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RESEARCH

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Desire Lines

Sandy Hobbs

I have recently spent some time reading popular collections of urban legends. Naturally many tales appear over and over again, but sometimes there is an unexpected unique example. One such appears in N. E. Genge's *Urban Legends: The As-complete-as-one-could-be Guide to Modern Myths* (Three Rivers Press, New York, 2000). This supposed completeness incidentally is itself a myth. And it has no index! Nevertheless I am grateful to Genge for introducing me to a story I don't recall having heard before.

It concerns General Dwight D. Eisenhower when he was President, not of the United States, but of

Columbia University. Because of the deteriorating state of many lawns, the university administration introduced "Keep Off The Grass" notices. This led to student protests. The matter was referred to Eisenhower who, after inspecting the disputed areas, said:

"Have you ever noticed how much quicker it is to head directly where you are going? Why not let the students take whatever route works, then build the walkways over the bare patches?"

This advice was followed and, according to Genge (page 242) "Columbia University's campus has been recognized as one of the most conveniently arranged campuses nationwide".

This is not in itself a particularly remarkable legend, but on reading it I was struck by two points. First, it seems to be advocating that large institutions should respect the behaviour of the populace. In this case the walkways were built on what were literally "folkways". The second interest the story had for me was it recalled discussions I had heard more than half a century before, when I was a psychology student. I heard it suggested that, if psychologists were consulted about the landscaping of new housing estates, they would watch where people actually walked and build pathways accordingly. Whether this had actually ever been put into practice I was unclear.

When I was a student, there was no such thing as "environmental

psychology” but there is now. I told the story to one of my colleagues, Eddie Edgerton, who specializes in this field. He had not heard it, but confirmed that the concept was now quite well known in planning circles. He introduced me to the term “desire lines”. When I followed up this phrase, I found various definitions which would suit them to the Eisenhower legend. For example, there is “paths actually made by walkers as opposed to those created on the drawing board” (at www.wordspy.com).

I would be interested to discover whether anyone else has come across this story and whether any light can be thrown on why it is connected to Eisenhower. It may be true or nearly true, of course. Genge does not pass judgement on this point. However, one possibility that has occurred to me is that it has arisen because the term “desire lines” is actually also used in another way besides the one mentioned so far. It can refer to a proposal for a new route in transport planning. When Eisenhower was President of the United States he set up a commission on transport policy under another General, Lucius D. Clay. Its report *Ten-Year National Highway Program* (1955), which proposed a number of new highways, was soon followed by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. The maps in the report contained indications of planned new roads, which in more modern terms would be referred to as “desire lines”. This commission’s report led to the actual building of new highways, which may be regarded as part of the legacy of the Eisenhower Presidency.*

Thus, in this sense Eisenhower was a “Desire Line” man. Perhaps he then came to be seen as a “Desire Line” man in the other sense too.

*Anyone interested in this side of things may readily find relevant websites through a Google search for “Eisenhower desire lines”.

Postscript

Having read the above draft, Brian Chapman kindly forwarded the following texts to me. Both suggest that stories about the use of desire lines may be more widespread than I had realised.

The first is from Jacob M. Braude, *Speaker's and Toastmaster's Handbook of Anecdotes By and About Famous Personalities*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971, p. 167.

"One of the finest examples of the value of precedent that I have ever seen," President James Burrill Angell, of the University of Michigan, used to say to his class in International Law, "is one of the paths which you fellows make across the grass of the campus. We take that as clear proof that a walk should be there, and set about building one."

The second is a posting on a web newsgroup (dated 1999/04/06) from Nathan E. Tracer (tracerne@umich.edu). The sender appears to be an architecture graduate student and former member of the US Air Force. His story concerns the now closed Loring Air Force Base in northern Maine.

Seems the Base Commander was irritated that they had to reseed the grass after every spring thaw where the paths had been worn from people not being able to tell where the sidewalks were (average snowfall there is about 130 to 150 inches a year). People (even GI's) will usually take the shortest path, even if its provided somewhere else. An irritated Base Commander is never a pretty sight. The next winter he had the folks in charge of such things wait till after a major snowfall (usually by the end of November at the latest) and they marked each snow path with stakes. The next spring he had each path that was worn blacktopped about three feet wide. Solved the grounds mainten-

ance problem and saved the taxpayers a bunch of money in the long run. Frequently the best stories are not true, but I thought I share it anyways. Fact is, there were foot-paths at the Base that did match the most direct routes between buildings, however they got there.

Note that he distances himself from the story by pointing out that "frequently the best stories are not true".

The Bosom Serpent: "Curiouser and Curiouser" ...

Gillian Bennett

I was reading Isabel Allende's novel *Portrait in Sepia* recently, when I came across the following passage—a nice literary parallel to, or even re-enactment of, a well-known legend, I thought:

[My grandmother] played pranks on me—some a little heavy-handed—until I learned to turn the tables ... Once on the patio I found a lizard that had been run over by a carriage wheel and lain in the sun for several days; it was fossilized and forever preserved in its sorry guise as a squashed reptile. I picked it up and kept it, not sure why, until I devised the perfect use for it. I was sitting at my desk doing my arithmetic, and when my grandmother wandered into the room for some reason, I pretended to have an uncontrollable fit of coughing, and she came over to pound me on the back. I bent way over, with my face in my hands, and to the poor woman's dismay I "spit up" the lizard, which landed in my skirt. She was so shocked when she saw the horror my lungs had apparently spewed forth that she fell back into a chair, but later she laughed as hard as I had, and kept

the dessicated little lizard between the pages of a book as a souvenir.

I have been interested in the "Bosom Serpent" legend for many years. I first collected a version from a group of students whilst still a [mature] student myself and I used it as a casestudy in one of the first papers I wrote for a professional journal (Bennett 1985). Whilst editor of the informal folklore magazine *Dear Mr Thoms* I compiled a special issue on the "Bosom Serpent" (Bennett 1991), and I have put together three longer studies of the story—one in a book on the history of medicine (1997), one in our journal *Contemporary Legend* (2000), and one in my recent book *Bodies* (2005). In these three studies I have argued that the legend may be used to express a sort of metaphorical medical truth, in the sense that it is a ready-made language for talking about symptoms and discussing rival approaches to healing. I have also suggested that the symptoms described in the stories at times correspond pretty closely to those described in the medical literature for a number of, mainly digestive, complaints that have only recently been identified. In all of that time I have never considered the possibility that at least some of the stories may have a more literal medical interpretation. I was therefore intrigued to read an article in the *Guardian* last month about a rare psychiatric disorder called "pica syndrome":

Last month, an inquest was held into the death of Dewi Evans, a 61-year-old man from south Wales. Mr Evans had been a patient at a psychiatric hospital in Pontyclun and was suffering from pica, a rare disorder which makes the sufferer feel a compulsion to eat non-food items. He had undergone surgery twice before, but died this time, after attempts to remove objects including a screw, a pen-top, a magnet and some

coins from his bowel. At the inquest, the hospital's deputy manager explained how an extra fence had to be erected around the hospital to stop Mr Evans going looking for things to eat, and how staff had to constantly monitor him in case he tried to swallow objects or drink cleaning fluid.

Common cravings in people with pica include the urge to eat soil, coal, rust, chalk, and paper (in the 16th century it was given its name from the Latin for "magpie" due to the sufferer's often indiscriminate eating), although people have been known to ingest anything from animal faeces to bits of metal. (Saner 2006, 18)

The report goes on to describe other cases where sufferers have eaten necklaces, needles, coins, bone, foam rubber, string, buttons, thumb-tacks, disposable gloves, razor blades and other unlikely things. Pica syndrome, the author says, seldom appears alone but usually accompanies some other, more common, condition such as autism, psychiatric problems, learning difficulties, or (in the case of children) severe neglect.

This strange disorder does not perhaps have direct relevance to standard "Bosom Serpent" stories such as those reported in British folklore journals from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, where the victim is believed to have swallowed an amphibian which has then lived in his/her gut causing dreadful sufferings. One such account may be found in an early issue of this newsletter (Smith 1987), and there are very many other examples to chose from (among others, Addy 1895, Dewhirst 1971, Duncan 1894, Latham 1878, Peacock 1899, "R.R" 1880, and Smith & Smith 1972). However, the pica syndrome does have relevance to the vast body of peripheral material anyone interested in the

"Bosom Serpent" will come across. This includes some of the "medical chestnuts" retold in the correspondence columns of *Notes & Queries* (see "Animals Inside" and "Newspaper Folklore"), and many of the weirder instances of people having swallowed or vomitted up centipedes, slugs, beetle larvae, a "nest of insects," "something wick'," "something ... like a monkey," "live animals about the size of a sixpence," and something "grey, hard and rough, and about as big as the knob on her oven door" (see note to Table 1 Chapter 1, Bennett 2005).

It also throws valuable light on all those people thought by some to be possessed and by others to be frauds or hysterics who are recorded as having vomitted up prodigious amounts of seriously strange stuff. For example, at the end of the 17th century the twelve-year-old son of a German pastor was taken very ill suffering from fits and stomach cramps. Then he vomited a woodlouse. Medical experts were called in but failed to cure him. During the following three weeks he vomited 162 woodlice, 32 caterpillars, 4 millipedes, 2 worms, 2 butterflies, 2 ants and a beetle. If this boy was suffering from pica syndrome then one could assume that he had been eating soil. The boy then started vomiting amphibians—21 newts, 4 frogs, and a few toads—had he perhaps been drinking pond-water? The medical men were dismissed and the exorcists took over. The boy then began vomiting even stranger objects: eggshells, knife blades, a link from a chain, and some nails and tacks. A cure was finally effected by strong doses of horse's urine and threats of more to follow (Bondeson 1997, 36).

There is also the famous case of Frau Catharina Geisslerin, "the toad-vomiting woman of Altenburg." In 1642 she started vomiting toads and lizards which she claimed to have

swallowed as spawn. They had grown in her intestines and she could feel them "running and sporting" there "especially after she had drunk milk." Her physician admitted that he was defeated by her case and several eminent men were called in, including the physician to the Elector of Saxony. In 1648 after all the medical men had retired defeated from the scene, Catharina started vomiting again. This time, she threw up no fewer than thirteen toads during the course of only two weeks. One of these toads was sent for dissection and its stomach was found to contain more than 30 winged insects. Since the animal could not have eaten insects if it had spent its life inside Catharina eating the food she ate, she was denounced as a fraud. At the autopsy performed when she died in 1662 after a lifetime of vomiting amphibians, no foreign bodies were found anywhere in her gastro-intestinal tract; she had died of liver failure. (Bondeson 1997, 33-34; see also Kirby 1803-20, 363-364 for a more sympathetic account)

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Legends and Anecdotes from *The New Yorker*

Collected by Brian Chapman

1. Analogues of "The Cybersex Surprise"

The New Yorker, 18 March 1950, p. 28.

[Cartoon by Peter Arno: An old man at a male gathering, having just pulled the top off a giant cake on the table in front of him, is astonished when one of the scantily clad women who pop out of it shrieks, "Uncle Henry!"]

Compare this from the *Weekly World News*, 6 July 1999.

"Birthday boy, 50, drops dead when his own daughter jumps naked out of cake!" STAFFORD; England

-- Louie Holiman was enjoying his 50th birthday party until a naked woman popped out of a cake -- and it turned out to be his 22-year-old daughter! The dancer, Lesley Holiman, didn't know she was doing her bare-butt entrance in front of her own dad. The shock was so great, the birthday boy dropped dead from a heart attack on the spot.

2. Helpful Hitchhiker Stories

The New Yorker 20 May 1950, p. 113.

[Advertisement] The Minneapolis Star and Tribune Column by Cedric Adams

[...] A jittery motorist picked up a hitchhiker in Philadelphia. The hitchhiker had no sooner settled down in the seat next to the driver than he confessed that he had just been released from the penitentiary. The motorist grew more jittery and began trying to figure out some way that he could get rid of his passenger without offending him. Suddenly he thought of violating the speed limit. As luck would have it, the car was soon brought to a stop by a state trooper, who talked to the pair from the hitchhiker's side. Instead of making an arrest, however,

the officer let the motorist off with a warning. The two proceeded. At the next town the driver explained that the hitchhiker would have to depart. As the two bade each other goodbye, the hitchhiker remarked, "I forgot to tell you that I served time as a pickpocket. This may interest you." With that he tossed the state trooper's summons book on the seat of the car. [...] [Brian says, "This version of "The helpful hitchhiker" doesn't make much sense - - why steal the summons book if no ticket was given? Cf. Bennett Cerf, *Bennett Cerf's Bumper Crop* (Garden City, NY: Garden City Books, n.d.), pp. 540-1; James N. Young, *101 Plots Used and Abused* (Boston: The Writer, Inc., 1946), pp. 20-1.]

Daily Herald [Chicago] | 3 Aug 1951

"Minister says pickpocket stole cop's arrest book Arlington denies theft; Schreiber says story came from Barrington"

Note: When this story was published fourteen years ago the Arlington police department claimed it was "not so." When the editor learned from Frank Danielsen, of Palatine that the story was originally told by Martin Schreiber, who claimed he got it from the Barrington police department, the investigator threw up his hands and apologized to Arlington police department in the next issue. We think it is a pretty good story anyway, so we are publishing as a "what might have happened." The conscience of a pastor of a Barrington church is a bit troubled over his experience recently when he chanced to give a hitchhiker a ride, ran a stop light in Arlington Heights, received a ticket when he appeared before the magistrate, discovered that there was no charge against him—all through the foresight of his passenger. This pastor was slightly shocked when he learned that the hitchhiker was just out of Joliet. He felt at ease, however, when he learned that the crimes of his passenger had been confined to picking pockets. The autoist, who had just been

emphasizing to his companion the importance of obeying the law, accepted the police ticket for running a stop light without argument. The pickpocket later requested the ticket and proceeded to tear it up with the remark, "You do not need the ticket now, because I have the police book in which the ticket was written." The pastor found there was no charge against him when he went to the Arlington police court the next day

3 Misunderstandings

The New Yorker, 5 Nov 1949, pp. 28-29. THE TALK OF THE TOWN

"By Any Other Name"

The parents of a girl in the third grade of a local parochial school were understandably shocked recently when she informed them with pride that she had been assigned a role in the forthcoming school presentation of a play that she insisted was entitled "The Virgin Menace." The parents fretted about this for a couple of days, and then her mother called the school, where she was connected with a polite young priest, who shared her incredulity. After excusing himself for a moment, he came back to the phone to report, with obvious relief, that the only drama on the school's production schedule was "The Merchant of Venice."

The New Yorker, 17 June 1950, p. 23. THE TALK OF THE TOWN

"Rival"

The mother of a boy in the graduating class at Yale got a telegram from him last week cancelling a date they had: "SORRY CAN'T MAKE LUNCH BACK AT LORETTA'S ADDRESS LOVE BILL." The message was read to the mother over the telephone, and when she made some slight sound of astonishment, the Western Union girl evidently had misgivings, for she asked, "Is that address familiar to you, Madam?" The lady said it certainly wasn't, and there the matter rested

until Bill arrived and explained that what he'd said was "baccalaureate address."

The New Yorker, 10 Dec 1973, p. 187. "MUSICAL EVENTS On the Heights." Desmond Shawe-Taylor

[...] Perhaps I may relate, in this context, another true and tall tale of Hoffmann, this time from London. Some years ago, during the funeral service for an eminent and respected musician, the largely professional gathering was stunned to hear the organist, as his solo contribution to the proceedings, launch into the lilting and voluptuous strains of the Barcarolle. He played it right through to the end; and the explanation, when it came, was simple. A member of the family, asked by telephone what music would be required for the ceremony, had replied, after a moment's consideration, "Oh, I think a Bach chorale."

Brian's files also include the following items from *The New Yorker*, "The Talk Of The Town."

20 Jan 1934, p. 10.

Jasmin [Jasmin = jazzmen.]

22 Sept 1934, pp. 16-17.

Pretty Close [Saturday Evening Post = sardine sandwich on toast.]

29 June 1940, p. 13.

Three Pictures

[Poinsettia = "pointer" and "setter."]

20 Dec 1947, p. 23.

December Fool

[Maple Leaf Train = Make Believe Train.]

31 July 1948, p. 17.

Hospitality

[United Nations official mistakes a delegation of librarians for Liberians, arranges for them to "attend a committee hearing on the status of African natives."]

13 May 1950, p. 23.

Comedown
[Moss Hart = Mozart.]

17 Feb 1951, p. 25.
Worthy Cause
[League of Women Voters = League of Women Bowlers.]

26 Jan 1952, p. 19.
As Ordered
[Soybeans = Sardines.]

12 Dec 1953, p. 37.
Anglo-Anglo Relations
[Die Fledermaus = Freedom House.]

31 July 1954, p. 13.
Not to Reason Why
[Architect misunderstands directions to design a hospital waiting room, designs a wading room.]

19 Feb 1955, p. 28.
The Dean's Secretary
[Secretary types "Puerto Ricans" instead of "Board of Regents."]

26 May 1956, p. 26.
Mixed-Up Pollys
[Secretary mishears Pollyanna, types "Polly Adler."]

4 May 1957, p. 27.
High Life
[Riviera = River Area.]

24 Oct 1960, p. 38.
Warm Welcome
[Recorded message on telephone, "The number you are dialing...", misheard as "The number you are, darling...."]

30 Jan 1971, p. 30.
[Cartoon by Charles Barsotti. Boss at Happy Way Cards Inc. corrects card designer. "It's not 'Our hearts in twine,' you idiot, it's 'Our hearts entwine.'"]

25 Dec 1971, p. 47.
THE AIR
Concentration, Squares, Jeopardy, and Bouillon Cubes
Renata Adler
[...] [A letter to the game show

Jeopardy was] from someone who apparently misunderstood one of the program's categories, "Potpourri" -- [and who] expressed a distaste for this reference to "Popery," as "ridiculing the head of one of the great religions of the world, 'The Pope,' the head of the Roman Catholic Church." [...]

Recently in the British Press

Monitored by Paul Smith

1. *The Guardian* 11 August 2006, page 14. Item reprinted from the *South West News*.

Swimmer's Lost Wallet Found in Lobster's Claws

A swimmer who lost his wallet during a tipsy late-night dip in the sea off Plymouth Hoe has had it returned—after it was found by a deep sea diver in the claws of a lobster. Paul Westlake, 30, of Plymouth, though he had seen the last of the wallet. But in it the diver found a business card belonging to Mr Westlake's hairdresser and then handed it in to the salon. Mr Westlake is now eager to find the diver and thank him in person. "All my bank cards were in there, and they're working fine, though there were phone numbers and addresses which can't be salvaged," he said.

2. From *The Times* 5 August 2006, page 35. Article by Ashling O'Connor in Bombay.

Coke and Pepsi Told To Spill Secrets or Face Ban

India's highest court yesterday demanded that Coca-Cola should reveal its secret formula for the first time in 120 years ... Coca-Cola's original recipe, according to company policy, is kept in a bank vault in Atlanta where only two executives—banned from travelling on the same plane—know it.

Requests, Notes and Queries

Message from the Editor of *Contemporary Legend*.

Dear ISCLR members and associates,

I am about to take over the editorship of *Contemporary Legend* and in order to fully comply with the mandates of "peer-review" I am in the process of compiling a database of potential readers for the submissions the journal receives. I am after two reader's reports for each article the journal receives, done blindly. In order that I do not overburden certain members as readers, I am sending this request out wide in order to potentially draw as many of you out of the woodwork as possible. All I ask in return is that reports be filed no more than six weeks after submission. In preparation for such a database to be compiled, I need the following information from you.

Name:

Postal address (with post/zip code):

Email address:

List of keywords reflecting your expertises/interests (methods, methodologies, topics, etc.):

Any limit to the number of papers you're willing to review in a calendar year:

Ideally, papers will be submitted to you in an electronic form. By filling out this form, you agree to review, up to the number specified above, articles for potential publication in *Contemporary Legend*.

Thanking you in advance,

Mikel J. Koven
Editor, *Contemporary Legend*

Message from Trevor J Banks

Call for Papers: Collaborative
Publication on Urban Legend Motifs,
Themes, and Genres

***ATTENTION FACULTY AND
GRADUATE STUDENTS***

Hello! I am Trevor Blank, President of the Folklore Student Association at Indiana University and avid collector of urban legends. In my time at Indiana University, I've noticed a disconnect amongst graduate students in folklore-related programs across the continent and I would love to see greater collaboration and cohesion among us budding folklorists. Here is an opportunity! Faculty, please pass this note along to applicable graduate students:

By some accounts, motif indexes are archaic in their practicality as a research tool by folklorists. For others, volumes like Thompson & Arne's collaboration still remain an important piece of their scholarship. In a world where the Internet is dominate and speed counts, a digitized, searchable database of information is the perhaps the most sought after research commodity. As such, this call for contributions will seek to answer the need for a digital, searchable, and efficient research tool in the discipline of folklore. Simultaneously, this call will provide graduate students a valuable opportunity to become published in both electronic and print formats, but more importantly facilitate cooperation and interaction among the upcoming generation of folklorists from various programs.

The idea: to create a collaborative publication with a supplemental and complementary electronic database to aid researchers studying urban legends. Graduate students are asked to select a genre, motif, theme, or actual legend itself, and then write an encyclopedia-style entry. The list of available topics (distributed via email upon receipt of student interest)

is a work-in-progress and as this project is geared toward facilitating ideas from grad students everywhere, there are no limitations to what can be covered. Topics not listed on the provided list are welcome for submission so long as the topics are approved as relevant to the project by the editor(s). Collections such as Brunvand's *Encyclopedia of Urban Legends* report legends and their variations, and the ever-popular Snopes.com routinely debunks circulating urban legends. This project, however, will be focused primarily on analysis of the genre, though entries on actual legends are welcome as well. Preferably, submissions will focus upon a particular topic while providing examples of relevant material. For example, an entry on the portrayal of disability in urban legends may cite "The Hook" or "The Blind Man" legends.

It is important to note that the end result of this project is not clearly defined. The outcome, be it a website, CD-ROM, book, or special issue of a journal, will depend largely on the quality, quantity, and relevance of the submissions, as well as the valued opinions and suggestions shared amongst contributors in deciding the evolution of the project. Interested graduate students should contact me, Trevor Blank, at tjblank@indiana.edu to express their interest in submitting/ getting involved. While I am currently heading the editing effort, I welcome volunteers to step up to help steer the course of the project. Feedback is always welcome from faculty, students, and fans alike.

Events

**International Society for
Contemporary Legend Research
25th International Conference**
Logan, Utah, USA
May 23-27 , 2007

The International Society for Contemporary Legend Research is pleased to announce that the 2007 Perspectives on Contemporary Legend Twenty-fifth International Conference is to be held on the campus of Utah State University, home to the Fife Folklore Archives as well as the annual Fife Folklore Workshop and Fife Honor Lecture, all three named in honor of Austin and Alta Fife, pioneer folklorists of Western (American) and Mormon folklore at Utah State University.

Proposals for papers on all aspects of "contemporary," "urban," or "modern" legend research are sought, as are those on any legend or legend-like tradition that circulates actively at present or has circulated at an earlier historical period. Previous discussions have ranged in focus from the ancient to the modern (including Internet-lore) and have covered diverse cultures worldwide (including our own academic world). Abstracts should be 400 words long.

The 2007 meeting will be organized as a series of seminars at which the majority of those who attend will present papers and/or contribute to discussion sessions. Concurrent sessions will be avoided so that all participants can hear all the papers. Proposals for special panels of papers, discussion sessions, and other related events are encouraged.

To participate in the conference, please forward a title and abstract, along with the appropriate conference fee, to conference co-organizer Lynne McNeil by February 1, 2007. (Abstracts can be sent by email.):
Email: lmcneill@mun.ca

English Department
Utah State University Logan, UT
84322-3200
USA
telephone: 435-797-3399

For further information or travel

advice, contact either of the conference co-organizers, Lynne McNeill (above) or Steve Siporin (siporin@cc.usu.edu).

Registration:

The registration fee (payable to ISCLR):

- ISCLR Member \$85 US, \$100 CD, ££50 British Sterling, 75 Euro
- Non-member (includes ISCLR membership fee) \$120 US, \$140 CD, ££70 Sterling, 100 Euro
- Student \$15 US, \$20 CD, ££10 British Sterling, 15 Euro

Lodging:

A block of rooms has been reserved at the University Inn, conveniently located on the campus of Utah State University, within easy walking distance of conference events and the Fife Folklore Archive

Reservations: (435) 797-0017
Toll Free: (800) 231-5634

Ask for the ISCLR International Meeting or Group #3469.

Special conference rates: \$60 for a 1-2 person room (2 queen-sized beds) plus tax. (Rooms are guaranteed to be available for reservation until Wednesday, May 09, 2007)

Transportation:

Logan is approximately 90 miles north of Salt Lake City. A shuttle service is available at the airport, but it is best to make reservations two days in advance and less expensive to travel in groups and share the expense. Contact Cache Valley Limo Airport Shuttle (1-800-658-8526 or www.LoganShuttle.com) for more information.

Weather in late May:

Logan is located in Cache Valley at

almost 5000 feet of altitude, between two mountain ranges, and has great scenic beauty. In late May the weather is highly variable; it can be summer one moment and winter the next, and it is often rainy this time of year.

Publication News

Select Bibliography

Compiled by Diane Goldstein

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Web Journal

* José Manuel Pedrosa, Professor of Comparative Literature in the University of Alcalá (Madrid, Spain), has written to alert us to the web journal he co-edits and which contains several articles about contemporary legends. The web address is

www.culturaspopulares.org.

Contributions are welcomed not only in Spanish, but in English, French, Italian and Portuguese.

Professor Pedrosa is author of two books about Spanish Contemporary Legend:

La ciudad oral. Literatura tradicional urbana del sur de Madrid. Teoría,

método, textos (Madrid: Comunidad de Madrid, 2002) 367 pp.

And

La autoestopista fantasma y otras leyendas urbanas españolas (Madrid: Páginas de Espuma, 2004) 285 pp.

Book Sale

Perspectives on Contemporary Legend: Final Copies

The society has a small number of copies still available of the vols arising from the early international seminars held at Sheffield. They are:

Perspectives on Contemporary Legend vol. II, edited by Gillian Bennett, Paul Smith and John Widdowson.

Monsters with Iron Teeth: Perspectives on Contemporary Legend vol. III, edited by Gillian Bennett and Paul Smith.

The Questing Beast: Perspectives on Contemporary Legend vol. IV, edited by Gillian Bennett and Paul Smith.

A Nest of Vipers: Perspectives on Contemporary Legend vol., edited by Gillian Bennett and Paul Smith.

Contemporary Legend: The First Five Years: Abstracts and Bibliographies from the Sheffield Conferences on Contemporary Legend 1982-1986, edited by Gillian Bennett and Paul Smith.

As well as papers by the editors, a number of other participants such as Bill Ellis, Bill Nicolaisen, Mark Glazer, Sandy Hobbs, Sigrid Schmidt and Keith Cunningham have contributed more than one paper to the PCL series.

Please note that the first vol. in the PCL series is no longer in print.

The listed vols are available, while stocks last, for 5 UK pound each or 20 UK pounds for the set of five. They will be sent post free to addresses in Europe. If you live elsewhere, please enquire about delivery rates.

Orders and enquiries may be sent to Sandy Hobbs, School of Social Sciences, University of Paisley, Paisley, PA1 2BE, UK. E-mail: sandyhobbs10@hotmail.com

Next Issue

April, 2007.

Deadline for submissions March 2007

Send contributions to <Foaftale-news@aber.ac.uk>
clearly marked "Contribution."

From the Editor

The present editor of *FOAFtale News* wishes it to be known that:

- (1) anybody is free to send a contribution, and it will not be refereed. However, the editor has discretion to refuse an item if she considers it unsuitable for any reason.
- (2) there is no house-style and there will be no editorial intervention in any text sent in. It is up to contributors to check spelling and grammar. Original spelling and punctuation (US or British English) will be retained and may therefore vary between items.
- (3) authors retain their copyright, and reserve all rights.
- (4) clippings from newspapers should note bylines and sources.
- (5) this policy may change if a new editor is appointed.

FOAFtale News (FTN) is the newsletter of the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research. We study "modern" and "urban" legends, and also any legend circulating actively. To join, send a cheque made out to "ISCLR" for US\$30.00 or UK£20 to Mikel J. Koven, Department of Theatre, Film and TV, Parry-Williams Building, Penglais Campus, UWA, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 2AJ, UK. Institutional rates available upon request. Members also receive **Contemporary Legend**, a refereed academic journal. Some back issues of **FTN** are available on-line at <http://users.aber.ac.uk/mikstaff/>. **FOAFtale News** is indexed in the MLA Bibliography.

This newsletter is called **FOAFtale News** for the jocular term current among legend scholars for over twenty years. The term "foaf" was introduced by Rodney Dale (in his 1978 book, *The Tumour in the Whale*) for an oft-attributed but anonymous source of contemporary legends: a "friend of a friend." Dale pointed out that contemporary legends always seemed to be about someone just two or three steps from the teller — a boyfriend's cousin, a co-worker's aunt, or a neighbor of the teller's mechanic. "Foaf" became a popular term at the Sheffield legend conferences in the 1980s. It was only a short step to the pun "foaftale," a step taken by a yet-anonymous wag.

FOAFtale News welcomes contributions, including those documenting legends" travels on electronic media and in the press. Send queries, notices, and research reports to a maximum of 3000 words to the Editor; clippings, offprints, and citations are also encouraged. The opinions expressed in **FOAFtale News** are those of the authors and do not in any necessary way represent those of the editor, the contributing compilers, the International Society for the Study of Contemporary Legends, its Council, or its members.

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