

Dear Andrea and Sidney,

12/16/76

We are sure your account of Kathy's wedding is neither the wishful thinking of a proud mother nor the exaggeration of the one who made it all possible. If she is anything the wonderful little girl I remember she deserved no less.

Hope she will always be as happy ^{as} everyone was that day.

The news about Sidney is a shock. I think that as we grow older we tend to think of those we have known and loved for years in terms of as they were when we first knew them. Thus I have always thought of Sidney as quietly durable - ongoing forever.

I do hope he can adjust to a new life without undue impatience. It is possible, impossible as it may seem to the active. And I hope he can again become as active as I have, although I'd rather have him satisfied with less. Florida and the warm sun should be the best medicine for both of you. With our hopes to add just a little more warmth. And maybe a little envy to make it more precious.

With patience and a little more care than I exercised Sidney will get his strength back. First I went too far, was too careful, too self-indulgent from it. Then I went too far the other way, partly because the doctors prepared me for nothing. Since then I have worked it out for myself. I do what I feel like doing. Now I can put in the hours you may recall - and do. What is boring that I should do I do. Like riding an exercycle when the weather makes walking not good. Once the body is ready the thing is to learn how much of what is enough and not too much.

Little is new with us. More of the same, more of everything. I am getting all the FBI records on the ^{King} assassination at the ⁵ rate of about 500 pages a week. Remarkable stuff! And they are holding off on the most significant. I have a whole file cabinet of once-secret CIA stuff and they have hardly begun to disgorge. Several possible movies in what I've read and I've read only a small fraction. Getting and reading this stuff, doing what is necessary for the lawsuits that make it possible, have kept me from a new book on the ^{King} assassination since April and from any of the started books on JFK.

But what an archive it makes! If I can keep on paying for the xeroxes. I've given my lawyer enough to pay for the next 10,000 but this is less than half of what I'll get from the FBI alone. I get an honorarium, ^{which} runs it through our bank account and I give it to the lawyer. We make out without these.

I've begun to deposit my papers in an archive in the University of Wisconsin system. Not at Madison but for all of them. At one of the more conservative branches where there is a solid professional historian who can and does supervise and reduce the nut stuff. Gratifyingly the favorable reaction is entirely non-political, as it should be. After I spent a week there, with two seminars and a night speech of which all but four were by me, the most conservative preachers were making laudatory sermons. They taped and videotaped everything (communications school) and are making it available to all schools and public broadcasting. If nobody else comes across with funding that requires something else they will get everything. I have four more file cabinets on order and I have 20 full ones. If they can arrange funding that does not cut into the real financial problems all schools have today they will ~~make~~ share with others. This really is unprecedented material so I'm hoping they can find someone with the kind of ego I do not have, someone whose name can be on the archive, and that as a result I can be more efficient. If with the promises I have to keep I can walk the miles I want before I sleep I will be content. Their approach to me was ~~fix~~ three or four years ago. My reluctance then was from the hope that there might be interest locally they could share, where it would give me a chance to work with students, particularly those who wanted to be lawyers and of these women (we need more women lawyers), but there has been no administration-level interest from the Washington-area colleges and the Peace Corps type who was the local women's college proxy has gone on to a larger place.

May the coming year and those to follow all be like Kathy's wedding day to you!

Our best,

Mrs. Andrea Kaufman
8657 Metz Place
Los Angeles, CA 90069

2/3/90

Dear Andrea,

In recent months, when more than usual I've been reminded of you and Sidney and your many kindnesses, I've intended to write and hope that you and the children are well and happy. I've just had occasion ~~at~~ to handle the Italian copy of my first book, which was handled by the fine person, Gordon Harbord, Sidney got to do it. So, I'm writing and I do hope you are all well.

By and large we are, although we have the old problems and some new ones.

I'm recovering from an operation I first heard of shortly after John was born, open-heart surgery. I remember Sidney telling me that he would need it when he was a little older. I marvilled then and do now! ^{passes}

I had three bypasses at John Hopkins. It went so well they'd have sent me home the sixth day if I'd had transportation. That was just before ^{mas}. Although I chafe a bit over the limitations I'm still under, that operation is no real problem. But the old venous troubles in the legs and thighs is.

I don't see as much TV as I used to because I still get up early only now try to get to bed earlier, too. So although I look at the credits on public TV, I've not seen John on any aired at the hours I see it. I hope he is doing well and enjoying it and life.

One of our complaints is that we suddenly have many fewer birds. I've wondered whether some one is feeding them what they like better or if something had happened to them. Our home is almost all glass, so I've arranged the feeders so we can see the birds while we sit in the living room or when Lil is in the kitchen.

We had another complaint but it almost vanished this past summer. The chipmunks moved in, eh masee. Painstakingly, deliberately, they consumed just about all of the bulbs Lil planted. Too late we discovered how to discourage them and Lil's arthritis gives her enough trouble for her not to plan any more large plantings of bulbs.

In no time, their first assault, they consumed 17 linear feet of hyacinths. Then all the scattered lillies were gone. (They don't touch daylillies.) Then a bed about 25 feet long of fine Dutch tulips were gone. Before long of the hundreds of tiger lillies we'd transplanted in a bed we'd gone to much trouble to enrich there wasn't one in that bed but we have a few that seeded elsewhere. This was the beginning of our observation that they detest members of the narcissus family. So, if you have a problem out there or of Cathy does in Conn., plant the bulbs inside a border of narcissi. They seem to migrate as soon as they've eaten all ^{the} relish. Here they could make a good living from the feed the birds waste, but that does not suit them.

This area has grown enormously because it was so much better a place to live and raise children than Baltimore, Washington or their suburbs. However, the newcomers brought with them what they found they didn't like in and near the larger cities. But we have the advantage of our five acres and we still have many deer and other animals. A racoon wandered into the main intersection of Frederick yesterday, was captured and taken to where he belongs. Another animal yesterday was fooling around with the electric wires downtown and short circuited the main lines for a while. It is still sort of rural.

And we were the beneficiary of the traditional rural thoughtfulness and kindness while I was hospitalized and until I was permitted to drive again. Even the lab technologist came here from every other day to daily when the clotting time of my blood had to be tested. Now it is only twice a week and I drive in. I can only wonder whether such a thing happens to you big cities?

Best to you all,
Harold

HAROLD,

Here is KATHARINE's STORY.

IF YOU LIKE IT - OR WANT TO JUST
SAY Hello - HER ADDRESS IS:

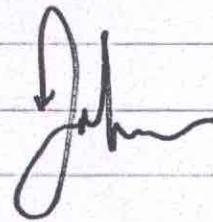
KATHARINE WEBER

108 BEACON ROAD

BETHANY, CT.

06525

HOP E YOU ENJOY THIS STORY.

A handwritten signature consisting of stylized initials "J" and "M" followed by a surname.

Joe- Her father, Sidney Kaufman, married James P. Warburg's daughter, Andrea, whose mother is Kay Swift, a Broadway star of our youth. They lived in a fine large house in Forest Hills, where I had a room the many, many days I was in New York trying to get my first book published. And from time to time later, when I was there to do radio and TV shows. When Sidney brought John down to our farm, when he was about 5, he really remembers it because recently he has been remembering it, and accurately, too. Sidney had left Hollywood when he was one of Walter Wanger's assistants. He stayed with me in Washington until he got his own place. He was one of many bright friends who wanted to help the coming war effort I was able to get worthwhile things to do. He was very able, bright, imaginative and a fine human being. They'd moved to Los Angeles. Sidney died in London. Kathy's brother John, a few years older, also moved back east, to Mass., near where he went to school as a boy. I am glad that both Kaufmans can afford to do the kind of writing they want to do. One of the most daring and imaginative things Sidney did was produce an anti-Klan movie in Louisiana. He took John with him, figuring it was as safe as he thought he'd made it by hiring all the klansmen he could to work while he made the movie! Nothing happened except that the movie was a success. H

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Katharine Weber
108 BEACON ROAD, BETHANY, CONNECTICUT 06524

Harold & Lil -
herewith, my fiction debut!
Love - Katheryn

It's a risk worth taking

SUNDAY BEST



By Katharine
Weber

"20/20" and "Phil Donahue" aired provocative shows that made a clear connection between DPT immunizations and numerous cases of such permanent and disastrous results, a minor panic was created among many parents of infants and toddlers across the country.

DPT stands for diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus, three diseases very much worth preventing. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children receive a series of DPT immunizations at 2½ months, 3½ months, 4½ months and 18 months, with a booster between the ages of 4 and 6. Routine reactions vary. Some children show no effect from the injections; some children run a slight fever and are sleepy and cranky; and, rarely, some children run a very high fever and show more severe, but temporary, side effects. Pediatricians usually give reduced doses for subsequent injections or otherwise modify the immunization program in those cases.

The sight of brain-damaged children accompanied by vivid descriptions of seizures and gross disabilities was understandably disturbing and threatening to many parents of young children. Appointments for routine immunizations were canceled. A rash of new lawsuits was brought against makers of the vaccine. In 1985, there were 19.79 million doses of DPT administered, and there were 219 suits filed. That works out to about 11 suits per million doses.

The problem lies in the pertussis element of the DPT vaccine. Pertussis is the fancy name for the childhood disease that our parents knew as whooping cough. When you call it whooping cough, it sounds a little folksy and not too serious, but it is a dreadful disease that can be fatal to very young children. The cough is so violent that it can cause brain damage.

No responsible parent would take a healthy child to the pediatrician in order for him to receive an injection that would cause seizures or permanent neurological damage.

That is why, when in 1984 and 1985

the pertussis vaccine is a made from a modified form of the pertussis bacteria, and it is thought that toxins from the bacteria are responsible for the adverse reactions. (It is also thought that those reactions may occur mostly in children with underlying neurological problems.) Compared to other vaccines, such as the diphtheria or tetanus elements in DPT, the pertussis vaccine is less refined.

So why immunize against pertussis if there is a risk? In England, where a national policy led to pertussis immunizations being stopped, and DT vaccines being administered instead, there followed a significant outbreak of whooping cough. The death rate for the disease is approximately one in 200 cases. The rate of severe neurological reactions to the pertussis vaccine is unknown, but in the words of one area pediatrician, whose practice has administered more than 50,000 DPT doses without observing a severe neurological reaction, "It is somewhere between one in 5,000 and one in 5 million."

Because of lawsuits seeking multi-million-dollar damage claims, a number of manufacturers have dropped the vaccine. (Outstanding claims for DPT lawsuits exceed \$5 billion at present.) Last year there was a serious shortage, and a number of physicians feared outbreaks of the disease. The remaining two laboratories that make the vaccine have been forced to make astronomical rate raises. A 15-dose vial of DPT vaccine that cost a physician \$5.43 in 1981 costs \$171 today, and \$120 of that price is reserved for product liability. The corresponding per-dose price has gone from 36 cents to \$11.40, a cost borne by the consumer that may also lead to failure to immunize.

In response to the growing crisis situation, the American Academy of Pediatrics is urging federal lawmakers to create a national vaccine injury compensation bill that would alleviate vaccine costs and take the pressure off manufacturers. (If this sounds good to you, write to your lawmakers.)

Clearly, the thinking that leads parents to decide against immunizing their children is well-intentioned, but it is a mistake. The odds against neurological damage from a DPT shot are far tinier than the very real risk of the disease run by an unprotected child.

It is probably easier for some parents to accept the consequences of that which appears to be uncontrollable — contracting a disease — than to take responsibility for a direct action — a DPT injection — that carries a minuscule but real risk.

Our childhood immunization programs are endangered. We need this legislation and we need some rational thinking. Do we really want to jeopardize the health of an entire generation?

Katharine Weber is a writer who lives in Bethany.

Kay Swift, Composer, Dies at 95; Hits Included 'Can This Be Love?'

By STEPHEN HOLDEN

Kay Swift, who wrote the music for the popular standards "Can't We Be Friends?", "Fine and Dandy" and "Can This Be Love?", died yesterday at the Alzheimer's Resource Center in Southington, Conn. She was 95.

She died of Alzheimer's disease, which was diagnosed three years ago, said a granddaughter, Katharine Webster.

Two of her most famous songs were written for the 1930 hit musical "Fine and Dandy," which had lyrics by Paul James (the pen name of her husband, James Paul Warburg, a banker) and was the first Broadway show for which all the music was composed by a woman. "Can't We Be Friends?" was introduced in 1929 in the hit revue "The Little Show," where it was sung by Libby Holman to Clifton Webb.

Miss Swift was romantically involved with George Gershwin in the 1930's, and she and Warburg divorced in 1935. Years later, Miss Swift was an invaluable resource to Gershwin scholars because she could fill in gaps in manuscripts and remember how

Gershwin played his music.

Katharine Faulkner Swift was born on April 19, 1897, in New York City, where she grew up and studied piano, composition and orchestration. After playing in a classical trio, she was a rehearsal pianist for the 1927 show "A Connecticut Yankee." Two years later, she cracked Broadway as a composer with "Can't We Be Friends?" In 1930, "Fine and Dandy," opened on Broadway, where it ran for 236 performances.

When the choreographer George Balanchine came to the United States, Miss Swift wrote the music for his ballet "Alma Mater," a 1935 spoof of the Harvard-Yale football game. She was director of light music at the 1939 World's Fair, the same year she married Faye Hubbard, a rodeo cowboy. The marriage, which ended in 1947, was celebrated in her chatty 1943 memoir, "Who Could Ask for Anything More?", which was made into the movie "Never a Dull Moment," with Irene Dunne and Fred MacMurray.

A third marriage, to Hunter Gallo-



Lusha Nelson

Kay Swift in the 1930's.

way, a radio announcer, also ended in divorce.

Miss Swift also contributed songs to "The Garrick Gaieties" (1930) and wrote most of the score for "Paris '90," a one-woman revue for Cornelia Otis Skinner, in 1952. A song cycle for her grandchildren, "Reaching for the Brass Ring," was performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1953. She also wrote songs for Radio City Music Hall revues, pieces for three world's fair exhibitions and commemorations for several national organizations, including the Camp Fire Girls and the American Medical Association.

Miss Swift made her last public appearance in 1986 at Merkin Concert Hall in Manhattan.

She is survived by two daughters, April Gagliano of Rome and Andrea Kaufman of Los Angeles, and six grandchildren.

SWIFT—Kay. On January 28, in her 96th year, after a long absence caused by Alzheimer's Disease. She was a songwriter par excellence, a beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, and a wonderful friend to many. Contributions may be sent to: The Kay Swift Archive at the John Erick Jackson Music Library at Yale University, P.O. Box 5469, Yale Station, New Haven, Connecticut 06520-5469. A musical memorial will be planned.

SWIFT—Kay. We record with deep sorrow the death of our member Kay Swift on January 28 in NY. Morton Gould, President ASCAP



Kay Swift

KAY SWIFT has two claims to a place in American musical history: first, in the Twenties, she was a rare exception to the rule that songwriters had to be grizzled cigar-chewing Lower East Side men; second, as his girlfriend and a fellow composer, she was George Gershwin's closest musical confidant apart from his brother Ira.

George was the cocky Tin Pan Alley song-plugger with ambitions to cross the tracks; Kay was a socialite, a banker's wife and a conservatory-trained musician who at one point in her life had written a fugue a week. Without her, he would undoubtedly have found his translation to the concert hall more laborious and painful. In turn, it was Gershwin songs which awakened her own interest in popular music, songs first heard when a mutual friend brought George to one of her parties. As always, Gershwin played for most of the evening; then, he stood up from the piano and said to Kay, "Well, I've got to go to Europe now."

On his return, they began a unique personal and professional relationship that lasted till George's sudden death from a brain tumour in 1937 — and beyond. Kay, no matter how you pushed her, refused to voice any criticism of George, beyond an expression of regret that he never married her. They saw each other constantly, but, despite her divorce, those who knew the merciful Gershwin doubted he would ever wed. One evening, entering a night-club, they were spotted by Oscar Levant: "Ah, here comes George Gershwin with the future Miss Kay Swift."

Marriage aside, there was no question of Kay's importance to the composer. At the first night of *Porgy and Bess* in 1935, she sat between George and Ira; they spent so much time at the piano together that, until her last illness, she was the first port of call for any Gershwin scholar who wanted to hear how George would have played any particular piece; the original manuscripts for the Preludes and several other works are written partly in his hand, partly in hers; they shared musical notebooks, jotting down themes and melodies, he starting at one end of the pad, she from the other.

After George's sudden death, she and Ira carefully preserved and numbered all the unused jottings, with Kay filling in the gaps from memory. Gradually and selectively, they began turning the best into new songs — first for the 1939 World's Fair, next for a Betty Grable film, *The Shocking Miss Pilgrim* (1946). The latter produced a couple of lasting additions to the Gershwin oeuvre — "For You, For Me, For Evermore" and "Aren't You Kind Of Glad We Did?" — but, over the years, more than a few of us wondered how much of the music was Gershwin and how much Swift.

"I would say to Ira, 'Look, this theme here would be really good for a main section, and then on this page there's a theme that we could work into a middle-eight,'" she recalled. But, in any kind of music, how the themes are put together are at least as important as what they are: surely, I suggested, she ought to have taken a co-composer's credit. "Oh, no," she insisted. "Every note is George's." Like Ira, at times she was content to neglect her own career to serve what she saw as George's genius.

Her own catalogue includes the music and lyrics for *Paris '90*, a revue for Cornelia Otis Skinner; the song cycle *Reaching For The Brass Ring*; and the score for one of George Balanchine's earliest American ballets, *Alma Mater* (1935), a spoof on the Harvard-Yale football game. But most of us know her for "Can This Be Love?" and other sophisticated revue songs.

She cracked Broadway in 1929, contributing to the score of *The Little Show* one of its biggest hits. "Can't We Be Friends?" is one of those effervescent swingers typical of the Twenties but with enough surprises — sliding down to a low D natural — to put it a cut above most of the rest. For words, Kay Swift turned to "Paul James" — a pseudonym for her husband, James Paul Warburg, scion of three great banking families and, as financiers go, not a bad lyricist: "I thought I'd found a man I could trust / What a bust! / This is how

me down and say Can't We Be Friends?" It's a neat lyric, though whether it suits the breezily carefree tune is another matter. Sinatra sang it slow and mournful, taking his cue from the words, attempting to infuse it with a solemnity the melody can't really support; most versions, such as Linda Ronstadt's successful revival, go with the tune, freewheeling and up-tempo.

Mr and Mrs Warburg landed another hit in 1930 with the title-song for *Fine and Dandy*, a number with an irresistible rhythmic device. She never found the notion of bankers on Broadway as striking as it seemed to others. "Bankers invest in the shows, they go to the shows, they throw the first-night parties for the shows," she told me, "so why shouldn't they write them?"

She had a theory, based on her friendships with Gershwin, Ravel and others, that composers look like their music. You can see it in George: brash, restless, assured, etc. But Kay Swift always looked to me like what she was — a high-tone banker's wife. She sprang to



life, though, when conversation turned to music. "When Ira was pleased with a lyric, he used to run around the room like a squirrel," she'd say, and then she'd show you. At the piano, she could conjure from memory an old Irving Berlin ragtime novelty that she'd last sung with her brother when they were 10 years old.

Unlike George, who was driven, Kay could turn her hand to everything and so never did enough. After his death, she went west and married a rodeo cowboy, an unlikely union which she chronicled in an idiosyncratic memoir, *Who Could Ask For Anything More?* (from a Gershwin lyric, of course). The book outlasted the marriage and was filmed in 1950 as *Never a Dull Moment* with Irene Dunne and Fred MacMurray as Kay and her cowboy. She wed a third time — to a radio announcer — and was divorced a third time.

Almost from their first meeting, it was George who was the most important man in her life. She was a tireless promoter of *Porgy And Bess* after its shaky premiere — but she knew enough, and was trusted enough by George, to suggest a few judicious cuts. And, despite his at times suffocating ego, she was never far from his thoughts. At the opening of *Strike Up the Band* (1930), in the middle of conducting the overture, he turned round to Kay, sitting directly behind him in the front row, and whispered, "April and Andy" — a reference to her daughters, who liked to do a little dance to one of the score's songs, "I've Got A Crush On You". She never ceased to marvel that any composer, on the first night of a show and on his first stint in the orchestra pit, could find time to recall a small moment of domestic pleasure.

In August 1936, the Gershwins left for Hollywood. Kay saw them off at the airport, having already agreed with George that it would be best if they didn't see or speak to each other for a year; then, when he returned, they would decide their future. The following June, after badgering friends for news of her, he phoned from California and said, "I'm coming back for both of us." A few weeks later, he was dead.

Mark Steyn

Kay Swift, composer, lyricist, writer, born New York City 19 April 1897, married 1918 James Warburg (two daughters; marriage dissolved 1935), 1943 Faye Hubbard (marriage dissolved 1947), Hunter Galloway (marriage dissolved), died Smithington Connecticut 28 Janu-

Katharine Weber

108 BEACON ROAD, BETHANY, CONNECTICUT 06524

April 23, 1993

Dear Harold,

I apologize for failing to keep up my end of the correspondence. My work is a swamp, and I have been devoting the past week to a detailed edit on Nick's major piece, about a fascinating and corrupt art dealer (down to 18,000 words from 35,000), for The New Yorker, which deadline was met, today. (They're sitting on a piece of mine, and have just turned down another, an imaginary interview with Philip Roth.) And I'm trying to work on my novel. And my grandmother's estate is a major drain, as always. But enough complaining. Harpercollins has now checked in, making a total of five publishers begging to see my completed novel. It's a bit daunting. I really do hope to finish, or make a good stab at it, in Ireland, alone, next month. (I've told you we have a small cottage on the coast of Cork?)

I wanted to let you know that having applied to the FBI a few months back for Sidney's files, they have written to me advising that I will have to pay \$70 in copying costs, as the file runs over 800 pages. That seems like a lot of pages, and I can't wait to read them. Surely they're not all about your visits to Forest Hills?

I had to laugh that you didn't know who Beatrice Rosenfeld is/was...does the name Beatrice Buchman ring a bell? Sidney became involved with her in Hollywood in 1936, around the time of Ernst Toller (whose literary rights Sidney's estate owns, because he seems to have swindled them away from Toller's widow, with whom he had an affair in the 1950s...) Beatrice was married then to Sidney Buchman, one of the Hollywood Ten. I have discovered (and discovered as a child, in the form of letters in the attic) lots of evidence suggesting that their alliance was alive and well through the time Sidney met and married my mother, and right through my own lifetime, until Sidney's death. She shared a space in his last office, and he introduced her to me several times with the phrase, "This is Beatrice.....She might have been your mother." When I say evidence I mean, beyond love letters and such, things like hotel receipts. It was truly an Affair. (A run-down inn and restaurant near us has a hilarious sign out front which reads, "Have Your Next Affair With Us!")

Now I've got to get back to work.....Hoping this finds you both well. Spring is really here, I think.

Look -
Kathy

Dear Cathy,

4/10/97

After reading your letter of the 7th I just sat and thought. With what your Griselda of a mother went through ^{earlier} what happened to her is what I'd not have expected. But knowing nothing about such matters, I suppose the past can have

that kind of influence. In any event, she is one of the finest human beings I met and we both hope that she continues to do well-for a long time!

Time is on our minds more than usual right now. I've just had my 84th birthday and there is the most surprising flow of kind card from total strangers, people I'd never heard of. I suppose some of those interested in the assassinations told others. And in eight days Lil has her birthday.

The years have not been easy but they have been kind to me because I'm still here and can function. If I had a bit more energy I'd file a FOIA lawsuit against O'Brien, who lied to me and I have the proof. But a year ago I had congestive heart failure with many complications, was discharged by the local hospital after two weeks, and then had it all over again. That time the expert called in by my cardiologist rushed me to Johns Hopkins. I was there more than three weeks. When I saw this local pulmonary expert three weeks ago he told me he'd not expected to see me live again. So, with a list of nine serious medical problems, including renal insufficiency and for the first time hx in my long life high, really high blood pressure on the Johns Hopkins report to him, I'm lucky.

Lil is still making out without the hip replacement she'll at some point need.

There is not much you can do ^{about} the FBI unless you can take them to court and when they do have a backlog you have to have a reason for not waiting for them to reach you. I have that but given the choice between continuing working with the energy that remains or taking time for that, I work. I'll be leaving many manuscripts that will be important in our history. As I can I'm getting them retyped on computers and distribute disks among my educator friends.

Sorry John's situation is no better and, of course, we are sorry that all this extra burden falls on you. But you'll do it and make it.

Please give your mother our wishes for a full recovery and many good years with no troubles and two beautiful granddaughters to make her happy.

Our love,

fei all

*I vary Mis got
lost on my
desh*

JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN
CONNECTICUT

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December 12, 1996

Mr. J. Kevin O'Brien
Chief, Freedom of Information-Privacy Acts Section
Information Resources Division
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

I am writing on behalf of my constituent, Ms. Katharine Weber of Bethany, Connecticut.

Ms. Weber contacted my office concerning her Freedom of Information-Privacy Act request for files on her father, Sidney Kaufman (FOIPA number 369,150-001). I understand that it is the policy of your office to fill FOIPA requests by the date on which the request was received so that no request is taken out of turn. Ms. Weber received a letter in April 1993 acknowledging her request and assigning it an FOIPA number. From other correspondence I have had with you concerning FOIPA cases, I understand that your office is currently filling FOIPA requests received after May 1994. Ms. Weber has waited more than three years for her request to come up in the queue. Just as it would be unfair for her request to be filled before her turn, it is also unfair for her request to be passed over when its turn came up due only to the size of the file. Please find enclosed a copy of Ms. Weber's correspondence with my office. I would greatly appreciate your reviewing the delay and an appropriate response.

Please direct your reply to my State Office located at One State Street, 14th Floor, Hartford, Connecticut 06103, Attention: Cindy Lemek.

Thank you for your care and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN
United States Senator

JIL:crl
Enclosure
cc: Ms. Katharine Weber

Lingering over a good book: the dictionary

SUNDAY BEST



By Katharine Weber

answers ranged from favorite novels to practical survival guides. No one came up with what would have been my answer: Webster's Second International Dictionary, unabridged.

Whenever I look up a word in the dictionary, I get hooked. Look up the spelling of *bourgeois* and there you see *bouw* (an Indonesian unit of land area equal to 1.75 acres.) And what about *boutade* (a caprice or whim) — now there's a nifty word. Now, how was *bourgeois* spelled again?

I call this habit "adjacent reading." Sometimes I can stop writing something in midsentence in order to check a spelling or meaning in the dictionary, only to become engrossed in adjacent reading for very long periods of time. I lose track of whatever I was writing, the time, and above all, my original quest for information that sent me to the dictionary in the first place.

While checking to see if *flight song* ought to be hyphenated, what did I find but *flimp* (to spirit away, to rob), *flifus* (a double somersault performed on a trampoline), and *fliskmahoy* (a flighty woman). I find myself trying to fit some of my new finds into everyday conversation, but it is usually a little conspicuous. Many a fliskmahoy has found herself in a flifus over a fellow, only to discover that he has flimped her heart. You start talking that way and people know you've been hitting the old dictionary pretty hard again.

Sometimes a word that seems vaguely familiar is defined by a word that is utterly foreign. *Footstalk* might sound like something you could figure out, but it is in fact a) the pediole or petiole of a flower, b) a peduncle, or c) the lower part of a millstone spindle. Time to look up *peduncle*, and off we go into the p's.

What book would you choose to have on a desert island? Lots of people select the Bible or the complete works of Shakespeare. When I questioned a number of people on this subject for an article last year, the

answers ranged from favorite novels to practical survival guides. No one came up with what would have been my answer: Webster's Second International Dictionary, unabridged.

Peduncle turns out to be less interesting than it sounds because it's one of the many thousands of words in flower language. But it is on the same page as *peesweep* (an English bird). If you do a lot of this kind of free-form adjacent reading you begin to realize that lots of good words turn out to be birds, the private parts of flowers or the names of things that lived at the bottom of certain Peruvian lakes during the Triassic period.

Whilst one wanders among the p's, one's eye is caught by *pewless*. What could it mean? "He was a sniveling and pewless coward" sounds about right. But no: the dictionary entry reads "pewless" — having no pews."

Sometimes I see if I can find an entire dictionary page that consists of words that are more or less familiar, scientific terms excepted. So far I haven't succeeded, although I've come pretty close. There are amazing numbers of words stockpiled in the dictionary that we just don't use. Even William F. Buckley doesn't use them all.

Did you know that something that is *torulose* is somewhat *torose*? An *ursogram* is not an urgent communication from a bear. You may be a *usufructuary* in your own backyard. Another term for *yampee* is *cush-cush*. Dr. Seuss did not make up the *zonule of zim* and you have two yourself.

Every year we read about the newest accumulation of technical terms and word concretions that have permeated the outer membranes of everyday language. It has been more than a decade since Edwin Newman began wringing his hands over the misuse of "hopefully" and he is still right, but it has been accepted by most dictionaries. (It's only a page or two away from *howkit* and *holus-bolus*.)

It is tempting to suggest a moratorium on the creation and acceptance of any new words or phrases until we have made full use of the ones we've got. The reason that would never work is that our language is constantly growing and evolving. It is a living thing. The oldest and most established rules of language and grammar were once new.

I might have personal objections to much of what passes for new language today, but I defend its right to exist. Common use makes anything legitimate if a long enough time passes and the word or phrase remains in currency. Trendy words and expressions tend to go the way of the Nehru jacket.

Meanwhile, there are lots of neglected words that are well worth saving. You too can adopt a word and take it out for some fresh air. Your sponsorship can help make the difference for underprivileged words that haven't been used in years. Anargyrose sponsors are welcome. (Look it up.)

Katharine Weber is a writer who lives in Bethany.

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!

LUCY AND CHARLOTTE, JANUARY 1993

K. Weber

108 Beacon Road
Bethany, Connecticut 06524

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Our house is in this village,
though it would be one more postcard
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I got your letter just before
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