

Dropped

Professor speaks about American-Indian basketry

Around this time of year people may start thinking more about baskets.

Some will be filled with green grass and multicolored jelly beans. Others will have eggs dyed pale shades.

However, for Barbara Trout, University of Nebraska-Lincoln associate professor of textiles, clothing and design, thoughts of baskets last longer than the spring season and, not to mention, more in depth.

As part of the Paul A. Olson seminars, Trout will present a lecture exploring American-Indian basketry today.

Trout first became interested in the functions of American Indian

basketry while she was making baskets.

Focusing on creating three-dimensional fiber art, Trout applied traditional knotting and coiling techniques used in early American Indian basketry.

Initially, Trout was interested in the daily use of baskets rather than the aesthetic functions. By using baskets, American Indians were able to gather, store and cook food, and transport necessities.

Trout will focus on the Pomo culture of California, whose women are known for their mastery in basket-making and meticulous approach.

Trout also will discuss the artistic merits of Pomo baskets, which often use symbolism.

Trout's lecture will explain the materials and processes used in Pomo basket-making.

She also will discuss how deliberate production has come about, transcending the needs of group members and extending the Pomo style of basket into the category of "art basket."

Trout will give her presentation today from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in the Great Plains Art Collection Gallery in Love Library. A reception will be held at 3 p.m., until the lecture starts.

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Turtle stars in TV show

Children's book character Franklin stars in a wildly popular cartoon.

NEW YORK (AP) — It's hard to make a turtle warm and fuzzy. Cold-blooded, shell-encased, this is a creature few would certify as cuddly.

Unless, of course, he's the turtle-tot Franklin.

In two dozen children's books and for the past year in a cartoon series on Nickelodeon (airing weekdays at 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. ET as part of the Nick Jr. lineup), this little guy is every bit as lovable as the kids who follow his adventures.

Meanwhile, the problems Franklin confronts ring true for any preschooler.

Franklin faces the first day of school fearful that he'll be expected to know everything when he walks into the classroom. But, to his great relief, he finds out that not knowing those things is exactly why he's there.

Being toothless, he feels left out when his mammal pals lose their baby teeth. But he learns there are other signs of growing up than a visit by the Tooth Fairy.

"I want to help a child believe that he or she is capable of managing some of childhood's common dilemmas," says "Franklin" creator Paulette Bourgeois, "and that they can find a solution, within their own range. In the stories, adults are guiding influences,

but they never tell a child, 'This is what you should do next.'"

Wildly popular among the wee set, "Franklin" wears well for Mom and Dad, too.

"I think what I'm trying to write is great parenting," Bourgeois says. "When I see how Franklin's parents deal with him, I realize I'm trying to write the parent I would like to be myself — and am not." She laughs. "It's an idealized world in those stories."

The Toronto-based Bourgeois had trained to be a psychiatric occupational therapist but gravitated toward freelance writing. In 1983, with the birth of daughter Natalie, she hit upon the notion of writing a children's book.

Then, nursing Natalie in the middle of one fateful night, she happened to be watching a "M A S H" rerun as Dr. Hawkeye Pierce refused to take shelter in a cave.

"I'm so claustrophobic," cracked Hawkeye, "if I were a turtle, I'd be afraid of my own shell."

Bourgeois calls it "a lightbulb moment. I started writing the next day."

The result was "Franklin in the Dark," which told of a turtle lad who, scared of the darkness inside his shell, refused to go in. He dragged it behind him with a rope. But by the end of the tale, he conquers his fear, embraces his turtleness, and learns to be comfortable in his own skin, er, shell.

Bourgeois had stumbled on a powerful metaphor, then transformed it into

a storybook character. But despite the vast symbolic value, Franklin's identity as a turtle was never Bourgeois' point.

"For me, always, Franklin was a 5-year-old," she says. A sweet, rambunctious, soccer-loving kid. For her, that much was clear.

"But I had no image of him," she confesses. "I don't think visually."

Even when Bourgeois found a publisher to buy her manuscript, Franklin remained unpictured in her mind. Kids Can Press presented the text to an up-and-coming illustrator named Brenda Clark.

Clark says she drew Franklin as a hybrid of box turtle and Galapagos turtle who can walk (and run) upright. She outfitted him with a baseball cap, neckerchief and backpack-like shell, and colored him lustrous green.

"At the time, green was not popular in design terms," she notes. "But I found a green turtle was much more appealing than brown."

Then she placed Franklin and his friends — Bear, Fox, Goose, tiny Snail and the rest — in a verdant countryside befitting any fairy tale. There, they radiate goodwill and good cheer.

Everybody's usually smiling.

"I try to draw the characters the way you'd like your mother, or your child, to look at you," Clark explains. When her son Robin, now 9, was born, "I could look at him and see the facial expressions I'm talking about, and they inspired me."

Garbo letters show deep friendship

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — For years, rumors have circulated of a love affair between Greta Garbo and socialite Mercedes de Acosta, but the letters thought to hold the women's secret remained sealed on Acosta's order. Until now.

Garbo's writings to Acosta — 113 items including 25 letters, notes, telegrams, photos and poems — were opened on the 10th anniversary of the actress's death Saturday. About half of them were laid out Monday before the media at the Rosenbach Museum and Library.

The writings chronicle a 28-year friendship of ups and downs, but they give no explicit evidence of a lesbian relationship, said the actress's grand-niece Gray Reisfield Horan, 40, who witnessed the unsealing.

"Garbo's mystery remains intact," she said Monday.

Acosta gave the letters to the Rosenbach in 1960 with the stipulation they not be opened until 10 years after both women were dead. Acosta, who

wrote in her autobiography about a deep relationship with Garbo, died in 1968. Garbo died April 15, 1990.

Half of the writings will open to the public Tuesday through June 4, along with tidbits from the women's past, including a tracing of Garbo's foot and Acosta's Bible with cutout photos of Garbo pasted inside. The entire collection will be available only to scholars.

The museum would not allow excerpts of the letters to be directly quoted, citing the Garbo estate, which is reserving the right to publish the material.

"The fact that the letters didn't say anything explicit, like I love you or I need you, says a lot," said Garbo biographer Karen Swenson. "Mercedes would have demanded that from her lover and pasted it in her Bible."

"Other researchers may see something different," Swenson said. "If they feel the need to see lesbianism, they'll see it."

"But for anyone to have expected she would say anything explicitly was

"Garbo's mystery remains intact."

Gray Reisfield Horan
 Garbo's grand-niece

contrary to Garbo's character."

Garbo was one of the world's most famous recluses. After starring in 26 films, including "Anna Christie," "Mata Hari" and "Grand Hotel," she walked away from Hollywood in 1941 for a life insulated from the public and press.

Ten years earlier, she had met Acosta, a woman who also claimed affairs with actress Marlene Dietrich.

The letters chronicle Acosta and Garbo's on-and-off relationship from 1931 to 1959.

Agency makes virtual newscaster for Web

LONDON (AP) — She has green hair, big eyes, slightly jerky movements and a vaguely American accent. She says she is "the face of the future."

Her developers hope she's a gold mine.

Ananova — billed as the world's first virtual newscaster — makes her debut today on the Internet. With a click of a mouse, computer users around the world can have breaking news bulletins read to them by the glamorous cyber-anchor, programmed to exude a range of human emotions.

Her creators promise that is just the beginning.

"She's a lot more than a talking head that reads the news," Mark Hird, publishing director at Ananova Ltd., said Tuesday in launching the creation to the media. "She's a computer with a face in front of it, not a face with nothing much behind it. It's a phenomenal information resource."

In addition to the virtual newscasts — which are delivered TV-style by a head-and-shoulders Ananova and come complete with a commercial break — users can arrange to receive tailored e-mail bulletins on subjects that interest them, from sports scores to stock alerts.

Just as with a host of other Web sites, they also can browse entertainment listings, buy tickets and make

use of Ananova's dedicated search engine.

"I'm your personal assistant in a digital world," the animated cyber-anchor said from a video screen at the media launch.

Ananova was developed by Britain's Press Association news agency, which has gone so far as to rename its new media division Ananova Ltd.

Ananova "will completely change the way we communicate," said Vivienne Adshead, the company's commercial director.

Others were more muted in their assessment.

"It's quite a cute idea," said Rebecca Ulph, an analyst with Internet specialists Fletcher Research Ltd in London. "I think it will appeal to the younger end of the market and people who are new to the Internet, people who want a filtering mechanism through all the news that's out there."

"It's a marketing idea, rather than anything really innovative or exciting," she added.

But several Internet watchers said they were unaware of anything else like it in cyberspace.

"It's tempting to say it's a gimmick, but I think it sounds like a very good idea," said Cliff Douse, editor of British-based Internet Advisor maga-

zine.

Ananova has a definite glamour factor. She bears more than a passing resemblance to Posh Spice, a.k.a. Victoria Beckham.

Several designers reportedly have expressed interest in fashioning her wardrobe.

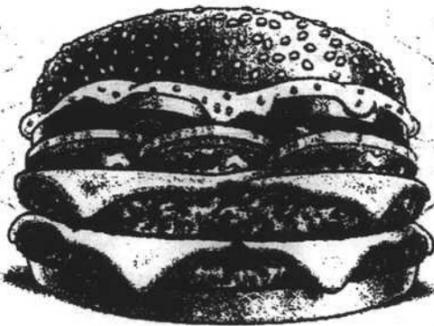
But her creators dismissed claims that she's just another cyber-babe along the lines of Internet icon Lara Croft, buxom heroine of the video game Tomb Raider.

"We did some tests and in general people said they preferred to get their information from a woman," Adshead said. "She's been designed to appeal, though, to both men and women. She's not a babe. She's a sophisticated real-time computer system."

She's also, her developers hope, a nice little earner who will generate revenue through various e-commerce partnerships and "commercially confidential" projects.

The company will not reveal how much their anchor cost to develop or how much they hope to bring in when Ananova Ltd. is sold in the next few months, though a sale figure of \$400 million has been reported. Robert Simpson, Ananova's chief executive officer, said the firm is talking with bidders and expects to announce a sale in the next month or two.

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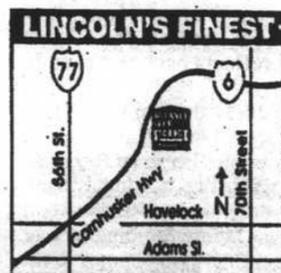
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