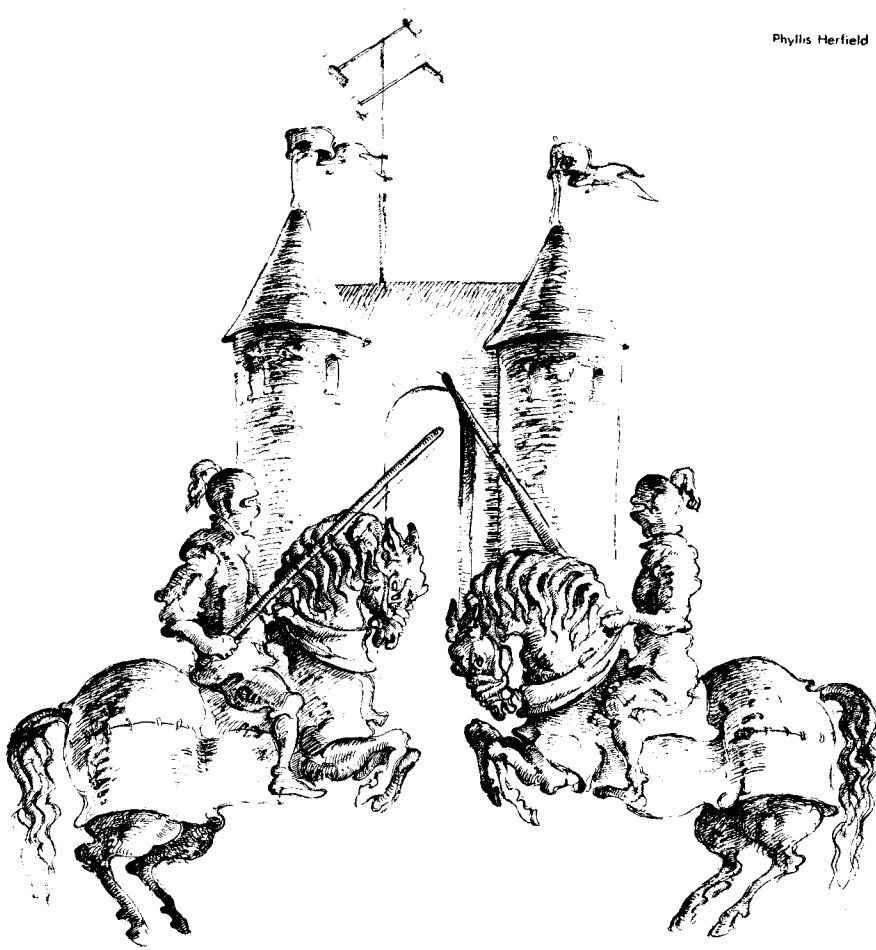


FRONT RUNNERS



Phyllis Herfield

Dig We Must

The pothole problem may have New York City buffaloed, but Yukon, Oklahoma, has tackled this urban nuisance head-on: City Manager James Branum recently ordered all able-bodied city employees to hit the streets for a day and get to work doing temporary patch jobs on the offending holes.

Yes, Mayor Harold Dunham was among the toilers, heroically wielding a shovel in 95-degree temperature. Everyone grumbled about the backbreaking chore and about the weakening of vital city services, but the turnout was excellent—mainly because Branum said that any no-shows better have awfully good excuses, or they'd be canned outright.

"Something had to be done to buy a little bit of time," said Mayor Dunham. "With these temporary patches in, we can begin letting contracts to do the job properly." Presumably the nation's big cities are monitoring the Yukon experiment with more than ordinary interest.

Undoctored History

Doctors are forever preening themselves on the way they have lengthened life and cut down on disease during the 20th century. But now comes a British public health expert, Dr. Thomas McKeown, claiming that better diet and hygiene and a lowered birth rate—not miracle drugs and new surgical techniques—are what have turned the trick. Writing in *Human Nature* magazine, McKeown—professor of social medicine at the University of Birmingham—notes that "Deaths from the common infectious diseases were declining long before effective medical intervention was possible.... By 1900, the total death rate had dropped substantially, and over 90 percent of the reduction was due to a decrease of death from infectious disease...." One hopes Professor McKeown is resting comfortably, readying himself for the counterblast sure to come from his medical colleagues.

Knights to Remember

If the world is too much with you, why not take on a new name, a new way of life, and even a new time slot—say, the Middle Ages. You won't be alone in this: Already, some 5,000 Americans and Canadians, reports *Grit* magazine, are boldly living out their anachronistic fantasies. Thus Michael Peterson of Rockford, Illinois, thinks of himself as a medieval Viking named Halfdan Greenleaf—he's so listed in the phone book—who lives in the Shire of Blackhawk.

Greenleaf has organized a local six-person Society for Creative Anachronism, whose four males have a grand time jousting with other Middle Western and Canadian refugees-in-time, while wearing

knightly armor and chain mail. The ladies, meanwhile, wear long dresses, spin and sew, and in general minister demurely to their champions' needs. "It's fun, it's romanticism—a way of going into another world," enthuses Halfdan Greenleaf. "We creatively choose good aspects of the Middle Ages as it should have been, leaving out the bubonic plague and keeping the indoor plumbing."

Meanwhile, outside Cincinnati, Ohio, 88-year-old Harry Andrews has, with some help, built—by hand, with over two million rocks from a riverbed—a towering castle he calls Chateau La Roche. Besides Andrews, the castle houses a 150-member secret order—complete with pages, squires, and knights—called the Knights of the Golden Trail. Andrews, whose knightly title is seneschal, founded the order, as *Ohio Magazine* tells it, "to save mankind from total degradation and degeneration."

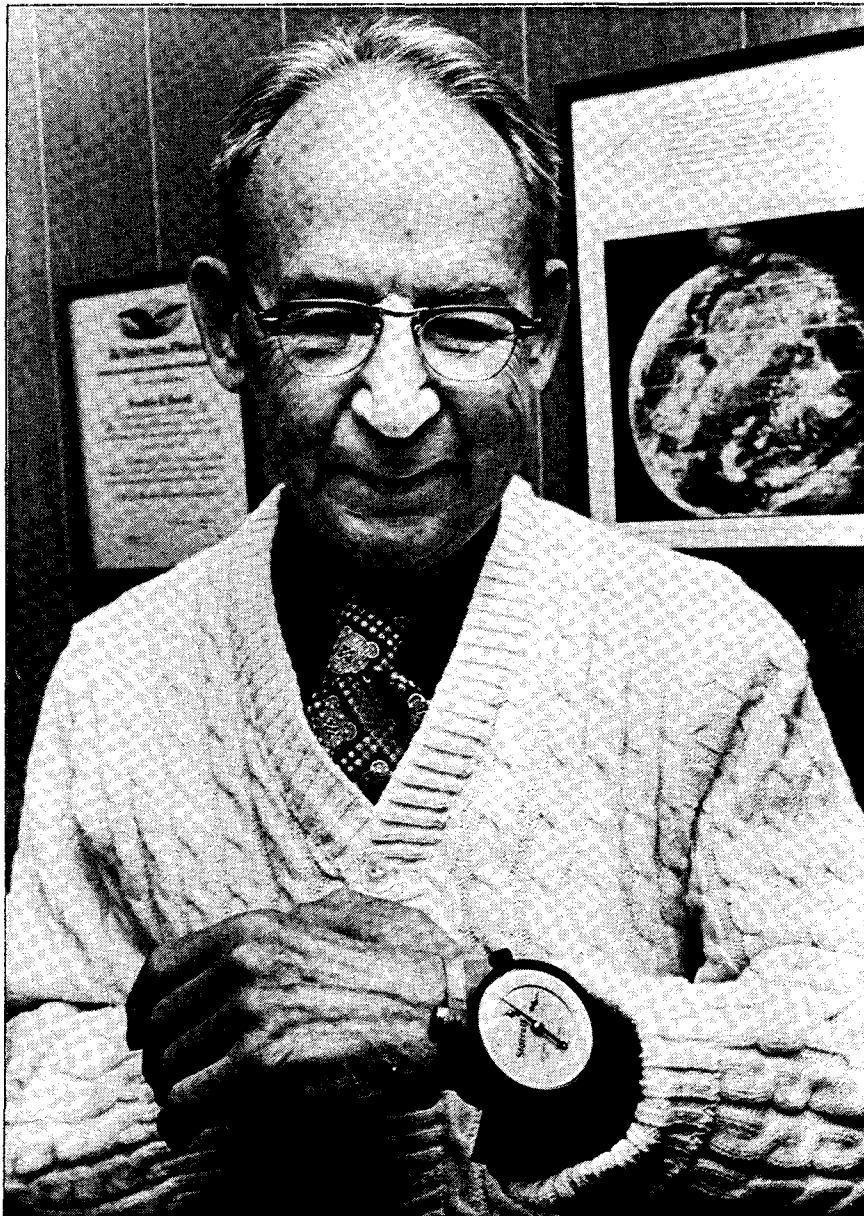
About Time

Metric weights and measures are already proving a big headache for Americans, and now a retired University of Michigan professor wants to get clocks and watches into the metric act. Dr. Franklin L. Everett has invented a metric wristwatch (below) on which the 24-hour day is divided into 100 intervals called "temps." Thus, you would go to work at 37 temps (about 8 AM), eat lunch at 50 temps (noon), and knock off

work at 70 temps (5 PM).

"Metric time seems so basic when time is one of the dimensions," Everett recently told science writer Larry Bush. "If anyone else has proposed metric time, I haven't heard about it. . . . People with expensive [conventional] watches might complain, but it ought to make the watch and clock makers happy. And all the five-year-olds. . . would be grateful because it would be very much easier for them to learn how to tell time."

Jack Stubbs/Ann Arbor News



Sanctuary

How to shield London's Third World immigrant population from attacks by marauding white street gangs? Responding to this challenge, the Greater London Council has raised a storm by planning to create a "safe area"—an official ghetto for nonwhites only—in the city's tough East End section.

The controversial plan would apply, specifically, to 20,000 Bengali immigrants from Bangladesh, who have been calling, the council says, for just such a protected enclave. "It's a reasonable and sensible solution to a very difficult problem," council chairman Horace Cutler told reporters. "If they're kept together, we can prevent intimidation."

Maybe so, but the situation has ugly undertones: The ghetto plan cuts squarely across the grain of British tradition, and many feel the GLC, which is dominated by Conservatives, may in fact have thought up the scheme as a way of giving vent to some of its members' segregationist views. Others feel the plan amounts to a kind of internal-passport system based on skin color, and that it simply won't work in a complex, interdependent city like London—even if the Bengalis themselves are all for it.

"I think in the long run this [plan] can only be harmful to racial harmony," says Labor Party chairman Arthur Latham. "The problem is whether we're going to live with racism or fight it—and I think we should fight it."

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CURRENTS

The Corporation in the Classroom

by Fred M. Hechinger

IS IT REALLY true that American universities are anti free enterprise? True or not, it's no secret that many corporate leaders are convinced that most college-level economics courses play down capitalism and talk up socialist economics. As a result, more and more corporations are now underwriting college courses intended to teach the superiority of free enterprise.

This new activist role played by corporations on the campuses may well become a significant force in higher education. According to the Council for Financial Aid to Higher Education, industry has already underwritten 100 such courses, and another survey reports the endowment of more than 20 "free enterprise" faculty chairs, with an equal number currently in the planning stage. Clearly, it is a trend that deserves attention.

Some of the big companies make no bones about the one-sided aims of the programs that they bankroll. The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co., for instance, has given Kent State University \$250,000 to set up the Goodyear Professorship of Free Enterprise. The retired advertising executive who holds the new post says frankly that he regards it as a golden opportunity to act as a "business missionary." A businessman who endowed Ohio State with a similar chair has said, "Since universities teach youngsters about the Communist, socialist, and fascist systems, I feel [there is] a real need for someone to teach about American free enterprise."

These sentiments are by no means rare. The corporate foot in the college door is increasingly accompanied by the refrain about academe's alleged anti-business orientation: Free enterprise, so the theme goes, is being routinely maligned in the nation's classrooms. And since everybody loves an underdog, it is not surprising that corporate-image builders are trying their best to portray free enterprise in America as Little Red Ridinghood about to be swallowed by some Big Bad Wolf—Big Labor, Bad Socialism, Big Bad Government, and now, worst of all, college economics teachers.

Unfortunately, there are a number of things wrong with such notions. They generally derive from the strange assumption that college economics

courses fail to teach the basic facts about free enterprise—about the market economy, the law of supply and demand, the nature of competition, the workings of investments and the stock market, and so on. Any such assumption is patently absurd. If the American way of doing business has been so shamelessly ignored in our classrooms, what accounts for the armies of young college graduates who eagerly become part of the free-enterprise system each year? How to explain continued corporate profits and the not insubstantial capacity of American business to maintain its profitability by making its wishes and ideologies known to Congress? If the college-bred anti-business virus is really so devastating, how is one to explain the rise of ever more powerful corporate conglomerates and American-led multinationals?

One can't help suspecting that what worries the proponents of Capitalism 101, as the *Wall Street Journal* recently called these offerings, is not really a dearth of instruction about the free-enterprise system but rather the universities' skeptical approach to the subject. Unfortunately, the corporate mind too often fails to realize that free enterprise, like any economic scheme, often lacks in practice some of the purity it possesses in theory. A college professor would be betraying his professional trust if he failed to discuss the system's flaws and abuses. Is it anti-business to look into price-fixing and monopolies, or to examine the conflict between profits and the public interest in matters of environmental concern, or to consider workers' safety or consumers' health? (Responsible teaching should, to be sure, make it clear that many of the same issues arise under other economic or political systems, often without the considerable benefits proffered by free enterprise.)

THE PROBLEM with the concept of free-enterprise chairs—endowed by business and filled with appointments made directly by the donors or according to their guidelines—is that it is incompatible with university autonomy. It threatens to balkanize the campus. The donor of Ohio State's free-enterprise chair is quite right when he says that our universities teach about the Communist, socialist, and fascist systems. But in order to give communism

a fair shake, should these universities encourage Leonid Brezhnev to endow an American college with a Communist chair and fill it with a reliable, retired member of the politburo? Should a Chilean general be flown in to expatiate on the sterling qualities of the junta's economic and political system?

Farfetched? Not really. According to a recent *New York Times* survey, universities are increasingly being tempted, at a time of growing budget deficits, to accept foreign endowments. But if universities are allowing corporations to endow free-enterprise chairs having

