

The short story

by Mark Taylor

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"Marker" is a regular column in Coyote, written by Mark Taylor, looking at issues in something-to-be-discovered and hoping to encourage debate, questions and a certain regard.

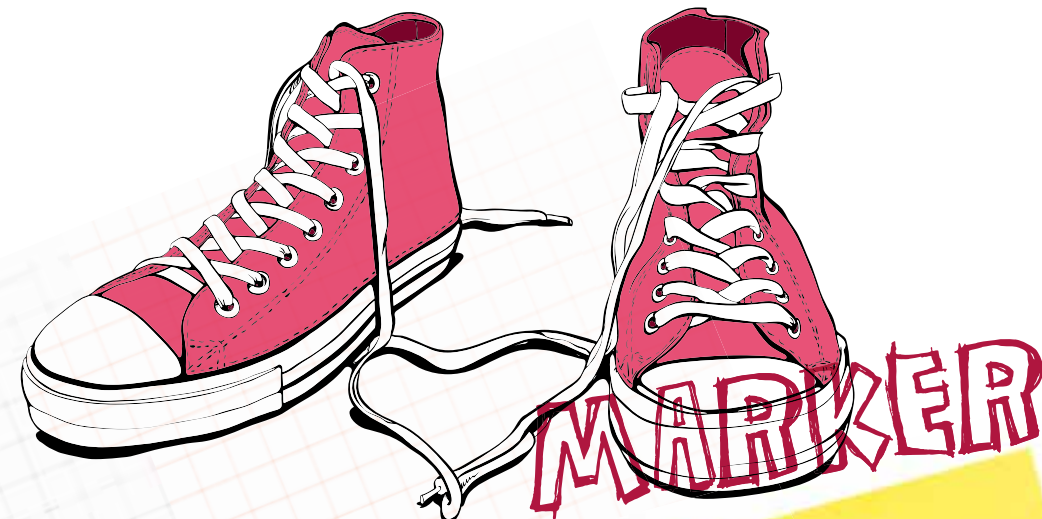
For reasons of space, this "Marker" is much shorter than previous editions. Normal service may resume in the next issue.

Change your ways...

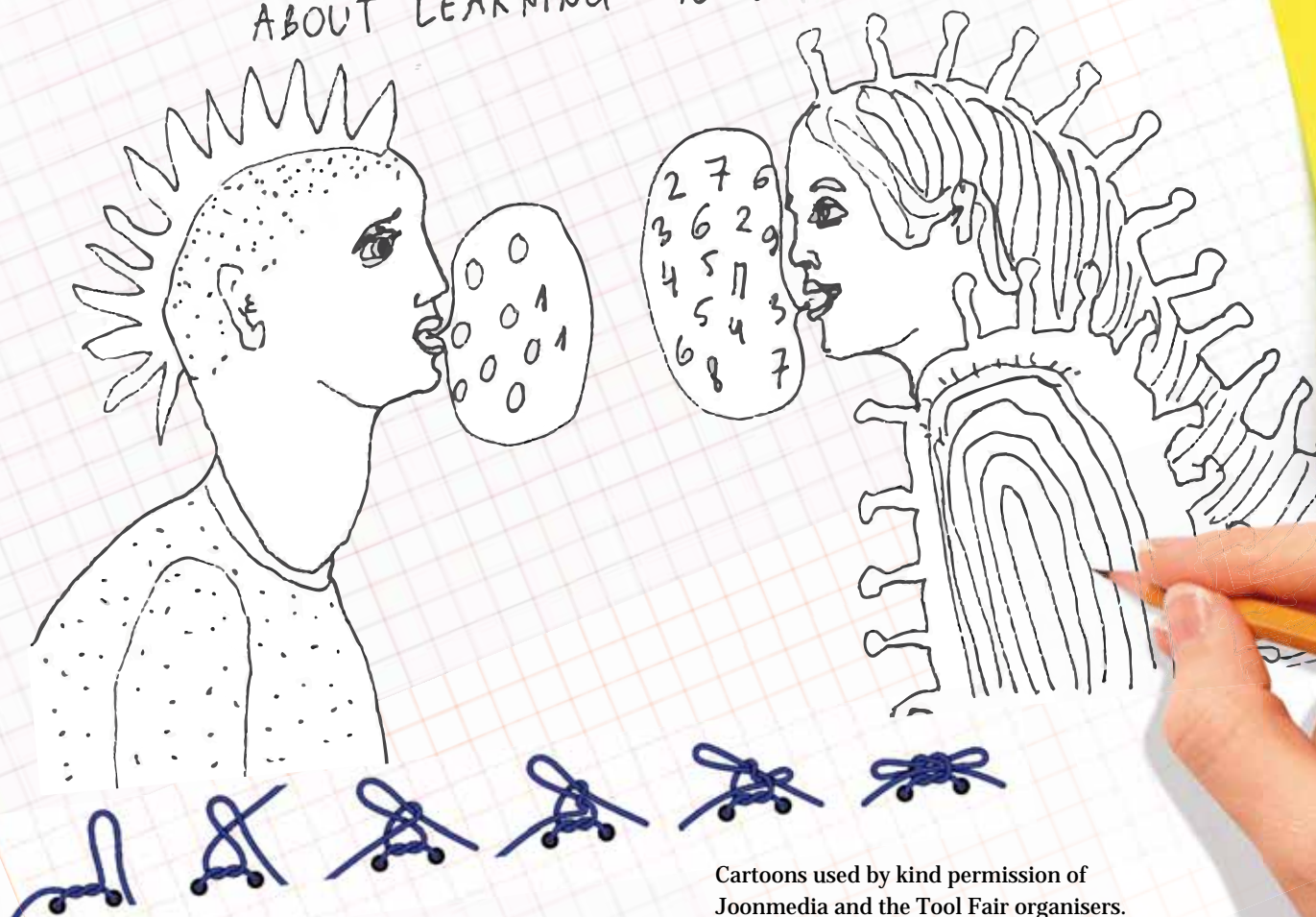
Walking at speed with my long-legged best friend a couple of months ago I had to stop every few hundred meters as my shoe laces kept coming undone. Slightly irritating. What to do? I wondered. He told me, "after a while the laces lose their friction and get loose; the solution is to reverse the way you tie them initially: instead of putting the right-hand end of the lace over the left and pulling them tight, you do it in reverse. This is hard to do initially, but does the trick. The lace stays tied." It's perhaps incredible, but true! My problem is that I learnt to tie shoe laces when I was four years old and have done it the same way ever since. Whenever I put on shoes, my hands seem to have a built-in memory and guide themselves... So now I have to a) remember that I have changed my practice and b) force myself to tie the laces in what is still an unnatural way.

Try it yourself. Who knows? Maybe this tip could change your life in the profound manner that resulted for some people when following advice about unpeeling sticky notes in "Marker" from *Coyote* No. 16. At least you won't trip up in the same way again.

You might wonder what this has to do with professional discourse. Someone wise said that you have to repeat something 42 times before it becomes naturally integrated into your behaviour – so why do we imagine that people can learn something after only doing it once in a training course?



MOST OF PEOPLE RUN OUT OF WORDS WHEN TALKING
ABOUT LEARNING TO LEARN



and finally

Thanks to those who write or give informal feedback. Next time we consider heat and the "pataphysics of badges".

Sounds, words, inspirations

Bill Hicks (1997): *Hicksville! An Introduction to the Genius of Bill Hicks*, Rykodisc, RCD 10427.

John Cage (1952): 4'33.

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