

Still Scary After All These Years:

Mr. Yuk Nears

By Christopher McCarrick and Tim Ziaukas

A commercial during the 1975 Super Bowl between the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Minnesota Vikings opened with a devilish laugh, which then segued into a song that still sounds like it emanated from hell: “Mr. Yuk is mean. Mr. Yuk is green....”¹ The 60-second spot, produced in Pittsburgh on a shoestring,² brought to a national audience the icon of Mr. Yuk, the first symbol for alerting families to poisonous agents in the home.



Courtesy of Pittsburgh Poison Center.

Now, nearly 40 years old, Mr. Yuk is still among America's "favorite anthropomorphic advertising mascots,"³ despite competing poison-warning icons.⁴ Perhaps it's his lurid complexion; maybe it's his visual allusions to other icons; maybe it's just his childlike whimsy, but for whatever reason, Mr. Yuk endures.

Mr. Yuk has been a star ever since that Super Bowl in the '70s when two Pittsburgh legends—the Steel Curtain and Yuk's Day-Glo face—went before a national audience and came back winners. In the present year alone, poison centers around the world will distribute more than 42 million warning stickers bearing

the green-at-the-gills countenance of Mr. Yuk, alerting parents and their children to the dangers of toxic ingestions.

Mr. Yuk is poised, perhaps, for another revival. First, his inclusion in the new *Pittsburgh: A Tradition of Innovation* exhibition at the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh enshrined him with other achievements of regional origin, such as the development of alternating current, organ transplantation, the Ferris wheel, and bingo. He'll celebrate his 40th birthday in 2011. Thus, the time is right to offer a biography of this Pittsburgh "celebrity," one that can also serve as an introduction for those unfamiliar with the symbol, and a refresher for those who may have forgotten who Mr. Yuk is, where he came from, and, most significantly, why he came to be.

Mr. Yuk is more than a sticker. The communications program—for which the Yuk imagery is the most prominent feature—was conceived in frustration and born in tragedy.

In the early 1970s, children in Pittsburgh appeared to be inadvertently ingesting poison at a higher rate than the national average.⁵ Some health officials surmised that this tragedy was occurring, at least in part, because of the *confusion* caused by the Pittsburgh Pirates logo, part of which contained the skull and crossbones—the buccaneers' Jolly Roger—once the calling card of sea-roving bandits. To most people, the skull and crossbones was a nearly universal ideograph for "poison"—but not necessarily to children in Pittsburgh. In fact, the city's tiny "bucco" fans may actually have been drawn to materials sporting a skull-and-crossbones logo. Thus, Pittsburgh medical officials wanted to develop a replacement for the "visual noise" that confused some of Pittsburgh's children. Enter Mr. Yuk, part of a campaign that attempted to replace the Jolly Roger as the symbol for poison, at least locally.



This year alone, poison centers around the world will distribute more than 42 million warning stickers bearing the green-at-the-gills countenance of Mr. Yuk.

To most people, the skull and crossbones was a nearly universal ideograph for “poison”—but not necessarily to children in Pittsburgh. In fact, the city’s tiny “bucco” fans may actually have been drawn to materials sporting a skull-and-crossbones logo.

The Mr. Yuk campaign was developed in 1971 under the auspices of Dr. Richard Moriarty and the advertising/public relations firm Vic Maitland and Associates. Moriarty, the first director of the Pittsburgh Poison Center at Children’s Hospital, worked with Maitland account executive Dick Garber. The program was developed with a grant from the Allegheny Foundation, part of the Scaife Foundation.⁶

“Mr. Yuk came from a cadre of things,” Moriarty said.⁷ “I did my pediatric training at Children’s Hospital, and during that time, the Poison Center was the function of the emergency room. And there was no organization to it at all. When somebody called in, they assumed that we knew something about ingestions ... and that just wasn’t true.”

As it turns out, similar chaos was happening all over the country.

Dr. Edward P. Krenzelok, current director of the Pittsburgh Poison Center at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (the current incarnation of Moriarty’s Center in Children’s), elaborated on the disorganization that once ruled the day: “Back in 1971, Pittsburgh was a bit behind the eight ball. Dick Moriarty was [a chief pediatric resident] at Children’s Hospital, and there were a lot of calls coming into the emergency department. He certainly can be credited as the one



Imagery from the Pittsburgh Pirates in the 1960s made the skull and crossbones a familiar, and friendly, image.

HC Library & Archives.

responsible for the development of the first poison center at Children's Hospital.

"At one time, there may have been as many as eight poison centers in the city of Pittsburgh alone, but that was at a point in time when there were no regulation or restrictions, and you could just put your shingle out and call yourself a poison center."⁸

By 1970—the year of Yuk's gestation—there were 590 poison centers across the United States.⁹ It was a medical mess and a communications nightmare, Moriarty said.

Among the many problems with running a poison center in the early 1970s was communicating the services offered by the center to people who were often wholly ignorant about the nature of poisons and the purposes of poison centers. Most people did not realize that the majority of ingestions were rarely harmful and almost never deadly, but it's hard for parents to acknowledge this when

their 6-year-old has just chugged some liquid stored under the kitchen sink.

"Frantic parents were making mad dashes to emergency rooms when what they needed to do was to call a poison center, get the right information and, more than likely, sit tight," Moriarty said. By way of example, one family in Pittsburgh was killed by running a red light and was hit broadside in a needless dash to the emergency room.

The problem in the early 1970s, then, was to get people to contact the poison center first, get some advice, then take action or simply wait it out. But how to get this basic information across?

Moriarty wanted to develop a poison education program, one that would keep

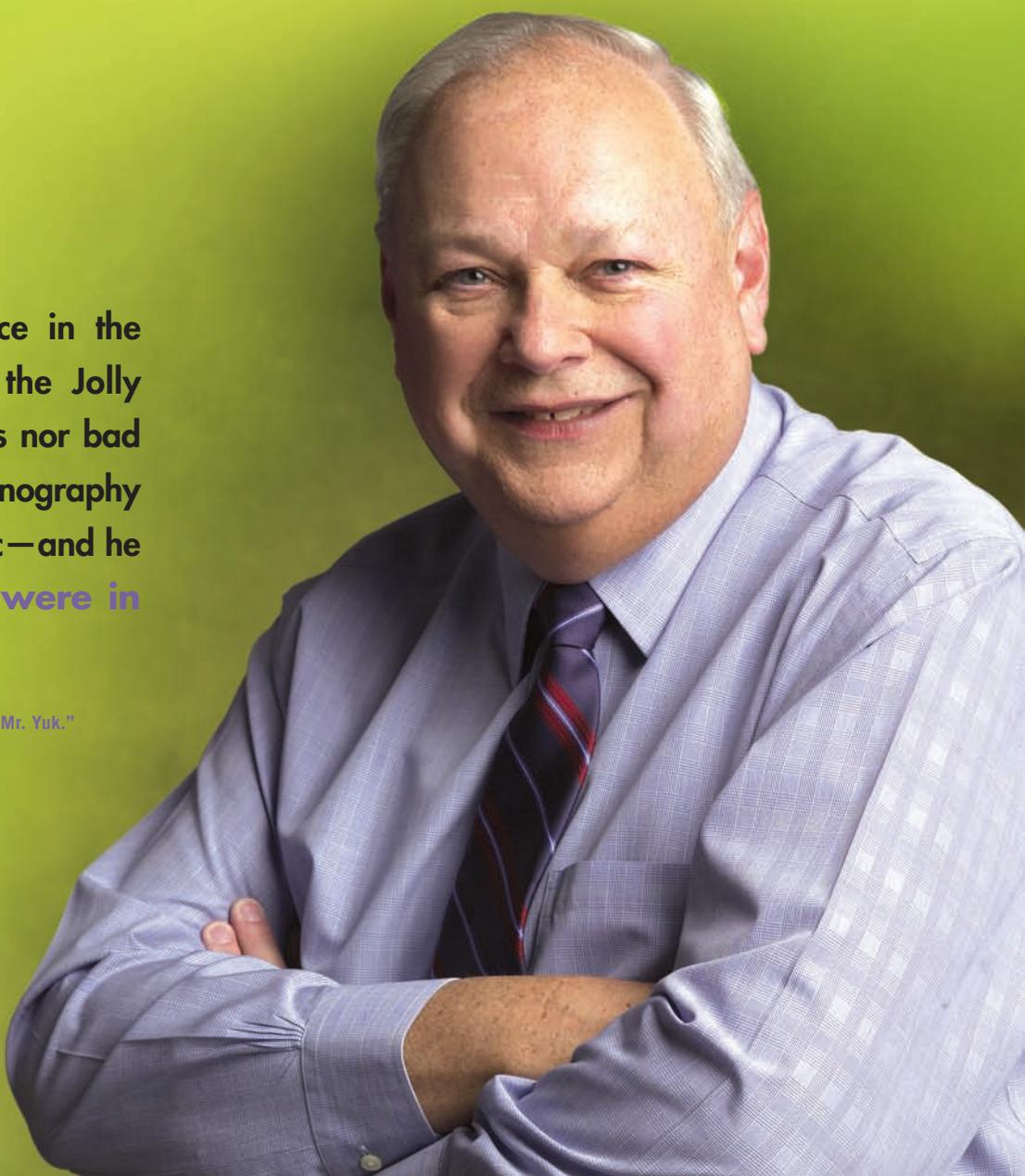
children from ingesting poisonous or corrosive products in the home as well as conveniently display contact information for parents—before they made the often needless dash to the ER. He wanted a logo with no sports association that would be attention grabbing as well as educational. His team's efforts would result in the first re-envisioning of poison imagery in at least 200 years.

The strategy, Moriarty said, was to save lives; the tactics were education and communication. "We needed to get people to call a poison center first ... but by the same token, we still had to find a way to capture [the clinical information] that was coming in

Pittsburgh was the only place in the world where the image of the Jolly Roger meant neither bad guys nor bad stuff. Moriarty needed new iconography to replace an evolving semiotic—and he needed it immediately. "We were in the middle of a war."

Dr. Richard Moriarty has often been called the "father of Mr. Yuk."

Photo courtesy The Pittsburgh Foundation, Michael Ray Photography.



so we could have a better understanding of what had happened after [an ingestion of a particular toxin].”

Moriarty set up a system whereby the Pittsburgh Poison Center of Children’s Hospital could be the hub and the contact for a vast array of “member hospitals.” Moriarty traveled to the regional hospitals, all of which, he felt, were ineffectually duplicating each other’s efforts and asked them to join the consortium.

“Do you really want to be a poison center?” Moriarty said he asked each of the center’s operators, before following with, “Why don’t you let *us* be the poison center, and *you* take care of the people?”

For the most part, his tactics worked.

A call from panicked parents to the Pittsburgh Poison Center set a process into motion whereby the parents got the information they needed: stay at home or rush the child to the nearest member hospital. The Poison Center would notify the participating facility, which, in turn, would make the necessary preparations. The member hospital then would be required, as a condition of participation, to communicate back to the Poison Center what treatment had been administered or what advice delivered. The Poison Center would be the point of contact and repository of data for toxic ingestions throughout the region. In the process, the Center’s clinical team would acquire an expertise that hospitals’ ER staffs, whose mission is much more far ranging, could never develop on their own.

But how, Moriarty wondered, could he make this system work? This was the 1970s: no 900 numbers, no personal computers, no cell phones, no Internet, not even memory typewriters.

Moriarty’s eureka moment hit: “IBM Telecopiers!” These were prototype fax machines.

“You had to put the telephone receiver into a rather large piece of equipment with the information to be duplicated on a piece of paper that then rolled around a cylinder, and ... wow! Maybe that’s it! It took four minutes for



A telecopier was cutting-edge technology in the early 1970s.
Courtesy of Xerox Corporation.

Moriarty’s eureka moment hit: “IBM Telecopiers! It took four minutes for one sheet of paper to be transmitted over the phone lines and printed out on the other end. But back then it was a technical miracle. We could now keep the information about treatment at the Pittsburgh Poison Center. And, when, say, a member hospital needed it, we could tell them, ‘This is what you need.’ We’d feed it into our Telecopier, and they would get the information in minutes out of theirs.”

PREVENTION
Still worth a pound of cure

PITTSBURGH POISON CENTER
Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

Donated by **patrick** **Media Group, Inc.**

Make Every Week
 Poison Prevention
 Week

Throughout the 1970s, Pittsburgh was ground zero in the burgeoning Mr. Yuk campaign, with billboards designed by professionals and some by children.

Courtesy of Pittsburgh Poison Center.

MR. YUK SAYS

PILLS ARE NOT CANDY

TERRY MOURIN
RIDGEVIEW SCHOOL

Brought To You By:
Metro Kiwanis

one sheet of paper to be transmitted over the phone lines and printed out on the other end. But back then it was a technical miracle. We could now keep the information about treatment at the Pittsburgh Poison Center. And, when, say, a member hospital needed it, we could tell them, "This is what you need." We'd feed it into our Telecopier, and they would get the information in minutes out of theirs."

The Center would alert and train member hospital staffs that, in turn, reported back on their diagnosis and treatment.

"At one point, I had more machines under one contract than anyone else on the planet," Moriarty said. "I was the Telecopier King of the World."

But the thing that drew the hospitals and the general public to the program was Mr. Yuk, now part of the cultural currency, especially with the ubiquitous stickers emblazoned with his mean and green face. These stickers turned the Yuk image into a pop culture phenomenon. In fact, Yuk received more publicity than disco balls or mood rings.¹⁰

One highlight of Yuk's pop cult credibility illustrates his popularity: at the end of the 1970s, Moriarty appeared on the TV quiz show "To Tell the Truth," as the "Father of Mr. Yuk." He won—that is, an imposter was selected over him—and he received four gallons of paint and two dress shirts as prizes.¹¹

What really made Yuk a star and gave him such pop culture legs?

"The Look," Moriarty said.

It was the design of the Mr. Yuk "look," his unforgettable appearance, that resulted in *People* magazine profiles, Super Bowl appearances, and invitations to national TV shows.¹² Like any new brand or star, Yuk was built, tested, rebuilt, and launched from the ground up. Mr. Yuk's look was derived from consumers' advice, some adult, but mostly from children. Taking the reactions of 5-year-olds, Yuk's graphic creators forged an image that has lasted for 40 years. From the mouths of babes, Yuk was born out of the coupling of

two remarkable and seemingly incompatible entities, the Jolly Roger and the Smiley Face. While the dominant visual gene of the Smiley Face is more obvious in Mr. Yuk, the recessive quality of the Jolly Roger is equally important.

Thus, Yuk grew out of a uniquely Pittsburgh need to replace the Pittsburgh Pirates logo, part of which visually sampled the skull and crossbones, the traditional and dominant symbol of pirates and poison. Of the handful of pirate symbols that were in use in the 17th and 18th centuries, the skull and crossbones was the one that stuck.¹³ Swiped

from popular medieval funeral imagery, the skull-and-crossbones icon was meant to put the fear of death in onlookers.¹⁴ By the time the bloody buccaneers receded in the 19th century, their icon had been evolving yet again into the West's most prevalent ideograph for poison, the image to this day associated with death.

If we jump ahead another 100 years or so to the 20th century, and to where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers join to form the Ohio, we would find ourselves at the only place in the world where the image of the Jolly Roger meant neither bad guys nor bad



After testing eight colors, the kids chose a florescent green—back then it was known as Day-Glo. One of the kids looking at that face in that color said, "He looks yucky."

"OK," Moriarty said, "We got a name. We called him 'Mr. Yuk.'"

By the time Pittsburgh and Moriarty made an attempt to take the program nationwide and establish the National Poison Center Network in 1974, the medical establishment politics around Mr. Yuk—and Moriarty—had become complicated.

“That really began to upset some people because they thought, ‘Moriarty’s taking over the world!’”

stuff. As part of the communications program for the poison center, Moriarty needed new iconography to replace an evolving semiotic—and he needed it immediately.

“We were in the middle of a war,” Moriarty said. Many were getting sick. Some were dying.

Enter the focus groups. Moriarty had hired a Pittsburgh PR agency—Vic Maitlan and Associates, headed up by its account executive, Dick Garber—to help develop a marketing campaign to communicate the poison center’s existence, its services, and how people could access those services. Part of the campaign was, perhaps, an evolved version or even a replacement for the skull-and-crossbones symbol, giving children a new ideograph for “danger,” “poison,” and “death.” Garber worked on the account for just over three years before being hired full time by the Pittsburgh Poison Center. (He retired in 1994.)

“We wanted to know what the general public would do in case of a poisoning,” Garber said.¹⁵ “The majority said that they

would take the child to the emergency room. The next most popular answer was that they would call a doctor. Very few said that they could call a poison center. There was little awareness of the idea of a poison center, much less how to use one.”

Curiously, while the adults seemed to know little about poison prevention, the kids were very clear about what they knew about it.

“In focus groups with the children, we were dealing with kids under the age of 5,” Garber said. “So we asked what might happen to you if you put something bad into your mouth that could make you sick. They said, 1) their mother would yell at them, 2) they would die, and 3) they’d get sick.”

Garber said they had an artist interpret the children’s comments in three images:

- **Poison will make your mother yell at you!** The designer put an “angry face” on a stop sign. That didn’t work because the kids liked the color red too much.

- **Poison could kill you.** The designer made “a dead face,” but one still based on the skull and crossbones. That didn’t work because it still confused the children. They liked the visual allusion to their baseball team—that was bad—and also disliked the black and white of the image. Overall, a strike out.

- **Poison can make you sick.** The designer used a variation on the then ubiquitous Smiley Face, but instead one whose expression signaled an upset tummy. After testing eight colors, the kids chose a florescent green—back then it was known as Day-Glo. One of the kids looking at that face in that color said, “He looks yucky.”

“OK,” Moriarty said, “We got a name. We called him ‘Mr. Yuk.’”

“We then started to use Mr. Yuk as a focal point for the public awareness program,” Garber said. “Our goal was to teach the general public what a poison center was, how to contact one ... how, in effect, to make use of such a facility.”

In addition, Garber wanted an icon to alert kids to substances that may not look, smell, or even taste bad. “Most of the poisons that kids get into are what I call ‘the sweeties.’ They look good, smell good, taste good, but do bad things. That’s a complicated message to kids.”

Maybe Mr. Yuk could teach them what they needed to know. So the traditional Jolly Roger was replaced with a nauseous non-smiling Smiley Face, a visual relative to the then wildly ubiquitous ’70s icon. (Happily, Moriarty and the Yuk team were never slapped with a cease-and-desist order from the Philadelphia company that, by then, owned the copyright on the Smiley mark. “We never thought of its being a copyright violation,” Moriarty said.)

“Garber was really the brains behind the development of the Yuk symbol, the whole poison education program, and even the national poison center network,” Krenzeloek said. “Dick Moriarty had the personality and

The strategy was to save lives; the tactics were education and communication.



Director Ed Krenzelok (affectionately called “Poison Ed”) and Mr. Yuk pose with a rep from Thrift Drug for a mid-1980s publicity shot.

Courtesy of Pittsburgh Poison Center.

the charisma. He was a good implementer. He was the front guy. But Garber was the guy behind the scenes. I don't think Garber ever got the credit for what he did."

Mr. Yuk, like his happy cousin, took off like leisure suits and the Hustle.

"Everyone wanted the stickers," Moriarty said.

But he'd only give them to members in the program.

"There were a lot of requirements to get to use Mr. Yuk," Moriarty said. "In many camps, I was looked at as a son of a [gun] because I said, 'No, you can't just use the stickers. You've got to go with the whole program. You can't just take a part of it. No! ... You've got to play the game we've put together.'"

"In some places, the idea sold. In other places, it never sold at all."

In fact, Yuk didn't "sell" in Philadelphia or New York City.

"Boston never sold because we were Pittsburgh," Moriarty said, "and they weren't going to be told what to do by Pittsburgh! *Pittsburgh!* No! But in Texas, it sold. In Seattle, it sold. In Alaska, it sold.

"By the mid-70s, slowly, as we got some notoriety, people said, 'Oh, we want to use the Yuk thing.' So we could use Mr. Yuk as a hammer, to say, 'OK, you want Yuk, this is what you need to do.' ... I dug in my heels, and said 'If you're going to do it, I'm not saying that I know exactly what to do, but I think I got a pretty good handle on it ...', as the program grew and people came into it, they came in with good ideas and helped us."

By the time Pittsburgh and Moriarty made an attempt to take the program nationwide and establish the National Poison Center Network in 1974, the medical establishment politics around Mr. Yuk—and Moriarty—had become complicated.

"That really began to upset some people because they thought, 'Moriarty's taking over the world!'" he said.

Rival systems, programs, and logos—Officer Ugg, Pinkie the Elephant, No Siop the Snake (that's "poison" spelled backwards), Fireman Red, even Uncle Barf (!)¹⁶—rose up to establish turf for different hospitals, as each realized the public relations value intrinsic to poison centers in developing relationships with potential clients.¹⁷

A particularly bad clash developed between Pittsburgh's Yuk forces and those of the Rocky Mountain Poison Center, represented by Officer Ugg.

"So it was Officer Ugg vs. Mr. Yuk," Krenzelok said, "and then poison centers across the country began to line up. Those in the West [generally] used Officer Ugg, and those in the East [generally] used Mr. Yuk. There was this minor culture war between

poison centers, with loyalty to either Rocky Mountain or Pittsburgh."

By the late '80s, after helping to modernize more than 50 poison centers around the country, using Mr. Yuk and his stickers as bait, Moriarty knew he had taken Yuk—and the national development of poison control centers—as far as he could.

"Yes," he admits, "I was difficult. I was firm. I pushed back ... everything got to be a fight, and I got to a point where I had had it. It was time to part company."

He resigned as director of the Pittsburgh Poison Center at Children's Hospital in 1983 and went into private practice and now works at Tri-State Pediatrics.

Dr. Edward P. Krenzelok, director of the Pittsburgh Poison Center at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, is the current curator of all things Yuk.
Courtesy of Pittsburgh Poison Center.



Krenzelok, who had been director of the Hennepin Poison Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and was a Yuk-user, despite his more western location, came on board as the second director of the center in 1983. He's still there.

Yuk, too, goes on.

The battle of the poison icons, however, came to a head in 2001, when the federal government provided funds to further consolidate the number of poison centers. Now there are only 60.¹⁸ The federal grant paid also for a national hotline, 1-800-222-1222, where anyone in the United States or a U.S. territory could be put in touch with the nearest poison center. It was also decided as part of that effort to have the first nationwide symbol accepted by all national poison centers. Yuk was under consideration by the American Association of Poison Control Center (AAPCC) board, but its members voted 7-to-5 not to use it.¹⁹

The AAPCC developed a new symbol: a pill bottle with a back-to-the-future Jolly Roger.

"Most people [in the poison control business] aren't excited about that," Krenzelok said. "A lot of poison centers don't use it."

Many have reverted to their own regional iconography.

Krenzelok is torn about Yuk not getting the national nod. On the one hand, it would have been industry acknowledgment of Yuk's longevity, ubiquity, and effectiveness, yet on the other hand, Pittsburgh would have lost control of Yuk, his image, and his not inconsiderable revenue stream. (Yuk merchandise—stickers, brochures, and posters—remain lucrative items for the Center.)

"Despite losing the national title, Mr. Yuk is alive and well and living in Pittsburgh," Krenzelok said. "In fact, he's thriving. In light of the financial pressures that many centers are under, a fair number of poison centers use Yuk. We have had sales of Yuk materials in every state of the U.S., a number of foreign countries, and military bases around the world."

Over the years, Yuk's meaning has evolved and broadened as well, Krenzelok said. In the



"So it was Officer Ugg vs. Mr. Yuk," Krenzelok said, "and then poison centers across the country began to line up. Those in the West [generally] used Officer Ugg, and those in the East [generally] used Mr. Yuk. There was this minor culture war between poison centers, with loyalty to either Rocky Mountain or Pittsburgh."

early years, Yuk's image meant "stay away," perhaps suggesting that things without a sticker were fine. The Yuk image now serves as a visual reminder about caution and prevention and also radiates important information. Thus, Yuk stickers spring up on T-shirts and book bags, not just bleach, weed killer, and oven cleaner.

"So Mr. Yuk is still growing.... I let people use Yuk for free. All they have to do is show me how they're going to use it. They can't produce stickers. We're going to be the purveyors of stickers, but if another poison center wants to use Mr. Yuk for a program or some non-profit

wants to use it in a program ... that's OK."

A quarter-million hits on that Mr. Yuk commercial on YouTube, the one that played on that Super Bowl three decades ago and "how-many-lives-saved" suggest that a certain audience recalls the iconic logo. And whether it's due to nostalgia or a perfect melding of icon and logos, image and message, Mr. Yuk lives on.

"There's something about him," Garber said. "His color. The commercial. His connection with our daily lives ... I expect Mr. Yuk's got a few more years in him. And a few more lives to save." 

The current national
poison logo.



The American Association of Poison Control Center developed a new symbol: a pill bottle with a back-to-the-future Jolly Roger. Most people [in the poison control business] aren't excited about that," Krenzelok said. "A lot of poison centers don't use it."

Originally from Philadelphia, **Christopher McCarrick** is an associate professor of English at Clarion University. He teaches courses in writing, literary and rhetorical theories, and literacy education. A native of Pittsburgh, **Tim Ziaukas** teaches public relations and communications at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford.

The authors would like to thank Judy Hopkins and Ellen Mazo for their assistance in the preparation of this article. An earlier version of this material was presented at the Visual Communications Conference, June 18-22, 2008, Tahoe City, California.

¹ The complete lyrics of the Mr. Yuk commercial by writer Barbara Bolton read: "Mr. Yuk is mean, Mr. Yuk is green. / Home is full of lots of things that children shouldn't touch. / Home is full of bad things that can hurt you very much. / Now there's a man whose face is green that you ought to get to know. / He'll warn you when danger's coming, fast or slow. / Get to know his face in every single place. / When you see it, you'll know quick. / Things marked Yuk make you

sick. Sick, sick, sick. / Mr. Yuk is green." The unused, "lost" second verse of the jingle, cut from the commercial to fit the spot to the time, according to Dr. Richard W. Moriarty, is: "Mr. Yuk is mean. Mr. Yuk is green. / When you see him stop and think. Do not smell. Do not drink. Do not touch. Do not eat. / Or you will be sick. / Sick, sick, sick. / Mr. Yuk is mean. Mr. Yuk is green." The commercial as aired in 1975 can be viewed on YouTube at www.youtube.com with a quarter million hits and counting.

² The commercial was produced in 1971 by Vic Maitland Associates under the direction of account executive Dick Garber with Barbara Bolton as creative director. Neither they nor the client, Children's Hospital's Moriarty were aware that the spot would air during the Super Bowl.

³ Mr. Yuk's status as "favorite anthropomorphic advertising mascot" on Grupthink, a website that measures public opinion, has risen and fallen over the years. As of August, 2009, Yuk is number 60, well behind Tony the Tiger, Mrs. Butterworth, and the California Raisins, but ahead of the Big Mac, Taco Juan, and the Coors' Light Beer Wolf, (<http://www.grupthink.com/topic/index.php5?id=2736&page=2>, accessed 6 August 2009.)

⁴ Robert S. Broadhead, "Officer Ugg, Mr. Yuk, Uncle Barf ... Ad Nausea: Controlling Poison Centers, 1950-1985," in *Health and Health Care as Social Problems*, eds. Peter Conrad and Valerie Leiter (New

York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 107-122, and Barbara T. Braden, "Validation of a Poison Prevention Program," *AJPH*, 60.9 (1979): 942-944.

- ⁵ There are no official records for ingestions at this time in Allegheny County; this belief was held at the time by Pittsburgh Poison Center's director, Dr. Richard W. Moriarty.
- ⁶ Vic Maitland Associates was headquartered in Pittsburgh with offices in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. (The Yuk focus groups referred to in the article were conducted at both sites.) Additional funding was provided by grants from the R. K. Mellon Foundation and PPG Industries Foundation. Maitland account rep Dennis Casey was the first contact between the agency and the client.
- ⁷ Interview conducted between the author and Dr. Richard W. Moriarty, May 5, 2007.
- ⁸ Interviews conducted between the author and Dr. Edward P. Krenzelok on June 5, 2007, and July 21, 2009.
- ⁹ Anthony S. Manoguerra and Anthony R. Temple, "Observations on the Current Status of Poison Control Centers in the United States," *Emergency Medicine Clinics of North America* 2 (1984): 562.
- ¹⁰ Of the many news features that the Yuk campaign generated, see these for a representative sampling: *Time*, Nov, 27, 1972, "Time Health Capsules"; *People*, April 9, 1979, Vol. 11, No. 14, "When He Can Teach Children to Say 'Mr. Yuk,'" Dr. Richard Moriarty Ends the Danger of Infant Poisoning; and *Business Week*, April 10, 1978, p. 44 "Safety and Health: Poison Control's Ugly New Face."
- ¹¹ Interview with the author and Moriarty, May 5, 2007.
- ¹² Curiously, while Yuk was developed at the beginning of the modern feminist movement in the early 1970s, and the primary questions to the children in the focus groups were about their mother, there was never any consideration given to "Miss." "Mrs." "Ms.," or even "Mother Yuk." "We never thought of it," Moriarty said. Garber confirmed. (Although later in the decade, Moriarty added that "a feminist caller" complained that there was no "Ms. Yuk.") Another consideration not afforded Yuk was his possible interpretation as being insensitive to Asians, a slanty eyed cliché, a charge leveled at Yuk at an academic conference at which an earlier version of this Yuk material was presented. Is Yuk a racist anti-Asian stereotype? "You have the isolated comments," Krenzelok said in an interview with the author, "but any outcry? No."
- ¹³ Angus Konstam, *The History of Pirates* (Guilford, Conn: Lyons Press, 1999) 98-101.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*, 98.
- ¹⁵ Interview between the author and Dick Garber, June 18, 2007.
- ¹⁶ Broadhead; and Annette Spence, "Mr. Yuk, Officer Ugg, Pinkie the Elephant, Siop the Snake, Fireman Red," *APA News*, Vol. 12. 3 (1996): 7 and "Captain B Careful," *Hospital Marketing*, July 1987.
- ¹⁷ Broadhead, 112.
- ¹⁸ American Association of Poison Control Centers, (<http://www.aapcc.org/DNN/> accessed 6 August 2009).
- ¹⁹ Interview between the author and Dr. Edward Krenzelok, July 21, 2009.



“Despite losing the national title, Mr. Yuk is alive and well and living in Pittsburgh,” Krenzeloek said. “In fact, he’s thriving. In light of the financial pressures that many centers are under, a fair number of poison centers use Yuk. We have had sales of Yuk materials in every state of the U.S., a number of foreign countries, and military bases around the world.”