Building Bridges in the Peace Corps

by Alexander Estrin

President Kennedy established the Peace Corps in March 1961. At that time, I was working for Westinghouse Electric International Company in New York, after earning a master’s degree in industrial engineering and training with the Army Corps of Engineers. Because I was intrigued by the concept of the Peace Corps and thought I could make a contribution with my technical background, I applied to take the entrance exam.

In June, I got a telegram from Peace Corps Director Sargent Shriver to report for training at Rutgers University for one of the first groups of Peace Corps volunteers. I was one of 62 men who went to Colombia after two months of training, which consisted of subjects such as Spanish, Latin American studies, and community development. The day before we left for Colombia, we were invited to the White House to meet President Kennedy, who commended us for serving as ambassadors of American good will.

During the two years I spent in Colombia, I was stationed in three rural locations. The first was a six-month tour in Buenaventura, on the Pacific Coast. The second was another six months in Gramalote, which is near the Venezuelan border. The third was one year in Gigante, which is in the Cordillera range of the Andes in southwest Colombia. At each of the first
two sites, there was another volunteer with whom I lived and worked. At the third site, I was the only Peace Corps volunteer.

The goal of our program was to get the community to work together to accomplish projects that would improve lives. In Gramalote, my fellow volunteer and I met with the community and determined that a bridge was needed for people to cross a river that flooded during the rainy season. Together, we identified a good spot to build a reinforced concrete bridge. Men in the community were able to carry railroad rails, which were needed to support the bridge, up mountain paths to the bridge site (no roads were available). Together, we built a wooden form for the bridge, brought concrete up on mules, and set the foundation. When the bridge was completed, the community held a fiesta and the local priest came to bless the bridge. We wrote an inscription in the wet cement that read: “This bridge was built by the people of Gramalote in 1962.” When we came back the next day to pick up our tools, we saw that the villagers had added “and the Peace Corps.”

Another project was to build aqueducts to bring water to the village. Before that, the villagers had to walk to streams and carry water back in buckets. Our goal was to find streams near the village and climb up the mountain to find their sources. At each of these sites, we built a concrete water tank and then hooked up piping that brought the water directly to the village. Again, these were projects that the community needed and was willing to work on with us.

In Gigante, a coffee-growing region 6,000 feet up in the Andes, I lived at a school that had been built by the Colombian Federation of Coffee Growers. My main project was building another school further up the mountain. The school consisted of two large classrooms—one for boys and one for girls—plus a home for the two teachers (a married couple) and their family. The building included a water supply with sinks, showers, and flush toilets to help emphasize health and the need for cleanliness. Because of the distance to the site for the new school, I needed transportation. I bought a horse, which I named “Conquistador,” and I commuted every morning on horseback for the 45-minute ride. This was quite a change for someone who grew up in Manhattan and was used to riding the subway every day.

In Gigante, I was part of the community of teachers and coffee federation staff. I was the first American they had seen, so they were interested in getting to know me and learn about life in America. We had a good relationship—eating, talking, and playing soccer together. Because the townspeople had never seen a movie, I arranged to get a projector, screen, and films from the U.S. embassy to show movies at night. They really enjoyed this.

I didn't think about all the things I was missing back in the United States because I was so busy working. Once a month, the volunteers in our local state of Huila would get together in the state capitol, where we would discuss our work and compare notes. We would also go to restaurants for a hearty meal—a nice change of pace from a daily diet of rice and beans.

I certainly didn't turn the world around by serving in the Peace Corps, but I got tremendous satisfaction out of being able to make a contribution. Also, the Peace Corps changed my life. I had never planned on a government career, but after two years as a volunteer, I served as Associate Peace Corps
Director in Brazil (1964–65), then as Director in Brazil (1976–77), and I held various positions in several federal agencies until my retirement.

Last year, for a seventh-grade project, my granddaughter Julia interviewed me and wrote and illustrated a delightful 10-page book entitled, “Building Bridges in Gigante.” She was impressed that her grandfather had had this unique experience.

The Peace Corps recently celebrated its 50th anniversary, and I attended an event held at the Arlington Cemetery Memorial Amphitheater and a reunion of some members of my “Colombia One” group. Since 1961, more than 200,000 volunteers have served in 139 host countries. It looks as if the Peace Corps has been successful after all these years, and I was glad to be a part of it.

Proper English

by Jerry Downs

English teachers, normally quiet, deferential types, occasionally burst forth with pedantic polemics like the following:

I do not consider myself a reactionary in grammatical and usage matters. I am well aware that the English teacher who tries to stop his fellow citizens from misusing the language is as foolish as King Canute. Just the same, I issue forth from time to time, with goose-quill pen for sword and Oxford English Dictionary for shield and buckler, and lay about me in the cause of proper language. Look, ye politicians, pundits, and prognosticators, the fact that Dwight Eisenhower could not pronounce NUCLEAR does not excuse you. NOO-QUE-LUR, forsooth! And what is it about public office that leads its practitioners to transform perfectly good nouns into ludicrous verbs? Demagogue! Caveat!

The present outburst, however, is not about these possibly still winnable battles. It is, rather, an elegy for causes all but lost, to wit: “host” is, or used to be, a noun. So is “contact.” And the egregious misuse of the pronoun “myself” has fastened itself to the helpless body of the language like a remora. Witness, in sad resignation, the following sentence, now all but acceptable: “Anyone who wants to help out with hosting the office party should contact Joe Doakes or myself.” (For the last time, you can use “myself” in two different ways—intensively, as in “I will do it myself”—or reflexively—“I could kick myself.” It is NOT a substitute for “ME!”)

Finally, the despair-inducing land mine of the slickly misleading adjective, best exemplified by Time magazine and its favorite spinner, “whopping.” Now, I see why their writers like the word; it sounds right. It is almost onomatopoetic in its hint of some huge lumberjack hulking his way through the forest. (OK, OK, “hulking” is not a participle. I can't help it. The language bacillus strikes where it will.) Anyway, what offends me is the way Time uses the word as a kind of subliminal comment. You see “whopping” printed before a number and you tend to ignore the number and just think, “Wow, that's big all right.” Examples: “The balance of payments went up last week by a whopping one percent,” or, “The president's popularity stands today at a whopping 25 percent.” Unless you are a careful reader—and who has time for that these days?—you are going to tend to ignore the actual figures and to be led unconsciously into taking Time's word for what is and is not “whopping.”

The English language is one of the towering creations of the mind of humanity, incredible in its richness, its range of nuance, its scavenger-like facility for scooping up useful words from other languages and incorporating them into the most extensive vocabulary on the globe—and it is a crime against our own minds to treat that magnificent language carelessly.
Leaving France
by Jean-Pierre Bouquet

Nine of us—my direct family, a nanny, a secretary, and an aide to my stepfather, who was probably there to report back to the government—left Vichy on August third, 1940 on a government mission. When we arrived at the Spanish border on August fourth, my stepfather was surprised to be told that he was denied the right of transit through Spain. He assumed that the reason was that he had been a French political figure who had opposed the Franco Government. In fact, Camille Chautemps was one of the preeminent members of the Government under the third Republic. He had been a Deputy, Senator, Cabinet member, and four-time Prime Minister.

In order to reach Portugal, we had to bypass Spain by traveling through Oran and Casablanca. We left France on August 13th, arriving in Oran on the 14th. As we came through the port of Oran, we could see the military part of the port of Mers El Kebir, where French warships were lying disabled as a result of the British attack on July 14th. As my stepfather remarks in his memoirs, “What a disappointment to arrive thus in North Africa as a private citizen isolated, devoid of power, when a few weeks earlier I was to come here as the head of the government and able to render my country important services.”

We traveled by train to Casablanca, arriving on August 15th. At the train station there we were met by the police escort which was to be with us during our stay. I should explain that Casablanca was part of unoccupied France; there was no German military presence, and the Germans only occupied all of France after the allied landing in North Africa. In Casablanca we were able to visit the New Medina (the native area), where we shopped and bargained in the souks (Arab all-purpose stores) and were entertained by snake charmers on the street. One evening we were driven to the old Medina, a more picturesque and commercial part of the native city. We could see the gates of the “reserved quarter,” where prostitution is practiced as it is in Amsterdam. I was not exactly aware of their occupation; at eleven I was rather naïve by today’s standards. On another occasion driving around the city we could see, at a distance, the squalor in which some of the people lived as exemplified by “bidonville” (derived from the French word bidon, meaning a large container for liquid), a whole area built with discarded wood planks and metal drums. One afternoon we were invited for tea by a wealthy local leader. He resided in a palatial house; it had outstanding Arab architecture, was beautifully furnished, and was staffed by teams of servants—a stark contrast to what we had seen a few days before. We could hear sounds of loud, persistent wailing; we were told that someone had died and that the sounds we heard were from professional wailers. One of the highlights of our stay in Casablanca was a lunch hosted by a local chieftain. The lunch was held under a tent; beautiful rugs covered the sand. We were seated on opulent cushions; we ate Meshoui (a whole lamb), Couscous, Lemon Chicken, and other native dishes. The food was served on a low table on common platters from which all the guests ate with their hands. My parents were amused to see the locals guzzling champagne, which was contrary to Muslim Law. They called it “gazous,” and that made it acceptable.

On September 15th we left Casablanca for Lisbon. When we arrived at the pier, we saw a small fishing boat, the Valle Formosa. I wondered how we and the other 24 passengers were going to make it all the way to Lisbon. Because there were not enough life jackets, the captain had to hurriedly find some in order to be permitted to leave port. Ironically, he had obtained some from the Massilia, the ship that was to have carried the government to North Africa in July. As we were leaving port we began to rock heavily. My brother, Nanny, and I were dispatched to the crew quarters, a small cabin with eight double bunks, four on a side. The bunk where I stayed for the entire trip was filthy, with no blankets or pillows or sheets, just greasy mattresses. The rest of our party remained on deck; the other passengers stayed in the hold. When we left port I did not realize that the next time I would set foot on French soil, I would be a Lieutenant Junior Grade, U.S. Navy, married father of one little girl, and never to reside in France again. The trip was to last 24 hours, but it took us almost three days. We hit a storm which,
thanks to the seamanship of our captain, we were able to weather without foundering. I don’t recall any nourishment, just water, which was just as well since I would not have been able to keep anything down. On deck my mother, who was breast-feeding my little sister, became so dehydrated that the baby’s very life was threatened. Others in our group describe having to use the ocean for necessary bathroom activities while being held by crew members so that they would not fall overboard. I remember when we arrived in Lisbon realizing how small our boat was as I looked at the ships in harbor. We were met at the port by the French Ambassador, who had arranged to have us driven to the very plush Hotel Aviz, where we thought we would stay. As we sat in the coffee shop of the hotel for breakfast, the nanny who accompanied us arrived with horror on her face as she described hordes of bed bugs crawling out of my little sister’s bassinet. We were all infested with vermin; my body was covered with flea and bed bug bites. We did not stay at the Aviz. We moved first to two separate hotels in downtown Lisbon on the Roccio, then to Estoril outside of Lisbon. I remember Lisbon as a very beautiful, historical city. We visited many of its interesting museums and beautiful churches. The Atlantico Hotel in Estoril housed a mixture of refugees and diplomats from all different countries. It was a microcosm of the people fleeing the German onslaught. Two events exemplify the plight of the refugees. The wife of a wealthy French businessman friend of my stepfather’s asked him to take a package for her to New York. After viewing its contents (several large platinum chains with metal the thickness of my little finger, uncut diamonds and emeralds, etc.), my stepfather explained that he could not violate diplomatic regulations and therefore regretfully had to turn down her request. I was approached by a man unknown to me or the family who offered to give me his stamp collection. I refused his gift. I often wonder what was in that collection that he wanted carried to New York and why he had approached an 11-year-old kid with such a proposition.

We left Lisbon in late November on the U.S.S. Excambion, arriving in New York November 31st, 1940. The rest of the story is in history books and many of my personal family memories.

New Girl in Town
by Leight Johnson

That’s Kathy Cooke we’re talking about. She’s the new program assistant for Baltimore and Columbia, the one who keeps things running like clockwork for us. (She doesn’t fix watches.)

Kathy comes to us described as having “excellent interpersonal skills.” That’s psychobabble for someone who is likable, and she is that. Kathy has the appropriate background for the job—BA and MBA degrees, several years’ work experience in marketing, event planning, and so on. She says she likes to finish one job before moving on to another, and that she’d rather be an “Indian” than a “chief.” That’s a good thing; we have plenty of chiefs in an organization like Hopkins.

She also brings a lot of enthusiasm to her new assignment, which is just as important as the other qualifications.

Kathy had been retired for four years before coming to us, and is too active a person to be satisfied with a sedentary life. During her working years she found time to raise three children, two of whom are now in college. Although she does like to read and knit, she is far from the rocking chair crowd that those hobbies tend to conjure up. She has run three marathons (twenty-six miles of running! Each!) and takes what she calls boot camp exercises three times a week (I get tired just thinking about that).

If you haven’t already met her, introduce yourself, and you’ll see what I mean.
How Muammar Gaddafi Changed My Life

by Karen Primack

One of the starkest differences between Africa and America seemed to be the fact that in Africa almost everyone was black—and we’re not talking about the gamut of browns that describe the American blacks, but rather a consistent, extremely dark skin tone, a beautiful color that was dramatic in the day’s strong sun or against the evening’s kerosene lamps. These Ugandans, except for those in the government, were as uniformly poor as their skin color was uniformly black.

In comparison, the tiny presence of Caucasians in the diplomatic corps or aid groups seemed palid, almost sickly. In between were the so-called “Asians,” really Gujarat Indians, many of whom were descended from workers the British governors had recruited for the Ugandan civil service in the early 20th century; others had come for commercial interests. The Asians constituted a sizable minority of middle class, well-educated Ugandans.

When we arrived in 1971, Idi Amin had been Uganda’s president for a little more than a year. My husband, Aron, had been persuaded to join a National Cancer Institute research effort in Uganda in part because Amin was “the good guy” who had ousted “a bad guy” and established a stable, pro-Western government. One palpable presence was the Israeli families in Kampala, who were there constructing apartment buildings and planting Jaffa orange trees. We felt warmly enough toward the president that we were excited to have the opportunity to shake his huge hand at an opening at the local art museum. He was a familiar figure to everyone, for he was commonly seen or quoted on the nightly news—which was broadcast in Arabic, Swahili, Luganda, and, finally, English. There wasn’t much else on TV except for Mannix reruns (perhaps because the character Peggy was black) and Sesame Street, which had been purchased for Ugandan television by a wealthy Indian family.

Times seemed prosperous and good. I don’t think many could have anticipated what was soon to happen.

By the time our surface freight had arrived and we had settled into our luxurious house in the Bugolobi neighborhood (sunken living room, large purple tub in one of the bathrooms), we had three wonderful servants: Paul Natumo, the houseboy–cook; Felista, the nursemaid (she had formerly worked for another NIH family and knew several Gilbert and Sullivan arias); and Samson, the part-time gardener. We had a tiny windowless room next to the garage that we assumed was for storage, but one of the servants wanted to live there with a spouse and eight children. We were horrified that they would want such a small space, but they told us this was a good room since it had a concrete floor. I’m sorry to say that we refused because we didn’t want all the noise and clutter so close by. Would we act differently now?

Paul’s specialty was curry, always accompanied by condiments such as chopped onion and tomatoes, peanuts, raisins, and coconut. We adopted this style at home for many years.

Felista’s specialty was keeping kids happy and pantless for toilet training. She had an adorable three-year-old son named Charles who spent a lot of time with our children, to everyone’s delight.

We didn’t get to know Samson as well as the others because he didn’t speak English. His native language was Luganda, but we could communicate a little in Swahili after our lessons took hold. Samson was fine at clearing land. When we moved in, our tiny front yard was overgrown with chest-high grass, which he
easily cut down to size with a sickle. We observed him planting corn on the side of the house, and we were excited when it was ready for picking. We boiled an ear in the conventional American way and found its large kernels to have an inedible, somewhat wooden texture. (That didn’t bother Samson.) We immediately ordered some Burpee corn seeds so we could eat the crop and so that Samson could see the difference. Come planting season (most of the year, in this perfect climate), Samson deposited some Burpee seeds alongside his own seeds. A few weeks later, his plants were thriving merrily, a foot high, while ours were an inch high, struggling to survive. When ripe, his ears were large and firm as before, while our shorter plants bore tiny ears with only a few kernels on each.

Our domestic lives progressed almost too peacefully. I became superfluous around the house and was unable to find a job; I was so bored that I actually looked forward to a women’s charity group that met on Wednesdays to sew sequins on Christmas tree decorations to sell at their annual bazaar!

Finally, I picked up some freelance work editing for the eminent African political scientist Ali Mazrui. My work mostly involved “Americanizing” his copy for publications in the United States. The work wasn’t mentally challenging, but the reading was extremely interesting, and it was lovely meeting his family. His wife, Molly, was a white Brit whose specialty was African fiction, and their son Kim and our son Brian played together. I remember that Brian came home from their house with as beautiful a painting as a two-year-old could possibly have produced, extra special because it was done with good paints on good paper. We still have it, framed, in our home.

We developed some friendships with Asians, mostly Aron’s colleagues at work or their spouses. I took a Goan cooking course, and I still use the fish curry recipe we learned. (Their enthusiastic recommendation was to substitute plain milk for that labor-intensive coconut milk that involved scraping the fresh coconut meat on a very fine grater.) One of our beautiful young Indian friends, Proful, shopped with me for material for a sari. We settled on brown silk with gold trim. She taught me how to drape it, but I had to be taught again each of the rare times I wore it.

Our peaceful existence in Uganda halted abruptly one day near the beginning of our second year. Amin had returned from Libya, where he was seeking financial assistance from Muammar Gaddafi. The rumor mill suggested that Gaddafi had promised Amin $24 million if he would make certain changes in his governing. Almost immediately after the visit, Amin announced to his people that he had had a “dream” telling him that Uganda was being betrayed by Israeli spies and sucked dry by the Asians robbing Ugandans who patronized their shops, stowing away the money in foreign bank accounts. Consequently, the Israelis were to leave the country within ten days, and all Asians were to depart within 90 days. Judenrein and Asianrein, I thought.

The Israelis had been there mostly as extensions of diplomats, so their move back home was not particularly traumatic, as I recall. But there was great consternation among the Asians. Uganda was their home; their families had deep roots there, with friendships and businesses. Many started selling off their possessions, since they would be allowed to take little with them. I don’t know how they got money out of the country; I’m sure some of it went to African friends and employees. We went to one yard sale and came back with three
possessions we still treasure—a brass tiffin (three-tiered lunch carrier), a brass water jug/vase, and a carved and painted Japanese wooden screen with ivory inlay. The cost of these items was embarrassingly low.

I would estimate that more than half of the Asians had Indian or British passports, so at least they had a place to go. However, there were people like Aron’s Goan nurse, Margaret D’Souza, who had a Ugandan passport and immediately became a refugee even though her family had lived in Uganda for three generations and had specifically adopted Ugandan citizenship. Her father had been a civil servant and was not wealthy. Her earnings as a nurse were good by Ugandan standards but did not enable her to amass a fortune, not that she could have taken it with her anyway. I remember that her family was only allowed to exit with a total of $100, not even enough for winter coats, as they headed to Canada, where they had won asylum.

There were some attacks on Asians as Amin continued his ravings about their treachery. Some were beaten, and I recall hearing about at least one rape.

Amin’s anti-Asian rhetoric was accompanied by an obsession with Islam. We had been told that the country was one-third Christian, one-third Muslim, and one-third animist (Aron noticed that some patients’ records listed “pagan” in the space for religion). Now, it was as though Islam were the only legitimate religion. We were also under the impression that the military was somehow Islamized. I remember that certain modesty requirements were made of women in public. There was an ominous air about the capital city.

Then one day, after the Indians had left, we heard some rumblings about the “Israeli spies” still in the country, although all the Israelis had departed months before. Our ambassador had been called back to Washington for “consultations,” so Aron went to the American Embassy in Kampala to seek the advice of the chargé d’affaires, the second in command. Aron asked what he, as a Jew, should do. The officer, Bob Keeley, told Aron that everything was fine. Then Aron asked Bob what he would do in his situation. Bob replied that he would “get the hell out of here.” We immediately planned for departure. We selected a flight less than a week away, one that took off in the middle of the night, with the hope that the army guards would be asleep and would not do anything problematic. There had been rumors that they had “internally” examined some departing Asian women to check for smuggled jewels.

Since we had been living in horror at the doings involving the Asians and in dread about our own status, our departure was not as sad as it might have been six or eight months earlier. Indeed, the day after Aron’s visit to the embassy, Amin had explained that an Israeli was “anyone with Jewish blood” and that all Israeli spies would be shot on sight. We bid farewell to our household goods, including my childhood spinet piano, which we assumed we would never see again. We offered our trusted servant Paul anything he desired. He wanted only one twin bed, because he said anything more would be stolen from his house. He also wanted a letter stating that the bed had been given to him as a gift so that no police or anyone else could accuse him of theft.

We decided that we would spend this unexpected period of “vacation” taking the long route home, since we might not have the opportunity to travel again. (I write this 90 countries later!) We purchased tickets for flights to Addis Ababa, Bombay, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Tokyo, and Honolulu—places where the planes stopped on the main route eastward to America.

And so, with trepidation, we left in the middle of the night one Thursday—uneventfully—with our children, now two and four years of age, on our backs and two suitcases each. When we calculated that we were in Ethiopian airspace, we breathed a deep sigh of relief.

Fall 2011

I am watching TV news reports of the death of Muammar Gaddafi. I am not the least bit sad. Our family holds Gaddafi responsible for Amin’s reign of terror, which lasted until 1979, after he had slaughtered 100,000 of his countrymen. Amin’s overnight change following his visit to Libya was striking. Even though Amin undoubtedly had some major character flaws, one has to wonder whether, without Gaddafi in his life, he would still have gone over to the dark side.
Without Gaddafi, thousands of victims of Amin's terrible and sadistic rule might have been spared.

Without Gaddafi, our little family might not have had to witness the most gut-wrenching terror we have ever encountered.

The Art of Navigation: (No GPS Required)
by Barbara Orbock

Some think of navigation as a science. However, during the travels of my lifetime, I have come to the conclusion that there is definitely nothing scientific about it.

Rather than a science, I call navigation an art. Skills are certainly involved, most of which are learned through experience. Certain personality traits smooth the way. A cool head under pressure and an ability to communicate are helpful, as is a sense of humor. Mastery of this art is partly a result of the right aptitudes, but equally a consequence of the right attitude. And, though most men would probably disagree, the ability to navigate has nothing whatever to do with the sex of the individual.

On our recent trip to Ireland, where they not only drive on the wrong side of the road, but one must also shift gears with the left hand, I happily turned the chore of operating our rented Fiat over to my husband.

In order for Dave to keep his eye on the road, my job was to ride shotgun, a.k.a. navigating. This involved reading the map, reading the direction indicators at the frequent roundabouts, reminding Dave to think left, that it was necessary to slow down when going around curves (even though the Irish don’t) and to avoid the hedgerows when approaching lorries take their half out of the middle of a road made for Tootsie Toys. Oh yes—please, Dave, try not to hit dog walkers, bike riders, or old ladies taking cuttings from the roadside flora, and in towns, watch for pedestrians of all ages who have never heard of a crosswalk or the green man.

I, of course, missed a few turns because I couldn’t read crossroad signs fast enough. We then had to go back and reread, as soon as we found a wide enough spot to reverse direction safely. Roundabouts are easier because you can just keep going round and round until you get it right.

If you are truly lost, the obvious solution is to stop and ask directions. We all know that this is a blow to the male ego, but at least on this trip, Dave agreeably made inquiries after only two or three suggestions on my part. I must say that when I have been the driver with ladies as my passengers, no one complains if we have to ask, and every time we have to turn around the car fills with laughter.

Another thing I am required to do as navigator is record gas consumption and distance traveled to determine how many miles we are getting to the gallon. Easy enough at home, but in Northern Ireland distance is measured in miles while in the Republic it is in kilometers. Both measure liquids in liters instead of gallons, so conversions are necessary. Finally, price is in pounds in the north and euros below the border, so more calculating is required to figure out what your petrol actually costs. Again skills I learned in junior high had to be retrieved from the mothballs of the mind.

When we turned in the car with no damage other than two cheap hubcaps that were bent slightly more...
than when we started, I awarded Dave a B-plus for driving (marks off for having to cling to my seat on too many sharp curves). I generously awarded myself an A-minus in navigation. All this achievement in the wettest, foggiest year in the weather annals of Ireland.

We only truly got lost in Dublin, and both Dave and I blamed it on the inadequate signposting of the Irish powers that be. Guidebooks say to avoid driving in Dublin—we just didn't listen. AND we found the Dark Hedges in the boondocks of County Antrim with only having to backtrack three times. Thanks to black-leathered biker hippies and a local butcher who helped us, the road truly rose up to meet us.

HUMOR COLUMN

On the Leight Side

Letters to the Editor

Dear Journal,

I read with interest about the troubles your director, Dr. Shartle Galotto, has had with lightning strikes. She might be interested to know that there is a way of minimizing the risk of such occurrences. It involves installing a metal rod on the roof, connected to a wire that runs to the ground and provides an easy path for lightning to pass harmlessly around the house. This is especially useful if her house stands alone on a hilltop.

We offer free estimates for such work.

Benjamin Franklin, President
Keystone Lightning Rod Co.

Dear Journal,

I have heard that Protestants believe that life begins at birth, while Catholics believe it begins at conception. My followers feel that life really begins when the kids leave home and the dog dies.

Anonymous
Osher at Johns Hopkins University

PREVIEW

Tuesday, June 5, 2012
10:00 a.m.
MONTGOMERY COUNTY CAMPUS
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
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Thursday, June 7, 2012
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Learn more about the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Johns Hopkins University
Join current members, faculty, and staff for an overview of membership activities and sample presentations of course offerings.

Dedicated to lifelong learning, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Johns Hopkins University has spent 25 years enhancing the lives of active semi-retired and retired individuals in the Baltimore Washington community. OSHER at JHU provides stimulating learning experiences and enriching social opportunities. The program builds on the assets of one of the world’s renowned universities to offer intellectual growth, lively discussions, rewarding cultural experiences, and new friendships.

OSHER at JHU classes explore the worlds of art, history, philosophy, literature, and politics. Courses are taught by faculty drawn from the university, the region, and the rich resources of its membership. Study/discussion groups and lectures give members a variety of learning formats. Social events and field trips complement the program’s course offerings

OSHER at JHU
Member benefits include:

- Lectures, seminars, and study-discussion groups on a wide range of subjects during two 12-week semesters
- Access to the university library system
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For additional information on membership or the upcoming Preview, please call 301-294-7058 (Rockville), 410-516-9719 (Baltimore). Or visit us on the web at www.agher.jhu.edu.

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Space is limited.
To sign up, please contact the Osher office appropriate for your campus at the address listed above.
The Osher at JHU Journal, the newsletter of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Johns Hopkins University, is published under the auspices of the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences two times per academic year.

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NOTICE
The Osher Journal is published for the entire Osher at JHU community. Articles from all members are welcome, subject to editorial review. To submit a story or article, send it by email to LeightJhnsn@gmail.com, or by hard copy to the above address.

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