

Ogden R. Lindsley
1922-2004
In Memoriam
by
Abigail B. Calkin

Og was the first person to take Skinner's methods into the field of human behavior, initially with his daughter, Kathy. According to a May 1952 Newsweek article, although about 250 infants had grown up in the Aircrib, "Kathy is the first of the crowd to undertake a precise scientific experiment."

By the mid 1960s, Og had combined his engineering training using log-log graphs, Skinner's use of frequency to measure animal behavior, and his work with people to develop the Standard Behavior Chart. He also started counting his reaches and urges for cigarettes and had his graduate students take the chart into special education classrooms. Thus began what has become known as Precision Teaching. By 1970, precision teaching was using the two most powerful methods for measuring and changing behavior—frequency of performance and its growth across time, celeration.

I, like so many other precision teachers and learners, can list a host of ideas, information, and practices learned from him. My greatest ones have included the Standard Celeration Chart itself and the ability to change inner behavior because using the chart forces us to count behaviors (outer or inner) and look at their frequency. He always told me never to publish unless I included a chart. While I don't always follow that, I offer two here, as much of a tribute to Og as any words I can say.

In Figure 1, Seth is the behavior, I the manager, and Og the supervisor. While I threw balls at Seth, he caught them, and Og filmed us. I had a box of about 40 or 60 tennis balls and threw them at him. The green dots are his catches, the red xes are his misses; he used colored Vis-à-Vis pens to chart because we were making a film. The first 10 days shows catches and misses have steep celerations. When the next two weeks showed little continued growth, we changed to a 2-min timing. The errors continued to decelerate and the corrects accelerated some, enough so they no longer overlapped. In addition to doing his own charting, note how Seth claimed the chart as his own. Through this charted project and Og's patient inductive teaching, and

not a textbook, I learned about free and controlled operant behavior. This was Og's way of teaching.

The second chart is one of inner behavior: Thinks about writing. I counted this behavior all day, thus the floor is at .001. "Accident" at the top refers to the working title of the chapter I was writing at the time. It was during the first phase that I learned Og had cancer, my sister-in-law had cancer, and Og died. I perceived that any count below 50 was due to the grief I felt. In the fifth phase, a count below 50 meant that I did something other than write that day. Solid celeration lines are just that—celeration lines. The dashed one of x2 is the trend line across a phase line that made it clear to me my inner behavior, i.e., thinks about writing, was returning to its normal level. RIS is Riverside Indian School where I consulted. In addition to the notes of impending loss or the loss of Og, there is also a note "talked to Shultz & MacGillis," two of the Coast Guardsmen I interviewed that week for the chapter I was working on at the time.

I miss him immensely—his creativity, energy, wit and humor, and oh that wonderful resonant laugh of his. For years, decades for some, we have dedicated our lives to ensuring his excellent work spreads and continues.

Og's amazing creativity brought about the tools for changing human behavior. Rather than causing the education system to turn upside down and inside out to improve itself, Og received what had to be one of his greatest heartbreaks: the chart that can help change people's lives for the better has not been recognized widely.

But he never gave up. Not even the day he died. He has left a legacy and our job is to continue his work. What we do see however, is what Og saw: changes in individual lives. "Little steps for little feet," he used to say as he followed his principles of "Each one teach one." Og understood the significance of what he had developed. If we understand its significance, then we must chart and teach others to do the same.

The first time I met him, he wore a seer-sucker jacket (my mother used to wear seer-sucker suits), a bow tie (my father often wore bow ties), and spoke in his cultured New England accent (I grew up in New England). I liked him and the clarity and analysis of his thinking and work immediately. I treasure those familiar and comfortable elements he had. This

is a personal In Memoriam, an unusual one to publish in a professional journal. I could have written about his contributions to learning and the measurement of human behavior with a more academic tone, but I offer those by the charts I share—both of which represent important aspects of what I learned from him. He was a personal friend, a brilliant and creative person, and a mentor.

Thank you, Og, for being such a great teacher and friend—to me, to all the colleagues, teachers, and students whose lives you have touched.

18 JAN 76

15 FEB 76

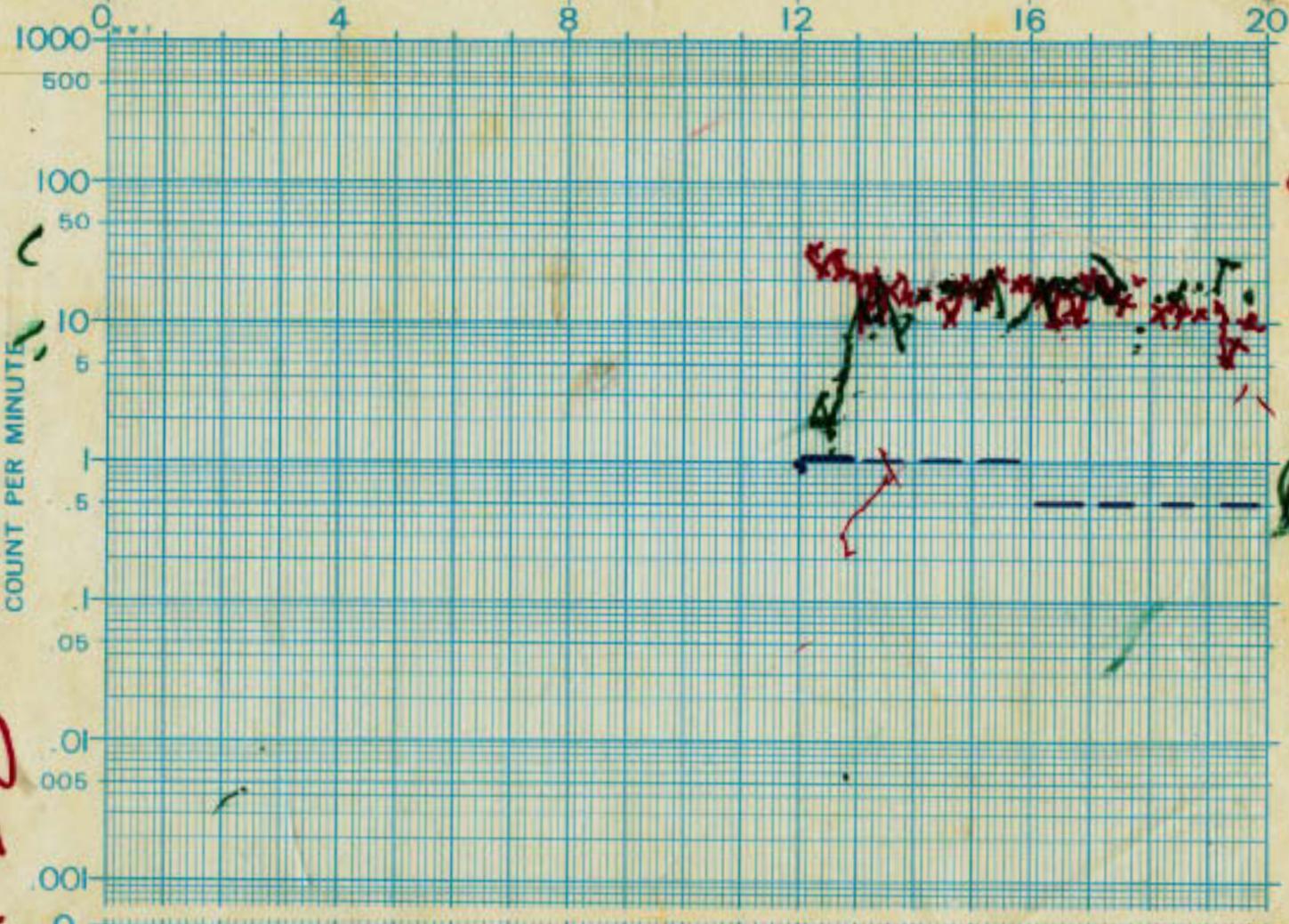
14 MAR 76

11 APR 76

9 MAY 76

6 JUN 76

DAILY BEHAVIOR CHART (DC-BEN)
BY CENTER FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

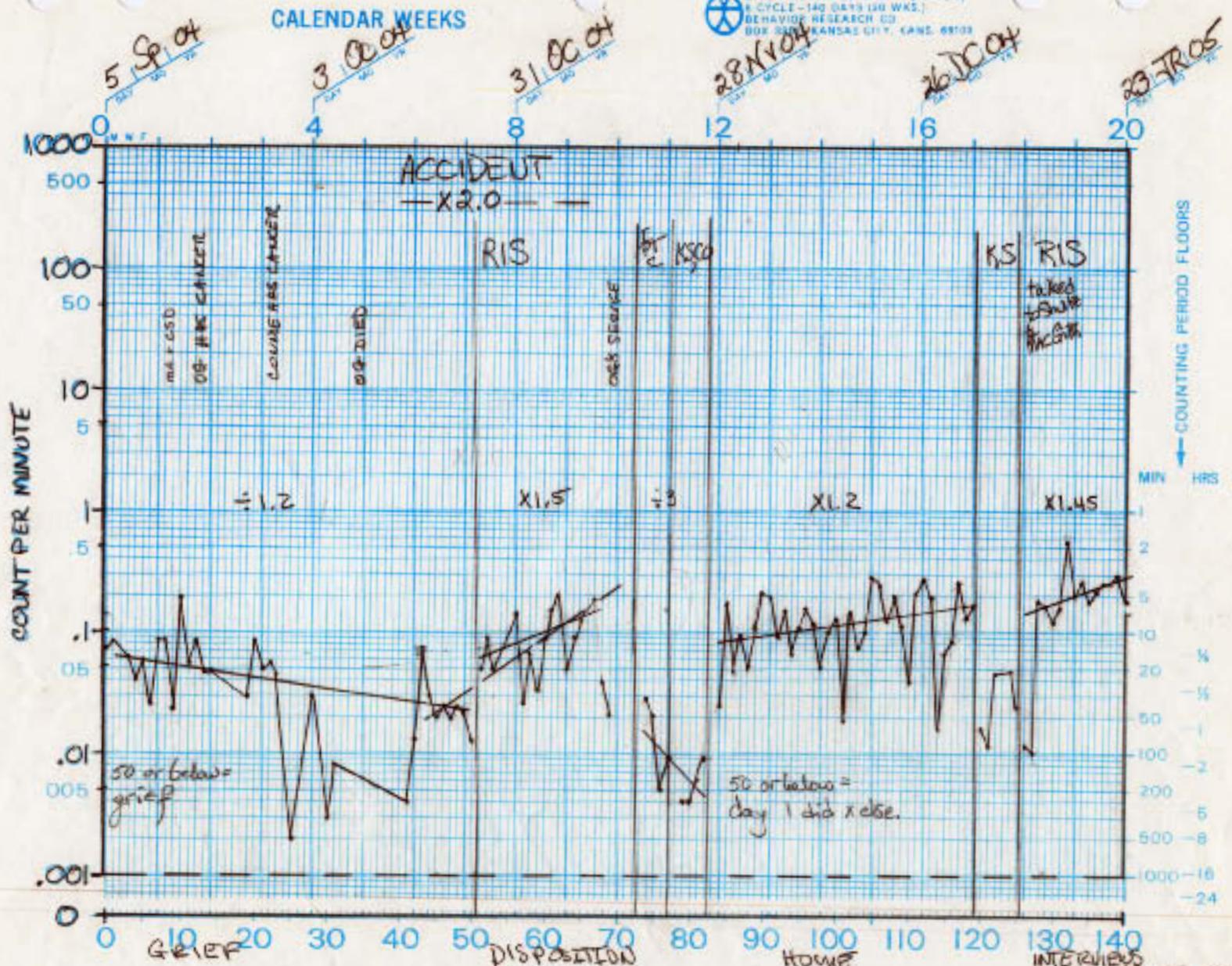


Handwritten red scribbles and symbols on the right side of the chart, including several boxes and a large circular scribble.

OBABIGDIL
 LN WRENCE KS. KU
 H KOC H 5 CATCHES BALL
 SUCCESSIVE CALENDAR DAYS
 BEHAVIOR AGE LABEL

DAILY BEHAVIOR CHART (DC BEN)
 8 CYCLE - 140 DAYS (28 WKS.)
 BEHAVIOR RESEARCH CD
 BOX 330 KANSAS CITY, KANS. 64103

(4)



OG LINDSLEY
 SUPERVISOR ADVISER MANAGER
 DEPOSITOR AGENCY

SUCCESSIVE CALENDAR DAYS
 FIGURE 2.
 ABC ABC
 TIMER COUNTER

HOME INTERVIEWS
 ABIGAIL THINK ABOUT WRITING
 BEHAVIOR AGE LABEL COUNTED
 ABIGAIL
 CHARTER THINK PART OF WRITE