

ARMS AND THE SCIENTIST: HERB YORK'S RACE AGAINST OBLIVION

By **Sandy Lakoff**

In 1604 – at the early dawn of the modern era – **Francis Bacon** predicted that science would become a *novum organum* – a new instrument – through which humanity would acquire ever greater command over the forces of nature. **Herb York** belonged to a generation of physicists who lived and worked during a time when that prophecy was fulfilled, in fateful form, by research showing that the tremendous energy locked in the nucleus of the atom could be released and put to controlled use. The application of this knowledge to the development of atomic explosives determined the path of Herb's career. As he worked to build and design these devices, he grew to understand the terrible perils they pose and therefore did his utmost to end the arms competition he described as a "race to oblivion."

In 1943, as a precocious 21-year old, he was drawn out of graduate studies at Berkeley to work in the Manhattan Project "Rad Lab" run by his mentor and Nobel laureate **Ernest O. Lawrence**. In earlier times, scientists and engineers had bent their talents only sporadically to improving the arts of war. As a result of their role in World War II they entered into a new symbiotic relationship with politicians. Science was now seen as an "endless frontier" that would provide not only national security but also continued prosperity. Government became the patron of science, at first especially of military "R&D" and eventually across the board. In exchange, scientists and

**Herb York**Portrait by *Manuel Rotenberg*

technologists were admitted, sometimes grudgingly and suspiciously, to the corridors of political power. "With the discovery of fission," **C. P. Snow** remarked, "physicists became almost overnight, the most important military resource a nation-state could call upon." For the first time in history, he observed, they were being asked on a regular basis to advise

on the "cardinal decisions" – those affecting war and peace.

The partnership was uneasy on both sides. Politicians already felt, with **Clemenceau**, that war was too important to be left to the generals. Now they came to believe that it should no more be entrusted to a "scientific and technological elite," as President **Eisenhower** warned in his farewell address. When **Niels Bohr** tried to persuade **Churchill** to inform the Soviets of the bomb project so as to forestall a post-war arms race, he was rudely rebuffed. "I did not like the man when you showed him to me, with his hair all over his head, at Downing Street," Churchill growled to his scientific adviser. President **Truman** was just as dismissive when **Leo Szilard** tried to persuade him and Secretary of State **Byrnes** to demonstrate the bomb rather than use it against Japan. Years after **Robert Oppenheimer** gained honor and fame as director of the Los Alamos Laboratory, where the first bombs were built and tested, he was declared a "security risk" because during the war he had misled security officers (to protect innocent friends) and socialized with radicals.

For their part, scientists had conflicting feelings about working on defense projects. **Norbert Wiener**, the mathematician and father of cybernetics, decided early on to have nothing to do with military applications. **Alvin Weinberg**, Director of the Oak Ridge lab, called the dependence of science on government support a "Faustian bargain." The same Robert Oppenheimer who said, after

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the atomic bomb was dropped over Japan, “we scientists have tasted sin” also remarked, upon learning of a new approach to designing the H-bomb, “when you see something technically sweet, you go ahead and do it and you argue about it only after you have had your technical success.” **Hans Bethe** said that he agreed to work on the “Super” in the hope “that it might be possible to prove that thermonuclear reactions were not feasible at all.” Szilard, who had urged **Albert Einstein** to warn President **Roosevelt** that the Germans were working on making military use of atomic energy, was so appalled by the prospect of atomic warfare that in 1946 he gave up physics and turned to biology – before the science of life ironically became another potential route to weapons of mass destruction.

York, like most scientists in all the countries involved in the war and subsequently in the Cold War, did not hesitate to pitch in. He was thrilled to be asked by Lawrence to work (along with **Hugh Bradner**) on one of the techniques for separating the U-235 isotope of uranium needed for the first bomb. As victory loomed in Europe but Japan continued to resist, Szilard and **James Franck** circulated a petition at Chicago and Los Alamos calling on our government not to use the atomic bomb as a weapon but to arrange a demonstration of its destructive power to persuade the Japanese to make peace. York said later that the issue did not arouse much concern at Berkeley and Oak Ridge. The culture of the Rad Lab reflected the attitude of Lawrence, a prototypical American pragmatist and an experimentalist rather than an abstract theoretician. Lawrence said at the time, York recalled, “that such matters were best left in the hands of the higher political and military authorities . . . Scientists, he said, especially younger ones, should not waste precious working time on extraneous issues for which they had no special training.”

York himself had not yet become politically active, partly because the war overrode ideological passions, even in Berkeley, but also because the Great Depression had had little intellectual im-

pact on him while he was growing up in Rochester, New York. He followed current events in the newspapers but was most fascinated by a book on astronomy that opened his mind to science. When the atomic bombs used against Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought the war to an end, York shared the general elation, convinced that the bombings had saved perhaps a million American casualties and even more among the Japanese.

Afterward, Lawrence “wangled” (Herb’s word) a combined appointment for him teaching physics and doing research at the Rad Lab. When, at the urging of **Edward Teller**, a new lab was opened at Livermore to work on the H-bomb, York was tapped, again by Lawrence, to be its director. Given his close ties to Lawrence and his new role running the lab, it is perhaps not surprising that when news that Oppenheimer had been branded a security risk aroused ire among physicists, many of whom were furious at Teller for testifying against him, York, like Lawrence, was conspicuously silent. York gave Teller a central role at the lab, including a veto power over all scientific elements during the first year, and thought he did an excellent job.

It was only later that York made amends by writing *The Advisors*, a study of the conflict over the crash program in which he defended Oppenheimer’s proposal to sound out the Soviets about a mutual moratorium before proceeding to build a weapon that would be so unnecessarily destructive. In his later memoir, however, York said nothing at all about any feelings he may have had about the treatment of Oppenheimer, at the time or later. This behavior on York’s part did not necessarily indicate agreement with Teller that the H-bomb was needed, nor is it likely to have been a case of simple opportunism. The most plausible explanation is that at the time he was still very much under the spell of his institutional environment, which is to say under the spell of Lawrence.

Once he was drawn to Washington, in the later 1950s, first to serve on PSAC, the new White House-based presidential science advisory committee,

York became more his own man and grew accustomed, through service on a series of committees, to give his views as a specialist on technical feasibility. On one of those committees, he was at first reluctant to join the other scientists in going beyond a technical evaluation of how a test ban might be verified to add an opinion about its strategic and political advisability. That experience persuaded him to be more forthcoming because he realized that if scientists were asked about ways to restrain the arms race, they should express their opinions, in view of their “special knowledge”: they “understand better than others the thermonuclear horror that is always only thirty minutes away from happening.”

In four months at the White House, and afterward for three years in the Pentagon, where he became Chief Scientist of the new Advanced Research Projects Agency (now DARPA) and then Director of Defense Research and Engineering under Eisenhower and briefly under President **Kennedy**, he found himself resisting efforts by “hard-sell technologists” to push all sorts of impractical and costly schemes, justifying them by worst-case scenarios of what the Russians were up to. He would later agree with **Robert McNamara** that the arms race was fuelled by an “action-reaction syndrome” in which our side was usually the initiator. He came to appreciate the critical stance of public-advocacy groups like the Federation of American Scientists (in which he became a leading figure) and took part in Pugwash meetings with Soviet counterparts, hoping to promote arms control and limitations on nuclear testing. But he confessed frustration at the debates that were swirling around nuclear weapons at the time. The scientists’ public-interest groups were correct in their warnings, he felt, but their prescriptions of what to do about the problems were often naïve and biased. Political scientists, historians, statesmen and others had a better appreciation for the ways of the world, but they “often don’t grasp how serious, how total, the nuclear threat is.”

Herb tried to bridge these differences of perspective. After returning to aca-

demia at UCSD, initially as its first chancellor, he served as a member of the Jasons (scientists who advise the DOD), a group he helped form; joined other scientists in opposing deployment of a ground-based anti-ballistic missile system because it would only destabilize the superpower military balance; and agreed to go to Geneva during the **Carter** administration as the chief U.S. negotiator to try to work out a comprehensive test ban treaty with the Soviets. In his writings and in a variety of organizational forums, he sought to gain support for reducing and eventually eliminating nuclear weapons and for blocking nuclear proliferation. When President **Reagan** launched the “Star Wars” program, he saw it as another misguided effort to find a “technical fix” for the arms race. Far from ending the race,

he thought, it would only move it into space and assure further efforts to enable offenses to overcome any new defenses. Against an equally capable adversary, he warned, there can be no “final move” in an arms race. To the suggestion that if we could go to the moon, then surely we could find a way of defending against nuclear attack, he answered pointedly that there was a qualitative difference between a “man against nature” contest and one between “man and man”: the moon can’t move or shoot back.

What made Herb York so well respected among his peers and so persuasive with politicians like President Eisenhower is that while he worked to shore up the nation’s defenses and make defense agencies more efficient, he sought at the same time to awaken public opinion to

the limitations and dangers of that very work and help shape public policy accordingly. By so doing, he lived up to the difficult double obligation scientists face as citizens of a democracy. In the nuclear age, he taught us, science does indeed enable humanity to gain great control of the forces of nature, but whether we benefit from that control depends on whether we can also master our own thoughtless and self-defeating impulses. That lesson remains his most important legacy.

I was privileged to be co-author with Herb of A Shield in Space? Technology, Politics, and the Strategic Defense Initiative (UC Press, 1989). The campus memorial for him will be held Friday, October 11, at 11:00 am in Mandeville Auditorium.



President’s Message



For the reasons **Dick Attiyeh** will review in this issue of *Chronicles*, it has never been more vital for emeriti to be informed, involved, and vocal regarding matters affecting the entire UC system, including the interests of retirees. The Emeriti Web site at <http://emeriti.ucsd.edu> was recently revamped by **Suzan Cioffi**, with assistance from **John McCleary**, to help us stay abreast of what promises to be a very active year for the Association. Updates there will convey news about budgetary and political developments affecting the UC system and its annuitants.

At the same time, we will be carrying on with our usual agenda. Our monthly programs will feature stimulating presentations by campus scholars and opportunities to socialize with familiar colleagues and new friends. The Mentoring Program that pairs Emeriti members with outstanding undergraduates in the Chancellor’s Scholars Program will be expanded. And we will continue to contribute to the Chancellor’s Scholarship Fund.

With the strong support of Chancellor **Marye Anne Fox** and Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Human Resources **Tom Leet**, and invaluable coordination by **Suzan Cioffi**, our membership has just topped 400 and continues to grow. We collaborate with the Retirement Association in interest groups and volunteer activities that meet regularly in the Retirement Resource Center, well located in the heart of the campus.

A capable and energetic Executive Committee is in place to lead Emeriti programs for the 2009-10 year. Our ties to UCOP and to CUCEA, the umbrella organization of the Emeriti divisions on all UC campuses, will be in good hands as **Colin Bloor**, immediate past president of the EA, will serve as Vice Chair of CUCEA, and **Marjorie Caserio** will be CUCEA’s Web Manager. Locally, **Dick Attiyeh** is our Vice-President/Chair of the Program Committee; **Sandy Lakoff** continues his adept editing of *Chronicles*; **Matthew Chen** will lead the Membership Committee; **John Wheeler** will chair the Mentoring Committee; **Paul Friedman** continues as Secretary; and **Bob Oakes** continues as our Liaison with the Retirement Association.

I urge any emeriti who have not yet joined the Association to do so, continuing your active engagement with this world-class university. You’ll be richer for it! I look forward to seeing you at our gatherings this year.

♦ Jacqueline Hanson, President

THE BUDGET CRISIS AND UCSD

By Richard Attiyeh

*Professor Emeritus of Economics
and former Dean of Graduate Studies*

As we all know, California, along with the rest of the world, has been plagued by the worst economic downturn in the last 60 years. As one result, the state's tax revenue has fallen sharply. Personal income tax revenue fell by 34 percent during the first half of the year. Because the state constitution requires the budget be balanced, the state has drastically cut spending. And, of course, the University of California, as a recipient of state funding, has had to absorb its share of the reduction.

UC's Budget Cuts. For the 2009-10 fiscal year, the University's budget has been cut by \$813 million. Compared to 2007-08, the \$813 million amounts to about a 20% reduction in state funding. (Of this total, \$176 million represents the carry-forward of cuts for 2008-09 resulting from the failure of the May 2009 ballot measures. The carry-forward would have been even worse had it not been for the \$640 million provided the University under the federal stimulus package passed by Congress last February.)

Over and above this drop in funding, the University needs to find the money for unfunded cost increases for 2008-10 associated with health benefit and utility cost increases and for last year's enrollment increases. All of this comes on top of sizable budget reductions in 1991-94 and 2002-05 that have not been fully reversed in subsequent years and that have led to significant increases in the student-faculty ratio.

President Yudof's Proposals. At its meeting of July 15-16, 2009, UC's Board of Regents approved the proposal submitted by President Yudof that spelled out how the University should deal with the cuts. Yudof's plan has three components: 1) a faculty and staff furlough plan intended to generate \$184 million in

savings; 2) previously approved student fee increases, which will generate \$211 million; and 3) undesignated cuts to the campuses and the Office of the President amounting to \$418 million, of which \$325 million have been assigned to the campuses. (The term "undesignated" indicates that it will be up to each campus to decide what form the cuts will take.)

The Furlough Plan. The furlough plan has aroused the most controversy, although from the point of view of critics, it represents a considerable improvement over Yudof's initial proposal. At first, he proposed a salary reduction plan that could take one of three forms: a salary reduction, a furlough with loss of pay for furlough days, or a combination of the two. It was to be structured as a 4% cut to faculty and staff who earn less than \$46,000/year and an 8% cut for employees with higher salaries. After considerable input from the campuses and the Academic Senate, Yudof decided to go with a furlough plan – strongly favored by staff because employees would not have to come into work on furlough days. Moreover, the plan now has considerably more progressivity. For academic year faculty members, the number of furlough days will range from 7 days (or 4% of salary) for those earning less than \$40,000 to 17 days (or 10%) for those earning more than \$240,000. For fiscal year faculty, the furloughs range from 10 to 24 days, which translate into salary losses ranging from 4% to 10%.

The most controversial aspect of the initial salary/furlough plan was that "in order to ensure equity" it was intended to apply to everyone, regardless of fund source. UCSD faculty members were the first and most outspoken critics of imposing furlough days on people who are not paid from state funds. They questioned what would be gained by salary cuts that would not contribute to solving the problem generated by the loss of state funding. Moreover, they pointed out that by



reducing the salaries of people paid from contracts and grants, the University would lose indirect cost income charged against contracts and grants, and the State would lose personal income tax revenue, thereby aggravating both the University's and the State's budget problems. Fortunately for the many faculty and staff paid from non-State funds, Yudof was persuaded to limit furloughs to personnel paid from State funds.

For a while, however, a problem remained for those employees whose salary is split between state and non-state fund sources. Initially, the Office of the President believed it might not be possible apply the salary reduction only to the state-funded portion because of limitations of the payroll system on some campuses; and OP took the position that unless all campuses could modify their payroll systems by September, no campuses would be allowed to exclude the non-state portion of split-funded salaries from the furlough reduction. This was especially annoying to our campus because our payroll system can distinguish among fund sources for split-funded employees, and we have a disproportionately large number of split-funded personnel. Eventually, OP saw the light and campuses were given the authority to exempt salaries paid from non-state fund sources from furlough reductions.

Impact of the Furlough Plan on the Campus. Unfortunately, the loss of

income by many of our colleagues and the inevitable negative impact that it will have on morale is not the end of the story. One question that is still to be answered is whether faculty should take any of their furlough on days when their classes are scheduled. That is, should the number of teaching days in a term be reduced in response to the salary reduction associated with the furloughs assigned to faculty? On this question, the faculty seems to be evenly divided. Those who favor a reduction in the number of classes scheduled for each course believe that if we don't show "them" that there is a price to pay for cutting faculty compensation, there will be nothing to keep "them" from doing it again or making the cuts permanent. They also argue that because of the other cuts to the campuses, class size will increase because there will be fewer temporary faculty and maybe fewer ladder-rank faculty. Consequently it would be only fair to offset that increase with fewer classes per course.

Those who think it is a bad idea to reduce the number of sessions per course have three arguments. First, students are going to be paying higher fees, and it would be unfair to them to also reduce the number of class meetings per course. Second, a reduction in the number of classes per course would reduce the quality of education offered by the University. And third, reducing the amount of teaching would be a public relations nightmare. When everybody in our society is feeling the pinch from the economic downturn, there will be little sympathy for "overpaid" faculty with job security who are getting a temporary salary reduction. I can just imagine the response in the San Diego Union-Tribune and

the San Francisco Chronicle to student organizations who complain that even though their fees have gone up, they are getting less teaching from the faculty. And our legislators are sure to believe that our faculty deserved what they got. (Maybe you can tell which side of this issue I am on.) Ultimately, in late August, Interim Provost **Larry Pitts** sent a letter to the chancellors and the chair of the Academic Council stating that it had been "decided that faculty furlough days will not occur on instructional days..." and that "we must do everything we can to ensure that the students continue to receive all of their instruction."

The Undesignated Cut to the Campus. As difficult as the employee furloughs may be, the impact of the undesignated cuts to the campuses may be even greater. The furloughs "solve" only \$184 million of the \$813 million system-wide problem, leaving the campuses's undesignated cuts to "solve" \$325 million of the problem.

UCSD's share of these cuts for 2009-10 is as follows: \$39 million in permanent cuts and \$45 million in temporary cuts, for a total of \$84 million. The current plan hopes to meet \$25 million of this budget shortfall from the furlough savings, which leaves \$59 million that will have to be found from other sources. \$20 million in budget cuts are being passed along to the Vice Chancellors for them to find savings from the units reporting to them. Internal loans from non-State funds of one sort or another will be used to get the campus through the current year. Given the severity of the problem, the campus has little choice but to pass on a significant part of the problem to future years.

At the July 15 meeting of the Board of Regents, before the Regents approved President Yudof's proposed plan, Chancellor **Marye Anne Fox** made the following statement:

UC San Diego, like our sister campuses, is struggling with the impact of the steady reductions in our budget. We have laid off 200 and have eliminated or frozen about 800 staff positions. We have halted the hiring of all faculty, freezing 100 positions. This freeze on the hiring of ladder-rank faculty

will worsen our undergraduate student-to-faculty ratio from approximately 20:1 a few years ago to nearly 40:1.

We do not plan to recruit faculty in the 2009-2010 academic year, despite the exodus of faculty to retirement. Our emphasis will be on faculty retention.

We, too, are cutting in every possible area while trying to maintain the excellence of a UC education. But rather than focus on areas for reduction, my message today is about the "brain drain" of talent from UC. Our best and brightest are leaving the Golden State. Some examples of alarming losses of our star faculty and staff:

The CEO of the UCSD Medical Center is leaving for Barnes-Jewish Hospital in Missouri. Under this CEO's leadership, the UCSD Medical Center moved into the black.

A leading professor of electrical and computer engineering is moving his lab to the University of Texas at Austin. This professor was named to a \$2.5 million endowed chair, income from which will support his salary and research group.

A top professor of biology is leaving for Columbia University, where he will be provided research support from a \$20 million endowment.

And I know that negotiations have entered the final stages with other members of our renowned faculty as the leading higher education institutions from around the world seek to hire the very best from UC.

The most important determinant of the quality of the University of California is the quality of its people. In order to retain the best and brightest, the chancellors will need the authority and flexibility to restructure their campuses and to provide competitive compensation. Institutions outside California and in other countries are targeting UC campuses to lure away top faculty and staff. While there may be little the Regents can do to reduce the magnitude of the budget cuts, the Regents can ensure that the chancellors have the flexibility that's vital to manage their campuses in these trying times.

The Long Term. A major concern of the UCSD Academic Senate has been that President Yudof's approach to filling the 2009-10 budget gap did not seem to

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Emeriti Website

The UCSD Emeriti Association maintains a website:

<http://emeriti.ucsd.edu>

Clicking the NEWS, PROGRAMS & MEETINGS button will allow you to view past issues of this newsletter. The website also provides the constitution and by-laws, lists of members, and minutes of meetings.

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be guided by a long-term strategy. Indeed, at a systemwide Academic Council meeting, when he was asked about the longer term, Yudof responded by saying that because he was totally consumed with finding the money to offset this year's State budget cuts the long-term issues would have to wait. One of the consequences of the lack of a credible strategy for the future of the University in the face of continuing severe budgetary constraints is that it invites opinion from within the University that can be divisive. This is perhaps best exemplified by a letter to the Chancellor and Senior Vice Chancellor from **Andy Scull**, chair of Sociology, that was co-signed by 22 other department chairs.

Scull's letter expressed concern, given that we will likely face a long-term fiscal crisis, that it will no longer be possible to maintain a ten-campus system in which all of the campuses aspire to be first class research universities. Although the letter contained a number of thoughtful ideas about what the University's long term strategy might be, the following passage captured widespread attention throughout the State and evoked considerable indignation on several campuses and in their surrounding regions:

In better times, there were in reality four flagships (Berkeley, UCLA, UCSD, and – in its highly specialized way, UCSF). Rather than destroying the distinctiveness and excellence at Berkeley, UCLA, and UCSD by hiring temporary lecturers to do most of the teaching (and contribute nothing to original research, nothing to our reputation, nothing to the engine of economic growth a first rate research university represents), we propose that you urge the President and Regents to acknowledge that UCSC, UCR, and UC Merced are in substantial measure teaching institutions (with some exceptions – programs that have genuinely achieved national and international excellence and thus deserve separate treatment), whose funding levels and budgets should be reorganized to match that reality.

We suggest, more generally, that in discussions systemwide, you drop the pretence that all campuses are equal, and argue for a selective reallocation of funds to preserve

excellence, not the current disastrous blunderbuss policy of even, across-the-board cuts. Or, if that is too hard, we suggest that what ought to be done is to shut one or more of these campuses down, in whole or in part. We have suffered more than a 30-per-cent cut in our funding from the state, and we can thus no longer afford to be a ten campus system – only a nine, or an eight (and-a-half) campus system.

Fortunately, the leadership now recognizes that business as usual will no longer be adequate. **Russell Gould**, the Chair of the Board of Regents, announced at the July Regents meeting that he and President Yudof would co-chair a Commission on the Future of UC. The commission, which will include members from within and outside the UC system, will seek to answer five critical questions about the university's future:

1. How can UC best maintain access, quality, and affordability in a time of diminishing resources?
2. What educational delivery models are best suited for UC's future?
3. What is the appropriate size and shape of the university going forward?
4. Where should UC grow, or should it?
5. How can traditional and alternative revenue streams be maximized in support of UC's mission?

The one member from UCSD on the 20-member commission will be **Harry Powell**, who will also be serving this year as chair of the systemwide Academic Senate. At the campus level, Chancellor Fox and last year's Academic Senate Chair **Dan Donohue** have agreed to appoint a Senate-Administration Task Force to consider how to address the long-term issues raised by the budget crisis. It is anticipated that the task force will be co-chaired by Senior Vice Chancellor **Paul Drake** and **Dan Donohue**, and that it will include ten other members, five from the administration and five from the Academic Senate.

It is clear that the campus and the University system will face serious budget challenges for years to come. There is now general agreement that we are no longer dealing with a short-term problem and need to develop a realistic, tough-minded, long-term strategy. What form this strategy takes will determine whether the University of California will continue to be, and to be seen as, the greatest public university system in the world. And the campus's decisions will determine whether UCSD will continue on the improbable journey that has seen it become one of the nation's leading universities in its short fifty-year history. ❖

The Mentoring Program

The Emeriti Mentoring Program is a partnership between us and the UCSD Chancellor's Scholars – high-achieving high school grads who are among the first in their families to attend college. The Emeriti Mentoring Committee makes the initial matches, based on the information provided by the students. Every effort is made to match students with a mentor who will be best suited to their academic interests. Because mentoring can mean many different things to different people, how often the mentor/mentee meet is left up to each pair, with the general minimum expectation that they meet at least once a month for the first academic year.

The Program is always looking for new emeriti faculty mentors. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity to contribute your time and knowledge to a student, and to UCSD, please contact the UCSD Emeriti Mentoring Program Coordinator, **Irene Serrano**, by email: emeritimentor@ucsd.edu, or by phone: (858) 534-0207. Or contact **John Wheeler**, Chair of the Emeriti Mentoring Committee for 2009-10 at: jwheeler@ucsd.edu, or at campus phone: (858) 534-3287.

– John Wheeler

ANECDOTAGE

By Sandy Lakoff

Department of Double Entendres

On a visit to CalTech once, **Dick Atkinson** was told by a female undergraduate that from a woman’s point of view the disproportionate enrollment there by gender is a mixed blessing. “The odds are good you’ll find a husband. The problem is the goods are odd.”

Our Own Lexicon. Definition of a **Palin-Drome**: political statement that is as forward as it is backward.



Ten of the Best: Results from an International Pun Contest

1. A vulture boards an airplane, carrying two dead raccoons. The stewardess looks at him and says, “I’m sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger.”
2. Two fish swim into a concrete wall. The one turns to the other and says, “Dam!”
3. Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. Unsurprisingly, it sank, proving once again that you can’t have your kayak and heat it, too.
4. Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says, “I’ve lost my electron.” The other says, “Are you sure?” The first replies, “Yes, I’m positive.”
5. Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root canal? His goal: transcendental medication.
6. A group of chess enthusiasts checked into a hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about an hour, the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse. But why, they asked, as they moved off. “Because,” he said, “I can’t stand chess-nuts boasting in an open foyer.”
7. A woman has twins and gives them up for adoption. One of them goes to a

family in Egypt and is named **Ahmal**. The other goes to a family in Spain; they name him **Juan**. Years later, Juan sends a picture of himself to his birth mother. Upon receiving the picture, she tells her husband that she wishes she also had a picture of **Ahmal**. Her husband responds, “They’re twins! If you’ve seen Juan, you’ve seen **Ahmal**.”

8. A group of friars were behind on their belfry payments, so they opened a small florist shop to raise funds. Since everyone liked to buy flowers from the men of God, a rival florist across town thought the competition was unfair. He asked the good fathers to close down, but they would not. He went back and begged the friars to close. They ignored him. So, the rival florist hired **Hugh MacTaggart**, the roughest and most vicious thug in town to “persuade” them to close. Hugh beat up the friars and trashed their store, saying he’d be back if they didn’t close up shop. Terrified, they did so, thereby proving that only Hugh can prevent florist friars.

9. Mahatma **Gandhi**, as you know, walked barefoot most of the time, which produced an impressive set of calluses on his feet. He also ate very little, which made him rather frail and, with his odd diet, he suffered from bad breath. This made him (Oh, man, this is SO BAD, it’s good) a super calloused fragile mystic hexed by halitosis.

10. And, finally, there was the person who sent ten different puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did.



Very Late Fees

(Thanks to **Elie Shneour**)

A lady died last December, and Citibank billed her for January and February for their annual service charges on her credit card, adding “late fees” and interest on the monthly charge. The balance had been \$0.00 when she died, but was now around \$60.00. A family member placed a call to Citibank.

Family Member: I am calling to tell you she died back in December.

Citibank: The account was never closed and the late fees and charges still apply.

Family Member: Maybe you should turn it over to collections.

Citibank: Since it is two months past due, it already has been.

Family Member: So, what will they do when they find out she is dead?

Citibank: Either report her account to our Frauds Division or report her to the credit bureau, maybe both!

Family Member: Do you think God will be mad at her?

Citibank: Excuse me?

Family Member: Did you just get what I was telling you – the part about her being dead?

Citibank: Sir, you’ll have to speak to my supervisor.

Supervisor gets on the phone:

Family Member: I’m calling to tell you, she died back in December with a \$0 balance.

Citibank: The account was never closed and late fees and charges still apply.

Family Member: You mean you want to collect from her estate?

Citibank: (Stammer) Are you her lawyer?

Family Member: No, I’m her great nephew. (Lawyer info was given.)

Citibank: Could you fax us a certificate of death?

Family Member: Sure. (Fax number was given.)

After they get the fax:

Citibank: Our system just isn’t set up for death. I don’t know what more I can do to help.

Family Member: Well, if you figure it out, great! If not, you could just keep billing her. She won’t care.

Citibank: Well, the late fees and charges will still apply.

Family Member: Would you like her new billing address?

Citibank: That might help...

Family Member: Odessa Memorial Cemetery, Highway 129, Plot Number 69.

Citibank: Sir, that’s a cemetery!

Family Member: And what do you do with dead people on your planet? ◆

UCSD Emeriti Association
9500 Gilman Drive, Dept. 0020
La Jolla, CA 92093-0020

Return Service Requested



Chronicles
September 2009

Mark Your Calendar!

Richard G. Kronick

Professor of Family and Preventive Medicine

The Debate on Health Care Reform

Wednesday, October 14, 4:00-5:30 pm



Seth Lerer

Dean of Arts and Humanities

**Children's Literature: A Reader's
History from Aesop to Harry Potter**

Wednesday, November 18, 4:00-5:30 pm

Chronicles

Newsletter of the UCSD Emeriti Association



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Jeff Calcara Layout and Design

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Colin Bloor Past President

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