

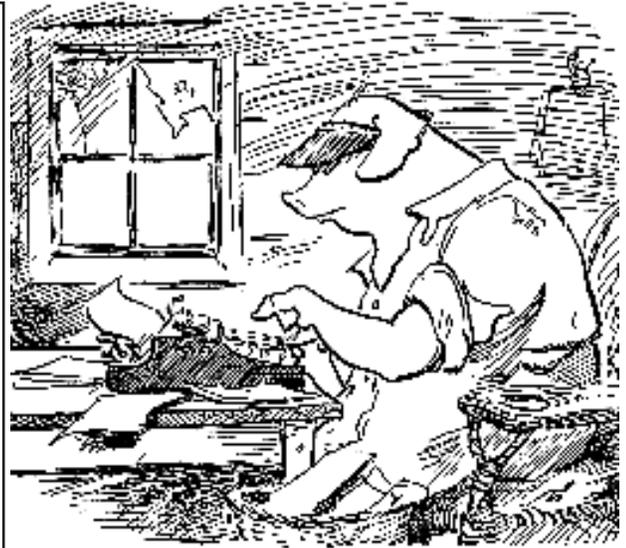
# THE BEAN HOME NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the memory of our friend, Walter R. Brooks

Vol. 25, No. 2

Spring 2018

From the Editor . . . . .	2
President's Corner . . . . .	3
From the Mailbag . . . . .	4
The Freddy Concordance Project, <i>by Peter Tamas</i> . . . . .	5
In Memoriam: Victor Manjarrez . . . . .	5
Of Aunts and Butlers, <i>by Peter Tamas</i> . . . . .	6
Prosecutorial Misconduct in <i>Spaceship</i> , <i>by Harley Hahn</i> . . . . .	10
In Memoriam: Peter Mayer, <i>by Wray Rominger</i> . . . . .	11
Pithy Perspectives of Walter R. Brooks, <i>by Randy Cepuch</i> . . . . .	12



## Peter Mayer - publisher of the Freddy books - dies age 82

The following tribute by FoF president Randy Cepuch appeared on Publisher's Weekly website following Peter Mayer's passing:

When a few fans of the Freddy the Pig series (written between 1927 and 1958 by Walter R. Brooks, better known as the creator of Mister Ed) found each other in the mid-1980s and formed a group called Friends of Freddy, their goal was to get the books back into print.

Thanks to Peter Mayer of The Overlook Press – a Freddy fan, himself – that mission was accomplished more than a decade ago. Today's Freddy fans, young and old, can easily fill their shelves with Overlook's faithful facsimiles of the original editions. Our group

grew much larger as a result, and we're very grateful to Peter, who passed away on May 11.

The 26 books in the Freddy series follow the adventures of a talking pig who wears many hats – detective, editor, magician, pilot and bank president, to name just a few – as he combines forces with other animals in the Bean barnyard, using humor and cleverness to outwit foes, solve problems and most of all to celebrate friendship.

Freddy never had a better friend than Peter Mayer.

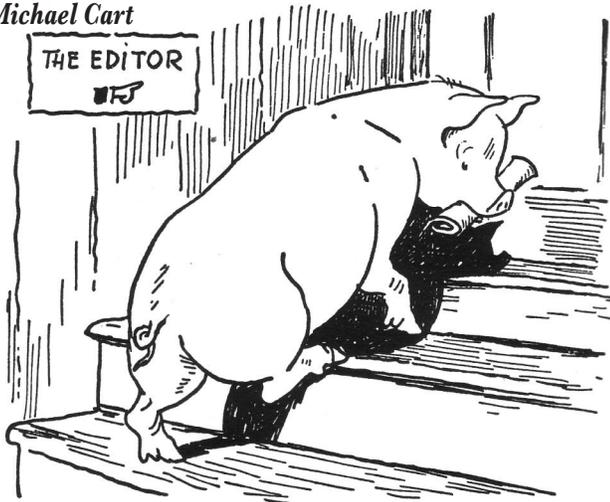
(See page 11 for another tribute from Wray Rominger, a Friends of Freddy member and longtime friend of Peter's.) 🐷



**Peter Mayer with FoF president Randy Cepuch in December 2016.**

# From the Editor

by Michael Cart



Everybody knows that Walter R. Brooks wrote the 26 Freddy books while a clutch of other readers may know he wrote 25 stories about a bibulous nag named Ed that inspired the kitschy '60s TV comedy *Mister Ed*. But how many of you know that he also wrote some 200 others targeted at an adult readership (well seven of these were for kids but who's counting)? The stories appeared in many of the popular magazines of the day, including *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Liberty*, *Argosy*, *Esquire* and more. However, his first magazine publication wasn't a story at all: it was a sonnet titled "Haunted" that appeared in the April 1915 issue of *The Century*. Here it is:

Without the window lies the rain-streaked night;  
Without the wet, black pavement shines like glass,  
Mirroring in long, wavering lines of bright  
Pure gold the haloed street lamps. Figures pass

Like wind-blown wraiths across the dripping pane,  
And, passing, turn a moment toward the light,  
Pale faces, dumbly questioning. The rain,  
Blurring the windows, blots them from my sight.

Within is warmth and comfort that derides  
Their wistful eyes. I turn away. And still  
Those faces haunt me; one thin pane divides  
My life from their life, my good from their ill.

What must I do then? How act? Undismayed,  
Throw up the window or draw down the shade?

His first actual story was titled "Harden's Chance" and appeared in *Forum* for December 1915. A bit sketchy, it's the tale of a man named Harden who returns to the rural scene where he had murdered a hated enemy named Farley. Improbably, Harden – who is on the run from the law – discovers that the murder weapon (an axe) he had abandoned is still at the scene of the crime. No sooner has he discovered this than Farley shows up. Yes, Farley! "A great scar seamed Farley's face from his ear to the roots of his hair, and Harden knew that he was alive and that he had not killed him." Initially Harden feels "the sudden weakness of great relief," but then "the hate surged

back into his heart . . . and before the other could fling up a hand to break the force of the blow, he (Harden) swung the axe high in the air and brought it down upon the head of his enemy." The End.

As Walter got into the swing of short story writing, he became greatly prolific. In the 1920s he published only seven; well, eight if you count his first novel, *The Romantic Liars*, which was serialized in six issues of *Country Gentleman* magazine in 1925. But in the 1930s the number jumped to 68 or nearly seven per year. The number then decreased in the forties to 40 or four per year. In 1948 Walter had a heart attack and his health until his death in 1958 was precarious so his output for the fifties decreased appreciably to total only seven. Two of these, however – *Jimmy Takes Vanishing Lessons* and *Henry's Dog Henry* were for kids and were subsequently printed as books.

Interestingly, Walter not only contributed short stories to magazines, he worked for them, as well, starting with *The Outlook and Independent* in 1927. He began as a columnist. His weekly column, titled "Ivory, Apes, and Peacocks," (the title was borrowed from the Biblical First Book of Kings) was an exercise in veritable window shopping, containing, as it did, (according to its prospectus) "notes on the newest contributions of American genius and inventiveness to the art of living." In other words Walter would be writing about consumer goods, about gadgets, gimcracks, games, and geegaws.

In addition to "Ivory, Apes and Peacocks," Walter would also write three different book-related columns during his five-year association with the magazine. They were "Picked at Random," "Behind the Blurbs," and "The Week's Reading." All contained reviews of new books. In this context, what Walter had to say about reviews is worth noting: "Book reviews today are, as a rule, pretty well written. The general run of reviewers are fluent, entertaining, and able to give you some idea of what a book is about. This is about all readers can expect. One reviewer, no matter how erudite, can scarcely be expected to give on successive days really expert judgment on a book about Africa, a translation of a novel by Gide, a life of Robert E. Lee, and a history of philosophy. But he can be expected to think clearly as far as he goes and to express himself in English." Fair enough, though Walter later observed that "the great trouble with book reviewing is that you have to read the books!"

What was arguably Walter's most ambitious undertaking for the magazine was, however, another column, this one titled "Prose and Worse." (The "worse" was the occasional poem it featured.). As for the prose, Walter had carte blanche to write about whatever excited his interest and imagination. In fact, his first column began thus: "You write well on nothing in particular," said the editor grimly, 'so it's really up your street to conduct a column on that subject. The implication was, we suppose,' (Walter continued) 'that we write well enough as long as we don't get out of our depth, and that our depth is in with the eight-year-olds, about a tenth of the way out to the raft.'"

As this suggests, many of the columns were humorous in nature as, in the succeeding several years were the "Talk of the Town" pieces that Walter wrote for the then fledgling *New Yorker*. Walter's magazine work became more sporadic as the 1930s went on. In the mid-thirties he became a contributing editor to *Fiction Parade*, a kind of literary *Reader's Digest*. Then in 1936 Walter became a columnist for *Commentator* magazine. The column was called "Once Over Lightly" and was billed as "a page of hasty notes sent to us at the last minute by our Official Philosophical Observer." This lasted until 1940 when the Official Philosopher – er, Walter retired from magazine work to devote his full time to writing short stories and, more importantly, Freddy books! The rest is history. ☁

## President's Corner

### How well do you know Jinx the cat?

The Freddy books wouldn't have been the same without our pig's faithful feline sidekick.



It's true that more often than not, he was snoozing at the beginning of a story. But as the pages turned and the plots twisted, Jinx typically rose to the occasion and his many talents (other than sleeping) often helped save the day when the Bean barnyard was imperiled.

Along the way, he revealed more than a few personality quirks that made him all the more charming. Do you know which vegetable he had a soft spot for? How about which European language he claimed to speak? Or which mode of transportation was his very favorite? (If you do, shhhh. No spoilers!)

I've recently re-read the entire series to study the cat's contributions, and I'll offer what I learned in "A Chronological Appreciation of Jinx" at Freddyfest 2018, this fall.

Some of the other presentations on the preliminary agenda include:

- "Why A Sunbonnet and Curls?" (a look at Freddy's favorite wardrobe choices)
- "What Sorts of Kids Like Freddy the Pig Books?"
- "An Investigation into the Treatment of Canadians In the Freddy Books"
- a look at Centerboro's real Native American neighbors
- a "Concerto in Bean Major"
- a poetry slam
- an interactive puppet show based on *Freddy Goes Camping*
- a preview of our planned get-together in Fresno in 2019
- ... plus whatever Freddy-related presentation/activity you'd like to offer, in exchange for the adulation of your peers, future fame



here in *The Bean Home Newsletter*, and typically some sort of cheap pig-themed trinket!

Don't worry that whatever subject you're thinking of may have been done before: it probably hasn't been, and even if it has you're sure to do it differently. And don't worry if you're not a seasoned presenter: you'll be among Friends! (Just try to avoid being Charles, that's all.) If you have an idea, send me an email: [randycepuch@gmail.com](mailto:randycepuch@gmail.com).

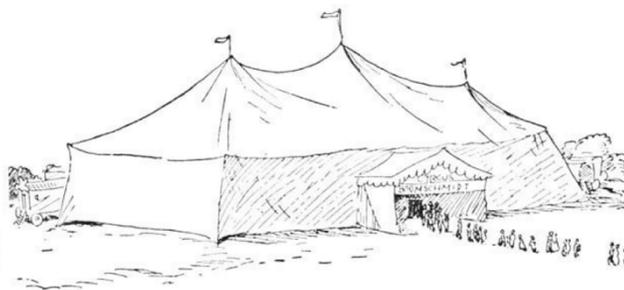
**If you haven't already made your travel plans, it's not too late. Or too early! In fact, now is jussst right!**

Keep in mind that to satisfy the comfort and economic needs members told us about, the timing and location of our convention are a bit different than they've been in the past – but as a Friends of Freddy member, you're an officially appointed delegate and we hope you'll join us!

**We're gathering on Columbus Day Weekend, on SUNDAY afternoon (10/7) and all day on MONDAY (10/8) – the day the holiday is observed.** Then on Tuesday morning we'll hold our business meeting, which all members can attend. If you need to take a day off and/or let the kids skip school to be with us: we guarantee you'll have a better time!

**The meeting will be at The Gould Hotel in downtown Seneca Falls NY (importantly, NOT just Seneca – yes, there is one! – but Seneca FALLS).** The hotel is holding rooms (until mid-July) at a special \$99 Friends of Freddy rate for the Sunday and Monday nights – a terrific deal, considering the usual rates are \$189-259. There MAY still be a few rooms available for the Saturday night (10/6) at a discounted rate of \$159, but the hotel is mostly booked that night. See the hotel online at [thegouldhotel.com](http://thegouldhotel.com) and then CALL to make your reservation and get the special Friends of Freddy rate: 877-788-4010.

The convention itself is free, of course. If you plan to join us, register at our website: [freddythepig.org](http://freddythepig.org) (Please keep in mind that the hotel registration is entirely separate.)



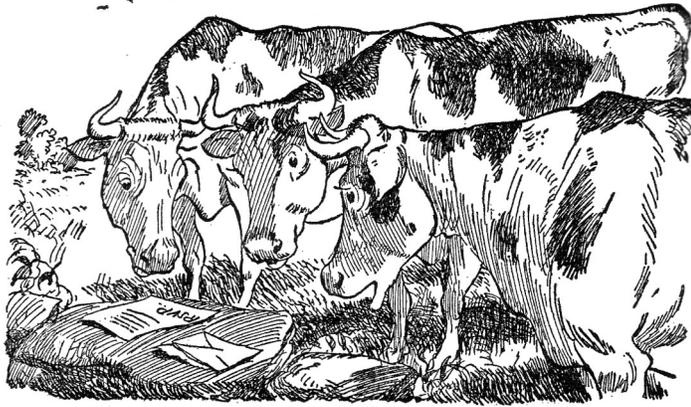
The day before we kick things off in Seneca Falls, our own Michael Cart will talk about Walter R. Brooks at 1pm at the Rundel Memorial Building (2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room), 115 South Avenue in Rochester, about an hour's drive away.

Brooks lived at two addresses in Rochester and the city comes up several times in the Freddy books. Michael's talk in Rochester is for the local historical society and open to the public – so it might be the perfect stop on your way to Seneca Falls! (He'll do an encore of the talk on Monday at the convention itself.)

There's plenty to see and do in Seneca Falls. Just a few feet from our hotel is the Women's Rights National Historical Park, where the first Women's Rights Convention was held in 1848. (Mrs. Wiggins

*Continued on page 4*

# From the Mailbag



Good afternoon!

As I write this note, I am listening to *The Bean Home News*.

When I was a little girl I read a couple of the “Freddy” books, and never forgot them. Many years later, I met a gentleman who was working on getting this series republished. A few years ago, I started to read and listen to these wonderful stories. As a youthful senior, I appreciate the humor, satire and insights of Walter R. Brooks even more than when I was a child.

I admit it, I’m a Brooks Bookaholic. Whether traditionally reading them and looking at the wonderful illustrations, or listening to the audio books, they make me LOL! He inspires me as an aspiring children’s author/illustrator.

Figured it was about time that I join this prestigious group of Freddy aficionados!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best wishes,

Dianna Diatz (Lexington Park, MD)  
mermaid\_studios@yahoo.com

## President’s Corner

*Continued from page 3*

would be proud!) Not much further is the National Women’s Hall of Fame and the Museum of Waterways & Industry, commemorating the Erie Canal.

There’s also the *It’s A Wonderful Life* Museum, celebrating the likely possibility that Seneca Falls was the model for Bedford Falls in the classic Christmas movie. It’s closed on Sundays and Mondays, but I plan to wander over there after we wrap up our business meeting on Tuesday morning (it opens at 11). And sometime during the convention itself, weather permitting, we may take a 3-block stroll to a bridge that looks a whole lot like the one from which George Bailey jumped to save Clarence, the angel – although if you recall the movie, you may well wonder who saved who!

We’ll have a great time, and it’ll be even better if you’re part of it! I’d like to extend a special invitation to our new members and those of you who live in the Rochester area (my hometown, and always a Bean barnyard bastion!).

See you in October – and I’ll do my best to tell you things you never knew about a certain black cat who, like all of us, is a Friend of Freddy! ☺

PS Are there any local member activities?

Are there any local members driving to the Conference in October?

Are there any members to share rooms with?

I know I will want to visit the Strong Museum of Play and the George Eastman House. Would any other members be interested in these sites?

I’d also love to attend the talk about Brooks at the (Rochester?) library on Saturday.

*Editor’s note: See the next page for details on the when and where for Michael’s talk. Also – this just in! – it looks like there will be a Freddy exhibit just across the street in the children’s section of the city’s main public library. We’ll post details as they become available on our Facebook Group page and on our website. ☺*

The *Bean Home Newsletter* is published quarterly by the Friends of Freddy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of the writings of Walter R. Brooks and his literary alter ego, Freddy the Pig. Print memberships are \$25 for two years or \$45 for four. Electronic memberships are \$9.50 for two years or \$18 for four. (US funds only, please.) Overseas members please add \$12 additional for airmail delivery. Please make your check or money order payable to Friends of Freddy and send it to the official address given below.

Address changes may be sent to either the email or postal FoF address.

Newsletter submissions should be sent to Michael Cart at the address below.

ISSN 0882-4428. Copyright © 2018 Friends of Freddy.

**FoF web site:** <http://www.freddythepig.org/>.

**FoF addresses:** Friends of Freddy, P. O. Box 912, Greenbelt, MD 20768-0912 USA. [friendsoffreddy@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoffreddy@gmail.com)

**President:** Randy Cepuch, 1323 Dasher Lane, Reston, VA 20190. (703-757-7263) [randycepuch@gmail.com](mailto:randycepuch@gmail.com).

**Vice President, Secretary, Book Donation Coordinator:** Connie Arnold, PO Box 314 (178 St. George Street), Annapolis Royal, NS B0S1A0 CANADA, [connie\\_arnold@hotmail.com](mailto:connie_arnold@hotmail.com).

**Founder, Vice-President/Canada:** Dave Carley, 11 Elm Ave., #421, Toronto, ON M4W 1N2 CANADA. (416-921-4025) [dcarley@sympatico.ca](mailto:dcarley@sympatico.ca).

**Treasurer:** John Chastain, 4916 South Centaurs Court, Annapolis, VA 22003. (703-978-6670) [jleslic@verizon.net](mailto:jleslic@verizon.net).

**Membership Director:** Henry Cohn, 80 Richmond Lane, W. Hartford, CT 06117. (860-523-9372) [main132@comcast.net](mailto:main132@comcast.net)

**Administrator:** Aladdine Joroff, 43 Central Rd., #2, Somerville, MA 02143-1205. (617-308-1691) [aladdine@alum.mit.edu](mailto:aladdine@alum.mit.edu).

**Website Editor:** Alice Tracy, 8300 Cypress St., Laurel, MD 20707. (301-490-5639) [Alice926@verizon.net](mailto:Alice926@verizon.net).

**Newsletter Editor:** Michael Cart, 3250 Forsythia Dr., Columbus, IN 47203. (812-373-9604) [mrmcart@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mrmcart@sbcglobal.net).

**Managing Newsletter Editor:** Kevin W. Parker, 3-E Ridge Rd., Greenbelt, MD 20770-2958. (301-345-2774) [kevin.parker@wap.org](mailto:kevin.parker@wap.org) ☺

# The Freddy Concordance Project

by Peter Tamas

## What is a concordance, anyway?

Concordance. noun. An alphabetical index of the principal words in a book or the works of an author with their immediate contexts (courtesy of Merriam-Webster).

The two most commonly used concordances are an alphabetical listing of terms in the Bible and in Shakespeare. You can use a concordance to determine if the word “pig” is used in the Bible (no, it is not) or in Shakespeare (Henry V Act iv Scene 7):

FLUELLEN: What call you the town’s name where Alexander the Pig was born?

GOWER: Alexander the Great.

FLUELLEN: Why, I pray you, is not pig great? the pig, or the great, or the mighty, or the huge, or the magnanimous, are all one reckonings, save the phrase is a little variations.

GOWER: I think Alexander the Great was born in Mac-edon;

The Freddy Concordance (link at <http://freddythepig.com/freddy-resources>) is an index of all the characters, locations, organizations, et cetera, that appeared in the Freddy books. It was assembled to facilitate research on the books.

The bulk of the data was gathered by Michael Cart, who noted the characters’ first appearance as he read the books. The data has been typed into a spreadsheet and is accessible on line.

The publicly accessible version is a web page with the information sorted by character name. That page has a link to the information sorted to make proofreading easy: book and page number. Those who will be making updates will be able to edit an online copy of the information.



## Next steps

It is a safe assumption that the typing of the data introduced some errors.

Perhaps as important, looking at the data will encourage brainstorming. It may bring up ideas for additional data that should be collected and how that data should be presented.

## Seeking help

I am seeking people who would be willing to check the information as they read a Freddy book. A few people have already helped, but additional help is needed. For a limited time only, volunteers can still pick their favorite book.

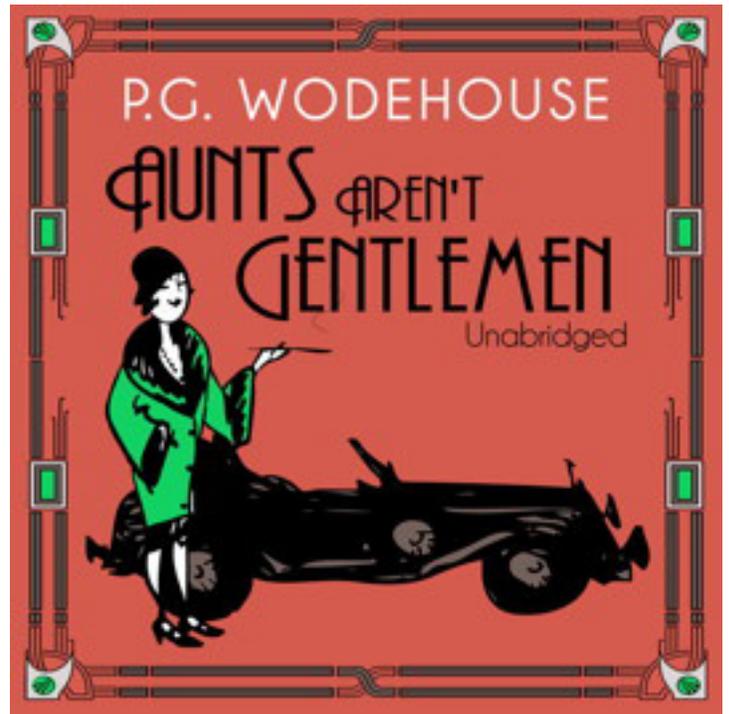
## Contact information

The project email address is: [freddy.concordance@gmail.com](mailto:freddy.concordance@gmail.com) .

## In Memoriam: Victor Manjarrez



Victor Manjarrez, a long-time Friend of Freddy (he joined us in 1990) has passed away at his home in Las Vegas. In his early eighties, Victor was a retired professor of mathematics at California’s San Jose State University and an erstwhile Jesuit priest. In his retirement he rediscovered a penchant for acting and studied the discipline to re-hone his skills, which were abundantly obvious in his dramatic ability to recite, by heart, acres of poetry and yards of Shakespeare. Speaking of heart: his was large enough to encompass not only Freddy but all of those who had the pleasure of knowing him. Victor’s skills were not confined to acting and cultivating friendship, however; he was also an amateur magician of long standing, whose performance abilities were on display in a magical program he presented at one of our cons in Wyndham, New York. Victor’s hand was notably quicker than the eye! Victor was also a wordsmith, quick with a quip, who delighted in what Ollie Groper would have called “these here polysyllables” – in English *and* in Latin! If all of this isn’t enough, Victor had a delightfully sardonic sense of humor, which was on display in his avowal that Simon the Rat was his favorite character in the Freddy series. Genial and courtly as the occasion invited, Victor was a regular attendee at our biennial cons; his absence will be conspicuous and his person sorely missed. Requiescat in pace, dear friend. 🕊



# Of Aunts and Butlers

## A Comparison of Walter R. Brooks and P. G. Wodehouse

by Peter Tamas

Once upon a time, in a land far away, (though not quite beyond the Inns river), I worked for an alarmingly chaotic software company. It was still in its startup phase and its clients were large banks. I found the corporate culture clashes to be frustrating but amusing.

One night, I was told to write a memo detailing our equipment needs. It was low priority, which meant it could wait until my manager arrived at headquarters in the morning. I also had to review a very long document as soon as I could hide for a few minutes. I had absolutely no intention of writing this memo.

My client was a German bank. An ongoing theme was that every problem deserved a clever solution. Some examples: 1) To protect privacy from those who can recognize people by their shoes, the bathroom stall doors were as close to the floor tiles as German engineering allowed; 2) after business hours, the lights throughout the building periodically turned off (they did not use motion detectors to turn the lights back on, we had to feel for the light switch); 3) They did, however, have a clever use for motion detectors to solve another problem. If someone went into the men's room, the motion detector would set off a timer. A careful estimate had been made of how

long it takes a Teutonic banker to urinate. Once this time elapsed, all the urinals flushed.

These all must have sounded excellent in the conference room. Now that toilets have optical sensors that invoke the flush sequence as soon as we twitch, it is difficult to appreciate just how absurd the automated flushing procedure seemed at the time. That night I found myself in a bathroom stall in sudden darkness as deep as the climactic moment of a cave tour. As I listened to the urinals flushing, urgent document in hand, I began to compose the memo. I made a mental note (remember, it was too dark to write) that this equipment must include a turbo-charged engine.

The only reasonable explanation of what happened next was that my writing was sharpened by just the right mixture of fatigue, frustration and caffeine. My memo arrived at the fax machine before my manager. It was intercepted and distributed to everyone with a sense of humor. Our colleagues tried to spare my manager the effort of reading it by enthusiastically misquoting their favorite passages. It was published in the company newsletter and I was asked to make regular contributions. In order to compliment me and stretch me, a colleague gave me a book that I should use as a model. Naturally, it had a pig in it. It was a novel written by P.G. Wodehouse.

While the Wodehouse gesture has the ring of an excellent pre-adolescent athlete being taken to a professional sporting event, I now note that one of Wodehouse's detractors described his work as "relentless flippancy."

Because both of these authors are unusually effective at composing humorous descriptions, I could not help but wonder if Walter R. Brooks took some inspiration from P. G. Wodehouse. I began writing a comparison of their books that involved aunts and a butler, specifically:

- *Freddy and Mr. Camphor*
- *Freddy Goes Camping*
- *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*

At one point, I turned to Michael Cart, who told me that Walter did not have a single Wodehouse in his library. I now believe that the inspiration was on the level of having succeeded with baseball,

football and various things that fly, Walter thought he might as well try aunts and a butler.

## P. G. Wodehouse

P. G. Wodehouse was born in 1881, five years before Walter. He wrote about 90 novels. The first was published in 1902. He was working on a novel when he died in 1975 at the age of 93. *Aunts Aren't Gentlemen* was his last completed novel. Wodehouse wrote several series of novels, which generally poked fun at the rich. Wodehouse's most famous characters are Bertrand "Bertie" Wooster and his valet, Reginald Jeeves. One of Wodehouse's most famous lines resulted from an initial setback to Jeeves' attempts to influence Bertie's taste in clothing: "I could see that, if not actually disgruntled, he was far from being grunted." Bertie described another incident this way: "Jeeves lugged my purple socks out of the drawer as if he were a vegetarian fishing a caterpillar out of his salad."

Typically, Bertie is pressured into participating in a complicated scheme, which, of course, backfires. Then Jeeves comes up with a brilliant solution, which also fails due to poor execution and bad luck. Here is a typical summation from Bertie: "As Jeeves said later the whole situation resembled some great moment in a Greek tragedy, where somebody is stepping high, wide and handsome, quite unconscious that all the while Nemesis is at his heels." Ultimately, Jeeves provides the key to the solution to whatever mess Bertie finds himself in. As a result, **Bertie's friends and relatives are very impressed with Jeeves' intelligence. It was a fan's homage that an early internet search engine, ask.com, was originally called Ask Jeeves.** As a point of reference, Google, the most famous search engine, was founded in 1998 while Ask Jeeves was founded two years earlier in 1996.

While he is not as well-read as his valet, Bertie clearly has some education. He likes to make literary allusions, such as: "She came leaping towards me, like Lady Macbeth coming to get first-hand news from the guest-room." While Bertie sometimes overestimates himself, he is not preposterously misinformed about his limitations and makes self-deprecating remarks about his own intelligence. However, we get the feeling that even at his most modest, the situation is worse than Bertie realizes. Some of Bertie's comments betray a garbled sense of logic: "You can't expect a dog to pass up a policeman on a bicycle. It isn't human nature." Certainly, while Bertie often makes the safe bet of attributing clichés to Shakespeare, more often than not he makes the relatively improbable mistake of choosing clichés Shakespeare did not actually invent.

Bertie has redeeming characteristics, and there are a few women who are very interested in marrying him. Bertie is unfailingly polite and is unconvincing when he tries to reject their advances. This inspired one of Bertie's excellent descriptions of Jeeves: "As always when I tell him I'm engaged to be married, he betrayed no emotion, continuing to look as if he had been stuffed by a good taxidermist."

Bertie will sometimes try to seem as if he knows more than he really does. A woman to whom Bertie was once engaged sees him buying a gift for Jeeves, a book by the famously challenging 17th century philosopher Spinoza. She asks him if he likes Spinoza, and he says: "Oh, rather. When I have a leisure moment, you will generally find me curled up with Spinoza's latest." She concludes that Bertie has grown as a result of their relationship. She misinterprets his friendliness, dumps her intended and moves forward with ill-conceived plans to marry Bertie. The adventure begins.

An important difference between Brooks' and Wodehouse's handling of the rich nephew character is Mr. Camphor's intelligence in the Freddy books. When we first meet Mr. Camphor, he is spending the summer consulting the government on an important project. Other than a momentary lapse when he believed the father of "the dirty faced boy" rather than Freddy, Jimson Camphor is no fool. Bertie Wooster, on the other hand, might very well be a fool.

Walter and Wodehouse both make fun of unsavory characters. For example, this is how Wodehouse described a particularly large and ugly antagonist: "It was as if Nature had intended to make a gorilla, and had changed its mind at the last moment."

However, Walter is much kinder when he makes fun of people's weaknesses. Even those who wish to do the animals harm are shown some sympathy. When Jinx describes how Mr. Eha was tricked into gluing his pistol to his hand and how "it took him ten minutes and practically his entire vocabulary to get it off again," Freddy responds: "What an awful night! I feel sorry for the poor man."

## Jeeves and Bannister

We meet Jeeves' counterpart in *Freddy and Mr. Camphor*. We really do not know if Bannister, Mr. Camphor's butler, is as intelligent as Jeeves, because Mr. Camphor does not rely on Bannister to solve his problems. (This burden falls, of course, on Freddy and his friends.) But, Bannister realizes that Freddy was unjustly accused by the Winches before Mr. Camphor does. In keeping with the theme of

*Continued on page 8*



## Of Aunts and Butlers

*Continued from page 7*

an intellectual valet, Camphor and Bannister compare proverbs. When we first meet Bannister, he accidentally steps on Jinx's tail. A few minutes later, Jimson Camphor turns to Bannister:

"That brings up another proverb: curiosity killed the cat. What do you say to that, Bannister?"

"I don't believe it, sir. This cat, if I may say so, is almost too much alive."

"I'm sorry I clawed you," said Jinx. "But when you stepped on my tail—"

"Pray don't mention it, sir," said Bannister. "I should no doubt have clawed you if you'd done the same thing to me."

Incidentally, Jeeves is not a butler, he is a valet. Strictly speaking, a butler has a managerial position while a valet specializes in taking care of one gentleman. It seems unlikely that Bannister has a butler's managerial responsibilities; he did not seem to have any authority over the other staff. Of course, most boys living in mid-twentieth century United States would not care about this distinction. And Bannister did have an important role in the household, which is to add dignity. As Freddy explained to Mrs. Wiggins: "A good butler has to be dignified and formal for everybody in the house. That's what he's hired for—to keep everything very high class and ceremonious. That's the advantage of having a lot of money like Mr. Camphor: if you don't want to bother about being dignified, you can hire somebody to be dignified for you."



Already in *Freddy and Mr. Camphor*, we get some indications that aunts will eventually be making their appearance. When we first meet Bannister and he realizes that Freddy and his friends are animals: "He gave a sharp bark of surprise. 'Oh my aunt-- pigs!'" Later, in the same book, Breckenridge the Eagle mentions his aunt in a line that if it weren't from Walter I'd think was an imitation of Wodehouse: "She is indeed completely her old self again. Quite capable, as she says in her quaint way, of tearing a rabbit with the best of them."

## Aunts Aren't Gentlemen

In the Aunts And A Butler Genre, the aunts attempt to dominate their rich nephew. Whenever we meet Aunt Dahlia, she is involving Bertie in one of her schemes. This might be an act of charity, such as supporting a local school. But often these are plots to make her husband, Tom Travers, more willing to fund the costs of the money-losing magazine she owns. These schemes often backfire. In one memorable case, she explained to Bertie: "I ought to have known that a clergyman was bound to have scruples, but it didn't occur to me at the time." Aunt Dahlia, who refers to herself as Travers, will scold Bertie when he does not go along with her schemes. "Where's your pride? Have you forgotten your illustrious ancestors? There was a Wooster at the time of the Crusades who would have won the Battle of Joppa single-handed, if he hadn't fallen off his horse." When Bertie tried to get a friend to take his place as speaker at a charity event, she fired off this telegram: "Am taking legal advice to ascertain whether strangling an idiot nephew counts as murder. Consider you treacherous worm. I hope you get run over by an omnibus. Love. Travers."

Dahlia is the aunt that likes Bertie. His Aunt Agatha is even more unnerving. Bertie describes her as: "tall and thin... rather like a vulture in the Gobi desert." Another description is: "Aunt Agatha is like an elephant—not so much to look at, for in appearance she resembles more a well-bred vulture, but because she never forgets." Even Jeeves remarks about Aunt Agatha, saying this about the headmistress of a girls' school: "In some ways she reminded me of Mr Wooster's Aunt Agatha, with the same cool stare and the same obvious unwillingness to put up with any nonsense." Jeeves once remarked to Bertie: "I am inclined to doubt whether the gentleman exists who could be master in a home that contained her ladyship, sir." In *Joy in the Morning*, written while Wodehouse was detained by the Nazis, there is a portrait of Aunt Agatha which makes Bertie and his rich uncle uncomfortable.

In keeping with the Aunts And A Butler Genre, Jimson Camphor's aunts are unpleasant. When Freddy meets Jimson Camphor's aunt in *Camping*, she says to her nephew: "Sorry, sorry? What good does that do? That's what you always say. Why don't you think a little beforehand?" Later, Jimson Camphor apologizes to the animals:

"I know I ought to have stood up for you better. After all it is my house."

Freddy grinned. "Not anymore, it isn't."

While Bertie tries to appease his aunts, the animals encourage Jimson Camphor to handle his aunts constructively. First, they encourage Jimson to stand up to Aunt Minerva. When she realizes that she is eating lunch with a pig and a cow, she exclaims:

“Jimson! What are these creatures doing here? Now clear them out! I spoke to you once about them! I’ve never eaten with pigs, and I’m not going to now.”

“Better late than never, eh, Bannister?” Said Mr. Camphor and giggled faintly into his soup spoon.

“As you say, sir,” the butler replied. “There’s no time like the present.”

Miss Minerva turned and stamped out of the room.

The animals teach Jimson that sometimes compliments can help people to improve their behavior. After Freddy remarks on Aunt Minerva’s soup, she responds: “The first word of praise for my cooking that I’ve ever heard in this house and it had to come from a pig!” As Mrs. Wiggins tells Jimson: “Well, good land, it wouldn’t hurt you to pay her a compliment now and then. If you praised her cooking she might improve it.” Later, even Mr. Bean gets into the act with a wink. By the end of *Freddy Goes Camping*, he is cooking with Aunt Minerva.

While Jimson Camphor and Bertie Wooster each have two formidable aunts, Walter diverges from Wodehouse with the aunts’ personalities. Aunt Bertie’s aunts are variations on the same theme, but Aunt Elmira is an entirely different type of unpleasant personality; she wants everyone to be unhappy with her. As Jimson puts it: “Depressed! Ha!—just plain squashed. All day long she sits in that chair. You think of something nice to do, and then you look out the window and see her. It’s as if a black cloud came over the sun. It’s as if you had a stomach ache that you’d forgotten about, and then it starts up again. Nothing seems like fun, and the more you look at her, the more you wonder why you don’t just go up and lock yourself in your room and set fire to the house.”

## Happy endings

At the end of both *Freddy Goes Camping* and *Aunts Aren’t Gentlemen*, distance is put between the unpleasant aunts and the rich nephews. Bertie Wooster leaves England to avoid his aunts, and Aunt Elmira moves to the Great Dismal Swamp. Bertie Wooster and his aunts do not grow. **In contrast, Walter’s characters grow by learning to handle difficult people.** In *Freddy Goes Camping*, Jimson Camphor’s aunts’ bad behavior is managed. **Once Aunt Minerva’s behavior improves,** Walter begins to refer to her as Miss Minerva. To signify the characters’ growth, Aunt Minerva transforms into Miss Minerva. Even the relocation is subtly different. **Bertie Wooster is escaping while Aunt Elmira is gaining independence.** Further, in *Freddy Goes Camping*, the animals also accept others as they are. Even when Jinx pokes fun at Uncle Wesley, we see that they accept Wesley as he is.

Contrasting with my original thought that Wodehouse influenced Brooks, I note that while *Aunts Aren’t Gentlemen* was written after *Freddy Goes Camping*, there are very similar concluding passages. In *Camping*, it is **Minerva that notices that the world has improved: Miss Minerva** looked out across the lake, and then up at the sky.

“Dear me,” she said, “I do believe the sun is going to come out.”

“It does seem brighter,” said Mr. Camphor, “but the clouds are just as heavy.”

“What’s brighter is that Miss Elmira’s gone,” Freddy said.



*Jeeves (Stephen Fry) and Aunt Agatha (Elizabeth Spriggs) in the 1990’s British series Jeeves and Wooster.*

In Bertie’s last speech in his last appearance in a Wodehouse novel he says: “We are tranquil. And I’ll tell you why. There are no aunts here. And in particular we are three thousand miles from Mrs Dahlia Travers.”

## Notes

Inns river: some folklorists believe that the traditional Eastern European start to children’s tales indicate that the magical place is so far away that it is beyond the Inns river. The most famous place associated with this river is Innsbruck.

Gruntled: *Code of the Woosters*

Purple socks: *The Inimitable Jeeves*

Some great moment in a Greek tragedy: *Code of the Woosters*

Ask Jeeves: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ask.com>

Like Lady MacBeth: *Joy in the Morning*

Dog - policeman: *Code of the Woosters*

Stuffed by a good taxidermist: *Aunts Aren’t Gentlemen*

Nature had intended: *Code of the Woosters*

Umbly, umbly: *Freddy and Mr. Camphor*

Ten minutes and practically his entire vocabulary: *Freddy Goes Camping*

Proverbs, Oh my aunt, tearing a rabbit: *Freddy and Mr. Camphor*

Scruples, Illustrious ancestors: *Aunts Aren’t Gentlemen*

Legal advice: *Right Ho, Jeeves*

Vulture in the Gobi desert: *Much Obliged, Jeeves*

Well-bred vulture, master in a home that contained her ladyship: *Joy in the Morning*

Jimson Camphor’s aunts: *Freddy Goes Camping*

*Peter Tamas has a background in Economics and Finance which led to working with financial trading systems, a career with its share of angst, gnashing of teeth and humorous absurdity. It is unclear if he genuinely believes there is an “aunts and a butler genre”. He would like to leave the last word of this article to Bannister: “There is no friend like a good book.”* 🐰

# Egregious Prosecutorial Misconduct in *Freddy and the Spaceship*



by **Harley Hahn**

Towards the end of *Freddy and the Spaceship*, there are two trials:

- The State vs. [Mrs.] Wiggins (pp 229-239)
- The State vs. Ed Bismuth (pp 240-253)

For Mrs. Wiggins, who is charged with stealing Miss McMinnick's pocketbook, the prosecutor is Herb Garble (page 230). However, who is the prosecutor for the Bismuth case, in which Ed Bismuth is charged with stealing the ducks' jewelry from the dried-up pond?

Although it is never specified explicitly, it is clear that Freddy is the prosecutor. For example, on page 244, the following dialog takes place between Freddy and Judge Willey:

But Freddy interrupted. "If it please the court, time is getting short and I would like to continue the examination of the witnesses."

"Of course, of course," said Judge Willey hastily. "Call the next witness."

So Uncle Wesley waddled up to the witness stand.

"Now Uncle Wesley," Freddy said, "you first met the prisoner, I believe, when he came to see you about the mud in the duck pond. Is that correct?"

However, is Freddy a fair and honest prosecutor? Sadly, the answer is no.

## Illegal and misleading evidence

At the beginning of the trial, Alice and Emma give their testimony "about their jewelry, how it was hidden in the pond, and how when the pond went dry they worried that it might be stolen." (pp 240-241).

Immediately following, Freddy testifies that he had seen Mr. Bismuth digging in the pond, and how information he later received from the fly (captured by Mr. and Mrs. Webb) led him to find the location of the hidden jewels (page 241).

It is highly irregular, to say the least, for a prosecutor to testify against the defendant whom he is prosecuting. However, it gets worse.

After Freddy calls Uncle Wesley to the stand, he leads him through the the story of to how he first met with Mr. Bismuth. Uncle Wesley relates that Mr. Bismuth came to see him after reading "my letter in the Bean Home News" (page 244). In this letter, Uncle Wesley described how the loss of mud from the pond created such a problem for all three ducks.

Uncle Wesley goes on to relate that "Mr. Bismuth was good enough to comment favorably on the style of the writing [of the letter] and the skill with which I had presented my case" (page 245).

Freddy introduces into evidence the actual "brown paper bag on which Uncle Wesley had written his complaint with a hard pencil" (page 246). Freddy then addresses the court and says, "I submit, your Honor, that nobody could honestly compliment the writer on such scrawl." The idea, of course, is to prove that Mr. Bismuth is dishonest.

At first, this seems to make sense. After all, we know that, at the time Uncle Wesley brought the original letter to Freddy to publish in the newspaper, "he handed Freddy a crumpled brown bag on which the letter had been written with a very hard pencil" (pp 20-21). Indeed, the letter is so illegible that Uncle Wesley ends up reading it out loud to Freddy.

[Author's note: We can, of course, sympathize with Uncle Wesley. It would be difficult for anyone to write well using a hard pencil on a paper bag. However, when the only way you have to hold the pencil is with your mouth, a wing, or a webbed foot, writing such a letter is nothing less than an extraordinary achievement.]

Nevertheless, as much as the idea makes sense, it shows up poorly for Freddy. When he brings out Uncle's Wesley's testimony, he conveniently overlooks the fact that Mr. Bismuth never actually saw the original paper bag. The only way Mr. Bismuth could have read the letter is after Freddy published it in the *Bean Home News* newspaper.

In order for the letter to be published, Freddy would have had to type it on paper, which would then be set professionally and printed by Mr. Dimsey in Centerboro. Clearly, by the time Mr. Bismuth saw the letter, it was completely legible. Moreover, since Freddy is the editor of the newspaper, he would have corrected any spelling and grammatical mistakes as he typed.

Let us now consider the testimony. Uncle Wesley testified that "Mr. Bismuth was good enough to comment favorably on the style of the writing, and the skill with which I had presented my case." This is perfectly believable seeing as Mr. Bismuth must have read the letter as printed in the newspaper. Indeed, as we see on page 21, Uncle Wesley actually did write with style, and he did present his case skillfully!

(Quick digression: Is it possible that, once Uncle Wesley had read the letter to Freddy, Freddy gave it back to him and that, later, Uncle Wesley showed the original letter on the paper bag to Mr. Bismuth?)

No, because once Uncle Wesley had read the letter to Freddy, there was no reason for him to keep the paper bag. Moreover, we know Freddy kept the paper bag because he was the one to introduce it as evidence in court on page 246.)

## How did he get away with it?

It seems strange that Judge Willey and the two owls, Old Whibley and Uncle Solomon, didn't pick up on the misconduct. To be fair, the owls don't see well in the daytime and Judge Willey is very near-sighted" as we learn in *Freddy and the Bean Home News*. (On page 154: "Judge Willey peered at Ernest Jr. He was very near-sighted, but he never wore his glasses on the bench because he thought they made him look too good natured." On page 162: "The judge was too nearsighted to see that Mr. Garble had fallen asleep.)

As incredible as it seems, both Uncle Wesley -- who is smarter and more outspoken than most people give him credit for -- and Mr. Bismuth himself -- who demonstrated repeatedly that he is not only observant, but clever and quick thinking -- both failed to notice the spurious evidence.

So how did Freddy get away with it?

Clearly, it was because Mr. Bismuth decided to act as his own lawyer (page 230). As such, he illustrates the old saying: Anyone who represents himself in court has a fool for a lawyer and a fool for a client.

## Conclusion

For Freddy, as prosecutor of the case *The State vs. Ed Bismuth*, to (1) testify against the defendant, and (2) knowingly introduce misleading, irrelevant evidence against him was misconduct of the highest order.

My advice to you?

If you are ever driving to the Bean Farm, make sure you don't get caught speeding and end up in the Centerboro legal system. ☺



# Peter Mayer

Freddy lost a real friend recently when the publisher, who has kept his books in print, passed away. Peter Mayer was 82 and *The New York Times* and *Associated Press* lauded him in two obituaries telling of his many remarkable successes as the CEO of Penguin Books in London and his own Overlook Press: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/11/obituaries/peter-mayer-publisher-of-the-incendiary-satanic-verses-dies-at-82.html> and <https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2018/05/11/arts/ap-us-obit-peter-mayer.html>. *Publishers Weekly* magazine once called Peter one of the ten most important publishers in the world.

Peter's friends knew of his deep love for Woodstock, New York. He named his press Overlook for the high mountain of that name above Woodstock, the place where he, and his parents before him, had a second home.

I met Peter in the early 1970s when he and his father began the press. Peter knew that an office in New York City was necessary, but he wanted a presence in Woodstock as well and opened a second office there. He sought a local printer for his catalogs, and my wife and I were lucky to be the printers of his first catalogs.

He told us that the big publishers were missing some great books. He believed also that there were many valuable books that should stay in print. When I wrote Peter that Knopf had dropped the Freddy books, he said, "Of course I'll publish Freddy!" He went on to say that in his grade school the best readers were the ones reading Freddy. I thought about that. In my fifth grade class only Roger Laub and I were reading the Freddy books. Roger earned a PhD in English, and I became a publisher. It could have been the same everywhere.

Peter left the press to his daughter and granddaughter. His daughter was thirteen when she came with her father to a Freddy Fest in Cooperstown, and Peter met Dorothy Brooks' son, Stephen, who had the rights. He also met past FoF president Michael Cart, whose books he would later publish.

I dreamed of designing my own home. When the building inspector saw my plan, he asked if I had been an engineer. I didn't need a degree; I had *How to Design Houses*, an Overlook Press book by Peter's good friend, Woodstock architect Lester Walker. ☺



Wray Rominger (author of this tribute), Peter Mayer, and Loni Rominger.

**The Friends of Freddy  
P. O. Box 912  
Greenbelt, MD 20768-0912  
USA**

**Put stamp  
here. Post of-  
fice will not  
deliver mail  
without prop-  
er postage.**

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

## **Pithy Perspectives of Walter R. Brooks: Critters In a Nutshell**

by *Randy Cepuch*

Freddy author Walter R. Brooks made a lot of quick and clever observations about various Bean barnyard inhabitants and visitors. They weren't always what you might've expected but they were always fun!

Here's a collection of his amusing generalizations (some of which were featured a while back on our Facebook Group page):

### **Part the First: Cats**

"Cats very seldom make promises, but when they do, they always keep them. Their word is as good as their bond." (*Freddy Goes to Florida*)

"All cats are good at tying knots. The stupidest cat can tie forty knots in a ball of yarn in two minutes – and if you don't believe it, ask your grandmother." (*Freddy Goes to Florida*)

"Like all cats, and many people, he (Jinx) wasn't much interested in any kind of work or game that he wasn't good at." (*The Clockwork Twin*)

"Like most cats, Jinx enjoyed a spice of danger, even when he was asleep." (*Freddy Goes Camping*)

"...when a cat makes up his mind, you might as well let him do what he wants to, for he'll do it anyway." (*Freddy's Cousin Weedly*)

"Cats always pretend they aren't interested in what is going on, and they turn away and wave their tails to show how indifferent they are. But some time you try doing something where your cat can't quite see what you're up to, and you'll find out quickly how curious he is." (*Freddy and the Ignormus*)

"Cats seldom break dishes. They pride themselves on being able to leap from the floor to a mantelpiece crowded with bric-a-brac and thread their way from one end to the other without even brushing against the most fragile and delicately balanced vase." (*Freddy and the Flying Saucer Plans*)

*Still to come: ants, cows, Martians, and much more!* 🐾

