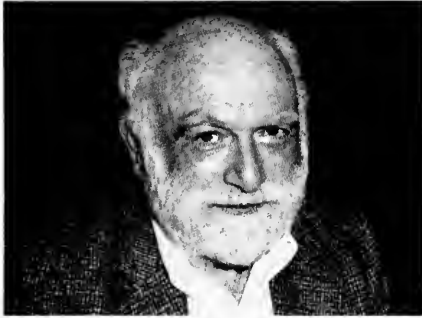




# Knights Letter

THE LEWIS CARROLL SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

NUMBER 32 SUMMER 1989



## PROFILE: Sandor Burstein

Sandor Burstein began his interest in *Alice* when his kindergarten teacher in San Francisco invited the class to see her as the White Rabbit in a semi-professional performance. By the following year she was Alice herself, and since all the boys in her class were smitten by puppy love, all developed life-long attachments to Wonderland. By 1933, Sandor collected his first-remembered Macmillan edition of the books for himself.

Through the University of California at Berkeley for undergraduate and graduate work, and later at Stanford's School of Medicine, Dr. Burstein wrote as many papers and examination themes on *Alice* as he possibly could. A busy medical practice kept him from Wonderland for many years, but when finally he took his first trip to Europe, he found himself in a Lisbon bookstore. The only recognizable volume contained the *Alice* stories, and became the basis for his future collecting.

That collection has now grown to about 3000 items, and is shared with his son, Mark. Together the Bursteins established the West Coast branch of the LCSNA, and have hosted most of its meetings. Dr. Burstein is also a trustee of the Lewis Carroll Birthplace Trust in Daresbury. An interest in music resulted in his appointment as tour physician to the San Francisco Symphony, and he has travelled all over the world with the orchestra, thus giving him opportunities that help the collection grow.

Fifty years after the kindergarten incident, Dr. Burstein and his teacher had a reunion and viewed the collection together. Such sentimental meetings are rare and treasured, and not granted to many. He is very grateful.

## Tornado, Power Loss, Fallen Trees Fail to Deter LCSNA Meeting

The huge tree in front of the Forsythe County Public Library in Winston-Salem, North Carolina had been felled by a tornado on the night of May 5th. It was the night before the Spring meeting of the LCSNA at the library. Fortunately, the tree missed the library building, but many homes, streets, intersections and power lines in Winston-Salem were not so fortunate. (The tornado had been preceded by Dave Schaefer's showing of early *Alice* movies at the library).

In spite of nature's welcome, which seemed to have more in common with *The Wizard of Oz* than *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, about fifty members and guests arrived at the Library on the afternoon of May 6. Southern hospitality, generously provided by our hosts, Charles and Stephanie Lovett, and the good fellowship of our members made this meeting especially memorable.

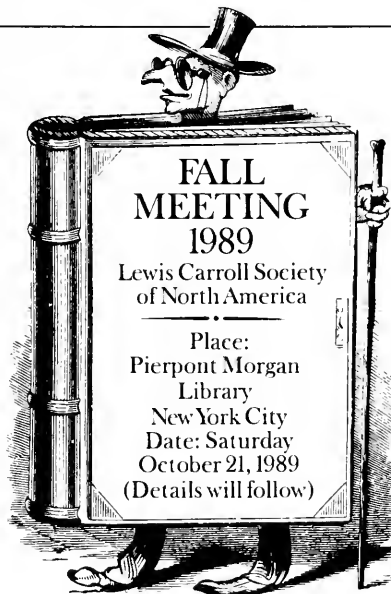
Most of those attending the general meeting had been by the Lovett's house, also narrowly missed by a large, uprooted tree. A part of the Lovett's splendid collection of Carrolliana was on display at the Library and was inspected by participants as much before the meeting as after it.

LCSNA president Ed Guiliano graciously thanked the Library for having us, recounted the facts on the favorable state of the society's finances, and then introduced our first speaker, Professor Elizabeth Sewell, author of the classic literary study of nonsense in English literature and a founding member of the Society. Her topic was the nature of



Dr. Norma Rose

Dr. Elizabeth Sewell



nonsense according to the listing in our program, but her real point was to explore the need for an aesthetic of nonsense. The points of departure for her talk, often a dialogue with her audience, were the Mad Gardener's songs from *Sylvie and Bruno*. In a pop quiz of the audience, Ellie Luchinsky, Mark Burstein and Peter Heath did best in recalling the songs - August Imholz got every one he remembered, which was not that many, mad-dingly wrong. Professor Sewell alluded, interestingly, to the "mock" or "trial" Mad Gardener's verses that Carroll tried out on his Common Room colleagues at Christ Church. After making some comparisons, or should we say "contrasts" with Edward Lear's "nonsense verse," Professor Sewell argued that the literary taxonomy for nonsense is insufficient. Like Emily Dickinson's (or for that matter, A. E. Housman's) definitions of poetry — you know it by its effect on you. We need, therefore, an aesthetic of nonsense to

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Meeting *Continued from Page 1*

chart that "sudden glory" that Hobbes ascribed to laughter. Interestingly, Professor Sewell did not comment on the format of the Mad Gardener's songs:

"He thought he saw —"

"And then looked again —"

and their philosophical relevance or irrelevance to Kant and company. Professor Sewell thoroughly engaged her audience and raised questions, a mark of a good teacher and lecturer.



Diana Marx stands beside one of the massive fallen trees that were bowled over by the unexpected hurricane of May 5th.

From irresponsibility (a harsh view of nonsense), we turned to tradition in T.S. Eliot fashion, and were enthralled by Norma Rose's account of the Meredith College faculty presentations of an *Alice in Wonderland* play once every four years since 1924. In her detailed, color slide-assisted talk, Dr. Rose, who herself played in many of the presentations, spoke feelingly about the importance of this school tradition. Deans and faculty members appearing before the student body in a way the sterner side of Dodgson might not have approved, did not diminish the clear perception of a tradition of joy felt by the performers and successive audience. Despite the student unrests of the 1960's, this *Alice* play tradition persevered at Meredith. After listening to Dr. Rose's very warm and heartfelt recounting of the *Alice* play at this small college in Raleigh, North Carolina, one admires the wisdom of the original directors, the long-time support of the faculty, and, not surprisingly, the succession of student bodies thrilled by seeing their faculty in *Wonderland* roles. There are at least several levels of ambiguity, and enjoyment here that make college life memorable — for teachers and students, and for life.

Charles Lovett, undaunted by natural disasters that blocked the main entrance to his home (and could have done considerable damage to his home and its fine collection of Carroll materials), delivered a thought-provoking talk on "The Controversy over Victorian Stage Children and Lewis Carroll's Role in that Controversy." The controversy reflected many points of view — each held by various participants from a different perspective. Charles sketched the surprisingly small involvement of the British government in education before 1870 and then followed up the various reform movements for improving chil-

## Carroll Foundation, New *Snark* Edition Launched in Australia

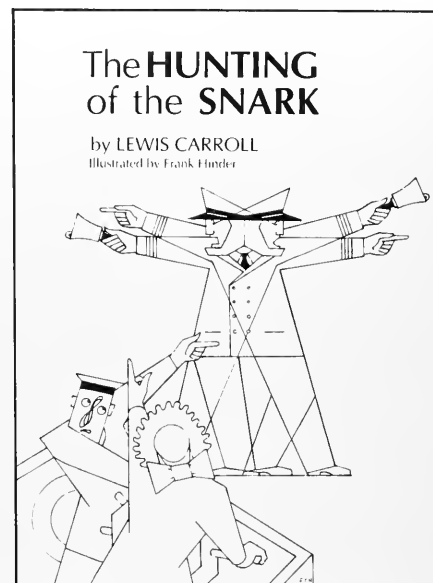
The Carroll Foundation, an Australian non-profit organization devoted to increasing awareness of children's literature, was formally introduced through its published announcement recently.

The announcement states that the Foundation "through education, investigation, research, exhibitions and consultation... (will) promote an appreciation of the role, functions and achievements of children's literary workers..." and "has an especial interest in the life and work of Lewis Carroll... The World Patron of the Foundation is Marcel Marceau."

The Foundation planned participation in the Oxford Conference consisted of two exhibits, a paper "Alice's Adventures in the Antipathies" and the launching of the first Australian edition of *The Hunting of the Snark*.

Among other plans is a touring display of 125 translations of *Alice* in 1990.

Details on membership and obtaining the *Snark* may be obtained by writing to: Carroll Foundation, PO Box 304, Flamington 3031 VIC, Australia.



A limited and a standard edition of the book are available.

## The Mystery of the Railway Car — Or, Did Tenniel Do a Double Take?



In the Looking-Glass Insects chapter of *TTLG*, Tenniel's well-known illustration of Alice, the man in the white paper suit and hat, the goat and the guard with the binoculars is certainly one of the most interesting illustrations in the two *Alice*

books. Recently, the question has arisen whether or not Tenniel copied the illustration of Alice with the feathered hat from a painting of Millais, "Her First Sermon", which pictures a young girl in the same hat. To add even more confusion, a Currier and Ives lithograph, "Little Ella", also shows the very same hat.

A visit with Martin Gardner recently brought this question to the forefront. Martin told us that both Roger Green and Michael Hearn stated that little girls of the time dressed like that, but the pose, the hat and the rest of the costume of Alice so closely match the other two illustrations, that it seems Tenniel drew upon them for inspiration.

If anyone has more specific information, we would be pleased to hear about it.

dren's education. Millicent Garrett Fawcett of the Moral Reform Union campaigned against the employment of children on the stage. The revival of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, translated to the stage, was the proximate cause of Lewis Carroll's involvement in the dispute. Charles traced the course of debate, with frequent allusions to Lewis Carroll, in the House of Lords, and analyzed the final legislative decision that allowed employment above a certain age. Carroll's arguments, often very heartfelt, were presented in the context of his letters

and against a well-sketched background. Like so much with Carroll, the arguments and their resolution are not without relevance to contemporary concerns.

August A. Imholtz

(Editor's Note) One of the many memorable pleasantries of the meeting was the special keepsake that the Lovetts wrote and had printed for the occasion. Entitled *Alice in North Carroll-ina*, the 32-page booklet is the schedule of the events and exhibition notes of the meeting. Limited to 100 copies and priced at \$7.50, copies are still available from the Lovetts at 1092 West 4th St., Winston-Salem, NC 27101.



**Lewis Carroll, Interviews and Recollections**, Morton Cohen. *University of Iowa Press*. 1989. \$24.95.

How we wish we could have met Lewis Carroll! What was he *really* like? Was he tall and striking; lunched over and unimpressive; or was he benign or forbidding? Perhaps all of these at different times and to different people.

The next best thing is to read about him, in the words of the people who knew him or were his contemporaries.

Morton Cohen has gathered reminiscences of Lewis Carroll, (some published and some previously unknown) by family, friends, and even some mild enemies. Because of his encyclopedic knowledge of Carroll's letters, (see his two-volume selection of letters and his recent review of the Macmillan correspondence), Dr. Cohen has been able to trace many of those people who knew Carroll, and who had written about him. In addition, he records transcriptions of his notes from personal interviews with members of Dodgson's family who were able to talk with him. (Carroll, of course, usually refused any interviews at all).

So this book is a portrait, rather a number of portraits, of what Dodgson as a young man was like before he became Lewis Carroll. It is a gallery of pictures showing his life at school and his later life until his death. It is an album of likenesses of Lewis Carroll as he appeared to his child-friends, (usually denying his other identity). It is evaluations and tributes by those who knew him best, and even by many who had never met him at all. It is a gathering from which only a few are chosen, Dr. Cohen has discovered a multitude of viewpoints which often do not agree.

Dr. Cohen's scholarship is overwhelming. His footnotes alone comprise a condensed history of Victorian England.

*Sandor Burstein*

(Editor's Note) Morton Cohen is also to be found in a new book *Nineteenth-Century Lives*. Dr. Cohen narrates the exciting detective work involved in the study of the life of Lewis Carroll. Available from Cambridge University Press, New York. List price is \$29.95.

*The Walrus and the Carpenter*, with delightfully amusing illustrations by Hilary Knight (of *Eloise* fame), makes an appearance in *Side By Side*, by Lee Bennett Hopkins. Simon and Schuster, New York.

## Pamphlet Project Editors Still Seek "Lost" Items

The first volume in the pamphlet project is expected to be issued within the year, with the second volume, the mathematical pamphlets to follow. In all, six volumes are projected.

Some elusive pamphlets are being diligently searched for, and it is hoped that members can be of help. These are:

- Notes on the First Part of Algebra — 1861*
- General List of Subjects — 1863*
- Algebraical Formulae — 1868 & 1870*
- Arithmetical Formulae and Rules — 1870*
- Symbols to be Used in Euclid — 1872*
- Purity of Election — 1881*
- Rules for Reckoning Postage — 1883*
- Profits of Authorship — 1884*
- Circular & Prospectus About a House — 1885*
- Circular About Counters — 1886*

Should anyone know of the whereabouts of the above pamphlets, please write to the Editor of the Knight Letter. All help will be acknowledged.

Brian Sewell, who several years ago was very much involved in Lewis Carroll activities (an ambitious *Alice* American bibliography was started and abandoned), is the author of a delightful article in the June issue of the Condé Nast *Traveller* magazine. Entitled "In the Wake of Cleopatra," Sewell describes a cruise in a Turkish *gulet*, along the coast of what was Asia Minor. Beautifully told and beautifully illustrated, the article is lyrical in its description of this ancient land and the ship they used.

## The Mad Gardener's Song Contest

He thought he saw an elephant  
That practiced on a fife,

One of the brighter spots of *Sylvie and Bruno* is the wonderfully wacky verses of "The Mad Gardener's Song." If Lewis Carroll were writing today, the verses would certainly be different, reflecting the times and the culture.

Believing that readers of the *Knight Letter* can contribute contemporary verses in the same metre and style of the original, we call upon one and all to send contributions to the Editor, upon whose discretion they will be printed. And who knows — eventually a book may come out of it all!

Richard M. Boothe, he of the Snark Hunt Potluck Picnic, mentioned in a previous issue, writes:

First, my Snark Hunt Potluck Picnic was a success. Fourteen people came, bringing a nice balance of dishes. Even though they were all unfamiliar with *The Hunting of the Snark*, most professed a keen enjoyment of my recitation-cum-reading of the *Agony*. One fellow Sierra Club leader urged me to make it an annual affair!

I've noticed another Carrollian allusion. Robertson Davies' new novel, *The Lyre of Orpheus*, centers around the effects of the Cornish Foundation's decision to not only underwrite the reconstruction of Hoffmann's proto-Wagnerian, barely-begun opera, *Arthur of Britain*, but also to fund its production and staging once the reconstruction (out of whole cloth, as it turns out) is completed. Davies has Penelope (Penny) Raven, a minor contributor to the new libretto of *Arthur*, compare the whole mad enterprise to *The Hunting of the Snark*. At one point, she makes specific comparisons of characters in the novel to members of the crew. Davies also has the ghost of E.T.A. Hoffman (stuck in Limbo until his opera is completed) overhear a reference to "... a Snark or a Boojum?" comment, "It sounds like some great conflict in the works of Wagner."



*Martin Gardner*

Martin Gardner, planning the revised edition of *The Annotated Alice*, has several new books in the stores. The list includes *Gardner's Whys and Wherefors*, a group of essays, mainly literary. (University of Chicago Press); *Perplexing Puzzles and Tantalizing Teasers* (Dover); and two books by G.K. Chesterton with new introductions by Gardner — *Four Faultless Felons*, and *The Club of Queer Trades*. (both Dover). Also recently published is *How Not to Test a Psychic*.

from our far-flung



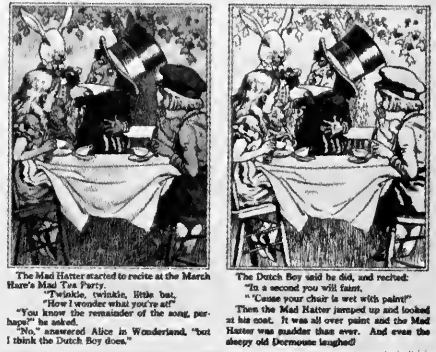
correspondents

David Del Tredici, Pulitzer Prize winner for his musical versions of the *Alice* themes, presented a new version of *Happy Voices*, commissioned for the San Francisco Symphony and played by them for the first time on June 22nd. *Happy Voices* is the first part of *Child Alice*.

*Noiresque: The Fallen Angel*, which opened in May at the Playhouse 46 in New York, is *Alice* through the eyes of an Asian playwright. *The New York Times* called it "double-edged . . . Lewis Carroll dipped in film noir". Alice takes a mysterious train to Terminal City, with the conductor announcing various stations, such as the Vale of Tears. She first meets up with Herr Hasenpfeffer (the White Rabbit), who in this version is early, rather than late and a guardian angel who helps Alice to understand her experiences.

Santa Barbara, California has a Cheshire Cat Inn — but children aren't allowed!

The March-April issue of *Nissan Discovery* (circulation 500,000) contained a page entitled "Join Any Good Clubs Lately?" — and listing the LCSNA. Mention is made of this esteemed publication and the Secretary's address is given.



Jack Golden, the designer of the *Knight Letter*, sends along a Xerox copy of a miniature paint book (above) put out by Dutch Boy Paints in 1925. Titled *The Dutch Boy in Story Land*, it contains two pages on the Mad Tea Party.

A most unusual "Peep-Show *Alice*" is being offered by Poole Press, 1170 Keeler Ave., Berkeley, CA 94708. Alice's adventures unfold on hand-cut and hand-colored panels, viewed through a die-cut peephole on the cover. A partial text is included, along with a short history of peep shows. 2 volumes, hand bound, limited to 100 signed copies. \$135.00

The Republic of Maldives's Alice stamps (Disney version) can be found in plastic-enclosed book marks in many bookshops and stationery stores. About \$1.25.

Fran Abeles, busy at work on the Lewis Carroll mathematical pamphlets, has been invited to speak at the American Mathematical Society meeting in Louisville, KY in January, 1990. Present plans call for a discussion of the two unpublished cyphers in Carroll's diaries.

Artist Allan Reid, 421 Second St., Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103, has completed four sepia-toned Alice etchings. Prices are \$75.00 and \$90.00 each and are limited to 250 signed copies.

Spring Hill Nurseries of Tipp City, Ohio offers a Day Lily called *Alice in Wonderland*. It's bright yellow with a blue-green center.

And finally, if you're looking for something exclusive — Rosalie Pompon, Rue Lebeau, Brussels, Belgium offers an Alice box with Alice and the Rabbit on the outside. When the box is opened, Alice is seen falling down the rabbit hole. It's one of a kind and priced at 35000 Belgian Francs.

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