

# LETTERS

## The Unsinkable Sooner

I got a real pleasure out of "The Unsinkable Sooner" in your Winter 1998 issue. I did not know about the hassle with the 1971 book or the demise for a time after publication of the 1991 *Sooner*. I regularly read *Sooner Magazine* but saw nothing about those events. Maybe you only tell us good news? At any rate, it is good news that it is publishing again, and I hope the student body takes to it.

I was the editor of the 1951 *Sooner*. Our theme was a magazine format with a story by a fairly recent grad, William R. Scott, who had achieved success authoring stories and articles in the leading slick magazines of the day. The "slicks" carried a lot of fiction back then. For me, he did a view of OU from the eyes of an "old grad" (1940). We entitled his effort, "Boomer Sooner." It is unlike other yearbook prose and is, in fact, still delightful. I just read it again after quite a few years and recommend it to you. It will give insight on both 1951 and 1940, and even some statistics on 1902. I think our opening section is the best of that era. (I wonder what happened to Scott—if he really made a career for himself.)

I recall when I got Scott's first draft, he made reference to going to the Campus Corner for a brew. The Publications Board thought we shouldn't say brew, so, with Scott's gracious blessing, we changed it to tea. What would the 1971 staff have thought of that? Both author and editor knuckled under without argument.

And yet, he writes about the pleasure of looking at pretty girls. I suppose that is unacceptable today. (I'll bet there is not a beauty section anymore.) One line that Scott included in his story that pleased me then, and pleases me now, is: "and if I were asked which particular change of all the changes I like most, I would say I like best the fact that OU's doors have been thrown open to all Americans regardless of color or religion, and that the student body of my Alma Mater has, with one or two infantile cross-burning exceptions, accepted the death of Jim Crow without mourning the loss."

The opening doors that Scott referred

to may not have been "thrown open," but they were opening. When you look at the group picture of the football squad on page 320, the number one team in the nation, and see *not a single black face*, there is no pride in that.

The 1951 class still had a lot of World War II veterans in it. They had a tremendous influence on the attitudes of the student body. I think we were serious about an education, optimistic, ambitious, and happy. We are considered the conforming generation. (Hence, change "brew" to "tea" without argument.) We had alcohol to some extent and lots of cigarettes, but no dope.

The Publications Board reminded me at the outset that the yearbook represented the University to the general public, especially high schools, and while our patrons were the students, we shouldn't forget the bigger audience. I tried to make it as representative for the student body as possible and still present OU in the best light. I think we succeeded. I was also reminded to maintain a good balance between Greeks and independents. I was especially pleased, after publication, to have been complimented on that by the independents.

I have no idea how many books we published, what the economics were, or if the book was judged. I do know that under the watchful eye of Cecil Brite, manager of all the student publications, there was no worry about the financial outcome. I also believe that the book was well received by the student body.

Your story prompted me to look back at those wonderful days. Thanks for that.

T. Jack Foster Jr., '51 B.B.A  
San Mateo, California

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The late William R. Scott had a very successful literary career. Under the pseudonym Weldon Hill, he authored such books as *Onionhead*, *Rafe* and *Iceman*.

## Kudos All Around

I tremendously enjoyed every page in the new issue of *Sooner Magazine*, Volume 18, No. 2, Winter 1998.

That was a very exciting story about "The Unsinkable Sooner" and also about the other items, especially the football programs of the early 1940s. Having been graduated in June of 1941, I remember well those programs.

Please congratulate President Emeritus William S. Banowsky on his Guest Commentary and heap the praise on Kathryn Jenson White for her excellent and interesting article on "The Unsinkable Sooner."

I was especially proud of many of the pictures, especially those of my old friend Harold Keith, the first sports information officer, who lived and grew up in Watonga.

I certainly miss Harold. We were excellent friends from the day I went to the University. And when my sister started at the University the following year, she, Jeanne Hoberecht ('43 B.S.), worked for Harold as his secretary. I knew Johnnie (Keith, also a former OU sports information director) and his sister well and even went to Florida to cover the University's first bowl game.

I was delighted to read about OU's President George L. Cross, a longtime friend. One summer we took a Spanish course together and . . . our friendship has continued. He became a very close friend of Ted Shimizu, whom I sent from Tokyo, to get a degree at the University of Oklahoma.

Congratulations on a wonderful issue.

Earnest Hoberecht, '41 B.A.  
Watonga, Oklahoma

## A Worthy Project

The article on page 9 of your winter issue by Judith Wall ("When Children Have Children") reminds me of the project in Houston started in 1986. A group of civic-minded women—YWCA and others—planned and carried out a similar project, a 501(c)(3) and incorporated. It was a special combined residence and day care facility. (There was a special class in school.)

High costs cost us the maintenance, and we volunteers closed TAMI House (Teenage Mothers and Infants) in 1997. We learned a lot about teens.

And as a B.F.A. grad from OU in

painting in '35, I began wondering how to combine education with community efforts. My years of drawing "from life" sparked ideas. But anatomy is not a welcome subject by anyone as an education subject, 60 years later. I do think it would be helpful to the young mind to learn the structure of the body—better than that of the usual "biology frog."

A study of bones—a mini forensic course—is not prurient, I don't think, and perhaps leading to further study.

I would be interested in knowing any comments. Pregnancy was only whispered in college in '35! Thanks for a good story of Emerson.

Mildred Knight Bohn, '35 B.F.A.  
Houston, Texas

## Internationally Speaking

I was thrilled to read the Fall '97 issue, highlighting "Foreign Policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." It was wonderful to see the University of Oklahoma filled with such a distinguished group of government officials, diplomats, scholars and journalists, all of whom are highly skilled in the art of international policy. Your coverage of this event was superb, and I only wish I had been there to participate in what must have been an invigorating and very timely debate.

For a short while in 1995, I had the opportunity to work with Ambassador Perkins at the U.S. Embassy in Australia. He is indeed a world-class ambassador of the people, and he will bring much esteem to OU. And I am delighted that the University will soon offer a degree-granting program in international relations. I truly believe, having lived overseas for a short period myself, that the study of IR is the first step toward a better understanding of the differences and similarities we share between all the nationalities of the world. A program of such stature should only enhance the University's ability to continue to attract students from around the globe and make OU a hub for international thinking in the Midwest.

Lynn Grigsby Frieda, '86 B.A.  
Manhattan, New York

## Sooner Sculptor Writes

Of all that is close to my heart, the University of Oklahoma is one of the dearest.

My mother and father met on the campus at OU back in 1915 or so, and Daddy later-in-life founded the School of Chemical Engineering. Mother played her part in organizations on the campus and in Norman. (She was born there—Oklahoma Territory in 1896.)

I graduated from OU in 1945 with a B.F.A. and went back to school when our son, Lee, was in junior high. (Lee received his OU degree in 1981.) Joe Taylor (professor emeritus of art and sculptor of the Bizzell Statue) was an excellent teacher, and I'm grateful for his instruction.

When he was on sabbatical one year, his replacement was a young lady from Georgia Tech, who taught a few of us to use an acetylene torch. I chose to do my master's thesis as a creative one with a written dissertation, the theme being: "Portraiture in Sculpture." Using various materials, I sculpted a commemorative terra cotta bust, a marble self portrait and a "Head of Christ," which began with uncertainty as to its ultimate identification, welding scraps of steel from a wrecked V.W.

Upon completion of my work, the metal piece was on display at the Art Building. My mother's sister, Grace Williams McInnis, had come from California to attend her class reunion. She was the first woman graduate from the School of Journalism at OU.

Aunt Grace was immediately taken with my "Head of Christ," and since she had spent quite a bit of time in Great Britain, she recognized the sculpture as one that could fit into Coventry Cathedral's theme of reconciliation.

Aunt Grace suggested to me that I let her purchase the work, and we would make a gift of it if Coventry Cathedral would accept it. I readily agreed. She traveled to England that summer and took with her some slides I had taken. It was accepted, and I received a fine letter from Provost Bill Williams asking me to ship the sculpture to Coventry.

The Lord works in strange and wondrous ways.

There are three of my sculptures on the OU campus: "Richard Lee Huntington," School of Chemical Engineering, "Roy Temple House," who started *Books Abroad*, now called, *World Literature Today*, and "Guy M. Steele Jr.," in the School of Geological Engineering.

Just last June, the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation accepted one of my bronze sculptures, "First Kiss," from Alice Garrard as a dedication to William G. Thurman, M.D., president of OMRF.

Words cannot express my feeling of gratitude for the education I received at OU.

Helen Huntington Jennings  
'45 B.F.A., '66 M.F.A.  
Vero Beach, Florida

P.S. I always enjoy my *Sooner Magazine*, and the Spring 1996 is one I'll keep, because of the Cross statue on the cover. Cleo and George and Mary Lynn are friends I miss since we moved to Florida almost 20 years ago. Paul Moore did a marvelous job of capturing George's likeness, and I'm delighted that he is teaching at OU.

## Fan Mail from Home

Holy Smokes! The Sooner is so great! I've been with OU since '63 as student, staff and faculty. You always hit the right spots of my interest. Really, among the best, none better, that OU has. Thanks!

Glenn Solomon  
'67 B.A., '72 M.A., '81 M.P.H., '90 Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Research  
Department of Pediatrics  
OU Health Sciences Center

## A Sooner Update

The recently enacted \$216 billion national highway bill includes \$2.5 million for University of Oklahoma research to extend the life of aging bridges. Associate Engineering Professor William N. Patten is perfecting his bridge shock absorber (featured in the summer 1995 *Sooner Magazine*), which goes into production later this year. Patten's new focus is on developing a "smart shock absorber" to retrofit the heavy trucks that damage the bridges.