

Natural Selection

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

UNSOLICITED ADVICE

EUGENE MARTIN

My first week of graduate school, back at the University of Florida, was a lab course focused on molecular and protein analysis techniques. When I asked the professor why we were doing these techniques, he basically said, "Over the last few years we've realized that a lot of you [first year students] are terrible at them." Let there be no mistake, after that first week of graduate school I was still pretty terrible at these techniques, but I also learned my first lesson of graduate school—I wasn't supposed to know how to do science yet. It's nice to be reminded that graduate school is a place to admit what you don't know, be it a technique, concept, or fact, and then to try to fill the important gaps.

I've been learning ever since that being successful in science requires more than being good at science. Since my first week, I've gotten what I believe to be excellent advice¹ from mentors across the spectrum of disciplines and experience levels. I'd like to share some of that advice².

When choosing a lab, find a good manager. If your current lab head isn't a good manager, try to coax him or her into becoming a good one. A lot of management is simply assigning tasks to the right person, making sure he or she can complete the task, and then motivating the person to complete it in a timely fashion. As the schedule of completing graduate school is often defined as little more than "4 to 7" years, it really helps to have someone who can put order into the lack of structure. For those who need to learn how to help coax their current lab head into being a better manager, start by consulting a mentoring plan³.

On the point of ending one's graduate education: it is nice to be cutting edge in your experiments; it is nice to get publications in *Science* or *Nature*; but graduate school is only the first step in a long career. That is, one of the most important parts of going to graduate school (or doing postdoctoral training) is to complete it. You should always try to be running two experiments at the same time: a bold, interesting, high risk but high pay-off experiment and a safe, incremental, low risk but guaranteed-results experiment. The prior is one of the joys of science; the latter is a practical way to make sure that you're always moving forward.

Speaking of guaranteed results, there are none. Somewhere in the sixth year of graduate school or prior, this gets depressing. It is important to remember two things: the most beneficial time to talk to your lab head and committee is when things aren't working. If you feel stupid or like a failure, remember that this is training. If you knew how to do everything, you would be a professor already. Secondly, while persistence is a key to success, it's equally important to know when you're wasting good time on a problem that you've spent too much time on already.

This last part sometimes requires an intervention.

The fact that you're getting a doctorate in Biology makes friends and relatives ask you about their health issues. Even after explaining the difference between a Ph.D. and an M.D. they will still assume you're being trained as an M.D. That said, I urge you not to diagnose the maladies of your friends and relatives. It's fun when you're correct, but it is so easy to be wrong. And then it's a knock on your credibility and it puts people at risk. Secondly, when people have incurable diseases, it is tempting to tell them about the potential science has for that disease.

If you choose to do this, do so with caution. Someone suffering or scared often doesn't want to hear about potential, they want to hear about a treatment.

On the topic of friends, networking is actually an easy, natural, and moral thing to do. Networking, which you'll hear about all the time as you get closer to graduation, is not about giving your business card to every stranger you meet. Instead, it is the simple, but long-term, act of maintaining the relationships that are formed naturally. When you meet someone who is interested in your work, or if you're interested in theirs, get their contact information. And then, once a month, spend a day e-mailing, calling, or setting up lunch dates to let them know what you've been up to and to ask what they've been doing. This should feel totally natural, like picking up the conversation where you last left off.

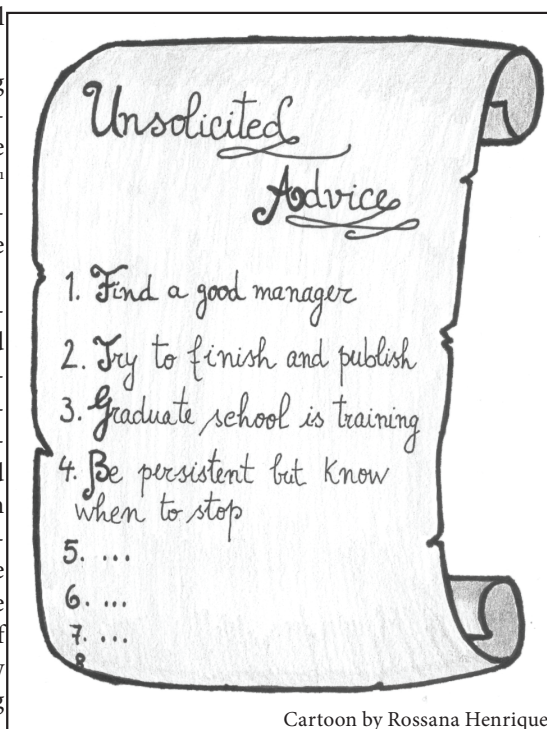
Moving towards the business side of science, many of us, myself included, don't

know how to put a value on ourselves or what we do. Read a book on how to negotiate. While science is an idealistic field, the ability to do it ebbs and flows with politics and money, just as many other careers do. We all need to know that we're the ones responsible for our current state, our future, and the field's future. Before you leave Rockefeller University, make sure you have the tools to do that well. Grabbing an occasional book from the business section of the bookstore is a good way to start getting these tools.

And, as a final note, Professor Richard Axel gave many postdocs and myself advice just last month. To paraphrase: "Science is enjoyable. Enjoy what you do." ◉

References:

1. For advice from people in science who have achieved greatness, see Ramon y Cajal's *Advice for a Young Investigator* and P.B. Medawar's *Advice to a Young Scientist*; Fiske's *Put Your Science to Work* is also excellent.
2. This article has been reposted at incubator.rockefeller.edu; I hope that other people offer their own comments and advice in the comments section.
3. www.nationalpostdoc.org/publications/mentoring-plans/mentoring-plan



Cartoon by Rossana Henriques

Science Blogs on Climate Change

JEANNE GARBARINO

Summer has come and gone and the air has a certain crispness to it, indicating that autumn is near. Another round of warmth followed by a round of cooling—the normal seasonal change that we New Yorkers have come to know and love (or hate). Sure, we had a few really hot days, but those moments are just blips in our memories. Should we truly note the feeling as if we were in an outdoor sauna as unusual? In fact, have we been witnessing a substantial climate change without even realizing it? Unless you are a hermit, you are probably aware of the climate debate raging between scientists and politicians. However, a majority of us are not atmospheric physicists and our attempts to dive into the literature written by climate scientists can often prove to be quite difficult given the amount of technical jargon associated with such reports. Therefore, in honor of Climate Week NYC 2010 (September 20 to 26; www.climateweeknyc.org), I have resorted to the next best thing: interpretations of these studies by scientists communicated to the general public via the world wide web. Yes, folks, I am talking about blogging.

A common misconception about climate change is that some believe the debate is over whether warming is actually happening. But, virtually all scientists believe that warming is occurring. Where the debate truly arises is over the issue of greenhouse gases, namely carbon dioxide (CO₂). A large majority of the scientific community feels that the current climate phenomenon is anthropogenic global warming (AGW), a concept that, if fully embraced by the government, could have substantial impacts on global policy as it relates to greenhouse gases. However, there is a scientific minority that does not feel the data presented by the pro-AGW camp is of the best quality. Additionally, these scientists have presented a re-evaluation of the raw data used by their foes and have generated alternate datasets using different proxies (i.e. isotope measurements as opposed to tree rings). Here, I will present two blogs discussing climate change, with one representing each viewpoint.

The majority view is that human-induced CO₂ production is the major factor behind global warming (97% of climate scientists agree with this). This is based on the relationship between increases in CO₂

and the subsequent increases in temperatures. One of the most well-written blogs in support of this theory is “Skeptical Science,” authored primarily by John Cook, who, although he studied physics in college and graduate school, is not a climate scientist. In fact, he is not associated with any climate institution and does not get paid to keep up his blog. He sifts through the peer-reviewed literature and presents it to us, the public, in a language that can be readily understood. As he says on his site, “Skeptical Science” is “strictly a labor of love.” The site is maintained nearly everyday, with posts such as “Newcomers start here” and “Of satellites and temperatures.” However, the most relevant section is named simply “Arguments.” In this section, Cook lists 119 arguments presented by non-AGW scientists and provides apparent counterevidence for each argument, including data extracted from peer-reviewed articles. Given the recent Rockefeller University lecture given by Dr. Fred Singer, atmospheric physicist and leader of the non-AGW movement, who stated that cosmic rays are the ultimate cause of global warming, I clicked on argument number 14 against AGW: “It’s cosmic rays.” What I found was a summary of several journal articles which all concluded that the link between cosmic rays and increased global temperatures was not clear; in fact, it is stated that increased cosmic rays would impose a cooling effect, assuming this was directly correlated to increased cloud cover. For more information on this topic and to read this blog, go to www.skepticalscience.com. A few other noteworthy pro-AGW blogs: Alden Griffith’s “Fool Me Once” (www.fool-me-once.com) and Joseph Romm’s Climate Progress (www.climateprogress.org).

Conversely, there are a number of climate blogs that promote an alternate message: that the warming of the earth is a result of natural cycling. I recently stumbled on “Watts up with that?” a climate blog primarily authored by Anthony Watts, a former television meteorologist with a passion for weather measurement and weather presentation technology (www.wattsupwiththat.com). He states that, due to an auditory condition (he suffered an injury during his childhood which left his hearing at 15% of normal levels), blogging is a natural forum to discuss his favorite topic. Although he

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considers himself a global warming “skeptical,” Anthony Watts also considers himself “green.” He drives an electric car and promotes the idea of alternate energy. As this article is being written, the headlining post on this site describes a new paper whereby the original “hockey stick” graph, which depicts a sharp increase in temperature correlating with the beginning of the industrial revolution, is reconstructed using alternative proxies and more stringent statistical filters. These new findings suggest that warming has occurred over the last century. However, the slope of the new graph is much more gradual. This paper also proposes that climate scientists have severely underestimated the uncertainty associated with proxy-based temperature reconstruction. Another interesting project to which Anthony Watts dedicates his time is called “Surface Stations,” a venture started in June 2007 that is designed to photographically record each of the 1221 weather stations in the United States considered to be “of high quality.” This project, which can be found under the “Projects” tab on Anthony Watts’ blog or can be accessed through www.surfacestations.org, is intended to highlight that the placement of thermometers can have a major effect on temperature readings and may skew national temperature averages. For example, there is a picture of a weather station surrounded by asphalt, a cell phone tower, and several air conditioning exhaust units, all emitting heat and contributing to an artificially increased temperature reading. Anthony Watts hopes to promote awareness of this situation so that these micro-site effects are taken into consideration when these temperature readings are analyzed.

Both Anthony Watts and John Cook have managed to get iPhone apps for their respective websites. Perhaps I will get both for my iPhone so that I can keep up with the times. Given the magnitude of the climate debate, it might prove to be quite useful when trying to decipher the new climate findings. Additionally, I can comfortably predict that climate change will be a major issue surrounding the next presidential election. It might be in all of our best interests to keep up on the most current viewpoints, so that we can cast our votes for the candidate whose ideals are more aligned with our own. It is becoming increasingly difficult for me to separate climate science from climate politics. However, I will refrain from discussing this as it probably can initiate a whole other article (or even series). If you would like to read more about the global warming debate or if you want to initiate a local discussion on this topic, please check out my column on The Incubator (incubator.rockefeller.edu). ☉

The Diaper Struggle

COLLENE LAWHORN

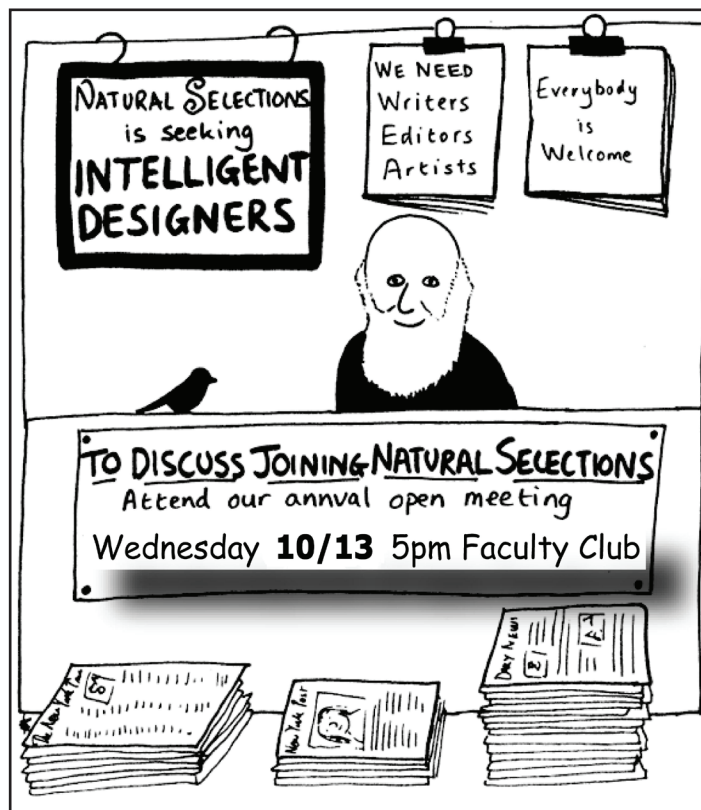
For me, observing developmental milestones is one of the most exciting parental rites. I can recall with vivid detail my oldest son's first steps, his first words, and even his first high five. If I had to choose his most exciting developmental feat to date, I would have to admit that it was his first solo trip to the potty that truly blew me away. It meant that we were on the road to becoming diaper-free.

By the time my son was three, it seemed that disposable diapers had become the most important purchase in my life. I was buying them at the local drugstore, online, and at the wholesale club. We tried organic brands, we tried no frills brands, we tried major brands, and we tried brands on sale. I was leaving a pack of diapers in the car, a bundle at day care, a stash for the stroller bag, double sets at each grandparents' house and a stack of no less than 40 under our changing table. It felt like we went through a massive amount of diapers each day. We weren't proud of the impact that our diaper bonanza might have on the planet, but it was clear to us that while we had a child who didn't know how to use the toilet independently—diapers were something we could not be without.

But recently I was made aware of a situation that affects thousands of families across the country. Imagine if you had to make a choice between food and diapers? For many families in New York City and across the country that are living in poverty, that is a choice they are forced to make each month.

The monthly cost of diapers can average between \$40 and \$45, which is an expense that is not covered by government sponsored subsidy programs such as the Food Stamp or WIC (Women, Infant and Children) programs. In fact, a *New York Times* article from several years back (<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/16/nyregion/nyregionspecial2/16colct.html?>) noted that the need for diapers ranked among the highest of all necessities for impoverished families. Since the downturn of the economy, one can only imagine how that need has grown.

Dr. Cybele Raver of New York University and Dr. Nicole Letourneau of the University of New Brunswick directed a study fielded by the market research firm Abt SRBI to address family diaper needs. In February 2010, they conducted an opinion poll of approximately 1,500 mothers in the US and 1,000 mothers in Canada that reported having children between the ages of 0 and 4 years old in diapers. The survey was sponsored



by Huggies Diapers and is a part of their "Every Little Bottom" report. The data were collected from 20-minute phone surveys conducted in English and Spanish in the US, and in English and French in Canada.

The study revealed that even for working families whose children attend day care centers, a child who is not potty-trained is usually not permitted without a supply of disposable diapers. Infants may use a dozen diapers per day and toddlers may require fewer but still upwards of 8 to 10. Cloth diapers may be an unrealistic option for parents and child care providers who do not have the appropriate laundry sanitizing facilities. Some mothers reported missing work because they could not supply their child-care provider with the day's worth of diapers required.

The study also revealed that 1 in 3 mothers in the US have reported cutting back on household necessities, groceries, or missing a bill payment to be able to provide diapers. Some low-income families have reported using 1 to 2 diapers per day to save money—leading to a greater possibility of painful rashes and infections. Other women reported having to reuse soiled diapers and extend the amount of time a child is in a diaper.

While the closest diaper bank (that I am aware of) is about 90 miles north of RU in New Haven, Connecticut, most social service agencies are available to accept donations of unopened diapers to help families in need. Two of our local agencies are the United Way of New York on Park Avenue and the New York Foundling on Avenue of the Americas. One can also schedule a pickup of diapers to donate at <http://babybuggy.org>. Furthermore, since the Huggies report surfaced, several successful diaper drives have been popping up across the city, and I suspect more will surface as this problem gains greater attention.

Because each child has the right to a full belly and a clean diaper, I have made a personal commitment to remember those families in need the next time I am out buying diapers for my newest little guy. One can only hope that our communal little steps will prove to be a significant milestone in the fight for the rights of the many needy children and families around us. ☉

Ragnar Relay Race Report: Leave the Bowels Behind

JEFF SMITH



Ragnar Relay refugees at Rombout Middle School, Beacon N.Y. Photograph provided by the author.

The Rombout Middle School was a disaster relief area. Hundreds of bodies lay along the sidewalk under the awning like refugees from a tornado. One or two of them slept on cots, but most of them were lying on nothing more than a thin sheet or blanket. A lone volunteer sat against the brick wall, head hung between her knees, a red flashlight dangling from her limp wrist as though directing traffic in her dreams. It was almost midnight. The parking lot was wet from a short, heavy rain that had fallen an hour before. The line to the port-a-potties was twenty deep, which was twenty more than it had been when I arrived about two hours before. It had already been a long day; it was going to be a long night.

I was in Beacon, NY, with the other members of my ultra-relay team for the halfway point in the 183 mile Ragnar Relay foot race that had started Friday morning in Woodstock and would end Saturday in Dobbs Ferry, just outside of New York City. Of the more than 215 teams registered, only fifteen consisted of teams of fewer than twelve members—ultra teams. Of those fifteen, only ten would go on to finish the race. My team, the Magnificent 7—“We are six but we run like 7”—was one of them. The basics of the Ragnar Relay are simple: run, rest, drive, repeat. A team member runs a certain distance then hands off to the next team member. The non-running teammates drive a van specially decorated for the race to where run-

ner number two will finish their leg. Runner number three takes over and all pile into the van and drive to the next exchange point. This process is repeated until the last runner crosses the finish line. In a 12-person team, each team member runs from 12 to 15 miles total. In an ultra team, each runner takes on from 26 to 36 miles.

I slowly wound my way through the port-a-potty line where I discovered the wondrous things that running all day can do for the intestinal system. (As a runner on another team put it: “Ten years from now, we won’t remember our time, but the constant diarrhea.”) I had already run my first leg, a grueling 16.5 miles over some of the most mountainous terrain of the race during the hottest part of the day. Promised rain had failed to materialize and I ran with the sun blistering my shoulders. I had hoped to use the Rombout exchange, where our van would have a few hours downtime, as an opportunity to get some sleep. But the rain finally fell while I was snuggled under the stars on the grass next to the school’s parking lot. I scrambled back to the van amid other runners desperate for shelter. I found my two teammates unable to sleep. The Dodge minivan was just too uncomfortable, and we were all too wired.

I took the baton—actually a slap bracelet—shortly after 1 a.m. and ran 10 miles through the dark, humid night, most of it along Route 9 which traverses the Hudson River and is a major thoroughfare for cars

and trucks looking to reach the little towns along the water. I figured out quickly that when a car or truck approached—I was running against traffic, as the law and the rules of the course required—I had to put my head down and look off to the side, using my peripheral vision to watch the road and the car. If I looked straight ahead for a brief moment after the car passed I wouldn’t be able to see anything. My headlamp and the small flash I carried illuminated the road before me, as well as the bill of my fluorescent green running cap. The night was quiet; all I heard was the sound of my own breathing, my feet pounding the pavement, and the occasional van full of runners slowly driving past, cheering. I kept thinking of the fact that it was two in the morning and that the bars in New York are open until 4 a.m. I wondered if I’d be quick enough to jump out of the way before someone decided to turn me into the next Stephen King. (Actually, that might not be so bad, come to think of it—being the next Stephen King, that is, not getting hit by a car.)

26 hours 41 minutes after we started, we crossed the finish line together, arms raised in triumph. We were only about an hour off our pre-race estimate, not bad for a team that only came into being six months before. The Ragnar isn’t about finishing fast or coming in first, though; it’s about doing something as a team, about cheering on other runners and having other runners cheer for you. Towards the end of my first leg, I was overheated and thirsty, which meant I was already dehydrated. Another team van pulled up alongside me and gave me a bottle of water. Then they drove away and I never saw them again. It was a touching moment in a day full of team spirit and the camaraderie of being one part of many in a unique event. Every spectator on the course, every cheer we got, was from another runner, another racer. Short races don’t have that kind of all-around camaraderie—just another thing that made this event so special.

Not long after we finished, we began talking of our next relay race. Right now, it’s planned for September, from Virginia to Washington, D.C. There may be only five of us this time, as one of the Magnificent 7 has decided not to join. If so, that’s fine with me. I’m happy to run more miles. As long as there are lots of bathrooms—and short lines. ☺



This Month Natural Selections interviews **Frida Arrey**, a Research Assistant in the Laboratory of Cellular Physiology and Immunology
Country of origin: Cameroon

New York State of Mind

1. How long have you been living in New York? Four years in NYC.

2. Where do you live? 93rd Street and 2nd Avenue.

3. Which is your favorite neighborhood? Upper East Side. Between RU on 66th and York Ave, up to 96th St and Madison Ave. From Barnes and Noble, movie theaters, shopping, Museum Mile... You get to meet and notice certain people over and over again... a bit like a village.

4. What do you think is the most overrated thing in the city? And underrated?

Most overrated: Magnolia Bakery Cupcakes. Tourists who spend hours in line just to get a cupcake that they saw in a shop featured on *Sex and the City* while they could go to better cupcake shops like Crumbs or Butter Lane... Most underrated: All the little/small things like Little Korea which has the best barbecue on 33rd and 5th Avenue, Little Senegal on West 116th Street with fried plantains, the real Chinatown on Allen Street with \$2 boxes of dumplings, and buses that take you all over the east coast, and sometimes to Atlanta.

5. What do you miss most when you are out of town? I miss the speed with which most of New York does things. New Yorkers walk quickly, the clerks at the grocery stores are very fast, the waiters try to bring out food quickly.

6. If you could change one thing about NYC, what would that be? The rats and cockroaches—I think NYC needs programs to control the rodents, especially with the Second Avenue line construction going on. Seeing a rat the size of a kitten while walking back home is scary.



7. Describe a perfect weekend in NYC. In the summer, Friday after Faculty Club, going out for dinner around RU, then dancing. On Saturday, going to the Brooklyn Botanical Garden then having brunch at NoNo Kitchen, afterwards going to the Brooklyn Museum to see one or two exhibits, then evening music at the Knitting Factory in Brooklyn. On Sunday, church, and sleep.

8. What is the most memorable experience you have had in NYC? Two years ago I was stuck on a 4 train. The train had almost reached the platform but for some reason it just stopped. After waiting for 15 minutes, we were asked to walk between the cars to reach the one car that had edged by the platform. I was walking in front of a mother with a 3-year-old child and a baby. Everyone did something to help, like carry the stroller, hold open the doors, carry the 3-year-old from one person to another, and help the mother keep her balance. I realized then that New Yorkers can be truly nice!

9. If you could live anywhere else, where would that be? I would live in Durban, Kwa Zulu Natal in South Africa. The weather is like California, the state of living like New York, and the cost of living much cheaper than anywhere in the States or Europe.

10. Do you think of yourself as a New Yorker? Why? Yes. Either you get the city and entrench yourself into it by 3 to 6 months or you crack and leave promptly. I dug in. ☺

Why Do We Celebrate Labor Day?

AILEEN MARSHALL

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, has become to most Americans the unofficial end of summer. Most schools start right after Labor Day. It also marks the beginning of the NFL and college football seasons. But did you ever wonder why it's called Labor Day, and how it started?

Labor Day in the United States is over one hundred years old. It was first celebrated on September 5, 1882, when Peter McGuire, the General Secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners Union, suggested the holiday. He was also a co-founder of the American Federation of Labor.

This first parade started in Union Square here in New York City. The parade was run by New York's Central Labor Union, an umbrella organization made up of representatives of many different labor unions. The idea was to celebrate the accomplishments of labor unions, show their solidarity, and air their grievances. About 10,000 workers marched from there to 42nd Street. Afterwards there were picnics, concerts, and speeches.

In 1884, the Central Labor Union designated the first Monday in September as a holiday and urged unions in other states to follow suit. The day was chosen because it was halfway between Independence Day and Thanksgiving. Oregon was the first state to pass Labor Day as a legal holiday in 1887. It didn't become a federal holiday until 1894, when President Grover Cleveland was under political

pressure to pass the legislation after the deaths of some workers at the Pullman strike.

Pullman, Illinois, was founded in 1880 by the Pullman Railroad Company as a company town. The company provided housing, stores, and the like for the employees. During an economic slump in 1893, the company laid off workers, cut wages, and raised rents. The employees went on strike, demanding higher pay and lower rents. A mob formed, and rioting and looting followed. President Grover Cleveland declared the strike a federal crime and sent in troops to break it up. Upon confronting the striking workers, more violence ensued, and two workers were killed by the troops. President Cleveland got much criticism for supporting the violent methods. In order to appease the unions, Cleveland rushed through the legislation for Labor Day.

Today there are 155 million people in the work force in the United States. Due to the efforts of unions, of those, 83% are covered by health insurance, and 77% get paid vacation. It is interesting that only about 12% belong to a labor union. Samuel Gompers, the founder of the American Federation of Labor, once said: "All other holidays are in a more or less degree connected with conflicts and battles of man's prowess over man, of strife and discord for greed and power, of glories achieved by one nation over another. Labor Day . . . is devoted to no man, living or dead, to no sect, race, or nation." ☺

Ten Days in Amsterdam: A Story of Love, Beer, and Bitterballen

CARLY GELFOND

The white-aproned cheese monger informs me that the silken wedge of heaven on my tongue is *Emmental*. He seems to have understood that I wished to inquire despite the fact that the intensity of my bliss has rendered me momentarily speechless. As I emit noises more apt to a barn animal, my boyfriend John tugs me away before I can buy the whole wheel, and together we glide on among the stalls of the open-air market.

The slight drizzle that dampens our cheeks on our second day in Amsterdam barely registers with us as we scurry excitedly throughout town. Weaseling our way between gregarious raincoated women discussing *kaas* and *komkommers*, we sample the various delicacies each table has to offer. We glare into the glassy black eyes of *zalm*—salmon, we learn—laid out at the fish monger's stall. We watch a woman making *flensje*—soft, sweet, paper-thin crepes with fillings like *spek* (bacon), *stroop* (syrup), and *suiker* (sugar) or *slagroom* (whipped cream). Nibbling on *brood*, we pause to sit and listen to a ragtag band of street musicians playing folky instrumental versions of what we recognize are American rock songs. I am falling in love, I think. This is only my first date with Amsterdam, but already I am falling hard.

Happily stuffed to the gills, we wander on as food stalls give way to flea market treasures. There is everything from antique opera glasses to Rembrandt drink coasters. There are baskets of thimbles and porcelain beer mugs.

In the evening, we walk along the Prinsengracht canal. The bridges we pass are rimmed with arcs of glowing bulbs, and as darkness sweeps the city, lights from within the bricked walls flicker on through the windows.

In the following days, we view the yellowing photos of long-gone princesses and movie stars that Anne Frank pasted to her bedroom walls in the Secret Annex on Prinsengracht Street. Across town, we stand before canvases thickly coated in colored hash marks that form the faces of Vincent Van Gogh—painted himself—at the museum dedicated to his artistic legacy. We run our fingers along racks of vintage clothing and through bins of hand-painted doorknobs in the neighborhood of the Nine Streets. On an obligatory stroll through the Red Light District, our faces become illuminated in the ominous lights of the neon signs.



Photograph provided by the author.

We take a train to the old university town of Leiden, where I lead us through the Hortus Botanicus, one of the oldest botanical gardens in the world. Afterwards, we rent bicycles, which we ride many kilometers to the tiny picturesque island town of Kaag. In Kaag, John rents a sailboat and we spend several leisurely hours traversing a small breezy lake ringed with dark wooden windmills with wide white turbines.

Late that night, back in Amsterdam, our salty bodies slip easily into sleep.

How different this is from New York, I think, sitting across from John at an *eet-caffe* one afternoon. We have stopped for a beer and *bitterballen*—fried balls of meat and dough, a ubiquitous bar snack in the Netherlands. We have spent the morning roaming around an area called the Jordaan, a neighborhood that somehow manages to be tranquil without being sleepy.

On the narrow streets around us, nearly everyone glides by on two wheels. Babies peep out of carriers bolted to the front of parents' bicycles, while dogs crane their little necks out of baskets saddled to the back. During rush hour, I have noticed, the air is filled with the polite dings of bike bells.

A waitress stops and places our order on the table in front of us. On a canal across the way, houseboats are moored one in front of the other. Some are decrepit, but some are spectacularly imaginative, painted in bright hues, with hammocks and small outdoor seating areas. There are even some with rooftop gardens.

"I always think it's interesting to look at the streets of other cities," John says, breaking apart a couple of steaming *bitterballen* so that they cool faster. "Yeah," I say. "Here you're probably a lot less likely to suffer hearing loss from all the honking we deal with in Manhattan."

"No, that's not what I mean," he says. "I mean the actual streets. Like what they're made of." I cock my head to one side like a puzzled dog. This always elicits a smile from him. He smiles, then says, "See? These streets are made of old cobblestones, in weird arc-shaped patterns. I just wonder why they would have arranged them like that. They probably were built hundreds of years ago, so maybe we'll never know."

"As opposed to New York," I say, "where the streets are mostly asphalt, and even the cobblestone ones are made with bigger stones, arranged in straight rows."

"Right," he says, sipping his beer.

We must look so funny, I think, suddenly. Here we are, surrounded by glittering canals and stately brick homes, and the two of us sit at a café table staring at the ground. But not just any ground; this street is hundreds of years old, an easily miss-able feature of the landscape.

It occurs to me that travel is not only about discovering a far-off place, uncovering its intimate quirks, and what drives the people who inhabit it. Travel is also about the combination of travelers, who, by importing themselves into the landscape, bring something to it for each other. ☉

Book Review: *Here, There and Everywhere: My Life Recording the Music of The Beatles* by Geoff Emerick (and Howard Massey)

BERNIE LANGS

I was far from a disinterested reader when I picked up Beatles' engineer Geoff Emerick's memoir on his time spent at the recording sessions with that most famous and revered pop group. I was 7 years old when The Beatles hit the States with "I Want to Hold Your Hand," and 13 when they broke up. They provided the musical backdrop to my growing years during the magical sixties and had more than a little to do with making it the happiest period of my life. When I began writing songs in my teens, I modeled them after John Lennon-Paul McCartney compositions and later, from 1979-1981, the band I played in would center its sound around that of The Beatles (though by then it was clearly antiquated). Emerick's *Here, There and Everywhere* was published in 2006 and I knew that I would read it at some point, though I heard in the media that he hadn't been kind to Beatle George Harrison in the book. There have been books on people in the arts that I wish I'd never read; Spoto's work on Alfred Hitchcock and Lynne's biography of Charlie Chaplin come to mind as having gone to unnecessary lengths to savage their subjects (though Chaplin deserves some of what he gets). It never occurred to me not to read *Here, There and Everywhere* for such reasons.

That said, I can say that Geoff Emerick's book is tremendously informative, incredibly entertaining, laugh-out-loud funny throughout, and a true addition to The Beatles' lore. I don't read about the group much in books, but I'm full of facts and figures on its history. And although the authors present a volume of material that most hardcore Beatles fans would not know, there's plenty that many of us wish we hadn't been exposed to. One of the aspects of the book for which I was unprepared was Emerick's tough treatment of the band's heralded producer, George Martin. Though the author does laud him at many points, his criticisms of Martin sting harshly for those of us who believe that the producer added an incredible dimension to The Beatles just in his orchestral scorings alone.

Most Beatles fans are aware that The Beatles often fought in the studio. Bastardizing Tolstoy, one could say that all melodic bands make harmonious music, but all creative bands with players with large egos fight in a unique fashion. For example, members of the group The Who spoke of knife scars on their bodies as the result of arguments in the early days of the band. There was downright bitter hatred amongst members of The Byrds and The Mamas and The Papas. My own band came to a few wrestling matches and one piece of equipment accidentally "fell" on me after a heated discussion over a song's arrangement. I would venture to say that when you are in a band and are serious about it as an art, one's instrument or song becomes indistinguishable from oneself; and therefore, there is an almost natural territorial defensiveness about one's playing, etc. So when you get a group like The Beatles with two genius songwriters having to direct the other members of the band on how

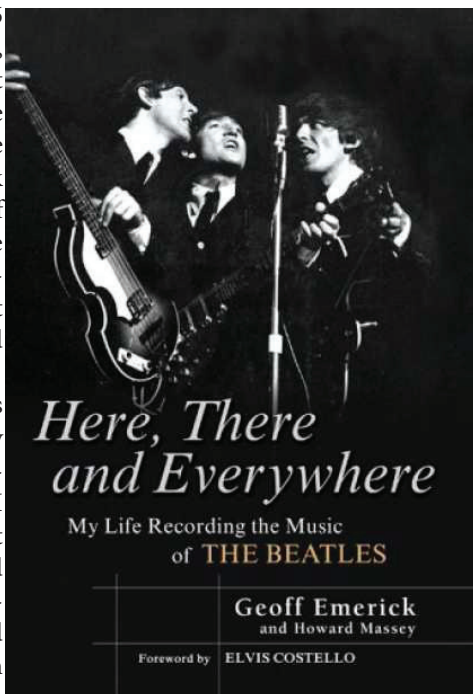
to achieve their vision, it was destined to become a terrible test of wills. The band members became nasty, sarcastic, bitter, angry, and argued to the point that not only did Emerick quit as engineer during *The White Album* sessions, no other engineer at EMI wanted the job knowing what was in store for them.

Geoff Emerick worked in a variety of engineering capacities for The Beatles, beginning as a teenager fresh from school at their very first recording session at EMI's famed *Abbey Road* studio. Both EMI and *Abbey Road* are relentlessly derided by the author throughout the book (and for good reason). Emerick was elevated to chief engineer for The Beatles in 1966 during the sessions for their great album, *Revolver*. On his first day, he made his mark in recording history with his studio effects on John Lennon's voice in "Tomorrow Never Knows" and by manipulating the sound of Ringo Starr's drums on the same tune. When The Beatles decided to no longer tour or appear live as a group, they buried themselves in the studio and began their 1967 masterpiece, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The stories that Emerick weaves in this section of the book are fascinating and I found myself unable to turn the pages fast enough to hear him relate how the group crafted the album. Emerick was instrumental in creating the remarkable sonic texture that graces *Sgt. Pepper's*.

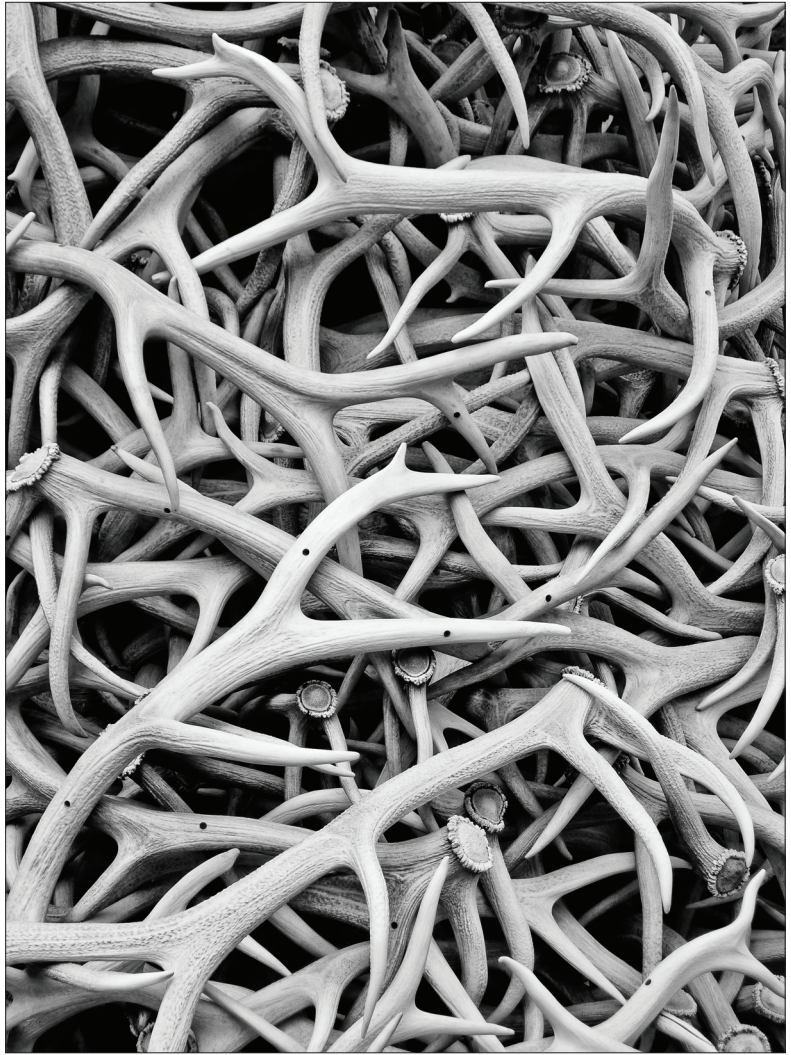
The perfectionist attitude on *Sgt. Pepper's* would haunt The Beatles in the studio for the three years that followed. They spent hours and hours at *Abbey Road*, often through the night, and the terrible arguments and fighting became a given. The constant presence of John's wife-to-be Yoko Ono only fanned the flames of discord. The funniest moment in the book comes when George Harrison, from the window in the control room, spies Yoko stealing one of his biscuits down in the studio proper. The tirade he unleashed should become legendary.

Though Emerick quit the engineering crew in 1968, he was invited back for the group's final album, *Abbey Road*. Things had settled down between the band members to a point of an uneasy truce, marked by the fact that The Beatles knew they worked best in smaller groups and without all four of them together in the same studio. By this point, the reader is tired of The Beatles' tantrums and personality quirks and almost relieved that they called it quits in 1970. I personally have no doubt that if John Lennon, who died in 1980, had lived, the band would have reunited at some point. There are interviews at that time indicating that he had made peace with the others and that they all had finally moved on and matured and were ready to "let it be."

The Beatles' music takes on a new dimension for those having read *Here, There and Everywhere*. It's such an entertaining and eye-opening book that I'm glad I read it, regardless of some of the negative portrayals. ☺



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