In the mid-sixties, after my first husband passed the bar and started lawyering, I stopped teaching because I wanted evening time free from grading papers. The job that filled the bill was as a secretary at the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. That stint turned out to be a learning year – a real world learning year.

The office of the Bulletin was in a two-story Victorian house— in the most attractive area of the Loredo Taft Midway Studio, on 60th Street in Hyde Park. Loredo Taft, had been a renowned Chicago sculptor for over fifty years, spanning the end of the 19th and into 20th century.¹ The *Bulletin* office was not far from Taft's "Fountain of Time," a monumental sculpture, located at the western edge of the Midway Plaisance.² In that huge work, Father Time peers over a shallow pool toward a wavelike procession of nearly a hundred human figures. ³ His students and his three daughters were among the models; he included a self-portrait on the reverse side.⁴ Dedicated in 1922 the Fountain was restored by the City and the Art Institute in 2002. ⁵

¹ Weller, Allen Stuart, *Loredo Taft, The Chicago Years,* Champaign, University of Illinois Press, 2013.

^{153-65.} Steve Thomas has made two presentations to the literary club about Taft.

² Ihid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ U of Chicago Arts, Fountain of Time

In 1892 Taft helped Daniel Burnham with the sculpture figures on the Horticulture Building at the 1893 World's Fair. As the fair's opening drew near, Taft realized that he would not be able to complete the sculptural decorations in time. He asked Daniel Burnham if he could use women assistants. Burnham replied that Taft could "hire anyone, even white rabbits, if they can get the work done." Taft brought in a group of women assistants who were promptly dubbed "the White Rabbits." Some of the most talented and successful women sculptors of the next generation came from that group of White Rabbits. 6

Back to the Bulletin

On my first day at the *Bulletin*, following a round of introductions, I was thrown for a loop when the Office Manager apologized that the electric typewriter was out for repair. Electric typewriter, oh my God! When I took typing in high school, electric typewriters existed, but not for me. Luckily, typing speed was not critical at the *Bulletin*. I survived my initial shock and continued on into my learning year.

Ruth Adams

⁶ White Rabbits (Sculptors) in Wikipedia.

Ruth Adams, the editor of the *Bulletin*, was a brilliant, charming, down to earth woman with a hearty laugh. Every day she brought her beloved standard black poodle, Harley,⁷ to the office; he sat by her chair, ever watching over, or sleeping by, his mistress. Ruth smoked a pipe, a lady-like pipe, which, according to her husband, Bob, gained her entrée into the almost exclusively male groups of nuclear scientists and disarmament mavens.⁸

Ruth had been an early participant in the <u>Pugwash</u> peace movement, which brought together American and Soviet scientists concerned about the nuclear threat.⁹ Pugwash had been founded in 1957 by Bertrand Russell and Joseph Rotblatt. They, together with the Pugwash movement, were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995 for their efforts on Nuclear Disarmament. Cyrus Eaton, the industrialist and philanthropist had financed and hosted the first conference, which was named after his birthplace, Pugwash, Nova Scotia.¹⁰ Ruth, the only woman present at the first Pugwash conference in '57', "was as knowledgeable as many of the Pugwash participants, even though she

⁷ Obituary of Ruth Adams, New York Times, March 4, 2005

⁸ Ibid.

 $^{{}^9\}text{Pugwash}$ Conferences on Science and World Affairs in Wikipedia

¹⁰ Ibid.

was not a scientist,"¹¹ said Victor Rabinowitch, a friend of Ruth for 50 years and member of the Board of the *Bulletin*. "She really believed in the importance of scientists in political roles. She held that view until her death -- that scientists had a unique responsibility to inform the public about the dangers of nuclear war."¹²

Bob Adams

Ruth's husband, Bob, was seldom seen at the office. Bob was Robert McCormick Adams, not of the reaper family, but his father had been a successful Chicago tax lawyer. Incidentally, Bob died this year at 91.¹³ He was a maverick. After serving in the navy in WW II, he attended the U of Chicago, but dropped out to work in a steel mill and a Ford assembly line.¹⁴ In the early fifties, Robert Braidwood, a distinguished scholar at the Oriental Institute, invited him to join an archeological dig in Iraq. Bob joked, "I think he wanted a person who could repair cars." ¹⁵ He completed his PhD in anthropology in 1956 and eventually, rose through the academic ranks to become provost of the U of C.¹⁶ Moving

¹¹ Obituary of Ruth Adams, Los Angeles Times, March 3, 2005

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Obituary of Robert McCormick Adams, New York Times, February 2, 2018

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

on from that post, he was appointed secretary of the Smithsonian in 1984.¹⁷ He and Ruth moved to DC where Ruth worked at the McCormick Foundation.¹⁸ The *Washington Post* once described Bob as looking like a cross between Walt Disney and Walter Cronkite. ¹⁹ He became a controversial figure at the Smithsonian. For example, *The Washington Post* heavily criticized an exhibition on the settlement of the West commenting that [the exhibition] "reduced the saga of the American West pioneers to little more than victimization, disillusion, and environmental rape." ²⁰ Daniel Boorstin, former professor of history at the U of C and later Librarian of Congress, also lambasted the exhibition, declaring it to be "perverse, historically inaccurate, destructive" and "no credit to the Smithsonian." ²¹

Back to the Bulletin

In the 1940's Ruth had been an assistant to Dr. Eugene Rabinowitch, a Russian-born American biophysicist at the U of C. Eugene, as most people addressed him, is most remembered for his unceasing efforts on the *Franck Report* and the *Bulletin*. A look back at certain events in 1945

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Ihid.

¹⁹ Obituary of Robert McCormick Adams, Washington Post, February 2, 2018

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *Ibid.*

sheds light on how the *Franck Report* became the raison d'etre of the Bulletin. In May of 1945, Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, created a secret high-level group, the Interim Committee, to recommend decisions about nuclear energy.²² To facilitate these decisions, the Committee named a Scientific Panel of Arthur Compton, Ernest Lawrence, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and Enrico Fermi.²³ On June 1, 1945, the Interim Committee concluded that the atomic bomb should be used as soon as possible against Japan, with no prior warning, on a target of military significance. ²⁴When these findings were reported to the scientists at the Chicago Metallurgical Laboratory, many of whom had been involved with The Manhattan Project, physicist James Franck founded his own committee. The Franck Committee was to study the use of nuclear energy going forward, and in particular to study the question of when, or if, the bomb should be used.²⁵ The *Franck* Report of June 11, 1945, was the product of intense meetings at the "Met Lab." Eugene Rabinowitch drafted much of the report.26 James

²² Interim Committee Report Atomic Heritage Foundation www/atomicheritage.org/key-documents/interim committee report

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Ihid.

²⁵ The Franck Report in Wikipedia

²⁶ Ibid.

Franck, signed, as chair.²⁷ Among other recommendations, the most important was, 'The use of nuclear bombs for an early unannounced attack against Japan is inadvisable . . . much more favorable [circumstances] would be if nuclear bombs were first revealed to the world by a demonstration on an appropriately selected uninhabited area.²⁸ The Interim Committee was so outraged by this report that some sentences in all copies—including the original in the National Archives—were permanently censored with ink.²⁹ On June 16, 1945, the science panel of the Interim Committee repeated its recommendations to the President in no uncertain terms, "We see no acceptable alternative to direct military use." 30 Oppenheimer signed the report for the panel.³¹ The debate raged on. Leo Szilard, infuriated, as was his nature, then prepared many drafts of a petition, the total of which were signed by more than one hundred scientists. The petition in its final form declared: "A nation which sets the precedent of using these newly liberated forces of nature for purposes of destruction may have to bear the responsibility of opening the door to an era of devastation on an

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Kelly C Ed. The Manhattan Project, Hatchette Group 2009 287-93

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ ibid

unimaginable scale."³² Szilard sent the petition to Compton, who forwarded it on to other scientists for their approval, until it landed in the hands of General Leslie Groves. Groves, who had been overlord of the Manhattan Project, had recruited Oppenheimer as his scientific partner. Groves disliked Szilard intensely and is rumored to have called him "a Jewish busybody.³³" Groves held onto the petition until early August when he had it delivered to Stimson, who was not available. Stimson's assistant, for reasons unknown, marked it "secret" and placed it in a desk drawer.³⁴ Consequently, neither Stimson, nor Truman saw the petition before the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

Back to the Bulletin

The Franck Report was the immediate precursor of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Late in 1945, Rabinowitch co-founded the Bulletin with Hyman Goldsmith. John Simpson, a fellow geophysicist, was the first chair of the board. The board of sponsors included leading scientists of the age such as Einstein, Oppenheimer, and Teller.

Rabinowitch was the chief editor of the Bulletin until his death in 1973. In October 1945, Rabinowitch and Simpson had written an article

³² Ibid.

³³*Ibid*.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

for *Life* magazine, which claimed that scientists were morally obligated to warn the public and policy makers about the dangers of nuclear weapons.³⁵

The *Bulletin* focused attention on the nuclear threat and quickly became known as the conscience of the scientific community, primarily the conscience of those scientists who felt a deep personal sense of guilt for their own involvement in the development of the bomb.³⁶ For example, in October of 1945, Oppenheimer met with Truman to persuade the president to support international controls on nuclear weapons. Oppie, as he was known, is reported to have said, "I feel I have blood on my hands."³⁷ Truman is reported to have replied that it was he, the President of the United States who had blood on his hands. Soon after that exchange, Truman reportedly commented to Dean Acheson that Oppenheimer was "a cry-baby scientist who came wringing his hands to my office over the creation of nuclear weapons." He also told Acheson, "I never want to see that son-of-a-bitch in my office again."38 In the early years, the *Bulletin* reported on the major developments in the nuclear area. With determination, Rabinowitch, until his death in 1973, lobbied the scientists

³⁵ American Heritage Foundation, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, February 2017

³⁶ Op.Cit. The Manhattan Project 289

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Ibid.

who had labored for the development of the bomb to lobby for the

abolition of the bomb.

Shortly after Eugene's death, the *Bulletin* included a series of

testimonials to him, including one by Dr. John Simpson, "Eugene

Rabinowitch became the "conscience" of U.S. scientists and proclaimed

the essence of man's destiny in this century. Although he lived with the

knowledge that civilization had at last the power to destroy itself

through nuclear war, he never ceased to be a 'romantic' in his view of

man's future on Earth. "39

By the time I worked at the *Bulletin*, Eugene was the titular chief editor

of the *Bulletin*, while Ruth Adams, always in conjunction with Eugene,

was the editor in fact. At that time, Ruth and writers for the Bulletin

were focusing on China, which had recently tested its atomic bomb, had

just instituted the cultural revolution, and was the subject of speculation

about a hydrogen bomb.40

Some Friends on the Staff and Our Work

My job was more of a Jack -of -all -trades, rather than a secretary.

³⁹ Quote from Bulletin "A Voice of Conscience is Stilled: Volume 29, 1973 Issue 6

Issue: Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Volume 71 Issue 1

10

I made coffee; I kept the copier working. I did type on that electric typewriter, but, thank God, I was not required to correct the carbons. My most exciting day was the day Hans Bethe telephoned from Zurich. Luckily, I had learned to pronounce his name before he called!

I opened and distributed all mail not related to subscriptions. My coworker, Dana Powell, was in charge of subscriptions, including our direct mail solicitations. Our returns in Business Reply Envelopes sadly were less than one per cent. From Dana, I learned about Bind-in Cards and Blow-in Cards, those pesky cards, to this day, I always throw away. For the most part, the staff got along, with one exception, Dana intensely disliked Bucky Harris.

Bucky was retired and was the runner and handyman of the office—although he lobbied for a loftier title. Picture a man in his 60's, short, slight of build with a shaft of totally white hair and steel- framed glasses always riding down on his beak-like nose. Bucky was a bleeding-heart liberal who "introduced" me to the *I.F. Stone Weekly*. Bucky announced ad nauseum that Izzy Stone was courageous in bucking other journalists' reports on the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. Johnston and the press at large had claimed that the August 4,1964, attack by North Vietnam on the U.S. destroyer was a proper justification for escalating

the war. Whether the Resolution was based on facts was hotly debated for years. Bucky was adamant that Izzy was on the mark in calling the Resolution a "damned scheme" to win the election. In 2008 the magazine Vietnam printed a National Security Agency report that "revealed unequivocally" that, although there had been an encounter on August 2, the alleged Aug. 4, 1964 attack never actually happened. 41 Even that formal statement has not quelled the debate. Bucky was liberal, but his brother-in-law, Milt Cohen was demonstrably more liberal, for Cohen had volunteered for the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, a group of about 3000 American volunteers, who supported the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Civil War1937-39.42 A large proportion of the brigade was thought to be communistic, but one thing they definitely had in common, they <u>all</u> hated Fascism. ⁴³ During World War II, former members of the brigade were considered security risks. In 1947, former members were placed on the Attorney

41 Vietnam, June 2008

General's List of Subversive Organizations.[44]

⁴² Lincoln Battalion in Wikipedia

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

After World War II, veterans of the Brigade were denied government jobs. Milt Cohen never suffered the stings and rejections of his fellow volunteers, perhaps because he lived in Hyde Park for years and years, stayed away from the military, and never sought government employment.

Bucky doted on Milt's adopted son Danny, who became a well- known writer of books for children and teenagers. Tragedy befell Danny's family. In 1988, Danny's daughter, Theodora, and 258 other passengers, were killed in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. Danny and his wife sought retribution from Pan Am, the US government, and the Libyan government. Finally, in a successful suit against the Libyan government, the families of each of the passengers aboard received ten million dollars. Danny died recently. His obituary identified his father, Milton, as a left-wing social reformer. Milt would have gloried in that description.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ https://www.britannica.com/event/Pan-Am-flight-103

⁴⁷ Obituary of Daniel Cohen, New York Times, May 9, 2018

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Back to the Bulletin and the Artists I Met There

A few days into the job, I met Ruth Duckworth, a woman of my height with bright, piercing eyes who spoke English with a heavy German accent. I soon learned that she was born in Hamburg. In 1936, when she was 17, her father had moved the family to Liverpool to escape the Nazis. She found little work as an artist. After all, she was a German, a Iew, and a woman. Among other stints, for two years she toured with a puppet theater and carved heads in an "expressionistic style." In 1949 she married Aidron Duckworth, a sculptor and designer. They moved to London but failed to find recognition there. Luckily, in 1964, Ruth was offered a year's teaching position at the Midway Studios at the University of Chicago. She was immediately told to "Sculpt" for her first exhibition. In the spring of 1965, her work was shown at the Renaissance Society gallery in Hyde Park. 49 Julian Goldsmith, the chair of the geophysics department, attended her show and gave Ruth her first big project in Chicago.⁵⁰ Still in existence, that work of art, a 400 square foot ceramic mural, entitled "Earth, Water and Sky" covers four walls and the ceiling of the entry way to the Henry Hinds lab in the

⁴⁹ Huebner, J,'In Good Hands, 'The Reader, September 26, 2002

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

geophysical sciences building at the U of C. It consists of 260 stoneware tiles; the earth, water, and sky are depicted in colors of pale blue, green, and brown.⁵¹ White porcelain clouds hang from the ceiling. The *Reader* has called it one of Chicago's best kept secrets.⁵²

Some years later, the Dresdner Bank commissioned Ruth to create a 200 square foot stoneware mural in the Board of Trade Building. Now located in the lobby of the Options Exchange, That mural, "Clouds over Lake Michigan," is based on a map of Chicago and its surroundings. To quote a comment from a photographic exhibition of her work at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, "It begins with a literal representation of the watersheds of the Midwest around the lower end of Lake Michigan...." This is overlaid by a grid pattern, and on this grid are imposed archaeological fantasies of Chicago as a site of an ancient civilization."

Both "Earth, Water, and Sky" and "Clouds over Lake Michigan" are open for viewing.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ruth Duckworth-Modernist Sculptor, "Bulletin of the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts, April 2006

In 2002, when Ruth was interviewed by the *Reader* she commented, "To me, form is what matters. And form can matter in a small piece or a large piece . . .One of the reasons I stayed in America is that you can work large here. I love working large, maybe because I'm small. ⁵⁵

Throughout her life, Ruth is said to have grappled with artistic problems of her own--mainly, how best to express a concern for the endangered environment. She contributed to several ecological and wildlife organizations and pored over books about the earth sciences. As she once said, "To me, my life and my work are relatively unimportant compared to the drama of a sick planet. The health of the planet and how to keep it intact are what matter most. The earth is so fragile and beautiful, and it needs so much love and caring, and not just by me. Can I express any of that in my work? I really don't know." ⁵⁶ The Union League Club named Ruth as one of its Distinguished Artists in 2003... At the event honoring her, she and I renewed our acquaintance and spent some time reminiscing about our experiences at the Taft Midway

⁵⁵ Op.Cit. The Reader.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Studio. When she died in 2009, I scoured the net and bought two small pieces of her ceramic work, which I cherish.

The Bulletin as a Magazine - Its Beginnings⁵⁷

The *Bulletin* initially was a 6-page black and white publication, a format that failed to warn sufficiently of the danger of nuclear weapons. 58 Within two years, the board decided that the *Bulletin* should be in more typical magazine format. The content was no problem; the supportive scientists welcomed the idea of being read--perhaps even by nonscientists. The cover was a challenge. What would be eye-catching and alert the viewer of the imminent danger of nuclear weapons? The answer? The Doomsday Clock! 59 That clock is the design of Martyl Langsdorf, whose husband, Alexander Langsdorf, Jr., a physicist at the U of C, had worked on the Manhattan Project. Martyl and Alex had many friends in the Bulletin community. Martyl was a successful abstract landscape artist throughout her life. In 1935, at 18, she studied and painted at a mentor's studio in Colorado Springs. George Gershwin, who

⁵⁷ Bever, Lindsay, *Washington Post,* "The Making of the Doomsday Clock: Art, science and the atomic apocalypse," Interview of Rachel Bronson, President and chief executive of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, January 25, 2018*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

was conducting nearby, bought one of her paintings and promised to help her if she ever came to New York. Today her work is in the collections of the Smithsonian, the Hirschhorn, the Art Institute, and the Whitney.

Given her reputation in the community, Martyl was a natural to design the cover of the *Bulletin*.⁶⁰ Besides she was a volunteer. That design was a challenge. Money was scarce; she was limited to two colors. She first considered using the letter U, the chemical symbol for uranium.⁶¹ She discarded that idea because it did not convey the looming dangers of nuclear technology. The face of a clock would do just that. She set the clock at seven minutes to midnight "because it looked good."62 In 1947 when the clock appeared on the first cover of the magazine, and to this day, the clock symbolizes nuclear danger.⁶³ Michael Beirut, a famous graphic designer, declared the Doomsday Clock to be possibly the most powerful piece of information design of the 20th century.64 The minute hand of the Doomsday Clock has been moved 20 times since 1947.65

⁶⁰ Beirut, Michael, *The Atlantic*, "Designing the Doomsday Clock," November 2015.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid*,

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ https://thebulletin.org/doomdayclock

The major moves include the following:

In 1949, the hand was moved to 3 minutes to Midnight. President Truman had informed the American public that the Soviets had tested their first nuclear device. The Bulletin explained, "We do not advise Americans that doomsday is near . . . but we think they have reason to be deeply alarmed."66

In '53, the hand was moved to 2 minutes to Midnight. The *Bulletin* explained: in 1952, the United States had tested the first hydrogen bomb on an island in the Eniwetok Atoll of the Marshall Islands. The explosion obliterated the island. In August of '53, Russia had exploded its first thermonuclear device. Not a true hydrogen bomb, but the Soviets used it for powerful propaganda. The Bulletin warned, "Only a few more swings of the pendulum, and, from Moscow to Chicago, atomic explosions will strike midnight for Western Civilization." In '63 12 minutes to Midnight, a move in the right direction—the reason being that the United States and the Soviet Union had signed the Partial Test Ban Treaty which pledged to discontinue all atmospheric nuclear testing.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid

In '68, 7 minutes to Midnight because of rampant regional wars -- the US in Vietnam, India and Pakistan in '65, Israel and its neighbors in '67. Moreover, France and China had developed nuclear weapons. The Bulletin lamented the "deadly heritage of international anarchy." ⁶⁹ In '69, 10 minutes to Midnight when most of the world's nations had signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, that is most nuclear powers, save Israel, India, and Pakistan. The Bulletin optimistically declared, "The great powers have made the first step. They must proceed to dismantling, gradually, of their own oversized military establishments. " ⁷⁰

In '72, 12 minutes to Midnight. *The Bulletin* was optimistic for the United States and the Soviet Union had signed the Strategic Arms
Limitation Treaty (SALT) and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM). ⁷¹
In '81 ominous events 4 minutes to Midnight. The Bulletin reasoned:
The Soviets had invaded Afghanistan. President Carter had pulled the US from the Olympic Games in Moscow. Carter was also considering ways in which the US could win a nuclear war. Reagan then scrapped

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

any talk of arms control and proposed the best way to end the Cold War was for the United States to win it.⁷²

'90 10 minutes to Midnight good news indeed! Eastern European countries had freed themselves from Soviet control. Late'89 the Berlin Wall had fallen; Winston Churchill's Iron Curtain was no more.⁷³

'15 3 minutes to Midnight The Bulletin took a new focus and warned, "In the climate change arena, current efforts are entirely insufficient to prevent a catastrophic warming of earth. International leaders are failing to perform their most important duty—ensuring and preserving the health and vitality of human civilization."⁷⁴
2017 the hand was moved to 2 ½ minutes to Midnight The board's decision to move the clock less than a full minute—something it had never done—reflected a simple reality. Quote "As of late January, Donald Trump has been the US president only a matter of days. Trump's statements and his actions have broken with historical precedent in unsettling ways. He has made ill-considered comments about expanding

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

the US nuclear arsenal. He discounts expert advice related to international security. His nominees to Energy and Environmental Protection dispute the basics of climate science."⁷⁶

'18 now 2 minutes to Midnight; The *Bulletin* board cited growing nuclear threats, climate change, and a lack of trust in political institutions as they set the doomsday clock— 30 seconds closer than it was in 2017.77 The *Washington Post* quoted two *Bulletin* board members" 78 'The world is not only more dangerous now than it was[in 1917]; it is as threatening as it has been since World War II," referencing President Trump's repeated threats of war against North Korean leader, Kim Jong un, as well as his reversal of the Obama Administration's efforts to stop climate change.

What the 2019 Doomsday Clock will read. We can only hope.

Having been in Chicago only a few years when I took the job at the *Bulletin*, I knew it by name only. It was a learning year indeed.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/.../2018/.../25/181ae8aa-0145-11e8-8acf-ad2991367d...

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

^{78 🛊}

I left to take a position tutoring a teenager with school phobia. Two years later, he was killed in Vietnam.

2018 The mission of the *Bulletin* lives on.