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BY

STEVE JOHNSON

AN AMERICAN BORN MUSLIM SCHOLAR

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MSC AFTER HOURS is looking for new instructors,
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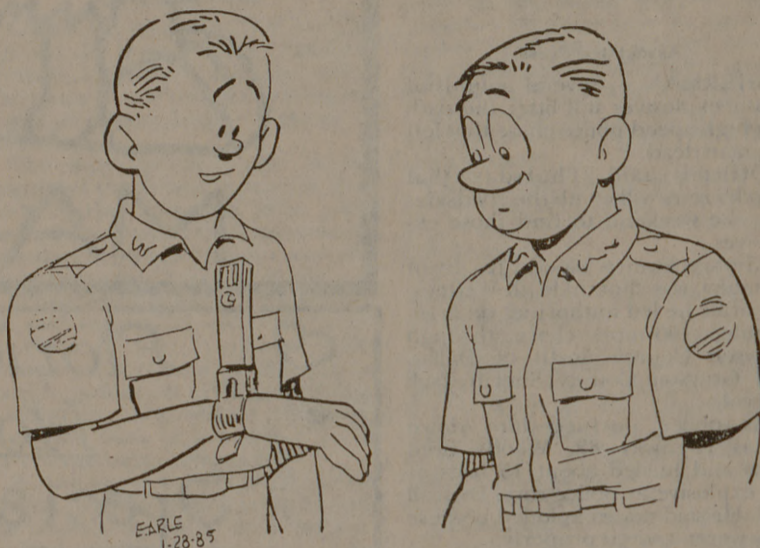
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MSC AFTER HOURS

Slouch

By Jim Earle



"It's a watch that commemorates our new bell tower. It seemed like a better idea when it was on the drawing board."

Happy Birthday

Once-scornful neighbors plan events to honor Sinclair Lewis

Associated Press

SAUK CENTRE, Minn. — Sixty-five years after Sinclair Lewis scandalized his former neighbors with a satirical account of small-town Midwestern life, the people of his hometown are throwing a birthday party for him.

Lewis, the first American to win a Nobel Prize in literature, was born in this central Minnesota farm town 100 years ago Thursday. Now, the town's 3,800 residents are kicking off a year of festivities to honor the writer whom the town once scorned.

Some debate whether the mythical town of "Gopher Prairie," the setting for Lewis' 1920 novel "Main Street," was based on his hometown, or whether it was a composite of small towns. Either way, the book sparked outrage in Sauk Centre with its portrayal of small-town narrow-mindedness, provincialism and hypocrisy.

"There was a certain indignation

on the part of local people," said Dave Jacobson, president of the Sinclair Lewis Foundation, which is organizing Lewis centennial events in Sauk Centre.

"They were, at first, very excited he had written about their town. Then they realized it was a biting satire, and some of them felt they recognized themselves, and there was some resentment."

In "Main Street," heroine Carol Kennicott is frustrated in her attempts to bring social reform and artistic enlightenment to the residents of Gopher Prairie, who are quite content with the way things are.

Legend has it that the nearby town of Alexandria banned the book from its library, and that an area preacher told his congregation not to read it. In Sauk Centre, "Main Street" was not required reading in the high school until Jacobson, a former English teacher, introduced it to his classes in the early 1960s.

Time has mellowed any lingering

Woodpeckers have a secret

Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ohio — Studying a woodpecker's tongue may help researchers lick the problem of protecting the human brain from injury, a Wright State University professor said.

R. Fred Rolsten, professor of engineering, is looking at woodpeckers, anteaters and karate experts to discover how they are able to hit hard surfaces without brain damage or broken bones.

It may help researchers develop better protective gear for athletes, soldiers and accident victims, he said.

Rolsten said woodpeckers apparently can use their unique, barbed tongues as a sonar device to help detect bugs under the tree bark and then to spear them.

The woodpecker's tongue wraps around its brain to buffer the concussion of hammering, Rolsten said.

Items such as football and motorcycle helmets would protect better if they were softer on the inside instead of harder on the outside, he said.

"The helmet is basically a rigid shell designed to minimize injuries due to spear impact—that is, the penetration of a sharp object," Rolsten said.

"But in my opinion, the number of blunt impacts—someone hitting the pavement or crashing into a telephone pole—far exceeds the number of spear impacts," he said.

If the foam liner inside the helmet were doubled, impact protection would also double while adding only .2 of a pound extra weight, he said.

Rolsten, who has studied the effect of impacts on the human body for the past 25 years, researched divers and diving birds trying to learn how they can hit the water at tremendous speeds without breaking their necks.

"We found that when they do they tense themselves. Muscle appears to be very important," Rolsten said.

The pangolin, a giant Asian anteater, may provide another clue.

"If you prod them when they're up in a tree, they just roll up in a ball and fall to the ground and bounce," he said.

Rolsten is also interested in karate experts who seem to "sense" how to shape their hands and wrists when breaking through wood and concrete blocks.

"What we're trying to do is find out how soft tissue and bones can take these impacts and redistribute the force so they do not break," Rolsten said.

Grading the quality of grains

Inspector 'nose' his duty

Associated Press

DULUTH, Minn. — A lot of people depend on Rick Wetterlind's eyes and nose.

If he sorts through a sample of merchandise and sees that it's in good shape, the price of that shipment could rise. But if he detects a sour odor, the price could plummet.

Wetterlind is a Minnesota state grain inspector, one of 10 people in Duluth who determine the grade and, ultimately, the price of grain shipped from the city's three grain elevators.

Several times a day, state employees take samples from much of the grain being poured into ships and railcars. The samples are sent to the inspection office in the Board of Trade Building, where the inspectors test the grain and assign a grade to it.

A wide range of grain can spill across the inspectors' clean, white tables—wheat, corn, barley and others. The testing is done on samples weighing precisely 1,000 grams—a little more than two pounds.

When the tests are done, inspectors tally the sample's good and bad points and assign a grade, which could mean hundreds or thousands of dollars difference in the price of a boatload or trainload of grain.

Once the sample is weighed, it is sifted by machine to determine its dockage content—the amount of chaff, weed seeds and other junk in each bushel.

The sample is then weighed again to determine its grade. Top grade spring wheat, for instance, weighs 58 pounds per bushel. If it's lighter, the grade goes down.

The inspectors then perform the "sniff test," putting their noses just a fraction of an inch from the sample to check its aroma. A fresh, grainlike

smell indicates a good sample; a musty, sour or oily smell means the grain is spoiled or polluted and earns it a lower grade.

Inspectors then spread the grain out on a table and pick through it to find broken kernels, shrunken kernels, heat-damaged kernels, stones, mold, fungus and other imperfections.

When the tests are done, inspectors tally the sample's good and bad points and assign a grade, which could mean hundreds or thousands of dollars difference in the price of a boatload or trainload of grain.

Grain inspectors must pass a test every three years and know the grain inspecting regulations, which fill a book two inches thick.

There's also another test that will make or break a grain inspector— allergies.

Even a small dose of grain or grain dust can do strange things to the human body. "Everybody here is allergic to something, but some guys are so bad they have to quit," Gerald Goad, an inspector from Duluth, said.

Crew fleeing ship with passports made officials suspect scuttling

Associated Press

HOUSTON — A maritime official said he began to suspect an oil tanker was deliberately sunk when crewmen who said they'd been fighting a ship fire got into lifeboats wearing fine clothes and carrying their passports.

Alister Crombie, deputy commissioner for the Liberian Republic's maritime affairs bureau, testified in U.S. District Judge Carl O. Bue's court Wednesday in the fraud trial of Houston businessman Frederick Soudan.

Crombie assisted the investigation into the sinking of the Salem on Jan. 17, 1980 off the Senegalese coast.

A 23-count indictment alleges Soudan, 41, stole 200,000 tons of oil from its Italian owner and ordered it delivered to South Africa in the Sa-

lem. According to the indictment, Soudan and four other men arranged for the ship to be scuttled to cover up the theft.

Also charged in the case is Soudan's brother-in-law, Wahab Al Ghazou, 48, of Syria, who is charged with helping Soudan hide his profits from U.S. tax authorities.

Crombie said investigators from around the world were shocked when, several days into their inquiry, they realized what had occurred.

"I can't believe something like this could have happened," Crombie said.

Crombie asked Lloyd's Register of Shipping, an international shipbuilding register, whether the tanker could have been sunk with a full load of oil. Crombie said Lloyd's answered, "We're not in the business

of sinking ships; we're in the business of keeping them afloat."

"It was concluded that the Salem, fully loaded with crude oil, would not sink," Crombie said.

Soudan, who has been in jail since May in lieu of bond, is accused of using fraud in the purchase of the Salem for \$12.3 million and convincing the South African government to pay \$43 million for oil he didn't have.

Prosecutors contend Soudan made \$4.25 million from the alleged scheme, which they claim was part of a conspiracy to steal 1.4 million barrels of oil from European firms and secretly ship the crude to South Africa.

Soudan has contended he was only a broker in the deal and was duped.

New law benefits county

Associated Press

HOUSTON — The federal government and local authorities will share proceeds from the sale of a 33-acre Montgomery County farm seized in a drug ring investigation, authorities said Wednesday.

"This is the first time in our history we have been able to share assets with state and local agencies," Dan Hedges, the U.S. attorney in Houston, said.

Under the new Crime Control Act program, signed into law in October, the federal government may share with local authorities proceeds from property seized in drug investigations.

Narcotics agents seized the land, 45 miles northeast of Houston, last September while investigating an international drug smuggling ring.

The land was used to store and package imported marijuana before it was shipped to be sold, officials with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration said.

No arrests or indictments have been made in connection with the seizure, but prosecutors said a grand jury is investigating people who allegedly have operated an international drug ring for several years.

The land has been appraised at \$125,000, officials said, and proceeds will be shared by the federal government, the county Organized Crime Control Unit and the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Prosecutors said the farm is owned by Frank Garcia of Edinburg and Jose Luis Cantu of McAllen. Neither has commented on the case or filed a claim after being notified the land was seized.

Deputy Attorney General Carol Dinkins said Attorney General William French Smith had to approve the agreement Tuesday because the program still lacks set guidelines.