

SYDNEY ALUMNI MAGAZINE (SAM) - SURVEY RESPONSE FROM THE SON OF SAM AND OTHER PEOPLE OF THE BOOK: (TOO MUCH SHARING?)

Today I read the Sydney Alumni Magazine (SAM March 2011) almost from cover to cover. I then promptly forgot the contents as I went on to other matters. Three hours later I did the SAM survey without looking at the magazine. After this, I looked briefly through the SAM magazine again and thought my first response had been too harsh. I'm sharing my current response with you in the interests of our mutual education and health.

I read every edition of SAM and am always very interested in the Vice-Chancellor's (VC) report. In regard to the fourteen other categories of information SAM provides, I can only tell you that how much of anything I read depends entirely on a quick assessment of the story content, to see if it relates to my interests, which are many. I have little or no idea which section of SAM I am reading at the time and I bet few other readers do either, on reflection.

I would like to hear more about the university's course offerings through SAM, but as a potential teacher, not as a student. See what I taught at Sydney University until I took the redundancy package in 2007 on www.Carolodonnell.com.au. The university should coordinate its efforts and offerings more broadly and effectively with the global and national goals of the total community, not just with those of scholars and their brethren.

When asked to rate 7 aspects of SAM, I noted that I am only ever aware of caring about content. I wrote that my impression was that SAM's content quality had gone downhill and that it had become more trivially disconnected and any coordinated policy direction moved too slowly. Later I flicked through SAM again and thought I had been too harsh in this questionnaire response, because I found the contents interesting, as I often do.

I noted yet another timid speech from VC Michael Spence and remembered Gavin Brown as an extremely entertaining and clever man who I guess was worked to death and who had some of the most boring hobbies I could imagine besides football – crosswords, Robert Burns, red wine and horse racing. He was bloody slow as well in spite of all his hard work. He had the gall to tell me he had no power to go and sort out university direction with the NSW Premier. He would not use his power because of being so drilled by the past. You mob are all alike except if there is a quid or a paper to be made off local, US or UK coattails.

However, I enjoyed reading about our ladies on stamps, especially as I think I recall the problems Sydney University gave Anne Summers over whether her terrific 'Damned Whores and God's Police' was good enough for a PhD, before she went into US magazine publishing with 'Sassy' and the US sponsors decided they did not like her tone. What did Elizabeth Evatt achieve other than the Evatt name? I have absolutely no idea. Given her background are we supposed to cheer that she went so far in law? Obviously Germaine Greer has been terrific globally and Eva Cox battled on gamely for years. It was very interesting to read about China Futures and about Sakuko Matsui's great life.

I read the rest with somewhat less interest and the article on John Brogden facing depression with conventional wisdom and pills was very irritating. The institution does very little to inquire into depression and suicide honestly because of the nature of the money and status race in which it invests which also create a supportive brain drain for the privileged in any nation. At least John Brogden has heard of the word 'denial'. It apparently helps him take pills and be fat. Four things that we will almost never see at Sydney University are honest and clear discussions of depression, suicide, law or finance.

For me, Australian books cannot compete with the quality and immediacy of a broader range of newspaper and TV reports or with cheap second hand or library books, videos or films. I had to watch the 'News Hour' on SBS TV to know about and order Bethany McLean and Joe Nocera's 'All the Devils are Here', the hidden history of the global financial crisis. A lot of this also appears to form the basis for the wonderfully clear, Oscar winning film entitled 'The Inside Job', which is now showing locally. McLean also co-wrote 'The Smartest Guys in the Room' on the rise and fall of Enron, which began life in supposedly clean energy. One wonders who pushed the turgid 'Traders, Guns and Money' or how all the other stuff is selected for Gleebooks, etc. It is not as if getting more of their women on US boards gained much besides global financial crisis.

When asked if SAM made me FEEL connected to the university I pointed out that I AM connected to the university as I live just down the road and go there almost every day to poke around the notice boards, buy the Sydney Morning Herald and the Australian Financial Review, go to the gym, walk through the grounds, etc. Along with a computer, TV, books, movie theatres, video shop, international and domestic travel, parks and other lectures or seminars at lunch, the university provides one of the pillars of my life.

This reminded me of a gripe, which is that Sydney University has too few notice boards which are not behind glass. This means that students have to put up expensive posters which are pulled down or pasted over within a day. I get a lot of information from posters, which I love. It always surprises me that the students do not revolt over the notice board situation. If I was paying for the posters and putting them up, I'd be very angry. The poster of a turd stating 'Don't step on me' was as memorable as the gallery.

As I filled in the lowest income level box on the SAM survey I again became aware that I have never had so much freedom and potentially disposable income in my entire life, which could only be nicer if I had a young, decorative, useful, occasional boy friend. (I hate risk.) Yet again I thanked the lord for giving me such a lovely house, free time and money along with the even more wonderful blessings of good health and education.

Hoping this helps your survey, Cheers
Carol O'Donnell, St James Court, 10/11 Rosebank St., Glebe, Sydney 2037
www.Carolodonnell.com.au

HOW RUDE IS THAT NUDE?

Hi All

Thanks very much for sending the terrific captions for 'The love that dared speak its name' the exhibition on homosexuality in the rare books collection at Sydney University. I certainly will not break your copyright. Blanchard writes 'Everybody wants a history'. If only this were true because a history and related economic, political, legal, cultural and religious analyses are what we need most and do not have, to improve our current situation. Academics tend to cling firmly to their colleagues' blinkers for their support.

Why not make a film to establish our historical and cultural context for homosexuality and for our broader institutional direction, as you appear to have been trying to do in your gallery work? I am currently thinking of this rare book collection, the treatment of the nudes in the Nicholson and University art galleries and the related pictures at the Tin Sheds gallery in the exhibition of the 'play power' era, which is now finished.

Whether or not you make your own film, would you cooperate if I invited to Sydney an English train driver from my last Intrepid trip to Japan, to make a similar film? He made a beautiful 30 minute film of our trip to Japan, with a little hand held camera. He edited it, added great music to it and sent it to everybody in the group for free. Contact me to have a look. See the related feedback below to the Sydney Alumni Magazine (SAM) survey and the attached policy directions. See more at www.Carolodonnell.com.au

I mainly see your work in the light of the wonderful Freud exhibition organized a couple of years ago in the Nicholson Museum. Janine Burke's book 'The Gods of Freud' then also made me see the intensity and depth of Freud's connexion to ancient global history. (I never had the Latin.) A year earlier, I had been to Freud's house in Vienna. The 'New Yorker' had taken up two thirds of the space with a huge number of very large and very funny cartoons about psychiatrists, drawn over many decades, cramming the other house contents into a third of the space. Freud hated the US. I loved the joke. Only last year's Sydney University Art Gallery exhibition on the Chinese Cultural Revolution was more beautiful, more slyly humorous and thrilling. The new China Studies Centre should help. One wonders how the Chinese, Japanese and others feel about our common heritage.

To me there are two distinct Freuds. One offers insights into the human condition which many have increasingly recognized personally and so accepted into popular culture and expressed in books, songs, movies, poems, etc. The other Freud claims to be able to cure the sick. I reject the latter Freud as likely to be a charlatan in his claims because the psychoanalyst can only 'know' what the patient tells him. This is a reason we love Tony Soprano and his family so much. We are in on all the jokes which are another's truth.

I've read a lot of and about Freud and greatly distrust the Freud who claimed to be a great 20th century healer, as distinct from Freud, the broad intellectual and man of history, letters and the world. All you need is love? However, from the common university pretence that psychology is a science rather than a social science and for related status reasons, I guess Freud will either go medical now or be totally trashed and forgotten like Galbraith. Homosexuals and those interested in the truth as distinct from its manipulation have a major stake in related debates, which are ideally broader than 'nature or nurture'.

So I suggest we make highbrow movies. I can also show you the 7 minute Tropfest films I made on women's health and on mental health with the help of students when I was teaching at Sydney University, to encourage others to do much better. See my subject outlines, assessments, lectures, background, posters, etc. on: www.carolodonnell.com.au

Sir David Attenborough said in the last episode of his 'First Life' on ABC TV (13.3.2011)

Somebody once said if you're tired of the history of life you must be tired of living. I can't possibly believe that's true. It's utter bollocks.

As our most brilliant recent teacher, he puts his finger on a common problem of our feudal common law and statute cultures, which is that it is very difficult to correct past mistakes, especially as our men control the books. This is sad because one knows how much we women have always loved to read and write, especially in 'fiction'. It provides the often unpalatable truth that men are emotional beings who may be driven by hidden or open forces besides self interest and the markets. I guess the ancients knew this first.

Marx provided a vital history of the decline of European feudal relations and the development of global capitalism but provided little theory of emotional responses other than as an expression of the need to preserve the self through controlling land, working and trading to gain money. Freud had the temerity not only to deny God but to address the reasons for madness, crime, rebellion and war from related dispassionate positions. By addressing the family formation of drives towards life and death, he provided a basis for wider, more honest thought and action to preserve the self and its circles. To do so Freud hardly needed to be a medical man. However, he valued his claims to science.

Marx, Freud and other conceptual giants are leaders in an embryonic modern and democratic era ideally driven by those who invent and deliver improving technologies and systems of service to all consumers and communities, including future generations. This is hindered by many older legal and financial systems which usually remain based on feudal assumptions and serve their interests. In an ideal Family of Man Management Approach, God is assumed to be driven by love of life. The key assumption is that the competent expression of love is more likely to depend upon more open knowledge, rather than on more trust in the lord and in his secret forces which is the key feudal requirement.

In this context, the ideal point of legislation to remove discrimination is to let people choose, express themselves and be judged more equally and therefore openly, without fear of harm unless they really screw up. To help protect our related global heritage and also to improve and deliver services as broadly as possible to future generations, the attached submission to the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research's Book Industry Strategy Group outlines the direction for governments and producers to take with communities to develop and implement comprehensive strategies for securing and improving the place of Australia and others in emerging communications markets.

Books are ideally conceptualised along with other written, audio and visual materials in the context of all regional production, sales and related education, entertainment and data gathering to assist all industries and communities to achieve more sustainable development more broadly, quickly and entertainingly through more open communication. All goods, services and their supply chains are ideally conceptualised in related communities, so we may all understand how many regional environments may be improved together from current and future environmental and social perspectives. Lawyers and laws which operate under feudal conditions ideally have no place here.

Australian state and capitalist trading relations are ideally more openly based on taxation, banking, insurance, superannuation, sovereign and other investment funds which drive higher quality, cheaper, wider production and niche markets in the service of broader communities composed of citizens, workers, consumers, investors and others. Funding approaches ideally promote more stable market conditions as well as injury prevention and rehabilitation. However, secretive, adversarial, legal, financial and related production expectations still drive this better designed production backwards as they privilege feudal production values which have also led to much destruction. Women and men should normally be prepared to work with all to create fairer, greener, healthier, more entertaining regions. For example, work with land developers, Jesus or children.

Personally, I was gob-smacked to learn on my trip to Berlin and Vienna in 2007 that in Jewish mythology Lilith was Adam's first wife, who he did not like because she argued. Listening to his complaints, God then made Eve from Adam's rib. Christians forgot about Lilith. Our garden has been taken over and we have been stuck with lots of dumb and nasty feudal relations ever since. We need Lilith the Magic Pudding to help us get it back. Why not contact all your friends and get them to sing out and give her a call?

The book the Magic Pudding was written and drawn by Norman Lindsay for a bohemian crowd of Australian children and became a puppet show and film. A Magic Pudding is always the type of pudding the consumer wants. It always regenerates itself after being eaten and so goes on and on. Australian funds must be made like the Magic Pudding, with the added stabilising capacity to address and manage investment risks effectively. Lilith the Magic Pudding ideally leads in educational, entertaining encounters at every age, teaching the new modern paradigm. Ask Britain, New York and California to guide as they did before in the historical and lyrical tradition of human rights that we adore, or not. One hopes that Europeans, Asians and the rest will all contribute. The Pope has set the ball rolling by waiving his condom ban. What can the Vatican do? Do not ask Lilith. She is in the Night Garden looking for Upsy Daisy and Iggle Piggle. Come and help her.

Yours truly

Carol O'Donnell, St James Court, 10/11 Rosebank St., Glebe, Sydney 2037
Queen of the Monkeys and Lilith the Magic Pudding, Chief Alternative to Faith

