

My Uncle Mort

...Texas A&M Former Student?



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On Bubble-Blowing and Peace Pipes....

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

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Aunt Maude, wed to my Uncle Mort since Noah's ark went into dry dock, says that her hubby regularly encounters premonitions while in dreamland.

"When he says, 'I'll bet you can't guess what I dreamed last night,' I know that soon he'll be untangling his dreams in his workshop, not likely to be heard from again until suppertime," my aunt observes.

Invariably, his dreams become schemes. His every blink provides imaginary dollar marks, and then, the fun begins once more on what he considers low-hanging fruit in the orchards alongside gold-paved roads leading to instant riches....

"It was a really strange one last night," Mort said. "I kept dreaming about alternate songs, with Texas A&M flags fluttering in the breeze. One seemed to fit, and why wouldn't it? It was the 'Aggie War Hymn,' warming the hearts of Texas A&M faithful since its introduction back in 1907. Alternating with it, however, was a chorus of Aggies--doing their best to stay 'in tune--singing 'I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles'."

Huh?

Learning that the bubbles tune came along just one decade later, Mort tuned in to ESPN, and--shocker of shockers--the Texas Aggies were winning a Super Regional Championship, thus qualifying for the NCAA College World Series in Omaha! And every time they scored a run, pretty bubbles wafted skyward, not by the dozens or hundreds, but by the tens of thousands!....

Turns out , a couple of players brought small bottles of bubbles--with tiny plastic wands--to a game several years ago. Then, "copycat-itus" took over. Fans started bringing bubble-blowing paraphernalia, and now they even have rentals inside the stadium. Some of the bubble machines are now affixed to the dug-out, allowing for the emission of bubbles big enough to startle pilots 20,000 feet in the air.

This may be the most creative use of bubbles since the 1940s, when dancers discovered a third option available to skirt the law--in addition to strategic placement of fans and feathers.

The "Aggie War Hymn" is, of course, here to stay. But don't be surprised if Aggie fans--perhaps led by the 12th man--don't cut loose with the bubbles melody when their team scores in the College World Series. There, it may require mirrors in addition to feathers, fans and bubbles to win it all....

This, then , is the backdrop for Mort's current "premonition."

That he would dream of such songs involving Aggies hours before seeing bubbles engulfing Blue Bell Park seemed providential.

"My mind started spinning, conjuring ways to make big money promoting giant-sized bubble peace pipes that ought to be popular with both the Aggies and the University of Texas Longhorns. After all, the athletic heavyweights--archrivals in the old Southwest Conference--soon will be slugging it out as members of the Southeast Conference," Mort mentioned....

In his workshop, Mort concocted distinctive bubbles--Aggie maroon and UT burnt orange.

Marketing should be a no-brainer.

He envisions selling the soapy liquid near stadium entrances, by the gallon or by the barrel....

Further, he envisions bubbles representing a peace gesture between the long-warring universities. "Instead of smoke signals of war, why not gather around the campfire and blow bubbles together?" he joked. Since Aggie brain trusts recently nixed resumption of the bonfire, maybe a joint campfire is just the thing to mend fences and start anew.

"I'm a concept person," Mort maintains. "I'll let others work out the details."

It may not be a stretch for Mort's claim to be a "former student." (He knows that Aggies bristle upon hearing the words "ex-students." They prefer "former students.") Technically, Mort may be a "former student." Years ago, he enrolled in the School of Engineering, but he dropped out after one day. He may have been too 'finely focused' on job security, figuring that we'll always need engineers to drive the trains....

Dr. Newbury is a longtime public speaker and former university president who is Texas' longest-running syndicated columnist, writing weekly since 2003.