



THE EMPTY NEST NEWSLETTER

VOL V NO3 MAY 19 1987

"A robin is perched overhead./Today is today--I love it!
And "springtime" sings my heart/Over and over... VWD, 1913
(age 18)

OFF TO NEPAL

WENDY AND JEREMY TO SPEND 7 MONTHS ON TRAVEL BOOK

\$3.50

THE MAGAZINE OF CANADIAN DISCOVERY

EQUINOX

JULY/AUGUST 1986



THIS GORGEOUS PHOTO, EVEN IN BLACK & WHITE, INSTEAD OF FULL COLOR (MAGENTA, TURQUOISE) SHOWS JEREMY'S SKILL, AND WHY EQUINOX CHOSE THIS (cont p. 4)
(and with reproduction problems @)



ENNL ED DOESN'T TOUCH GROUND ALL SEMESTER

Sptd. That's the way it was, and it was a horrendous semester -- 34 in the writing class, plus losing the radio helper late January (she nipped the school off for \$1500) so that I had to do all the radio reading alone, and then hosting another Jamboree, w/ 1300 kids on campus, took a big bite out of the semester. Then my dean nominated all the Lit faculty but me for Extra Merit pay: she said I had NO University Service; the

Jackie,

All semester I wrote papers, and you wrote thoughts back to me, via the margins. So here are some last thoughts to you.

Thanks for reading Pennington. No one's read me a story since I was a child. It meant a lot. And thanks for introducing me to Peyton's books. I really like them.

Thank you for never boring me. I never had to watch the clock, anticipating the end of class. In fact, the minutes flew quickly — like, "Boo-hoo, class is over already?" ☹️

Thanks for putting so much effort, time, and money (all that good food) into the class. I want you to know all the little things you did were noticed and appreciated. ☺️

Ode to a Snail Charmer

You opened the wardrobe door and we trooped through
Surprised by joy

Overwhelmed by offers too good to pass by.

Two coats of Lincoln green 'neath the greenwood tree?

A robin unearthing a rusty garden key?

A chance to be thrown to the sea?

You invited us to join the dance, and we wrote back

Our circle of friendship growing closer and more confident, as week by week

We stepped out and shared life's dues and desserts with our fellow travelers
of the way.

A slime-bucket for Soggy, a black spot for Silver,

Smarts for the Scarecrow, and suit of scarlet for Drem.

With no malice to Alice, it's her friends we found callous

Deep in need of a dose of Aunt Polly or Marmee.

When perfect children threatened to bore us,

You counted kisses and caresses to Elsie via Papa Horace.

Of animals we've kept up with quite a zoo, from wolves rating high on the
literary scale,

To smiling cats, Stew Cats, and midnight graveyard stiff cats.

Short of a bottle of rum and a taste of spruce gum

Our taste buds have been tempted by treats never ho hum

And our language has been spiced with some lasting refrains,

"Fifteen men on a dead man's chest!"

And "Off with their heads!" at the Queen's behest.

Lulled to sleep by Pa's fiddle as the campfire dies,

Disturbed in our dreams by the retreat of moccasined feet and babies with
black eyes,

We watched as the hour of the wolf, and the Eskimo, and Hanno licked by....

Then learned Bridge building from Leslie and Jess.

Your choice of frugal chariots has borne us well,

And in response we've ranged through time and space

And returned convinced that growing up is too important to leave to children.

A book of Pennington around the fire,

A loaf of bread, a jug of milk--and you

(And maybe some clams and a chunk of caribou)

And all our Tuesdays are measured in smooth white stones.

-- Melany
Kirchman

Jamboree is part of my job! So that's the end of the Jamboree. (She did this because she was mad at me for raising money for the Jamboree, dressed like a cat. She said she'd give me enough money, but it was \$200 less than last year!) So anyway, a hard semester, and NO more work done on Round Barn, no follow-through of Sabbathical. But nonetheless there were good times + joys. Most of the 34 winters did great work, and there were some v. nice appreciations, two of which written ones are shown here — both by bright students in the "Classics of Children's Lit" class. In the "Snail Charmer" ode, see how many books on our reading list you can identify. There are also some other references. (Answers elsewhere.)

Now the ENNL Ed is off to England, June 10, for a month, to recuperate, see our English subscribers, & scout places to take a class next June, for "Sources of British Children's Lit." Watership Down & Pooksticks Bridge, here I come!

The editor regrets that this is only Issue #3 of ENNL this year. Usually it's abt #6. Lots of good news has gone unreported. It's been due to Sabbathical & hard semester. Please keep sending news! She will try to do better!

NO ONE WILLING TO CHAIR RON DOUGAN'S BIRTHDAY SINGATHON; FORMAT MAY HAVE TO BE CHANGED

New Brunswick For Ron Dougan's 85th Birthday, Pat & Lew Dalvit have been unable to find anyone to lead the annual Singathon. The Afton Philharmonic is on strike, and other groups & soloists complain they did it last year. The Dalvits, if unsuccessful in their search, may turn to a "Hands Across America" format for a belated celebration of RAD's May 20 birthday. Word is out, however, and already there are pockets of resistance surfacing in various parts of the country. "We will persist," vows Pat D, "even if we have to down scale to "Hands Around the Cow Tank."

THIS ISSUE OF ENNL WILL REPRODUCE RAD'S FIRST SINGATHON, 1984.

Comparison with 1986's Singathon (published last year) will show you how the Singathon production has grown.

IT'S
RONALD'S
BIRTHDAY!

SPERM COUNT
RANKS HIGH!

Portland, O. David & Dana Woods are ecstatic that David's sperm count tests out in the millions. Soon to come: A Family Fertility Dance.

TREVER FINDS LEVEL TOYS

Clackamas, Or. Trever Dougan is now employed as Asst. Mgr. at a large toy store chain. His father can hardly wait for the 10% discount on toy trains & fake noses. Grampa says they will watch his promotions on his pop stick.

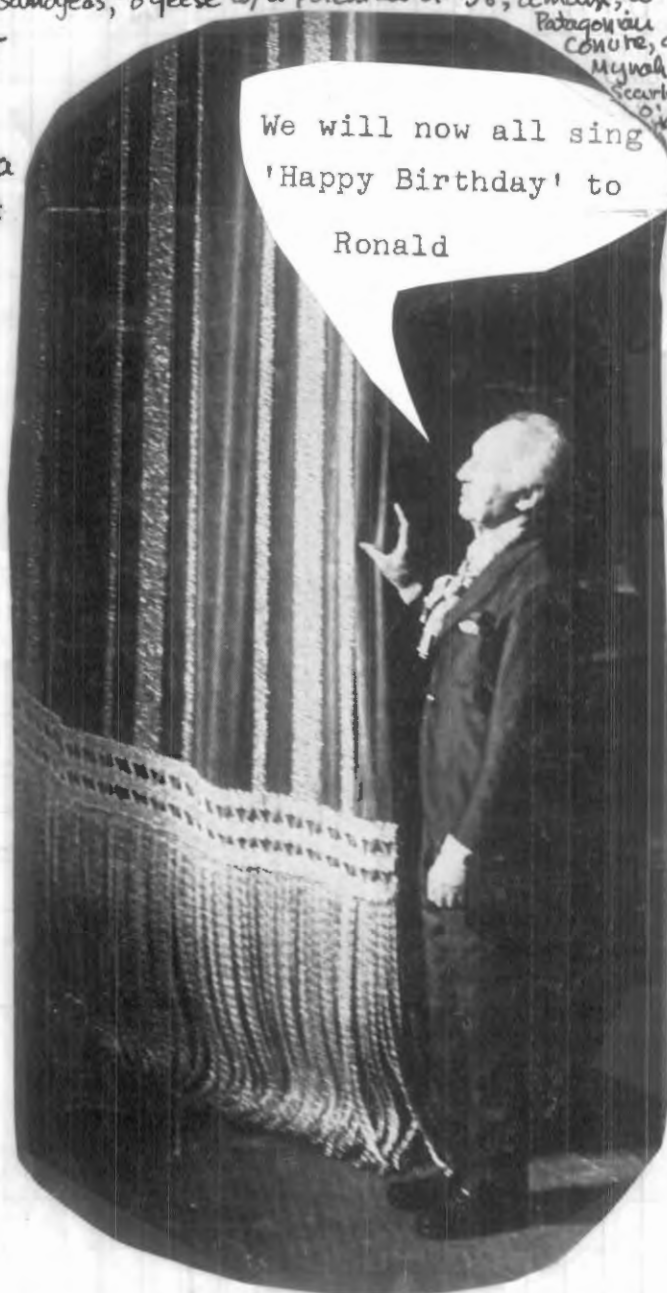
Craig: Barbara's nest is now empty, except for 2 samoyeds, 8 geese w/ a potential of 38, a hawk, a Patagonian conure, a Mynah & a scarlet tanager.

We will now all sing
'Happy Birthday' to
Ronald

BETSY CREAMS 'EM!

Bethesda Betsy Schmidt passed the CPA exam on the first try, after getting a 4.0 average in the necessary accounting courses required for the exam. Betsy is now looking for a part-time job. Bravo Betsy! We're proud of you. Other Bethesda news: Jenny Schmidt recently flew alone to Wisconsin where she visited Grandma Jo & Grandpa Karl over Easter vacation. She had a great time, and

A 'one' and a 'two'



also saw her great-grandparents Ron & Vera, her aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. This summer Jennie will go to overnight camp, and to Jr. High in the fall. Matthew Schmidt is also going to camp this summer. He keeps busy with Cub Scouts and soccer. (Dad Peter is his team's coach again this season.)

(Gillian's friends refer to her as a D.A.R. -- Darned Average Rascal!)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU....



GILLIAN CREAMS 'EM TOO

Reno Gillian Jackson has pulled down A's this semester in Biochem, Organics & Analytic; she's still waiting on one 2hr lab grade. Hurray, Gill! Gillian now has Sr. status, though she has 2 yrs. to go on her major! She has gotten a lab job for the summer.

JEREMY, WENDY (Cont from p. 1)

-- photo for their cover, even tho the article on Tibet within had a different author & photographer. The mag. used a number of Jer's pictures, & have now commissioned him to do a book. Jeremy & Wendy are off to Nepal for 7 months, gathering material, photo-graphing. If the ENNL Ed can swing it (in school semester) she will join them for a couple of weeks in October.

BITS & PIECES

... I have heard there is an electronic Scrabble game called "MONTL" Portland Dr. Craig Dougan has built grand child Jennifer a great big beautiful doll house. We presume Barbara is having fun furnishing it.

West Bend, WI, after June 1. Dick & Katie Yde, Sonia, Josh & Ben are moving to this city, where Dick will be City Attorney. He has been Attorney of a totally unspellable hamlet near Green Bay, WI. Congrats to you, Dick!

OKemos, MI The ENNL Ed has realized belatedly that old & loved friend (& ENNL subscriber) Gib Hocking, had critical surgery in January, for an aneurism of the stomach aorta. He now boasts a scar from his guggle to his zatch, & is recuperating v. well. He & Judy will visit Ann, Tamara & daughter Nancy (& ENNL Ed god-daughter) in London in June, & go on to Cypress w/ Nancy & Tamara later in the summer. Gib says that life is beautiful, and that he's very glad to be here! (We told Smithsonian Mag for May: Demi's Quilt International show is written up in this issue.

Duluth, MN Dan Schmidt: Station Manager at Last! And not of one, but of several Minnesota Public Radio stations! Dan will be headquartered in Duluth, where Julie & Karl Andrew & Sarah will be moving from St. Paul soon. Julie is looking forward to being a full-time mom. Congrats to the Dan Schmidts!

Beloit When Jackie was cleaning up a mess of papers, crumpling them & flinging them from her, so that her card table was banked around with paper balls, enter RAD: "What are you doing, making a nest?"

SSU, Spfld. Book list from P. 2 "Ode": How'd you do? Answers: Lion, Witch & Wardrobe; Robin Hood; Secret Garden; Alice (both books); Pennington's Last Term; Treasure Island; Wizard of Oz; Warrior Scarlet; Ten Savoyers; Little Women; Elsie Dinsmore (excerpts); Julie of the Wolves; The Cay; Taste of Spruce Gum; Little House on the Prairie; Stranger at Green Kucuk; Bridge to Terabithia. Plus refs. to (Shewie's Surprised by Joy, Emily Dickinson, The Pumbat, & Lewis Carroll's diary, where he marked special days w/ a white stone.

DR. DOUGAN HONORED

Portland Uncle Craig was recently honored at a luncheon, for 15 yrs. quality service at Kaiser Permanente. There was a speech that included many interests: trains, coins, geese, Shrine Band, American political history. Craig says that at 20 years they will take him out to dinner. He recently came to Wis. via AIRTRAX & attended medical meetings at U.Wis.; also visited Groun, Groun & Cauer at Chez Nous. Also went to his 30th Med School reunion.

Chez Nous. Grandma was sitting in her chair recently... most ENNL readers know she's blind... but she "sees things", reported before, colorful castles in the air, etc. Lately it's been stairs, which confuse her walking, so she shuts her eyes so she's sure they aren't real. Well, Jackie saw her reach out and stroke the

air over & over. Said Jackie, "Mom what's the matter?" VWD: "Oh, I'm just seeing a rabbit behind my eyes, & so I thought I might as well



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



pat it!"

Boy's belch a manly rite of passage

By THOMAS SCHMIDT
of The Journal staff

WHEN MY 5-year-old nephew comes to Milwaukee next month for a visit, I'm going to teach him to belch. I called him and told him so and he's very excited about it.

The skill came to me at an early age and has served me well for more than 20 years in a variety of social situations. But when I told a female friend about my plans, she was appalled.

"We shouldn't transmit the negative aspects of masculine culture to our children," she said. "Are you going to teach him to drop his little clothes all over the house, too?"

No, I'm not. And I really hadn't thought that teaching Karl the art of the self-prompted belch would perpetuate destructive male behavior patterns.

I just knew it would delight him. Learning to let fly with a megabelch gives a boy whose voice hasn't changed yet an awesome feeling of power. I also knew it would make him more popular with his friends and help him stand out at school. Besides, everyone needs a form of self-expression and Karl hasn't shown much interest in learning to play the piano.

But there are long-range considerations to take into account as well — locker room considerations.

No boy should be raised in such a way as to venture unversed and unprepared into the grunt 'n' gripe, gross 'em out atmosphere of the locker room. He ought to have something to contribute.

It can be as simple as knowing the proper technique for rolling towels into rat tails, or as complicated as working up sarcastic imitations of the school's most despised teachers. Ripe stories of anatomic dysfunction are always welcome. So are authoritative discourses on the vagaries of the female form and temperament.

I like to think of Karl — sitting happily on a bench as his grade school locker room surges completely out of control — quietly swallowing air in preparation for bringing the pandemonium to an abrupt halt with a deep, vibrant belch.

Why should a kid have to feel like an outcast?

A boy who lacks the requisite locker room skills can become an object of ridicule, standing piously off to the side, never getting the joke, never charging ahead with his own prurient turn of phrase, and — most important, never networking with future career contacts while his peers busily establish themselves on the fast track by exchanging negative aspects of masculine culture.

Women like my friend, though, love to belittle considerations of the locker room — as well as considerations of the playing field, the ice-fishing shack, the campfire and the rec room on Super Bowl Sunday.

They take on an air of sober, adult detachment and describe these all-important get-togethers as childish male-bonding sessions which, if not destructive, are at best silly butt-patting diversions from life's more serious considerations. But then, they'll smirk, men will be boys.

Thank God for that. What they fail to recognize is that if men will be boys, then boys who will be men who will be boys had better be allowed to be boys before they're men or they're bound to feel left out.

My best friend knows all about it. As the quintessential nerd, complete with thick glasses and a calculator on the belt of his floodwater pants, Rick was an object of locker room ridicule for years. Even the mildest anatomic references left him blushing and speechless.

Given time, though, and a certain amount of patient instruction, Rick mastered the ways of scatological humor and is today a well-adjusted male who wants to protect his son from the awkwardness he felt as a young boy. He moved in that direction when his son was still an infant.

Nathan was born with an anomaly concerning a portion of his body that will not be named here. Though clearly abnormal, the doctors said, Nathan's anomalous portion was perfectly capable of fulfilling its biologically assigned functions.

Strictly speaking, reconstructive surgery was not necessary.

To Rick, though, it was clear that his son's anomalous portion was not capable of fulfilling its sociologically assigned functions. In particular, he worried that when all the other boys were writing their names in the snow, Nathan would be writing on his shoes. He opted for surgery.

For similar reasons, I will go ahead with my plans for Karl's visit. I'm not about to jeopardize his future by failing to pass on the secrets of the self-prompted belch. When he arrives in Milwaukee, we'll go off by ourselves — away from the women in the group — and I'll show him how to swallow a little air and force it back up.

If he shows promise, I'll pass on a few of the more advanced techniques in later sessions — like how to inhale directly into the stomach, recite the alphabet and engage in belch banter. Then, probably a year or two from now, I'll shift the focus of his training and start teaching him an advanced form of expectoration.

When I mentioned this plan aloud, another female friend stopped at my desk to complain that she had never learned to spit very well. She seemed very disappointed and said she had tried for years to figure it out.

As I gave her a few tips, I began to see that we males have been very selfish. Through her eagerness to learn, I became convinced that we have a responsibility to share more of the negative aspects of our

masculine culture with those across the gender fence.

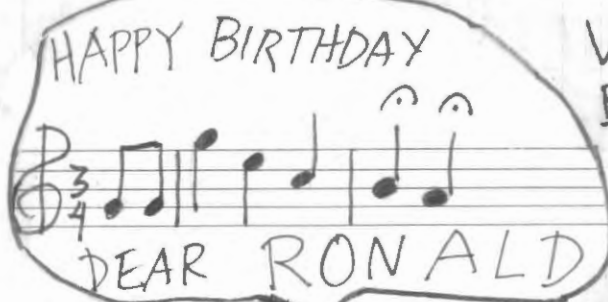
Next week, I plan to call my 6-year-old niece.

Comment & Question by ENNL Ed: Splendid article, Tom! BUT... did you, as a kid, ever read THE GHOST BOAT by your Aunt Jackie, specifically Chapter 10? It was your Aunt Patsy who won the belching contest with 200 in a row, & your cousin Paulie Wiggle Wee who could float a whole sentence out on a single belch! You've got a great family tradition, now, complete with song, & you didn't throw a crumb our way! *News Note:* Tom is Temp. Asst Ed (come June) of Milwaukee Journal Life/Style section, while the Asst Ed goes on maternity leave. Tom has yet to be on the staff a year. Congrats!

UPDATE ON DAMARIS
Mips. Dami recently had a one-person quilt show in another Unitarian Church, & has also had her quilts displayed in a bank. On June 13 she'll do a workshop for Minnesota Quilters. Before that, she and S. Mudge (AND the press - ENNL Ed!) will attend the opening of the International Quilt Show in Athens, G., June 5, with Press Review, Open-ception, Award Ceremony, etc. As reported, D's quilt is 1 of 90 to be accepted for this show. Not reported is that it is 1 of 30 selected to travel! COMING SOON TO A TOWN NEAR YOU! We'll let you know the itinerary. And for all this, D. is making futons: as the veteran futon maker at Depth of Field, she is training in new stitchers. Last Aug. they sold 600 futons, & D. can only make 120 a month, alone.



The ENNLED thanks a kind donor for underwriting this issue.



NO LONGER A BABY

Green Bay. Ben Yde, 2½, has been talking for awhile, but words, short phrases. Toher day he looked his mom Katie in the eye and announced distinctly, "I AM NOT A BABY ANY MORE!" Said Katie, "Oh, what are you then?" Replied Ben, "A BOY!"

*CAROL CALLS

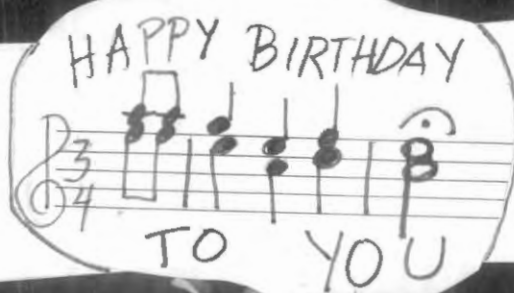
Hinesburg Pond I had scarce penned the words in the next column, when Carol was on the line, calling from the lake. It is lovely there! And she had a great dinner with Chad & Eva, Dannie & Don, and Audrey & Don. How the ENNLED longs to see you all! Camp report: Lisa Brackett's 9 yr. old has trashed a no. of cottages w/ a baseball bat, doing grievous damage to Moores' Camp, among others. I am appalled. (Readers who don't know the lake: Lisa B. is the neighbor who is trying to build houses beside the Jackson meadow, & we're fighting her on zoning-- it's costing mucho \$\$\$.) Carol says she hasn't heard that our Camp was trashed, she will go see. And yes: she did have a great time out west, seeing Sara Dell and Alison Walsh.

MEGAN (Santa Cruz) is nearly hired as a 911 op. (what screening!) & she's written & illustrated 2 little pic books ("McNaughty") to go w/ a doll Barb & Jess Barker are marketing, & the agent is wild abt 'em! Now she & Barb are working on ms. of Florence Lewis's, Much creative ferment, details will be reported soon.

WEST ROPES 'EM IN!

Reno, S.F. and Santa Cruz. It started with Megan moving out to Santa Cruz, & visiting Gillian & Cressie en route. Then Jackie flew out over spring break, and with Gillian & Cress drove to S.F. in Gillian's new Hyundai, stayed w/ Alison Walsh & Sara Dell for a super time, went on to lunch w/ Uncle Tim & Aunt Audrey Jackson in San Mateo (Cress loved Uncle Tim's guitar playing & singing, & the toybox) and thence to Santa Cruz, to see Megan & Annabelle Dicks. A wonderful dinner with Annabelle, and much fun on the waterfront (sea lions!) w/ Cress & Emily Barker. Lots of rides, too. Next, Dannie took a holiday, visited (who else?) Cress & Gill, & on to Megan in Santa Cruz, stayed w/ Annabelle. Ellie was all set to go to Cal. for her job, late in May, & would have seen Cress & G., Alison, Sara, Megan & Annabelle, but the trip was cancelled (a good ticket went begging, alas!). She will be sent out in June or July. Also: we've not had a direct report, but Carol Dell, we know, visited Sara & Alison late March. Marvelous, the drawing power of the West!!!

* see other column



Love, PAT + LEW ☺