

Pieces of Mind



Brevity and Levity - 1994

by Alan Harris

Pieces of Mind

Brevity and Levity - 1994

by Alan Harris

**Thanks are extended to the Burlington Northern Railroad
for providing the commuting time necessary for this project.**

This book is downloadable in Adobe Acrobat PDF format at:

www.alharris.com/pdfbooks

Poems and Photos Copyright © 2008 by Alan Harris.
All rights reserved.

Many who will sit inert before a TV all day will also honk in slow traffic.



Leaving a few stones unturned in a marriage or a minefield can be downright healthy.



Something about righteous people strikes one as wrongous.



If every discarded corporate goal in America could be changed into a muffin,
world hunger might be ended.



Give a man a fish
and feed him for a day;
teach a man to fish
and he casts his life away.



Ye armies, take up golf.



God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
Later, IBM said, "Let the chips fall where they may,"
and chaos was upon the earth.



He traveled the world, carrying vast unexplored territories within.

Thrice passed along and truth goes wrong.



Plenty from Nothing

So many good deeds,
costing no one a dime,
are done by the people
who have the least time.



A society lady's best snub is no match for that of a summoned house cat.



Nobody scolds like a coward.



“I don't mind dying,” the old-timer mused, “but I'm sure going to miss myself.”



Epitaph

(as wished by Keith E. Harris)

Some of my advice was good, some poor.
Some was followed, some ignored.
May it be that the good advice was followed
and the poor advice was ignored.

Delayed Honor

Advanced degrees
(a waste of time?)
require a climb
on servile knees.
Who dare displease
and do the contrary
get all the honorary
Ph.D.'s.



Silence is golden, like wedding rings only much scarcer.



When I'm very ill, no fat ladies may sing at my bedside.



The first robin of spring has to eat frozen entrées.



Whoever first said "Hey, man!" was to be the most widely quoted dude in modern times.



A stitch in time saves the theory of relativity.



Too many looks spoil the betrothal.

People You May Know

Execudrudge

Follows paralytic procedures to the nth decree.

Maitre d'isdain

Helps you feel humble in a restaurant where you don't really belong.

Hairbabblor

Gets gossip all over your new do.

Cellular phony

Attracts dates by flashing his pocket phone.

Stockbroken

Working on his third improved system.

Standup Graffitian

Writes high comedy in the stalls.

Hell's Angler

Rides a Harley to the trout stream.

Altered Boy

Piously trades puberty for the soprano section.

Baba Bigaura

A perfected being who has to take on disciples to keep from starving.



Pep Talk to Shy Poets

Will editors request the poems
you've written for your drawer?
As well make friends by holing up
behind an armored door.

Law of Halves

Reprimands
where none are needed
make every new one
half as heeded.



Music is evidence that beauty, mathematics, and time all live in the same neighborhood.



Stumbling blocks make wonderful starting blocks for the next race.



Happiness may come in waves separated by generous troughs.



Jesus had quite an impact for one who apparently knew no algebra.



When you're down in the dumps, advice becomes excruciatingly abundant.



A kiss in time makes nine.



When a salesman says my name repeatedly, he is pushing a button—the eject button.

Getting your hair clipped tends to make your secrets fall out of your mouth.



Junk Class Mail

A proposed new category for most US Mail,
which would be conveyed from the Post Office directly into a
nearby recycling truck, offering Americans an environmentally
correct savings of millions of domestic hours.



Perhaps 90% of us have been talked into doing 90% of what we have done.



Corporate Image Task Force Report

Our research shows that the best way to make our customers think
they are getting what they ask for is to give them what they ask for.



Half of humanity have ego problems, while the other half are proud not to have any.



No Hog Heaven?

Might not the same bliss
as the guru's Nirvana
be experienced by pigs
in a rotten banana?



The road to hell is littered with the manuscripts
of church sermons written late on Saturday.

To marry for happiness may end up stretching both words a little.



Businessman's Prayer

God grant me the ingenuity
to escape the things I cannot change,
money to change the things I can,
and lawyers to know the difference.



Random silences deepen a conversation and add force to an argument.



Unanimously Remorseful

Personnel in a meeting
to agreements may come,
which in each of their hearts
they know to be dumb.



Good Morning Wish

May your breakfast food nourish,
your day ahead flourish,
and your outlook on living
be never too worryish.



Well-Balanced Man

He's just as shallow as he is loud,
as incompetent as he is arrogant,
and as insecure as he is cocksure.

Lecture: a verbal dance between voice and attention,
sometimes accompanied by meaning.



Never lose more money than you can afford to lend.



Exposed

In life no law's known
to prevent hurtful words,
as in death one's gravestone
is wide open to birds.



He has a six-figure handshake.



To nurse a few grudges is forgivable if you try not to breast-feed them.



The Kindest Safe

Thieves will fail,
try as they may,
to steal any money
you've given away.



Comfort: what philosophers deride in order to somewhat achieve.

Computers have enabled business offices to move much more quickly
from one emergency to the next.



Perhaps the only infallible way to detect a lie is to be the liar.



Country Song Title

“You Punched a Hole in My Heart Like I Was A Train Ticket to Peoria”



Didn't we think we were bad when we used to do a drive-by tooting?



The wealthy appreciate humility in others, and some even pretend to it themselves.



No bird flies freer than a skating child.



Computer Book Title

Artificial Intelligence for Dummies



A computer is a city in a box.



Find some friends you like, or be satisfied with the friends who find you.



In Case of Offense

The feather of humor
may sometimes
be felt as a dagger thrust.
Humblest apologies to
any wounded reader.

—A. H., April, 1994





About Alan Harris

When Alan Harris was born on Sunday, June 20, 1943, his father, Keith E. Harris, was piloting a B-17 in bombing missions over Europe while his mother (Margie) worried about Keith lovingly from Illinois.

Schooling in Earlville, Illinois (Alan's home town) was interesting, useful, and generally free of creativity (do what the teacher says, get the good grade). From 5th through 12th grades he played the trumpet in the school band and enjoyed the contest trips. His father drove a school bus as part of his living (farming was the other part), and if Alan happened to ride on his father's bus, he had to very much behave.

Illinois State University was where Alan became chagrined over how a student with a full class load could possibly keep up with all of the assignments given in said classes.

He felt he was a pawn in a game, but with judicious time-shuffling and corner-cutting he plowed along and made respectable grades amidst all the worries.

A bright spot at ISU was taking a contemporary American poetry class with Dr. Ferman Bishop. Through him Alan discovered depths in poetry that he had never dreamed of while in high school. E. E. Cummings took him for zingy flights of in-your-faceness. T. S. Eliot, whose symbols even had symbols, fully baffled him. Robert Frost was slyly charming. Emily Dickinson's mastery of rhyme and meter for conveying soul and spirit made the young poet's heart go funny. Alan started "being a poet" in his sophomore year (1962) at ISU. Poetry had been previously unneeded in his life but now was available to contain parts of his soul that he hadn't realized were there.

After graduating from ISU in 1966 there was the little matter of having to earn a living, which took the form of two years of high school English teaching, three years of tuning and repairing pianos, and (after a 1976 MS in Computer Science at Northern Illinois University) about 25 years of computer work (mainly programming, in-house computer teaching, and Web development—for Commonwealth Edison Company in Chicago).

During most of that vocational stint before retirement, Alan continued to write poems. Even with the whirl of commuting it was still possible to emote at home. He launched his current Web site (www.alharris.com) in 1995 with a few poems, and eventually has populated it with almost everything he has written. As a poet, essayist, story-writer, and photographer he has spurned the print publication route, having seen the excruciations gone through by other writers trying to make a big name and big money for themselves via magazine and book publishers. With the Web, there's instant publication, moneyless communication, and a worldwide potential audience. Of course, the literature has to stand on its own feet to get readers, but it's always there for those who seek it, or just happen in, or get sent in.

Alan met his wife Linda at ISU in 1962 and they were married in 1966. Linda has worked as a school speech therapist, insurance medical office worker, and medical transcriptionist, in addition to being a conscientious wife, mother, and grandmother. They have a son, Brian, who is a Tucson percussionist.

