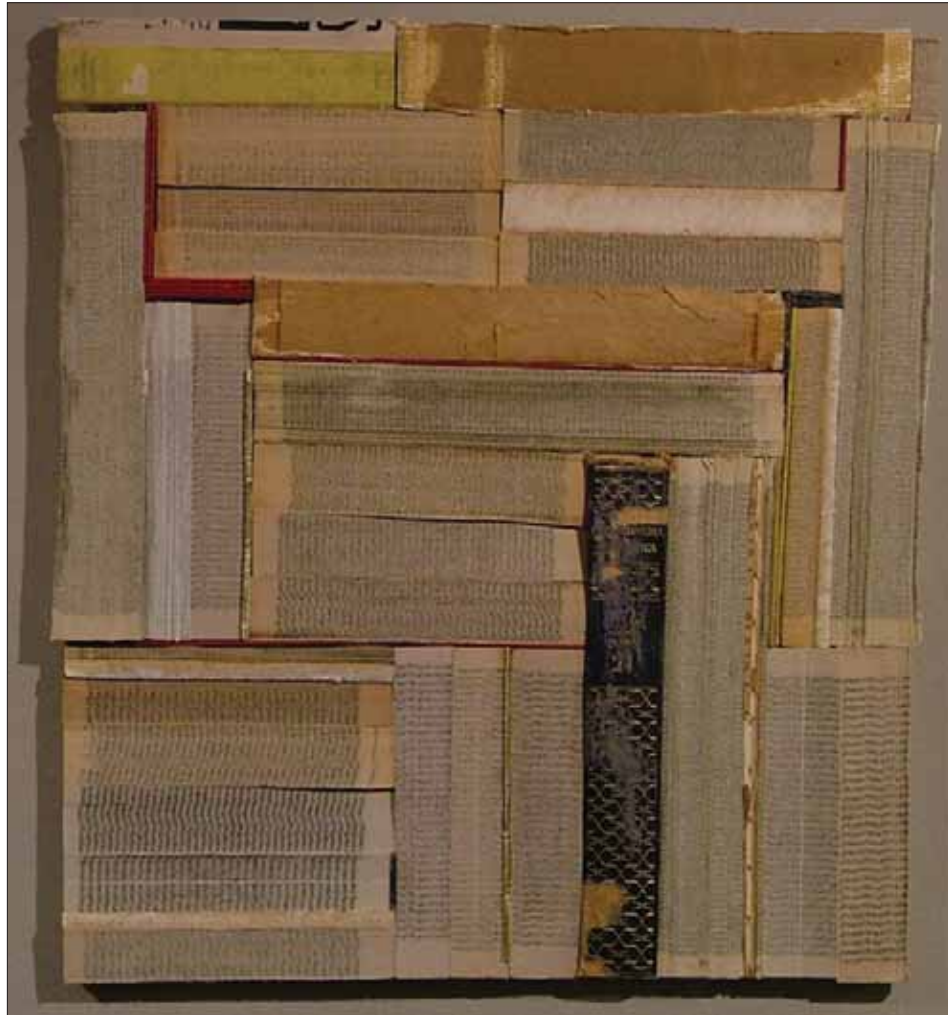
Mixed Media on Panel, 2'x4'

The small flower in this piece was made by cutting up the covers of romance novels for the colors, and covers from Encyclopedia Britannicas were used for the ground plane. The dichotomies created by using references to encyclopedias and romance novels possess a certain comedic value, but the overall attitude of the piece is somewhat somber. Essentially it is the dichotomy between heart and head and how the separation of the two can be fatal. Blaise Pascal once said that "the heart has its reasons that reason knows not of." Either extreme, heart without reason or reason without heart, frightens me.



CORRESPONDENCES WITH LEGALISM
Envelopes and Mixed Media, 2004

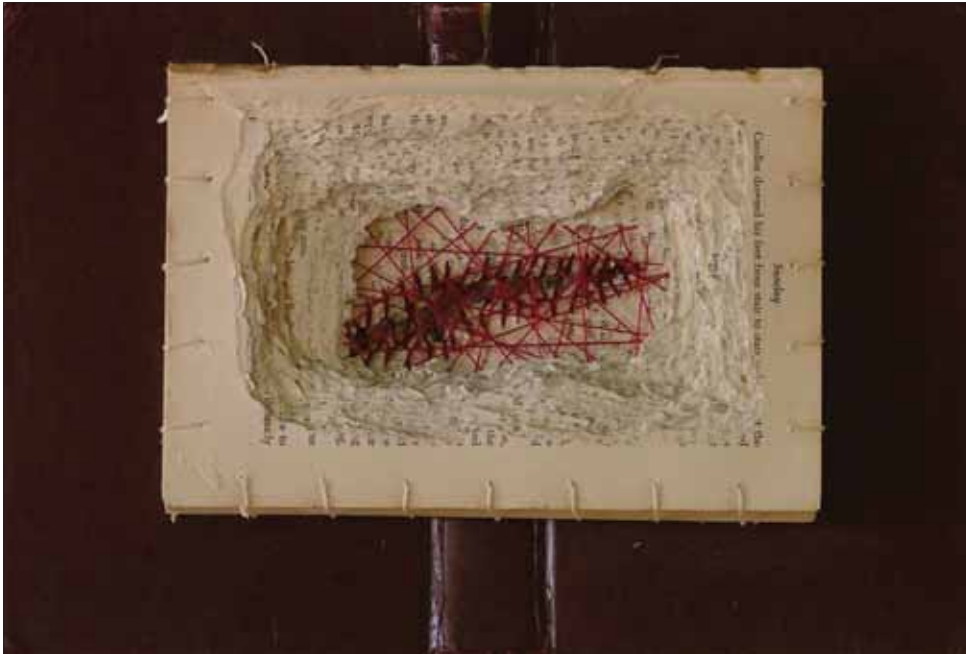
For me, one of the most important issues of making art is the attention given to its details. Even the smallest parts of a painting are handled with concern and nothing is ever approached casually. The idea behind “Correspondences with Legalism” grew out of noticing this aspect of how I work, and I began to wonder just how small I could go while emphasizing the details. I constrained the size of the compositions so that they each would fit within the window of an envelope. Each small composition is self-contained and stands alone, but I found that the idea was reinforced by displaying all twelve together.



BOOKENDS

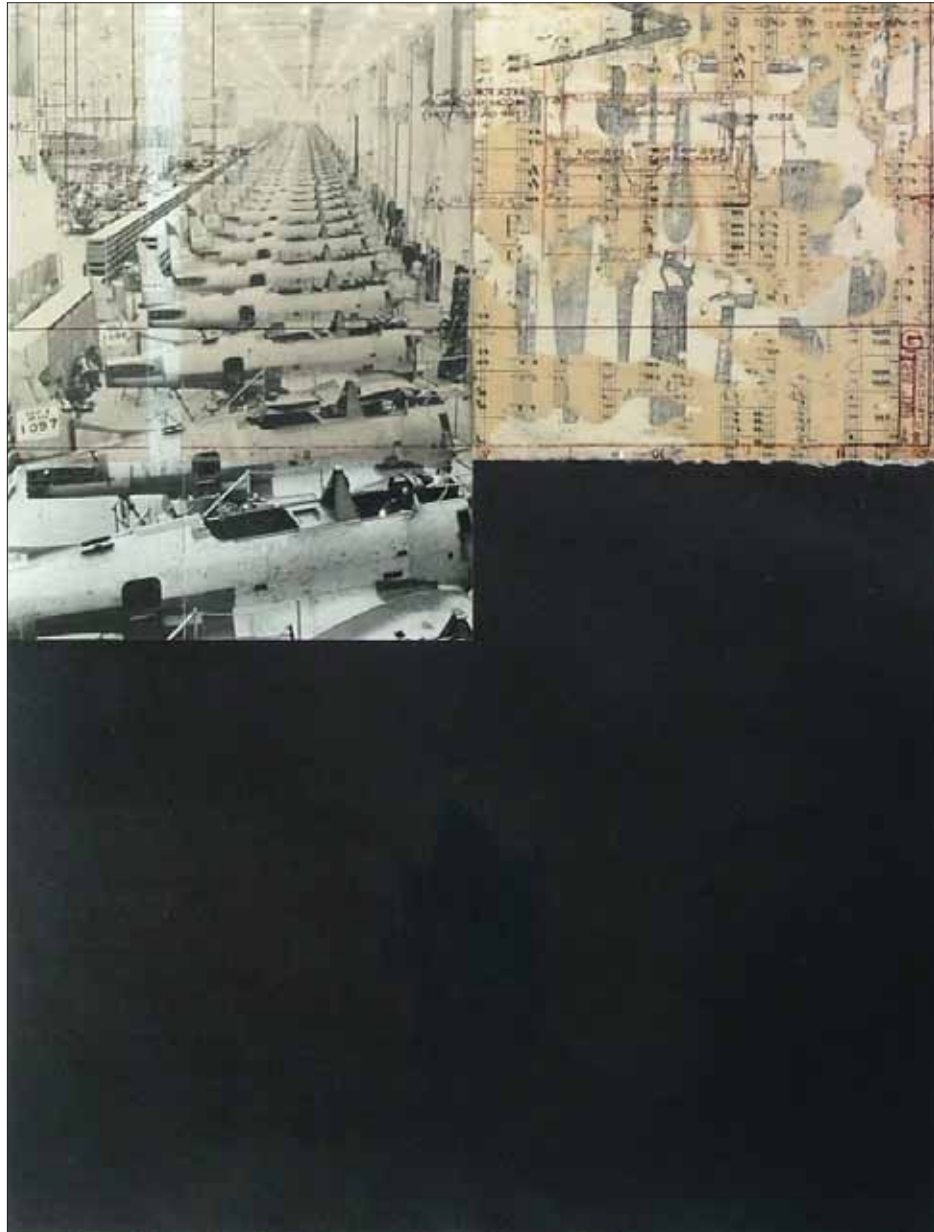
Paperback Book Bindings and Book Covers, 16x16", 2004

This piece was made by cutting up old paperback books I bought at a resale store. The designs created by the text from cutting the books along their profile became interesting because no one ever looks at the profile of the book unless forced to read the spine. The experience caused me to look more intently at common, everyday things, knowing that the more I look and the more carefully I observe, the more something is bound to reveal itself that I can use in the next piece I make. The ideas of transformation and mystery are incredibly important to my work. The old junk that I find to make a piece from is rarely successful if nothing is done to it. Left alone, the only interesting thing is the fact of its being old. I have to do something to it, whether that something is cutting it up, reassembling it contrary to expectations, or combining it with something else. Using old things just for the sake of their being old is simply sentimentality. Transforming something into more than what it was is one of the more exciting and rewarding aspects of making art.



THE WORD PIERCED
Mixed Media, 8x11½", 2004

"The Word Pierced" was created by literally piercing a book through the middle and tearing out its insides. The book is held together internally by the crimson thread. The idea for this piece came from two passages of Scripture in the Bible, one from the Gospel of John and the other from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. In the opening sections of his gospel, John describes Christ as the Word of God made flesh and how Christ has revealed and explained God. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah describes the reasons behind the death of Christ, at one point telling the reader that Christ was "pierced for our transgressions."



ALL TIME IS UNREDEEMABLE
Mixed Media, 15x20", 2004

Evoking ideas of erosion, the passage of time, and history, "All Time is Unredeemable" was created from a photograph of a WWII aircraft factory and old sheet music overlaid on antiquated carpentry tools. The title is borrowed from a line in the poem "Burnt Norton" from T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets.



OTHER ECHOES INHABIT THE GARDEN
Mixed Media on Panel, 18x24", 2005

Another title borrowed from a line in T.S. Eliot's "Burnt Norton," "Other Echoes Inhabit the Garden" was created alongside my piece "Formal Construction," hence the underlying geometric structure of the work. My concern in this piece, though, was to move beyond simply a formal approach and bring in wider connotations using more recognizable imagery.



Adam Back received his B.F.A. in 2004 from Stephen F. Austin State University, where he was a member of the Texas Sigma chapter. He is currently finishing his M.A. in painting there as well. He presented this essay and slides of his art at the 2005 national convention.

Choosing a Need

Mary and Brian Dawson in Uganda

By John Williams, Editor

Uganda's history officially began for the west in 1894, when it became a British protectorate. Mary Dawson's history with Brian Dawson, her future husband, officially began at Mars Hill College (North Carolina) in 2000, when he asked her out on a first date. The difficult, sometimes bloody history of the country and the storybook lives of the Dawsons intersected this year in a way that should give some hope that the individual is not entirely hostage to the larger forces that govern the destinies of nations. The time was brief, a few weeks in February 2006, the cause noble, a medical mission trip, and the result life-changing for at least some Ugandans and most certainly for the Dawsons.

Mary remembers being impressed with Brian's confidence back at Mars Hill as he presented her with a carnation on Valentine's Day and, while her roommate looked on, asked her to dinner. A brief acquaintance with Mary suggests that she shared her new boyfriend's confidence. In fact, she and Brian discovered they had a lot in common: a love of the outdoors, an interest in medicine, a faith in God, and a call to service. They had a chance to work together in several service groups on the small campus, and to share

membership in Alpha Chi. The organization's standard of excellence fit the upbringing of both, especially Brian, whose Air Force dad instilled in him a drive to be the best. Their undergraduate credentials included biology, chemistry, and math (Brian) and biology and French (Mary).

They both ended up in pre-med and by the time they married in 2002, the general direction of their professional and private lives had been set. They moved to Greenville, North Carolina, to attend the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University. Now, as they look forward to graduation in May, Brian and Mary also await March 16, national match day for all prospective medical residents, to find out where they will complete the final phase of their training. He will specialize in emergency medicine come the fall. If the Dawsons get their wish, he will do so in Greenville at the Pitt County Memorial Hospital. After all, Mary's family lives in Greenville, and Mary, whose specialty will be family medicine, wants the relatives to be able to see the new addition to the family when he arrives on July 9. Thanks to her pregnancy, she plans to take a year off to be exclusively a mother before joining Brian as a resident at Pitt County Memorial.

These two former honors students, now happily married and soon-to-be successful professionals, had every reason to be satisfied with their lives, but the scenario would not be complete without Uganda. Of course, it wasn't always Uganda. Back at Mars Hill it was

Honduras, where they spent a spring break building a house. Or Zambia, where in the summer of 2001 they participated in a church mission effort. Brian uses a word from the world of religion when he describes the effect of those brief trips outside America: both he and Mary were "convicted" to go back some day. Why? For Brian, whose calm exterior belies the inner conviction, it was very simple. The basic needs of human beings were not being met.

So when they learned of the attempt of an endocrinologist at Brody, a native of Uganda, to put together a medical mission trip to that country, they jumped at the chance. The trip began on January 30 and ended February 22. It took them to a world of change, but, as they discovered, this endocrinologist, this native Ugandan, would prove a steady guide and inspirational mentor.



Mary and Brian Dawson in rural Uganda.

Sometime in 1979, Sylvester Odeke watched from his school in Uganda as Idi Amin sped by on his way out of the country. More than dust billowed in the wake of his getaway. The brutal dictator left a ruined economy and 300,000 dead Ugandans behind. His regime, one of the worst in the 20th century, became the face of the country for a while, but the young man who watched his cowardly flight would some day present a far different visage to those in his world. As his country tried to rebuild, he matured and became a doctor. He eventually moved to America, where he prospered but never forgot Uganda. Now in his 40s, a tall, slender and quiet man who is a devout Christian, Dr. Odeke goes back home every two or three years to do what he can. Brian and Mary just missed one of his prior trips. He raised money and then took vacation time to help drill two wells near his village, which has no official name. It is near a town called Mukingoro and consists of several clusters of huts on the plains more than 150 miles northeast of Kampala, the nation's capital. When the couple approached him about this "clean water" project, he told them they were too late, but that something else was on the horizon.

That something else was the medical mission trip.

Thus, on January 30, the Dawsons' plane touched down in Entebbe, their enthusiasm and luggage intact. The plan was to travel by land to the Kumi hospital where they would spend a week getting on-the-job training as medical personnel. Then, with other members of their volunteer group, they would journey further east to Dr. Odeke's village to conduct a weeklong clinic. Before they could leave, however, the group needed to purchase a vehicle, and for that they had to travel to Kampala.

This task taught Brian and Mary how valuable Dr. Odeke would be. Nearly overwhelmed by Kampala traffic—which Brian described as New York without lights or



Dr. Sylvester Odeke ministers to a Ugandan man suffering from severe goiter.

cops—and engulfed by the prospect of buying and registering a vehicle without speaking the language, they relied on the good doctor not only to translate but also to apply pressure on officials when needed. Those first forty-eight hours were a whirl of crowded humanity, bicycles, new kinds of food, shady car dealers, bureaucracy, and, not least, a sense of their own foreignness. Through it all, bespectacled, bearded Dr. Odeke showed a persistence at odds with his deferential manner. At one point, for instance, they were told that it was

lunchtime, so they would have to wait to get a needed form. But since the window was open, Brian, Mary, and the doctor could see the bureaucrat in question through an open window. Dr. Odeke simply called out, “Why can’t you just

Through it all, bespectacled,
bearded Dr. Odeke showed
a persistence at odds with
his deferential manner.

hand us the form?” The embarrassed official did just that. Finally, after Dr. Odeke physically accompanied the needed forms as they passed from office to office, the team drove out of Kampala in a new van, headed for the Kumi Hospital. It was February 3 and the real journey had begun.

After driving Brian and Mary the six hours to Kumi, Dr. Odeke left for his village, where he would spend the week preparing for the clinic. Welcomed by staff members and other volunteers, the Dawsons were invited to a wedding reception that evening, where they ate well and watched a parade of gifts for the newly married couple, including a water container and a goat. If the gifts reminded them that they were in a largely rural country, the power failure that interrupted the celebration underscored that they were in a relatively poor country, one without dependable public services. In the darkness, however, the wedding party happily continued to the beat of drums and the sound of singing.

The Kumi Hospital is a series of one-story buildings housing a pediatrics ward, maternity ward, internal medicine unit, and an operating theater. Brian and Mary spent time working in several parts of the hospital, adjusting to a non-air conditioned operating room with screened windows and undertrained nurses. Yet they learned and served. Consulting at times with Dr. Odeke, Brian and his partner, Dr. Okiror, diagnosed and treated an old woman with hyperglycemia and diabetic ketoacidosis, managing to bring her glucose down to a safer level with a week of constant monitoring.

In the maternity ward, Mary watched many pregnant women, each forced to bring her own plastic sheet on which to deliver, each waiting a turn on the hospital’s single delivery bed. She saw one woman become a mother for the tenth time and suffered with a first time mother who labored for almost twenty-four hours before Mary (and Brian) helped put her on a rolling bed to carry her, in the dust and heat of mid-afternoon, from the maternity ward to the operating theater, where they assisted in a successful C-section. Mary, feeling her own child kick inside her, was almost as relieved as the harried mother when the ordeal was over. It seemed right somehow that the woman’s name was Grace.



Mary and her translator treat one family among the hundreds that showed up for the free clinic.

One child born but many at risk in Uganda. The infant mortality rate in the country is 112/1000 births. Children are threatened with living conditions and diseases that seem part of another century. Back in Kampala, Brian and Mary had learned of a child christened Fabiano by the Americans who had discovered him living in a grass hut in the town of Rikyè, orphaned when his mother died of AIDS. He was six years old and weighed 22 pounds. Determined to take him away from what would be certain death, the Americans gave money to his caregivers to buy food while arrangements could be made to place him elsewhere. The well-meaning villagers used the money to feed Fabiano and his siblings huge plates of food. Fabiano's body, wracked by starvation, was poisoned by the sudden intake and the boy began to vomit—for 48 hours. Fortunately, he received treatment in time to avoid further damage to his health. When the Dawsons last heard, the adoption process was incomplete but apparently destined to be successful. One child born and one to carry on—in a country of 21 million.

After a week at Kumi, the Dawsons headed for the Kadami region and the main purpose of their trip: the free clinic. They arrived near dark to the cheers and applause of the villagers, a tumult highlighted by the shrill catcalls of the women. Dr. Odeke had seen to it that the group would be further welcomed by arranging for them to stay in the brick home of his parents. He had even installed a shower outside and a flush toilet for the Americans, at considerable labor on the part of the doctor and others in the village.

Refreshed the next day after a good night's sleep and "humbled" at the show of hospitality, Brian and Mary headed to the meeting for the Kadami Hospital Project, so

named for the district which it would serve. A brainchild of Dr. Odeke's, the undertaking is very much a community effort, as attendance at the meeting testified. Over 600 people showed up at the projected hospital site to hear a report and make further plans. A two-kilometer walk from the village, the site consists of 15 acres of flat land, dotted with mango trees and cassava plants, with mountains in the distance. The enthusiastic crowd learned that fundraising in both Uganda and in the United States was yielding results. They learned that the Kadami Hospital web site (designed and subsidized in part by the Dawsons) was up. Most importantly, they heard about the hope brought to the people of the area by the project.

Members of local government pledged their support and others pledged what materials they could to help. For instance, a total of 9,500 bricks and five bags of cement were promised by various people, enough to build a small office. Soon the meeting turned into a celebration with singing and even a play. Brian and Mary were moved by the solidarity and joy that permeated the day's activities. They were ready for the clinics, which would begin the next day and scheduled to last all week.

"How many patients should we expect?" they asked.

"More than you will be able to see," they were told.

The next morning as they approached the shelter that would house their clinic, several hundred people were already lined up outside the thatched roof structure. Dr. Odeke, the Dawsons, and the other volunteers organized as quickly as possible. The wood-stick shelter had been divided into three rooms, none larger than 8 by 10. One room housed the pharmacy, another was occupied by Dr. Odeke, and the third was shared by Brian and Mary, along with a translator for each of them. These doctors and medical students had blood pressure equipment, stetho-scopes, reflex ham-mers, suture kits, and bandages. For some of the patients these meager tools, along with antibiotics, were enough.

For others, they were not enough. With no ability to conduct blood tests, the diagnoses became exercises in empiricism. Patients came in with symptoms that could have been urinary tract infection in one case, or anemia in another, or STDs, so the doctors and medical students alike made their best-informed guesses. In other cases, the affliction was all too clear but with no means to cure it. They saw malaria and worse. One patient who especially affected Brian came in with a large goiter. He

The next morning as they approached the shelter that would house their clinic, several hundred people were already lined up outside the thatched roof structure.

obviously needed surgery, something that in America would have been routine, regardless of his income or where he lived. On the plains of the Kadami District, however, all Dr.



Brian, here attending to a child, was overcome on occasion as he realized that his family dog gets better treatment than many of the children in Uganda.

Odeke and Brian could tell him was to go to the Kumi hospital. Dutifully, the sick man, barely able to swallow because of the swelling, hired a boda-boda (two-seater bicycle) to make the long trip, only to return with bad news. "I cannot afford the operation," he said. "It cost 300,000 shillings" (\$150).

As she worked alongside Brian, Mary met another "Grace." This one was a nine-year old girl, a polio victim whose mother had to carry her everywhere. "But there is something wrong with her mind!" the mother said through the translator; "she cannot speak and cannot understand what goes on around her." Grace had been this way since birth, which probably meant retardation or autism. As Mary looked into the eyes of the mother, it was clear that all her hope had been invested in this visit. She had carried her helpless child miles to get a magic cure from America. Mary told her as gently as possible that there was no cure, that even in her country nothing could be done. The hope in the woman's eyes drained as surely as if they were Dr. Odeke's wells sabotaged by the earth itself.

The clinic saw one hundred patients a day, and still the crowd diminished little. As time wore on without a call, some of the patients grew restless. Quarrels broke out among those standing outside. Though Brian and Mary never felt unsafe, they did sense the tension. Brian remembers how Dr. Odeke may have helped them at this point more than they could know: "Since we did not speak Ateso, we never heard the pleas for help directly. He bore the brunt of all those emotional appeals. And it was hard on him. I saw him cry more than once during our time in the village."

As Brian also commented, Dr. Odeke has a “big heart for Uganda.” If only his resources were as big as his heart. As the third day drew to a close, the clinic was almost out of medicine. The huge crowds had sapped supplies two days early. Rather than risk more disappointment or treat patients without proper medicine, Dr. Odeke and the group decided to close the clinic and distribute the remaining medicine to area doctors.

Despite the heartache of not being able to do enough, the volunteers had reason to celebrate their stay in the village. Hundreds had been helped. Even Grace’s suffering mother went away with a wheelchair for her poor, mute, crippled child. Sometimes the good came in the form of simple reassurance. Mary remembers seeing the look on another woman’s face when Dr. Odeke told her that she was okay, that nothing was seriously wrong. Who knows what anxiety she might have had, living away from any expertise or help? Who knows how far she had walked fearing the worst? But when the mild doctor, her countryman come all the way from America, told her quietly that she need not fear, her face radiated an almost palpable sense of peace.

Brian and Mary were also rewarded with fellowship during their stay. The close-knit community worked to make them comfortable by preparing meals and doing other domestic chores. In addition, construction projects were under way. It was as if the Kadami Hospital project had energized everyone.

For their part, the visiting group tried to give back to the village. Using a video projector brought by a group member, they showed episodes of the British comedy *Mr. Bean*. The films drew loud, sustained laughter from the villagers, who, of course, could not understand the dialogue but responded to the universal language of slapstick. They also responded to a film on Jesus in Ateso, laughing and cheering when they saw the miracles performed. When the group traveled to other villages to show the

But when the mild doctor, her
countryman come all the way
from America, told her
quietly that she need not fear,
her face radiated an almost
palpable sense of peace.

film, they got similar reactions. Brian, Mary, and Dr. Odeke’s wife, even led an effort to bake some banana bread for the villagers, who gathered around to see if the *mzungos* (white people) could cook. Evidence was mixed, since the bread burned slightly in the Dutch oven Brian had brought, but the Ugandans ignored the burnt crust and declared the bread “sweet and tasty.” For Dr. Odeke and the Dawsons, the week came to a perfect close with a church service featuring prayers in both Ateso and English.

Brian and Mary left Uganda on the following Wednesday, February 22. They took with them indelible memories, of course. They got brief glimpses of the country’s natural beauty: Lake Victoria, the Nyero Rock paintings, and Sipi Falls. And the people, many of

them nameless but identifiable in their warm humanity, stayed in their hearts. Most of all, they remembered those people whose need was so much greater than the time and resources afforded by one medical mission trip. Uganda is a country of almost 236,000 square kilometers, about the size of Great Britain, or the state of Oregon. It lies in Southwest Africa, squeezed uncomfortably between Kenya to the east and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the west; and between Sudan to the north and Rwanda and Tanzania to the south. It looks on the map like a fragile egg in the heart of a vast hunched torso. Brian and Mary could not shake the sense of vulnerability they saw in so many lives, and as daunting as the threats to the well-being of Ugandans are, this small egg of a country symbolizes suffering on an even greater scale in the continent itself.

The Dawsons knew two things for sure: they had to do something about the needs, and the sum total of needs was overwhelming. The solution for this couple seems a natural

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product of their upbringing and training. If they could not do everything, they would serve by facilitating the service of others. Their choice combines the pragmatism of the scientific mind with the idealism of their familial and religious backgrounds.

Thus was born ChooseANeed.org. This website, planned by husband and wife and

under construction by Brian, explains that it will provide a list of specific medical needs in Uganda and elsewhere, and a kind of clearinghouse for those who want to contribute time or money to relieving even one small burden on the poor. The format of the site is currently simple. A mission statement is followed by a list of items and their approximate costs. A prospective donor can, for example, buy an EKG machine for \$1,500 or operating goggles for about \$5. As things progress, the couple hopes to be more precise about costs and more comprehensive in identifying needed items. Eventually, they hope to report to donors on when and where their gifts reach actual people. Of course, they also mention the Kadami Hospital project, still trying to get the word out on behalf of their colleague and mentor Dr. Odeke.

According to the web site, ChooseANeed is a “potential lifelong project.” Knowing the history of Brian and Mary Dawson, one suspects that it will be. The man who had nerve enough to ask someone out in front of an audience and the woman who had the discernment to accept are ready to challenge the world, one need, one item, one visitor to the web site at a time. They are using a very old and simple persuasive device: an appeal to conscience. The biblical verse that serves as masthead for the web site sums up the appeal, one felt by them and before them by Dr. Odeke. And if truth be known, by Dr. Odeke’s



For Mary and Brian, the Ugandan experience was a haunting window on the world.

parents too, for this impulse to serve humanity goes back a long way—long before Brian’s and Mary’s parents bequeathed it to them, before Idi Amin ravaged his country, before Britain tried to claim it, or before America was discovered.

The passage is Luke 12:48: “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.”

Editor’s note: Those interested in humanitarian efforts in Uganda can learn more by visiting the Kadami Hospital Project at ugandahospital.org and the Dawsons’ own ChooseANeed.org, now under way.

In the Beginning Was the (Banished) Word

By **Suzanne Eide**

This ‘breaking news’ just in: Lake Superior State University releases its 31st annual List of Words and Phrases Banished from the Queen’s English for Mis-Use, Over-Use and General Uselessness.”

Through the years, LSSU, a small Alpha Chi school in the Michigan peninsula, has received thousands of nominations from people around the world for its list of banished words and phrases, such as “breaking news,” “conferenced,” “peacekeeping force,” and “end result.” This year’s list is harvested from almost 2,000 nominations received mostly through the University’s web site. Word-watchers target pet peeves from everyday speech, as well as from the news, fields of education, technology, advertising, politics, and more. A committee makes a final cut in late December. The list is released on New Year’s Day.

It was during a New Year’s party thirty years ago when LSSU public relations director W. T. (Bill) Rabe and some colleagues cooked up a whimsical idea to banish overused words and phrases. On January 1, 1976, with “tongue firmly in cheek,” Rabe took his first crack at it. Much to the delight (or chagrin) of word enthusiasts everywhere, the list endures into a fourth decade.

Three subsequent directors of public relations at LSSU have carried on the tradition since Rabe retired in 1987. Well-known author Sue Harrison ran things for about a year. The office and list responsibilities were handed over to Bill Crawford until 1992, and currently Tom Pink sits at the helm. In 1977, one year after Rabe released the first “banished words list,” he said that the international reaction from news media and the public told him “it would go on forever.”

When Pink was asked why he thinks the list has remained popular, he responded, “I don’t know, but people won’t let us stop! The nominations just keep pouring in.”

Pink related that each director steers the list in a unique direction. He and his partner John Shibley, LSSU photographer and writer, prefer to emphasize the humorous

aspect of language abuse rather than the serious implications such as the fact that the words a person chooses to use reflect on him or her as an individual.

“Some people take the list too seriously,” said Pink. “They interpret it literally and believe we are advocating eliminating words from the English language. I make just as many mistakes as anyone else, and I do not feel competent to debate on where the English language is headed.”

An article printed in the *Arizona Republic* on January 25, 1993, by Pamela Manson, relates how court administrators in Arizona were no longer permitted to write the words “empower” or “proactive” after the Chief Justice of the Arizona State Supreme Court saw a copy of the newly released list of banished words by LSSU. The Chief Justice wrote a memo prohibiting the words and said he did it because they are occasionally used in court correspondence, and he has never understood what either of them meant.

The word banishment list can be a fun and effective way to heighten people’s awareness of the words they use and abuse. Rabe would probably be proud that the list generates so much attention and even controversy. Not only is it an effective means of generating attention for LSSU, but it also means people are thinking about language.

RECENT OFFENDERS

2005

blog

(and its variations, including blogger, blogged, blogging, blogosphere)

Many who nominated it were unsure of the meaning:

Sounds like something your mother would slap you for saying.

Sounds like a Viking’s drink that’s better than grog, or a technique to kill a frog. – Teri Vaughn, Anaheim, California

Maybe it’s something that would be stuck in my toilet. – Adrian Whittaker, Dundalk, Ontario

I think the words “journal” and “diary” need to come back. – T. J. Allen, Shreveport, Louisiana

2004

metrosexual

Aren’t there enough words to describe men who spend too much time in front of the mirror? – Fred Bernardo, Arlington, Massachusetts

Even though we may not all be poets, the ability of the word to make us crazy when it is misused is a testament to its power.

Originally, word banishment combined with several other activities organized under the heading of Unicorn Hunters, a society originated by Rabe when, in 1971, he realized that LSSU lacked an identity. Having recently established itself as an independent school, it was still largely thought of as a branch of Michigan Technological University, if it was thought of at all. Joined by several other LSSU professors of English, including John McCabe, John Stevens, and poet-in-residence Peter Thomas, Rabe used the Unicorn Hunters to generate publicity for the University.

Unicorn hunting, in the traditional sense, may be likened to seeking the impossible dream, but the pursuit of writing and speaking well acted as the axis around which the other activities revolved. Professor Thomas explained the quest in an essay written in 1971: “The pursuit of the Unicorn is a lonely quest; but many more embark upon that journey than teachers or publishers may recognize. It is enough merely that each one seek the unicorn in his or her own way.”

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The first winter of the Hunters in Sault Ste. Marie saw a record snowfall. When the first day of spring arrived, the Hunters burned a snowman, another tradition on campus that continues today.

Shakespeare’s birthday was celebrated that April 23, which launched the Poets’ Fortnight, with emphasis on reading and heeding poets everywhere, but particularly local poets.

Professor Thomas defined a poet as a person who, among other things, “has a powerful physical sensibility and an equally powerful feeling for the properties of words, and he doesn’t confuse the first draft with the finished poem.”

The popularity of the Society of Unicorn Hunters grew and the list of newsworthy activities and events expanded over the years to include the annual List of Words Banished from the Queen’s English for Mis-Use, Over-Use and General Uselessness; burning a snowman on the first day of spring; World Sauntering Day; the International Stone-Skipping Tournament, held annually on Mackinac Island; Unicorn Questing Season; and Teacher Thank-You Week.

There is a price to pay for fame, however, and when the University began to be obscured by the Unicorn Hunter’s shadow, the public relations office subdued the society upon Rabe’s retirement in 1987. At the time, competition for student recruitment was beginning to increase, so the University sought to draw more attention to its name, rather

RECENT OFFENDERS

2003

challenge

A weasel word. Challenges only have to be met. Problems require solutions. – *Ray Lucas, Ann Arbor, Michigan*

must-see TV

Must find remote. Must change channel. – *Nat Heflin, Colorado Springs, Colorado*

2001

diva

Elton John is not a diva. He's a GUY. – *Lisa Sanderson, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan*

2000

24/7

Although it sounds . . . biblical, 24/7 refers to consumer demand for service 24 hours a day, seven days a week--something only a newborn should be allowed to request.

1998

is dead tonight

As spoken by news anchors to announce the death of a prominent person: "So-and-so is dead tonight at age 63." Do they expect his condition to change by morning? I have heard of one such case, but even that took three days. – *David Downing, St. Paul, Minnesota*

than the Unicorn Hunters. However, LSSU continues to receive mail addressed to the Unicorn Hunters, and it still offers licenses on its web site. The University copyrighted the concept of the word banishment list and continued that tradition, as well as several of the other activities, including the spring snowman burning.

Pink, a 1984 graduate of LSSU, was a student of both Rabe and Professor Thomas, and as a student, he worked in the PR office in 1983. However, Pink said he wasn't that interested in the word banishment list during those years.

"I didn't have an appreciation for the list until after I started working in the office full time in 1989 as a clerk," said Pink. "The attention it received was unbelievable. One of the first phone calls I answered was a radio station from Los Angeles wanting to do a live, call-in interview about the list."

As a PR tool, the list doesn't necessarily increase enrollment at LSSU, but Pink related that it is effective in circulating the name of a small university located in a remote area.

"You can't really measure the effectiveness of the list, but it appears in almost every daily newspaper in the United States and Canada, as well as a few papers overseas. Most schools couldn't buy that kind of advertising," Pink said, and then concluded: "If seeing the University's name in the paper gets people to pull out their maps or explore the LSSU web site, then it's done the job."

How far reaching is the press? Well, a former photographer in the PR department at LSSU saw an article about the word banishment list on the front page of the only English language newspaper at a resort in Thailand. She sent a copy to the University PR office along with a

note that stated, "I just can't get away from you guys!"

Television and radio are included in spreading the word about the words. CNN and Fox News have aired reports on New Year's Day for several years. The CBS Sunday morning program mentioned the list this year, and local TV picks it up as well. Radio interviews are also conducted but vary in frequency each year from a few to a dozen.

As Pink says, "It depends on the national news. If there is a big story, then the word banishment list will get bumped, but on New Year's Day there usually isn't much to report. That's why Rabe chose the first of the year originally, and why we have carried on the tradition of the January 1 release. Press interest in the list usually dies down after the first week or so of January."

But nominations for the list continue year round. Anyone can make a contribution. Pink noted that in the past, most nominations came in the mail or by fax. Now nearly all of them are received on the LSSU word banishment web site. The bulk of the words are received between January and February, with nearly 2,300 words recorded so far this year, and at least another 1,000 are expected to be entered by next December.

"Nominations come from all kinds of people in all walks of life and from all over. For example, we get suggestions from servicemen stationed abroad," said Pink. "Some of the international nominations don't resonate with Americans, but when the movie *Crocodile Dundee* was first released, some Australian words made the list," he added.

During Christmas break the nominations are reviewed and selection begins. The selection committee members vary. The core is made up of public relations staff with the director and writer acting as editors. English professors have been involved and often students will help.

"A diverse group of selectors is best because it provides a variety of perspectives," Pink commented.

HALL OF SHAME (Multiple Nominations)

filmed before a live studio audience

Do they film before dead studio audiences? – *Isabel Grasby, Thunder Bay, Ontario, 1987*

if you will

I usually won't. – *William O. Maris, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1984*

basically

Used to upgrade pauses. – *June Marx, Farmington Hills, Michigan, 1984*

infotainment

A Geraldo Rivera specialty. Sounds like a government policy to stem the spread of communisim by flooding Third World countries with free copies of *Reader's Digest*. – *Keith C. Krahnke, Paradise, Michigan, 1989*

The screening process eliminates duplicates that have made the list in past years, a set that composes about half the nominations. Usually words that have been most nominated are selected due to their popularity, but other factors are involved, and words with a single nomination have been selected.

“The committee looks for humor and pertinence. A good nomination will have a witty explanation that accompanies the word,” advised Pink. “Many of the anecdotes that accompany the word on the final list are written by contributors, but we do collaborate when necessary,” he added.

Humor is a key ingredient. The list acts as a sounding board. Many contributors are frustrated, irritable, and fed up with the use of the word they nominate. What better way to relieve that frustration than by the use of witty barbs?

Comedian and wordsmith George Carlin sometimes nominates words. In 1994, for example, “baddaboom, baddabing” made the list and was credited to him. Ironically, this world-famous comedian offered no attempt at humor in his entry. One supposes he felt no need to establish credentials.

Shibley, who has worked for ten years in the LSSU public relations office, related that during the 1990s Carlin called the office several times.

“It’s like talking to a columnist; he wants to know everything about the list and the new nominations,” said Shibley. “We shared ideas on the evolution of language and the

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preposterous way we often use words. Carlin has built a career on poking fun at how we express ourselves, how the public parrots things they hear. I think he sees our effort as evidence of a kindred spirit,” Shibley explained.

The relationship between Carlin and the LSSU PR department has not always been long

distance. In June 1998, Shibley and Pink met Carlin backstage after a performance at the Kewadin Casino, also located in Sault Ste. Marie.

“We chatted and Carlin signed the 1994 poster with his word nomination on it,” Shibley said, pointing to the wall of his office.

There hangs the framed, autographed poster with a photograph of Carlin in the act of signing it. Carlin collects the annual word banishment posters for his office walls.

In like mind but on a more serious note, Professor Thomas offered these guidelines to beginning poets: “They should consider, first, that language grows and changes in time, like any other living organism. Some words, or forms of words, become obsolete and

disappear from common usage.” (Or should disappear from common usage, the Unicorn Hunters might add.)

Who would have guessed that a relatively little known University in a small town in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula would play an international role in maintaining the accuracy of the English language?

Perhaps those of us who find that the misuse of words drives us crazy are really poets at heart. At least we can make our contribution to society by bringing such abuse to public awareness by nominating a word for next year’s word banishment list.

Those who haven’t seen the list or want to make a contribution should do themselves a favor and log on to the LSSU web site: www.lssu.edu/banished.



Suzanne Eide is a recent graduate of Lake Superior State University, where she was a member of the Michigan Gamma chapter of Alpha Chi. As an English major, she served as an intern in the public relations office, and she is now seeking employment in journalism.

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