

# Befuddled nuclear physicist vents frustrations via poetry

**Editor's Note:** Beginning Oct. 20, the Emerald will publish bi-monthly a collection of reader-submitted poetry, short stories, drawings and news stories. Deadline for the first edition is Friday at 5 p.m. Except for poems, no selections will be accepted unless typed, triple spaced and written 65 characters to a line (set in margins at 10 and 75). The material will be screened by a committee that will change every two months. While there is no length limit, special consideration will be given to short selections. Material should be submitted at the Emerald offices on the third floor of the EMU.

In some of my weak moments (like when I feel rattled after giving a particularly bad lecture!) I write poetry (really!). So as soon as I heard about the new supplement I went to see Claudia Giselle Reet. She is one of the gutsy people who will screen the poems for publication. Without beating around the bush I asked:

"Look Claudia, I thought you want new poets, particularly unique types of poets. Now look at me! I am brand new. Never published a poem before. I am also a unique type. There isn't another theoretical nuclear physicist in Oregon who writes poetry." The last statement was trivially true

because there are only two nuclear theorists in Oregon. But I don't think Claudia knew it.

"Claudia, would you like to publish one of my poems? I shall be happy to contribute one." I meant what I said. Indeed, discovering a new poet of my caliber might be just the break the Emerald needs to establish its credibility in this field.

"Amit, I know you have published a few papers in physics, but what makes you think that your work in poetry is worth publication?"

Now that threw me! To me it is fairly obvious that anybody who can write physics can write poetry provided he gets rattled often enough. However, I have learned to be cautious about communicating such obvious things to these literary types. They have a habit of getting offended. So I said in as nonchalant a manner as I could master,

"I have to look at some of your stuff before I can commit myself."

"That's no problem." I opened my briefcase and handed out a bunch of my poems to her. She looked them over and frowned.

"Amit, I am sorry to say, but these are all love poems. I sympathize with your reasons for taking the love poem route, but we are just not accepting any love poems.

"Well, I do have one hate poem." I wrote this one when I was so rattled that I just couldn't think of love. I handed her the sheet of paper. After a while, Claudia said,

"Amit, I commend you for being able to write so many obscene words in such a short space, particularly since you blush every time you hear any of us utter any such words. But sorry, there just isn't enough hate in that poem."

I was getting desperate. "Listen Claudia, you must admit that I am a pretty good physicist. Maybe you would like to look at my science poem."

"Really? You wrote a science poem?" Finally she sounded a bit interested.

"Yeah. I also read this one to my class last summer." It was about the Atlantic Ocean and moving tectonic plates. Great stuff! Well, Claudia was reading it with some interest. But a frown showed up again on her face.

"What's wrong this time?" "Listen Amit, you just have to practice more on your poetry."

"But Claudia, there were forty students in that class and everybody liked the poem!"

"How could you tell?" "They looked sort of contented."

"That's probably because it was a diversion from the even more horrible stuff that you teach."

Claudia seemed adamant for some strange reason. I had run out of poems by now and had to try another approach.

"Claudia! I know the reason you don't like my poems. The English is too simple, right? They sound like translations. So why not say at the end something like 'translated by the author from original Bengali,' or better yet 'original Sanskrit.' Don't you think that could be the most exotic item of the literary supplement, the center of the centerfold?"

"Amit, I am sorry. The answer is still no. You just have to, what's that phrase you physicists use, 'go back to the blackboard'."

I was about to give up. I was really feeling sorry, not so much for myself, mind you, but for so many people missing out on a new approach to poetry writing. Suddenly Claudia said something that brought a new ray of hope in me.

"There is a way for you. See, frankly we are not getting too many worthwhile contributions. So, we have been thinking about starting a competition to come up with the most effective publicity gimmick that will bring in the most contributions. The winner gets to publish one short poem, no questions asked. Now, there is your chance, Amit."

So, dear readers and past, present and future pupils, here is an appeal from your favorite professor. Come forward and be counted. Contribute to the Emerald literary supplement. Now, I don't like to threaten, but if you don't (thus ruining my last chance of publishing a poem), I shall have no other alternative but to publicize my poetry through reading them in my classes. Now what would you prefer?

Amit Goswami  
Prof. of Physics

## County sanctions public defense

By CAROLE HAMILTON  
Of the Emerald

Following three years of debate, the Lane County Board of Commissioners recently approved a program that establishes a Public Defenders Office (PDO) in Eugene. The PDO is a non-profit, county-funded organization which supplies defense counsel to those who are unable to afford a private attorney.

A seven-member board of trustees, appointed by the board of commissioners, is responsible for governing and appointing the PDO staff, which includes one public defender, seven staff attorneys and two attorneys specifically for juvenile cases.

The office takes over juvenile cases in November and adult cases in January. Up until now, private attorneys were assigned all of these cases.

After careful modification of the original proposition, the PDO will be responsible for approximately one-half of all court-appointed cases. The remaining cases will continue to be assigned to private lawyers.

Ned Briner, assistant county

administrator, feels the "mixed system," using both public defenders and private attorneys, is beneficial to Lane County's system of justice. There will be a larger source of lawyers available, says Briner. "Also, public defenders will soon develop an expertise in criminal procedures and the handling of a case will be on par with the DA's (district attorney's) staff."

Briner believes a staff specializing in public defense will cause an equalization between defense and prosecution.

Under this new program the assigned private attorneys will receive pay equal to the public defender and DA. Briner feels that this will be a definite improvement in the quality of client defense.

Previously, private attorneys "were, for all practical purposes, donating their time," says Briner. They did, however, receive payment, but it was a salary far below their usual wage. According to Briner, this was helpful to the budget, but not to the client. A lawyer may not devote as much time to a non-paying client as to a profitable one.

Apparently the public defender won't have this problem since

none of his clients will pay for his service. Instead, the public defender will receive a wage from the state, which will be equivalent to an attorney in private practice.

Briner feels that another major advantage of the PDO is that it will be equipped to provide a speedy trial. Briner explains that although the program will add approximately \$19,000 to the budget, this expense will be regained in the number of trials able to go through the courts in a given amount of time. Under the previous arrangement, the average time between arrest and trial was 200 days, but the use of a PDO is expected to shorten this time to 90 days.

The public defender program has undergone improvements since its conception in 1973. Originally, the proposition advocated a "pure" public defenders system, meaning that the office would handle 100 per cent of the cases. If this had been approved, Briner says, the source of attorneys would have been seriously limited. He believes that by comparison, the mixed system provides an adequate number of lawyers for the work.

Maybe you don't like to spend your noontimes indoors?

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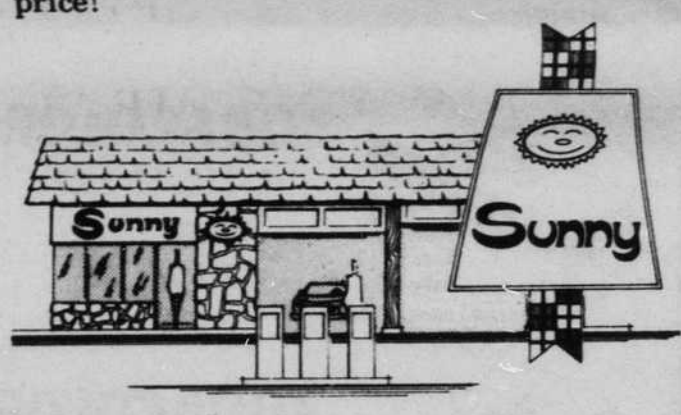
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