

If raindrops are actually angels' tears, what happens when they sneeze?

All two of us here at *Burnhamish* would like to wish you a joyful holiday season. We could have chosen any of several other greetings, depending on religious preference, geographic region, or ethnicity, but felt a generic all-encompassing generality was most appropriate. You can't be too careful these days.

Speaking of not being too careful, many people I have never met before often approach me and ask me what it takes to write the introductory article for the annual Holiday Issue of *Burnhamish*. My initial reaction is to run quickly in the opposite direction. However, I usually resist the urge to flee and calmly explain that it takes three main things to produce an entertaining and insightful piece: 1) careful thought, 2) an extensive personal record of the past year's events, and 3) keen observations of the human condition.

"But what if your deadline is just three weeks away?" is usually the next question, to which I reply, "I write whatever."

If you want keen observations of the human condition, listen to *National Public Radio*. All I can tell you about is my own condition, which is currently "cluttered". I explore this matter further in the accompanying article, "Down With Entropy".



You may have noticed something different about this year's Holiday Issue. I mean besides the fact that you probably received this *before* Christmas. COLOR! This is history's first full color *Burnhamish*, made possible in part by the introduction of high quality, low-priced color printers, and a glut of the colors cyan, magenta, yellow, and black on the market.

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Down With Entropy !

I have too much stuff lying about in disorganized piles around my brain. It's a lot like my basement. I can hold a garage sale and clean out my basement, though. I'm not so sure I can sell off the information cluttering my brain as easily. There's not much I know that isn't already common knowledge. But you knew that already.

Our house tends toward being cluttered. It is the physical manifestation of an increase in *entropy*. Entropy is an abstract scientific term and has little use in casual conversation. When have you ever heard someone saying it's not the heat, it's the *entropy*?

We can think of entropy simply as a *state of messiness*. If you make a regular effort to throw out your junk mail, bundle your newspapers, and stack the magazines neatly on the coffee table, you can keep the clutter down. In other words, by applying some energy you can *lower* the entropy of your living room. Contrapositively, if you just sit back and let things go higglety-pigglety ("higglety-pigglety" means "a real

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To ensure financial stability by the time we retire, we have started investing in real estate. To date, we own three apartment buildings, a bank, a church, and two retail centers.

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We have gone through some changes this year, the biggest of which happened within a two month period. First, we finally bought a house. On May 19th we moved into our new house here in Waterford. It is a nice house, with nice trees in the backyard, in a nice area, with nice neighbors. We still have the same crappy furniture. Yes, that's correct, Jeff Noce's former Tennessee-built, pine-framed, flat-wooden-arms-you-can-set-your-beer-down-on, sagging-cushion, living-room-set-he-didn't-have-to-schlep-to-New-York-because-I-bought-it-from-him furniture. As soon as we moved in, we needed more space. Ooh, what a shocker. We gained a second floor, but not much square footage, so I immediately started thinking things like "...if we extend the second floor out over the garage..." and "...build off the back of the house..." not to mention "...if we didn't have so much stuff in the basement, JOHN..." Actually, Carolyn gets credit for that last one.

On the employment front, both Carolyn and I took on new positions this year. On June 1st Carolyn started as the new research director at WDWB-TV (WB20- *Detroit's place to WB*). It's a WB network affiliate (you know, that frog station). No, we have not met Buffy, but we're ever hopeful. Carolyn's doing basically the same job, but more of it, and is really really happy to be working closer than seventy miles from where I work. The money's pretty okay, too. I am still with DENSO (you would be saying to yourself, "This must be some kind of record for John to be with the same company for over four years," and you would be right), but on July 1st I switched from *designing* A/C systems to *testing* A/C systems. It's like going from the frying pan into, well, another frying pan. I get to play with really expensive gadgets, though. Any job could be fun for me as long as I get to play with gadgets.

Except maybe an emergency room physician. Lots of gadgets, but wow, ick.

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mess"), you can say things are in a state of *higher* entropy. Put in these terms, this concept is easy enough for the average person to grasp, even without a background in hard science. This is a great way to apply scientific principals to everyday life.

Look around- you'll see other examples of scientific principals at work in the everyday world, such as a room full of two-year-olds (chaos), opening a shaken can of soda (cold fission), and eating chili (sublimation). You may not be as far removed from science as you think.

HOLIDAY HAIKU

This year's poetry is in the style of Japanese *haiku*. Haiku, roughly translated, means "short verse, doesn't rhyme, bow incessantly."

Holiday shopping

Put it on my Mastercard

Cash poor, credit rich!

\$£¥



Eggnog and fruit cake

Sushi, roast beef, spicy wings

Diet? What Diet?

Big man, flying deer.

Air Traffic Control party.

DC10, big mess.



Am I mistaken,

or are you still reading these?

Stop now- save yourself!



I DON'T KNOW-I WOKE UP WITH A CRAVING FOR SUNFLOWER SEED AND PEANUT BUTTER PANCAKES...



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