

Write to us

Letters to the editor should include contact details, degree and year of graduation if applicable.

Please address letters to:

The Editor, **Sydney Alumni Magazine**
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Letters may also be sent by email to:
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Opinions expressed on these pages are those of the signed contributors or the editor and do not necessarily represent the official position of the University of Sydney.

Space permits only a selection of edited letters to be published here.

Mangled Coolidge

The spate of letters dealing with the US Studies Centre (*Sydney Alumni Magazine*, Autumn 2007) is illustrated by a cartoon showing a map of Australia penetrated by America's stars and stripes. Underneath are the words "The business of America is business", with an attribution to President Calvin Coolidge.

This mangled version of what President Coolidge actually said on 17 January 1925 is perhaps the most quoted misquotation of recent history. It has been used by historians of considerable reputation

and regularly crops up whenever things American are being criticised or ridiculed. The correct version had a context.

Coolidge was giving a speech to the Society of Newspaper Editors. He sought to deal with the two roles of the newspaper as both a business trying to make a profit and a source of information, and he raised the question whether it could legitimately straddle and meet both obligations.

He argued that it could, and that in this had much in common with the national life as a whole. "After all," he went on, "the chief business of the American people is business," and "the chief ideal of the American people is idealism."

Makes a difference, does it not?

Barry Maley (BA '51)
Castlecrag, NSW

Eternal reflections

The essay *Sydney, Our Literary City* by Rebecca Johnke (*Sydney Alumni Magazine*, Autumn 2007) notes: "It's believed that [Arthur] Stace was inspired by a preacher who cried 'I wish I could shout eternity through the streets of Sydney'. Stace heeded the call and spent years and years writing Eternity in chalk copperplate on pavements all around inner Sydney".

When I was a student at Sydney Law School in 1961 I saw Arthur Stace

write the word eternity in George Street near Wynyard. The preacher referred to in your article was my uncle, the soldier and Baptist evangelist Rev John G Ridley MC. His wife Dorothy and my mother Gladys were daughters of Professor HG Chapman of the University of Sydney. The story is well written by Harold E Evans and published in 1980 by the Baptist Historical Society of NSW, under the title *Soldier and Evangelist – the story of Rev John G Ridley MC*.

Michael Flynn (LLB '66, MA '73)
Downer, ACT

Dart's Sydney connections

I was most pleased to read the article on Raymond Dart (*Sydney Alumni Magazine*, Autumn 2007). It reminded me that he had lectured at Sydney during October 1972, having come to contribute to the centenary celebration of the work of Grafton Elliot Smith (an early and very famous University of Sydney graduate).

The occasion had been organised by Professors Elkin and Mackintosh, who later published Dart's contributions, together with those of others (of whom I was honoured to be one) in *Grafton Elliot Smith, The Man and His Work*, Sydney University Press, 1974.

John Simons (BSc '49, MSc '53)
Burradoo, NSW



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Compassionate technology

I have always admired Professor Gero's creative thinking (*Sydney Alumni Magazine*, Autumn 2007). Or is it predictive thinking?

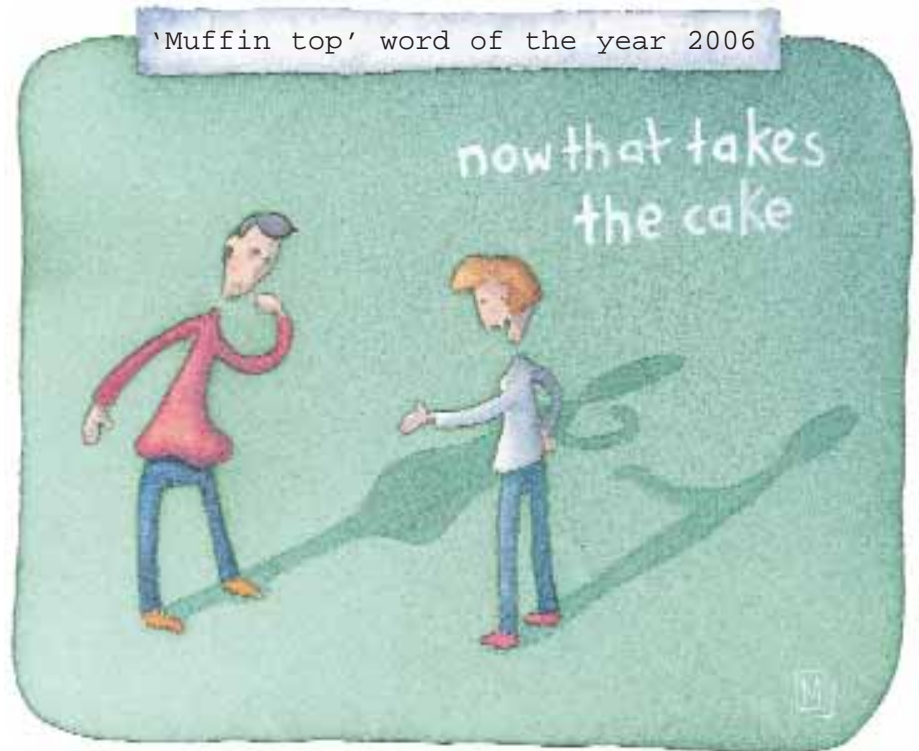
Imagine if the United Nations should have these ultimate machines. When world poverty level rises, our ATMs would simply siphon off our money to the poor. When world peace is desired, all war machines would stop firing. Although that would not stop humans from fighting among ourselves, it is something to work on. Maybe the next research project is to de-program humans by machine. Predictively, of course.

Ernest To (BE '66, MBIgSc '73)
Medowie, NSW

Waiting room reader

The autumn edition of your *Sydney Alumni Magazine* was among the magazines in the waiting room of South Coast Radiology, Pindara Hospital. The hour and a half I was kept waiting one day last week proved nowhere near long enough for me to do justice to such a splendid magazine. It was just as well the warning notice asked patients to consider others and not lift any of the publications provided, or I would have been sorely tempted. I especially enjoyed Dr Rebecca Johnkin's piece on Sydney.

James Rabe
Nerang, Queensland




Can a man have a muffin top?

I was truly ecstatic to see that muffin top has been chosen as the Word of the Year for 2006 by the Macquarie Dictionary (*Sydney Alumni Magazine*, Autumn 2007).

My excitement was tainted, however, when I read that the definition of muffin top is specific to females. I am male and I do possess a small fold of fat around the midriff which on the odd occasion has been known to spill out (just slightly) over the top of tight-fitting pants. Am I to be denied a muffin top because of my gender?

I propose that the Macquarie Dictionary adjust their definition of muffin top owners to eradicate specificity of gender so that us male muffin tops can stand proudly alongside our female counterparts.

Simon Pennington (MCom '05)
Abbotsford, NSW




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