Kay Dinsmoor

"MONEY'S THE CHEAPEST THING WE'VE GOT"?

If we assume that Wordsworth was an authority on such things and if we assume that the writing of poetry is similar to the writing of a reminiscence of JEAB as seen from the Business Office—shaky premises to be sure—then we may assume that this piece, properly composed, would be of strong feelings recollected in moments of tranquility. Strong feelings are certainly there; moments of tranquility are a rare commodity in my life with JEAB.

My introduction to the world of operant conditioning came by a rather circuitous route. In 1953 I came to Indiana University as a graduate student in English literature; as I worked on my PhD (a degree I did not complete, having stopped short of the 18-hour written examination and the dissertation), I taught expository writing to Indiana undergraduates and advanced English composition to foreign students. In 1954 I was introduced to one of the younger members of the psychology faculty, James A. Dinsmoor; when we went out together, he talked of things like reinforcement, aversive control, operant conditioning, and other equally foreign-sounding but somehow familiar concepts. (My parents knew nothing of conditioning or positive reinforcement in those terms, but certainly praising the "right" behavior and discouraging what was "wrong" was very much a part of their repertoires.) Jim also mentioned names like B. F. Skinner and Fred Keller. So, thinking I should try to understand more of what Jim and his students were discussing, I bought a copy of *The Behavior of Organisms* at a secondhand book store. After sampling a few chapters, however, I decided that my one undergraduate course in psychology (taught by an elderly lady who began the course with "Psychology is the study of the mind") had not prepared me to understand Skinner, and that Jim would have to settle for an interested listener rather than an active participant.

Not long after we were married, as I finished my course work I was employed by a group of four young instructors who were beginning a new journal at Indiana University,

Victorian Studies. My role was to do the general editorial typing, write business letters, develop a subscription list, solicit advertising, set up files, compose business and editorial forms, and make certain that the journal did not spend more money than the University subsidy provided. These years, 1956 and 1957, were my apprenticeship for the JEAB job that was to come. My employers nurtured my compulsiveness about detail and taught me that every letter deserves a prompt reply and that business correspondence need not be stuffy—that there was another human being reading that letter.

During 1957 and 1958, when the Bloomington-based Dinsmoors socialized frequently with the Indianapolis-based Fersters and Verhaves, I heard much about a new psychology journal being started and about the problems it was encountering. Because many of these were the problems *Victorian Studies* had already worked through, there was a lot of sharing of information about maintaining subscription lists, courting advertisers, composing business forms and the like, all of which took place during these social gatherings.

In the summer of 1959, after interviews with Charles Ferster, Thom Verhave, Murray Sidman, and Og Lindsley—and after considerable behind-the-scenes agonizing about the advisability of dispersing the journal operation even further by adding a separate business office in a small midwest town and of turning the journal finances over to a relatively unknown quantity—I was offered the half-time job of Business Manager of JEAB, at an annual salary of \$2,000. It was not until December that the files were shipped to Bloomington and the Business Office began to function out of a small bedroom in our home. The chairman of the Indiana University Psychology Department was happy to have JEAB use the department as a mailing address, an arrangement that has remained mutually beneficial: Indiana is thought of as the "home" of JEAB, without having to provide space or staff, while JEAB benefits from having its name associated with

The real home of JEAB's Business Office.

a university and a department well known for excellence in research.

If this home-office arrangement had the important advantage of permitting me to be at home while our children were growing up—and the guilt heaped upon “working mothers” in those days was considerable—it also had some disadvantages. For example, my letterhead shows a business mailing address, but the phone listed there is at our home. One morning an advertising agent, who had taken into account neither the time zones nor the possibility that I had worked most of the night on an expiration notice, called at 8:00 a.m. and was startled to have my husband reply: “She’s in bed; I’ll see if she can come to the phone.” Another example: When back volumes were reprinted, shipments weighing about 2,000 pounds arrived at our house. Drivers expected to find a dock for unloading, and union rules, they explained, obligated them to move cartons only from the back of the truck to the dock. So my job was to move the cartons from the truck into the garage storage area. Usually the men watched me struggle with the 54-pound cartons for a few minutes, but I can recall no instance that they did not eventually come to my aid.

For a time I held both the *Victorian Studies* and the JEAB jobs; however, as both grew, it became apparent in 1963 that I must choose between them. John Boren made that decision relatively easy: If I chose JEAB, the Society would add to my salary what I was making with *Victorian Studies*. (I should add that John Boren, more than any person with whom I have ever worked, is a true believer in positive reinforcement and uses it masterfully; the

prospect of being denied his weekly pellets of praise would probably have led me to choose JEAB in any case.)

In 1966, when the Dinsmoors moved to a larger home, JEAB got its own basement office with plenty of room to spread—and a larger garage that is still used to store about 125 cartons of back volumes. (An additional 495 cartons are stored in two other Bloomington locations.) If space has become a problem, it is only because I seem unable to part with files that might someday come in handy. For instance, I have nine long file boxes full of 3 × 5 salmon cards—one for each individual and each institution that ever subscribed to JEAB, including dates on which orders were received, volumes purchased, prices paid, and receipt numbers.

It may be difficult for current readers to appreciate the shoe-string existence of JEAB in its earliest years. Although my salary was low and the working conditions were somewhat less than ideal, it should be remembered that everyone else was working with no compensation and under similar constraints. Marilyn Ferster, who copyedited the journal during the early years and who typed the first two issues, received only enough to pay a babysitter while she worked; Og Lindsley, who served as Society Treasurer and also as Business Manager of JEAB during 1957 through most of 1959, had only a pittance to cover secretarial help and supplies; Serena Schoenfeld, who saw to the design of the original JEAB format and oversaw the printing of the early issues, received no compensation; Murray Sidman, who recruited subscribers during 1958 and 1959, and Peter Dews, who solicited

Kay Dinsmoor, 1968, in basement office.

advertising during those two years, were not supplied even postage money. There were no editorial honoraria and no expense accounts for secretarial help, postage, phone, or supplies. There was a missionary zeal among the founders of the journal that seemed to transcend such mundane considerations. (Charlie Ferster used to say, when I worried about spending money on equipment, "Money's the cheapest thing we've got." I never believed it for a minute, but it became a household phrase within the Dinsmoor family and is still used when we are trying to justify spending some money.)

I was accused of being a tightwad, but I gave in and spent a little money on equipment: In 1960, JEAB bought an 18-inch-carriage Olympia electric typewriter (the first of three such marvelous machines I've had over the past 28 years); we bought an adding machine, and I was able to put away the abacus-like gadget I had used during the first 10 months. And we purchased a cast-iron Elliot addressograph machine. Subscribers' names and addresses were cut by typewriter on plastic-paneled cards; these cards were then hand-cranked through the machine for inking and imprinting the information directly onto the journal envelope. (If this now seems crude, be assured that it was a vast improvement over typing the individual mailing labels, the procedure for the first two issues mailed from Bloomington.) Sitting in the middle of the living room floor, I affixed labels and postage (we had not yet obtained a second-class mailing permit), sorted the pieces by city and state, tied them into bundles and put them into bags, and prevailed upon my husband and my son, Dan, to pile the bags into the family station wagon and to help me deliver them to the loading dock at the back of the Bloomington Post Office. But within two or three years, with money more plentiful, I relinquished that job to the Michigan printer (although I continued to provide the addressed envelopes).

Another indication of the growing feeling of affluence was Nate Azrin's insistence, when he became Editor, that I rent a Xerox machine. (I routinely made four copies of all correspondence—for the file, for the Editor, for the Managing Editor, and for the Treasurer.) I don't know if Nate tired of trying to read copies made with badly worn carbon paper or whether he sincerely believed, as he said, that I should

Kay Dinsmoor and JABA's Mary Louise Wright, 1968.

be spending my time on more important things than bothering with multiple carbon copies; in any event, that copying machine quickly became as essential to me as the personal computer appears to be to the younger generation.

But now I rarely talk about the difficulties of the "old days"; although I occasionally tell my JABA counterpart and dear friend, Mary Lou Wright, tales of JEAB's spartan beginnings and chide her about JABA's lack of suffering, her face sometimes takes on the affectionately tolerant but bored expression that my children assume when I start my "When I was your age . . ." routine.

It is impossible to recreate the excitement of those early years—waiting to see if any of the 100 or so individually typed letters sent annually to prospective advertisers would bring results (they did; by the end of 1964, 37 companies had purchased advertising space in JEAB) and waiting to see if promotional mailings would bring in enough subscribers to pay the bills (they did) and to approach the circulation of the JEP (they did). I remember vividly an IRS examination during the 60s when the examiner asked me where we listed our expenses (such as editorial and secretarial salaries, rent, utilities, staff, postage, supplies) and found it incredible that the editors donated their time and space and that the Society had almost none of the usual overhead expense. The editorial dedication and sacrifice, obvious even from the financial records, played an important part, I'm sure, in the IRS granting us the tax-exempt status we continue to enjoy.

The hiring of Garth Hopkins as Managing Editor in 1962 did much to give a professional

character to JEAB and greatly reduced the inordinate amount of time I spent writing to subscribers to explain why their issues had not arrived; his equilibrium and perpetual cheer did much to relieve the stress of my job. And the appointment of Vic Laties as Executive Editor and Treasurer in 1966 (offices he still holds), with his exuberance and enthusiasm and basic good sense in overseeing the money management of the Society, did much to calm my concern that I would be the one held solely responsible if the journal were to suffer some financial disaster. My admiration and affection have continued to grow over the past 20 years; if JABA's Mary Lou Wright and I were

forced to choose a SEAB hero, certainly Vic Laties would be the one.

After 28 years with JEAB, I seem to have become a fixture. I was amused and taken aback at a convention a few years ago when a man approached me, read my name tag, and asked me what my *real* name was. It turned out he assumed that the name "Kay Dinsmoor" was a fictitious one assigned to the Business Manager of JEAB over the years to maintain continuity and name recognition—a sort of "Betty Crocker of JEAB." I like that.

Business Manager, JEAB

Marilyn Ferster, now Marilyn B. Gilbert, served as Assistant Editor of JEAB from 1957 to 1962. Charles B. Ferster, the first Editor of JEAB (1958–1960), died in early 1981. Appreciations of his life and work have appeared in JEAB (Skinner, B. F. [1981], Charles B. Ferster—A Personal Memoir, **35**, 259–261; Keller, F. S. [1981], Charles Bohris Ferster, 1922–1981: An Appreciation, **36**, 299–301); in *The Behavior Analyst* (Boren, J. J. [1981], Charles B. Ferster, 1922–1981, **4**, 155–156); in the *American Psychologist* (Dinsmoor, J. A. [1982], Charles B. Ferster, 1922–1981, **37**, 235); and in *Revista de Historia de la Psicología* (Spain) (Mendez, J. & Colotla, V. A. [1983], Charles B. Ferster (1922–1981): Un analisis bibliometrico de su influencia en la psicologia, **4**, 59–68).

Charles B. Ferster, 1968.

Marilyn B. (Ferster) Gilbert

MEMORIES OF JEAB'S MOTHER

"Have you heard about this new desktop publishing? With a computer you can create your own journal!"

I listen patiently to my young writer friend, remembering how it was in 1957. We had desktop publishing then, but it was hard to do.

I was Marilyn Ferster then, married to Charles Bohris Ferster, known as "Charlie." We were in Orange Park, Florida, the original site of the Yerkes Laboratories of Primate Biology. Yale Professor Robert M. Yerkes, who hadn't studied his geography lessons very well, chose Orange Park because he thought the