



Knighit Letter

THE LEWIS CARROLL

SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

NUMBER 52 SPRING 1996

City of Brotherly Love Hosts Spring Meeting

The Spring meeting of the Society was a moveable feast in and around Philadelphia, which was looking exceptionally verdant this cool and sunny spring day. Our first stop was the remarkable Rosenbach Museum and Library.

The Rosenbach collection is housed in a spectacular Civil-War period mansion, the former home of Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach, the justifiably famous rare book and manuscript dealer. Today it is a research library and museum, open both to scholars and the public. There is no way to do justice to a description of their collection which, in addition to its works on paper, houses English and American furniture (such as Melville's bookcase and Marianne Moore's entire apartment), silver, paintings, and decorative art. There is so much among the thirty-thousand books and manuscripts that just to list a few of the "genuelect quality" items must suffice: the (almost) complete handwritten manuscript of *Ulysses*; working drafts of Shakespeare's plays; manuscript notes and outlines for *Dracula*; a copy of *Moby Dick* presented to Hawthorne (the book's dedicatee); Jefferson's copy of this, Napoleon's copy of that.

We were welcomed in the garden by Joan Watson, Director of Public Programs, who gave us an orientation talk, split us into two groups, and turned us over to a pair of knowledgeable and friendly librarians for a tour.

Their Carroll holdings are vast and of supreme importance (remember it was Dr. Rosenbach who purchased the original manuscript of *Alice's Adventures Underground* and returned it to the British Museum). A few items were set out to whet our appetites, including Tenniel's pencil sketches for the Jabberwock and Caucus Race. In the latter, the ape which appears in the final drawing was mysteriously absent - was it added later as a dig at Darwin? Also a (reproduced binding) white vellum presentation copy of the 1865 *Alice* inscribed to "MAB" (Marion Terry) with a preferatory poem; a few of their thirty letters to and from Arthur

B. Frost with Carroll's preliminary sketches of the ghost in *Phantasmagoria* together with Frost's pencils and final etchings; and an unpublished magazine from Carroll's youth open to a drawing entitled "The Great Cow-Eater" about an angry bull's charge (prefiguring the current Mad Cow scare in England?), and a handbill from the 1889 Saville-Clarke production among other treasures.

The officers of the Society then met for an hour and discussed upcoming meeting sites and the constitution which was unanimously approved in the general meeting. Its text appears on page 6 of this issue.

A big yellow school bus took us to the next venue, the Germantown Theatre Guild (founded in 1933) and located in the carriage house of the Mehl House, built in 1742, and of great historical interest - both housing Hessian mercenaries in the Revolutionary War (Battle of Germantown, 1777) and with underground tunnels believed to have been links in the Underground Railway of the Civil War. We were served lunch, and were free to wander through the house and theater, both of which had exhibits from the collections of Kitty Minehart (Artistic Director of the Theatre) and Barabara Felicetti, who collects "Alice in the Popular Culture" ephemera. There was even an Alice Bathroom.

The theatre Guild has presented many hundreds of plays over the years, including *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* five times. We walked in and sat among the audience already seated there (Humpty Dumpty and some Victorian theatergoers). Eve LaGalliene's "director's script" for the 1932 production was reverently housed in glass. Costumes from previous productions loomed about, as did a Christmas tree with Alician ornaments and a larger-than-life-sized Mock Turtle and Red Queen. We sat under the beamed ceilings in musty pews, breathing history.

Our keynote speaker, Alexei Panshin, is a respected author of science fiction, and has won the Nebula Award in 1989, a



Hugo in the same year (for *Right of Passage*) and a World Science Fiction Award in 1991. He is currently working on a book on the creative imagination which devotes several chapters to Lewis Carroll, and his talk was entitled "Falling Down a Rabbit Hole". Beginning with a discussion of the places where "sci/fi" and fantasy coincide, from early writers up through Robert Heinlein's *Number of the Beast*, wherein a Klein bottle (Carroll's "Purse of Fortunatus") led into the "abyss of wonder", Mr. Panshin offered a deconstruction of the Thames expedition and the first few chapters of *Alice*, included speculation on: Carroll's identification with the young Alice as his surrogate self; the six dream layers of the narrative; fairy-tales and magic; and comparisons with Alice's fall down the rabbit hole to Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. It was a definitely "Sixties" perspective, with talks of altered perceptions, head states, lucid dreaming, and so on. The material was admittedly not arranged as a lecture (a courtesy speakers might well be asked to observe), and could have used some serious editing. Or perhaps he was intending, as someone remarked, to illustrate the "dream state" by putting us into one.

This was followed by a fine reenactment of "The Wasp in the Wig", certainly well within, and at times exceeding, "the appliances of art". The nasty, crass working-class Wasp was delightfully portrayed by Mark Hallen, and Alice by the young and talented Laura Filosa, all under the direction of Kitty Minehart. This humorous interlude woke us all back up.

A panel discussion "Your Collection's Future: Down the Rabbit-Hole...and into the Basement?" ensued, moderated by Barbara Felicetti. The four panelists were experts in four related areas and discussed considerations regarding the sale, donation, or bequest of a collection.

The first speaker was Daniel Traister, Curator of the Department of Special Collections of the VanPelt-Dietrich Library of the University of Pennsylvania. Dan, a very funny and enlightening speaker, represented, obviously, the library culture. He had several salient points: one, that the dispersal of a collection is an idiosyncratic and very personal matter - do you need to keep it intact? is it your "monument to your own immortality"? Do you wish others to enjoy it? How? Does it have instructional/research or just sentimental value? and stressed the need for a "brutally realistic" appraisal of your assets and your own feelings about them. Second, that the dispersal of a collection is a two-way street, and that one must be sure the recipient is empowered to, and interested in, receipt. If it is to a library or other institution, have you also included sufficient funds to house it, catalog it, care for it, protect it, insure it, staff it, provide for present curatorial needs and future growth? Is it an unconditional gift that an institution can itself disperse? A "gift" can truly be a horrible burden to the recipient if these things are not considered.

Next we heard from John F. Warren, a Philadelphia appraiser and dealer in art books and fine prints. If you are going to sell your collection through a dealer, how does one choose among the five thousand used and antiquarian book dealers and twelve auction houses? How to find someone

professional, knowledgeable, and who shares your passion for these books? He suggests inquiring through fellow collectors or librarians and choosing someone who specializes in the field you collect. Ask to see their catalog. Be clear as to what you are selling (physically segregating the "Not for Sale"). The cost of third-party appraisals is usually warranted. Is it a sale? a consignment? Make sure everything is in writing. He advised us to solicit competing offers from two or three dealers.

George M. Riter, Esq., an estate planning attorney, next discussed a third alternative - charitable gifts and trusts. If you are planning to leave the collection to a charitable organization, first and foremost make certain that they want to receive it. Are they qualified? Obtain written acknowledgment. Filing a gift tax return (with third-party appraisal) may require a qualified advisor. Remember, pledges are unenforceable (*i.e.* do not just leave it to some charity without their full knowledge and consent). If you are looking to leave it to a family member (again, who wants it and understands the burdens it implies), the best plan is to do it throughout your life, as the IRS allows up to ten thousand dollars a year to be transferred tax-free. Otherwise, the assets will be taxed at 55%.

The fourth alternative, having a collection sold by an auction house, was discussed by Kimball Higgs, Assistant Vice President of Sotheby's Books and Manuscripts Division. Although collecting is "for the heart, not for profit" there may come a time when one wishes maximum return on investment. Sotheby's may be the proper route for "high-end" material - no book (or lot) is sold for under \$1,500. You are also charged for storage, insurance, advertising, and commission so only a select few items may be worth it - those handling charges are often around \$600 *per item*. So if you're hoarding a bejewelled 1865 white vellum presentation *Alice* with Tenniel sketches which have been hand-watercolored by Alice Hargreaves, fine, but they are not the avenue for your eighty-five variants of Grosset & Dunlaps.

At the end, a handout, "Alice's Last Adventure", was available. Barbara Felicetti (address in *Letters* section) may have some more copies. It includes outlines of the above talks, addresses of the participants, and a list of libraries with Lewis Carroll collections.

A lively question-and-answer period followed, with inquiries on provenance (and confidentiality); dual standards of valuation (it is not unusual nor unethical for the "fair market value" to fluctuate depending on whether the collection is being insured, going to charity, being sold, *etc.*) It was also noted that our Society has no permanent home, and, even if a collection were to be offered, would have no way of housing it.

At the end of the meeting, Janet Jurist received some presents and our heartfelt thanks for serving as Program Coordinator for so many years. We also thanked Barbara Felicetti for her warm hospitality, shmoozed a bit, and headed back for the Rosenbach in the big yellow school bus, where Sandor and Joel led the singing of "Ninety Nine Bottles of Drink-Me on the Wall" all the way back. Just kidding.

Ravings from the Writing Desk of Joel Birenbaum

Taking my lead from politics, I will indulge in a positive (as opposed to a negative) rave this issue. This month I initiated a separate Lewis Carroll Society of North America Home Page on the World Wide Web [see p. 12 for addresses]. While I am at it I might as well mention that the Lewis Carroll Society (UK) also has a new home page: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Aztec/LCS.htm>. The LCSNA board is investigating a permanent home for our Web presence. The page currently contains a description of the society, a list of officers, membership information, a few original articles, and a few odd bits of Carroll data. My belief is that the page should expand on what is known in the communications arena as "content". For those who remember the old Wendy's commercial, this is "the beef". The LCSNA should not merely be the keeper of pointers to other people's information; we should be the source of information. To this end I am requesting contributions for our page. These can be original articles, HTML versions of Carroll texts not yet on the web, original graphics, or digitized photos of Carroll-related sites [real ones, not virtual].

The Lewis Carroll Home Page (which is the home for pointers to other people's Carroll information) was rated in the top 5% of Web sites by Pointcom. Joshua Birenbaum, the webmaster of this site, added a counter to the page this month and we found that the page was accessed over 100 times per day. The link to the LCSNA page should provide us with a similar number of accesses. This is a better opportunity to reach more of the public than we have ever had. It behooves us to give a good indication of what we are about. While this may or may not increase our membership, it will definitely increase our exposure. We can bring Carroll scholarship, Carroll texts, Carroll photographs, and even a bit of Carroll trivia to more than a hundred people a day.

To date I have received electronic mail comments from information highway travelers in Canada, Mexico, Venezuela, Russia, Finland, Brazil, Japan, the Philippines, Sweden, Germany, France, Australia, the UK, and the US. The feedback has been 100% positive and in many cases positively gushing. This is a Lewis Carroll lifeline for many people. The more interesting information we can provide, the more people will visit more often. If we build it, they will come.

Odds Bodkins by Dan O'Neill, June 4, 1969



The most often asked specific question is: what is the answer to the Hatter's riddle, "Why is a Raven like a writing desk?" Fortunately there are deeper questions posed than that. The most general question asked is of the form, "I am writing a report on Lewis Carroll, what can you send me?" My general reply is, "I can send you to the library." If the question is more specific, I refer them to a short list of reference material. The key is to make sure they have made some attempt on their own to find the information and don't expect me to research their report for them. The good news about this is that many High School and College students are still choosing to do their projects on the subject of Lewis Carroll. Isn't that where most of us started?

In my opening rave I mentioned that I might be reporting information from the Lewis Carroll Society (UK) Committee meeting. Well, on November 24th, I attended my first LCS Committee meeting via speakerphone. I would have preferred to attend in person, but unfortunately this does not fit in either society's budget (and certainly not my own). We discussed publications in progress and their distribution, but here is a question that I was asked to relay: Are you planning a vacation in the UK, or perhaps a business trip? Our friends in the Lewis Carroll Society (UK) would love to know when visitors from the LCSNA might be in town. Perhaps they could arrange for you to attend one of their meetings (they have about 10 a year). If they know in advance, they may even ask you to speak at a meeting (with so many meetings a year a new voice is always welcome). This invitation is a chance for a bit more cross-pollination between our two Societies.

The LCS is planning a three day seminar in Guilford the first weekend in August of 1996. This will be their annual summer outing. The seminars will lean heavily towards the arts I am told [see page 7]. Now you can plan your "business trip" accordingly.

Now let's switch gears and talk about LCSNA meetings. First I would like to thank Kitty Minehart, Barbara Felicetti and their crew for all the hard work they put in to making our meeting in Philadelphia a great success. They were particularly thoughtful in arranging for beautiful weather, so that we could eat in Kitty's garden. The friendly Carrollian atmosphere was instrumental in enabling members to gather

in small groups to engage in lively discussion.

Our next meeting will be in Providence RI on November 9th. Professor Sherry Ackerman will speak on *Sylvie and Bruno* and Professor George Landow on the "Victorian Web" and will also give a demonstration of the World Wide Web emphasizing Lewis Carroll's presence. I would like to point out that Providence is a short drive from Boston and a reasonable trip from New York. I would anticipate a good turnout at this, our Fall '96 meeting. Plan to stay a few days and visit the surrounding area.

Future meetings will be as follows: Spring '97 in New York City; Fall '97 is still up for grabs (but may be in conjunction with a seminar on creative thinking being held at St. John's University in Collegeville MN); Spring '98 in New York City; and Fall '98 in Southern California. The Spring '98 meeting will probably be in late February, so technically it will be a Winter meeting. Yes, we have a good reason for holding the meeting in February. No, it is not the weather. January 14, 1998 will be the centenary of Carroll's death and there will be several exhibits and associated events in New York in February. It promises to be a great two-day meeting (the exact dates are not yet set). I suggest you set aside a weekend for this super-meeting.

Congratulations to Joel and his son Joshua for maintaining one of the most fascinating and popular sites on the World Wide Web. The Lewis Carroll Home Page has been awarded two marks of distinction: the "4-Star" from Magellan as one of the "best resources on the Net in terms of depth of content, ease of exploration and Net appeal" and the "Top 5%" by Point Survey, described as "a catalog of the most lively, useful, and fun sites on the Net."

The Fall elections for our Officers is coming up. All of the current officers are willing to serve again, except for our Vice-President, Rosella Howe, who cannot take on the additional responsibilities for personal reasons. Please send your nominations to any officer or member of the nominating committee, for example Dr. Sandor Burstein at 120 Sea Cliff Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94121.

Leaves from the Deanery Garden

I would appreciate copies of any photos taken at the April 27th meeting of the LCSNA at my home and theatre and will be glad to reimburse cost. Thank you! Please send them to:

Kitty Minehart
4821 Germantown Ave.
Philadelphia PA 19144



I thought your readers might enjoy knowing my cars' Illinois license plate numbers - BOOJUM 8 and SNARK 42. The 8 is for the number of fits in the Snark.

Fred Ost
Skokie IL



I've just returned from the Modern Language Association in Chicago, the annual meeting of between 8,000 to 10,000 college and university teachers of literature and languages which is the closest approximation to the Mad Tea Party that I have ever encountered.

During the festivities, I clipped the enclosed article about the conference from the 29 Dec. 1995 *Chicago Sun-Times* that I thought might merit a brief mention. In the article, Phyllis Franklin, the executive director of MLA, singles out Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* as an example of the sort of book that transcends the virtues of electronic publishing. Franklin sees *Wonderland* as the kind of book that parents want to preserve in book form to give to their children. It's refreshing to see that Franklin, as head of the MLA, situate *Wonderland* at the heart of literary cultures. Maybe she has been reading Morton Cohen's *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*?

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Normal, IL



[The article "Little Being Done to Save Books From 'Disappearing'" decries the estimated 100 million books on library shelves which will become unusable over the next twenty or thirty years, due to the acid content of the paper on which they were printed, according to Professor J. Miller, chairman of the MLA's Committee on the Preservation of the Print Records. In a statement warning against public complacency about book preservation in the face of the computer revolution and the reliance on "virtual libraries", Ms. Franklin made the remark that "Parents still want their children to know what (the book) *Alice in Wonderland* looked like."]



[Silver State Fine Art mailed to LCSNA members a solicitation for a "master serigraph" by Jett Jackson a few months back. One of our members shares her thoughts:]

I do not understand nor approve of presenting our 7½ year old Alice as an adult woman with a low-cut gown revealing her bosom, and wearing nail polish. I also find repellent the presentation of the Cheshire cat as a cross-eyed monster with missing teeth and weird stripes. It makes me question as to whether Jett Jackson has ever read *Alice in Wonderland*. Personally, I find absolutely nothing I like in the picture. Notice, for example, how Alice is wrenching the poor rabbit's hind leg in her left hand! I hope I'm not the only one who dislikes it.

[I could not agree more. I find the interpretation exploitative, the execution amateurish and the whole thing ridiculously valued (\$2500 is asked, about ten times what most such works sell for). However, there is such a thing as "artistic license" and the free market and this was advertised, after all, as "bar art" so de gustibus and all that.]



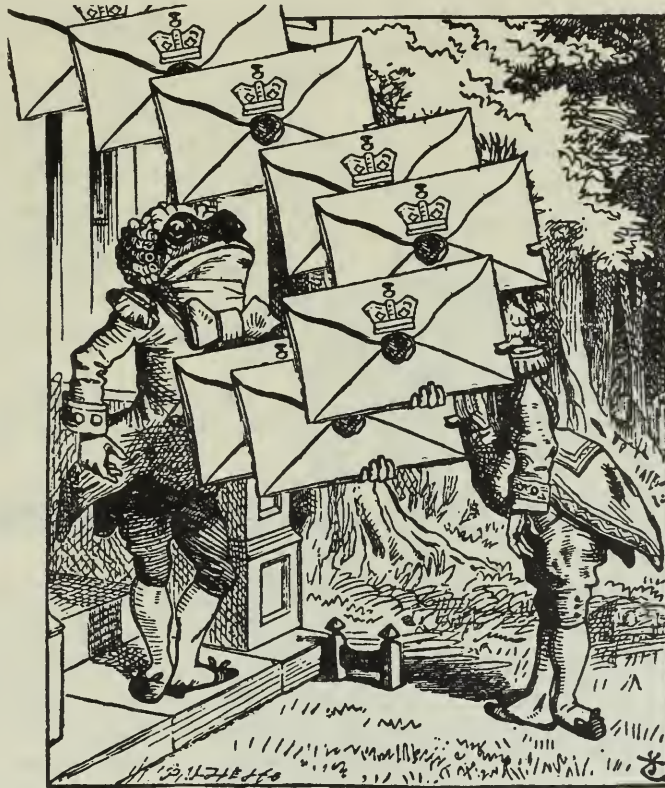
As a French student in Paris in a pre-doctoral program, I appreciated your article "Bandersnatch" a great deal. My thesis subject is "The Reception of Lewis Carroll in France". My main source is Jean Gattegno's works; hence my question: are there any specific French sources used by the LCSNA, and would you like a contribution on the subject, if I may offer mine?

I am looking for feedback on the subject at the moment. Carrollian studies are growing in France, and the translation issue is especially important. I am looking forward to hearing

from you, and will appreciate any input. We all contain "multicultural" multitudes.

Pascale Renaud
11 bis rue du Val de Grace
75005 Paris, France
prenaud@orbital.fr

[The article M. Renaud is referring to is "To Stop a Bandersnatch," my humorous look at the hermeneutic studies of Alice which can be found at the LCSNA website. I have offered him the names of Professor Lecercle at the University of Paris at Nanterre and our own Genevieve Brauet-Smith. Anyone who can direct him further is encouraged to write to him.]



An ad for Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations: Expanded Multimedia Edition* in the *New York Times* (1/29/96) among other places contained a "Quote of the Week", this time "What is the use of a book," thought Alice, "Without pictures or conversation?" For an "authoritative" source to indulge in a misquotation (with three errors!) is unforgivable. August Imholtz brought this to their (and our) attention.

In Memoriam

It is my sad duty to inform you that Ellis Hillman, founder and president of the Lewis Carroll Society (Great Britain) has passed away. I only met him for the first time last year in Lyndhurst and found him to be quite the conversationalist. I was looking forward to seeing him again. - Joel Birenbaum

Constitution

1. The Society shall be called the "Lewis Carroll Society of North America."
2. The purpose of the Lewis Carroll Society of North America is to encourage study in the life, work, times and influence of Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson).
3. The Society shall be an autonomous entity. The North American Society will endeavor to have a cooperative reinforcing relationship with the British Lewis Carroll Society.
4. Membership of the Society shall be open to any person or institution who pays the required annual membership dues. Types of membership and annual dues shall be specified in the By-Laws.
5. The elected officers of the Society shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. A Program Chairman and a Publications Chairman shall be appointed by the officers.
6. The normal term of officers shall be two years.
7. A governing Board will consist of the officers, four elected directors, the previous two officeholders from each office, and two directors appointed by the president. The board will be responsible for the financial affairs of the Society, and for the annual audit of accounts. The President shall be Chairman of meetings of the Board.
8. Every two years, the Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee to recommend candidates for the offices of the Society.
9. A board of advisors will consist of all previous officeholders not currently on the board of directors plus any other advisors appointed by the Board of Directors.
10. The two boards will meet simultaneously, but only the governing board will have voting privileges.
11. There will be at least an annual meeting of the Society at a time and place determined by the Board. Other meetings may also be convened. Regional societies should be encouraged to organize and hold regional meetings. Membership in the Society, however, will be required of all members of regional societies.
12. A quorum at any meeting shall consist of 25 members.
13. The proceedings of the Society shall be governed by and conducted according to the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, when not in conflict with Dodgson's *Principles of Parliamentary Representation*.
14. The By-Laws can be amended by two-thirds of those members present at a meeting, or by a majority of the total membership.
15. The Constitution can be amended by three-quarters of those members present at a meeting, or by two-thirds of the total membership.
16. In the event of the dissolution of the Society, its assets shall be donated to a children's hospital.
17. The official map of the Society shall be a perfect and absolute blank.

By-Laws

There shall be three classes of membership: Regular Members, Sustaining Members, and Honorary Members. Honorary Members shall be nominated with the approval of the governing Board. All members shall be entitled to vote at meetings.

Dues

The annual dues for Regular Members shall be \$20. The annual dues for Sustaining Members shall be \$50. Membership shall be for the current year except that persons joining after October 1 shall be members for the following year. Payment of the dues shall entitle members to receive the Society newsletter for one calendar year.

Guildford Study Weekend

August 2nd - 4th, 1996

For many years, the Lewis Carroll Society (UK) has been organising summer events which take its members to places of Carrollian significance. Recently, these events have included an overnight stay and have often been accompanied by talks and other entertainment. This year, the Society has chosen to return to Guildford [*in Surrey, about an hour's drive southwest from London*] for the first time in more than ten years and has put together a packed programme of activities.

The weekend will feature lectures, discussion periods, tours and other activities. We have called this event a

continued

Serendipity

Robert Hughes (September, 1965): What scenes would (you) like to have filmed?

Vladimir Nabokov: Shakespeare in the part of the King's ghost. The beheading of Louis the Sixteenth, the drums drowning his speech on the scaffold. Herman Melville at breakfast, feeding a sardine to his cat. Poe's wedding. Lewis Carroll's picnics.



Paul Sufrin (September, 1971): In many of your writings, you have conceived what I consider to be an Alice-in-Wonderland world of unreality and illusion. What is the connection with your real struggle with the world?

VN: *Alice in Wonderland* is a specific book by a definite author with its own quaintness, its own quirks, its own quiddity. If read very carefully, it will seem to imply, by humorous juxtaposition, the presence of a quite solid, and rather sentimental, world, behind the semi-detached dream. Moreover, Lewis Carroll liked little girls. I don't.



From *Strong Opinions*, McGraw-Hill, 1973

study weekend, in order to emphasise the educational aspect of the programme and have chosen two themes for the occasion.

The first of the themes, and the subject of the first day of the event, will be the Dodgson family connection with the town of Guildford. The second theme will be an examination of Charles Dodgson's interest in various aspects of the arts.

The weekend will be offered as a comprehensive package which will include accommodation (arranged at the University of Guildford), meals, use of all facilities, all transport (from arrival in Guildford), course materials and various keepsakes.

Lectures include "The Dodgson Family and its Con-

Califwocky

[The following bit was inspired by a fit of jealousy over Jersey-wocky. All italicized words are guaranteed to be genuine towns and cities in California.]

'Twas *Gridley* and the *Redwood Groves*
Did *Gerber* and *Gilroy* in *Half Moon Bay*
All *Quincy* were the *Orange Coves*
And the *Pomona Tafts L.A.*

Beware the Califwock, my son
The jaws that bite, the claws that reach
Beware the *Azusa* bird and shun
The *Petalumaious Pismo Beach*.

He gripped his *Ferndale* sword in hand
Long time the *Buttonwillow* he sought
So rested he in *Mill Valley*
And stood awhile in thought.

And as in *Red Bluffish* thought he stood
The Califwock with eyes of flame
Came *Whittier* through the *Tehachapi* woods
And *Burbanked* as it came.

San Juan, San Bruno and through and through
His *Yorba Linda* went *Riverbank*
He left it dead and with its head
He went *Humptulips* back

And hast thou slain the Califwock?
Come to my arms my *Beaumont* boy
O *Happy Camp! Coalinga! Ojai!*
He *Chowchillaed* in his joy.

'Twas *Gridley* and the *Redwood Groves*
Did *Gerber* and *Gilroy* in *Half Moon Bay*
All *Quincy* were the *Orange Coves*
And the *Pomona Tafts L.A.*

nections with Guildford", "Carroll and the Pre-Raphaelites", "Gertrude Thompson", "Carroll's Theatre-Going", "Carroll and Ellen Terry", and "Carroll as Photographer". Evenings will be taken with various entertainments. There will be visits to the Watts Gallery, the Muniment Room and its extensive Carroll holdings, St. Mary's Church and other schools where he gave lessons, the Watts Gallery, and, of course, the graves of Carroll, his sisters, and Aunt Lucy.

The fully inclusive price is £150 per person. Contact Mark Richards, Treasurer, at 50 Lauderdale Mansions, Lauderdale Road, London W9 1NE, England. A deposit of £50, made out to the Lewis Carroll Society, will hold a reservation, and they ask you to contact them by the end of May [*i.e. as soon as you possibly can!*].

The Jabberwock

The illustration below is © 1996 by Leslie Allen, a gracious and talented Mill Valley, California, artist, and was executed on scratchboard as a special commission for this Knight Letter, continuing her series of "Memorandum" in issue 49 and "Humpty Dumpty" in 51.



OF BOOKS & THINGS



As if we didn't have enough to worry about, British author Jeff Noon (*Pollen, Vurt*) is writing a book called *Automated Alice*, due this fall, portraying "a gun-toting, armor-plated Alice in Wonderland...I just had to go with it after I had a vision of an Alice with a door in her stomach that opens up to shoot the Jabberwock," Noon said in an interview with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "I imagined her shooting him and then saying something stupid like 'Eat lead.'"

The Tale of the Mouse's Tail by LCSNA President-emeritus David and Secretary-emeritus Maxine Schaefer, illustrated by member Jonathan Dixon, ISBN 0-9648692. "You've done a great job on the mouse's tail. It couldn't have been done better or more amusingly" - Martin Gardner. The tale from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* told by the mouse slowly grows into a tail that assumes many different forms including foreign languages and inside-out computer generated versions. The cleverly illustrated book is meant for anyone who can read, even if they have never heard of Lewis Carroll. Children from the third grade on up and adults will enjoy the book. \$9.95 including postage, from Mica Publishers, 617 Rockford Road, Silver Spring MD 20902.

Fantastic Alice, edited by Margaret Weis, Ace trade paperback, 1995, \$12 ISBN 0-441-00253-6. 291 pp.
Review ©1996 Evelyn Leeper

This is an anthology of seventeen stories based in some way on Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Well, I suppose it sounded promising.

I was not encouraged by the fact that the introduction refers to the original work both as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Alice in Wonderland*. It also describes Lewis Carroll as "the epitome of the proper Victorian gentleman," a description which I do not believe squares with his penchant for photographing nude girls. [*While we have no access to his innermost thoughts, his behavior has never been questioned* - ed.] But the real test, of course, is the stories themselves.

While it would be expecting too much for the stories to equal Carroll's, I had hoped they would at least capture some of the spirit (as did Gilbert Adair's *Alice Through the Needle's Eye* a few years ago). Unfortunately, for the most part they do not. A couple have as their only connection the fact that they have a talking Cheshire cat. (In this they are similar to Thomas Disch and John Sladek's *Black Alice*, which had a Tenniel illustration on the cover, but no connection with the Carroll stories.) Others postulate that Wonderland is some sort of fantasy world, bearing little resemblance to how Carroll described it, or even the afterlife.

And the stories are so downbeat, filled with child abuse, death, drugs, and so on. I know that's real life, but Wonderland was supposed to be an escape from real life. Even the stories that do seem to be set in the "real" Wonderland are mostly unsatisfying, their jokes and paradoxes taken straight from Carroll himself. The one exception to this is Connie Hirsch's "Wonderland Express," in which Hirsch seems to have come up with *new* wordplay of the type Carroll used.

One other story that did work was "A Common Night" by Bruce Holland Rogers, mostly because Rogers did a good job imitating Carroll's poetry.

But on the whole, *Fantastic Alice* is a disappointment, and I cannot recommend it even (or perhaps especially) for fans of the Carroll works.

I also have a complaint separate from the contents of the book. For the reader, a trade paperback should offer some advantage over a mass-market paperback, and should certainly not be worse. Yet when I left this book in the car for only four hours, the cover looked like someone had taken a curling iron to it. Other companies manage to make trade paperbacks that avoid this; I would hope Ace would too.

Inventing Wonderland: The Lives and Fantasies of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, J.M.Barrie, Kenneth Grahame, and A.A.Milne by Jackie Wullschlager. The Free Press, 1995, \$24.
Review by Dr. Sandor Burstein

For some reason this book seems to have received favorable notices in many newspapers and magazines. The author, who writes for the *Financial Times* of London, pulls in all the old pseudopsychiatric chestnuts about the Victorian authors' mostly unhappy childhoods, Oedipal losses, and even the "inner child" in all of us. None of these writers for children ever grew up, she claims. Frustrated sexuality is the basis of their creativities, and she continues for 228 pages which tell us absolutely nothing new.

It wouldn't be so disappointing if she had at least done a little research. It looks to me as if she hadn't even read the Alice books, but just skimmed through them looking for obvious passages to cite in her text. She tells us that *Alice in Wonderland* (1) opens as "Alice is about to make a daisy chain (p.8); (2) opens in a pool of tears (p.26); and (3) "A flurry of watches and waistcoats and jars of marmalade opens the book". She has a "duchess (who) becomes a sheep" (p.45) while a cursory look at the book confirms it was the White Queen.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's pet wombat "Tops", who

used to sleep in the epergne on the table at dinner parties and awoke to eat left-over cigars, is credited as being the inspiration for Carroll's dormouse. Strange. Alice was published in 1865 and "Tops" entered the Rossetti household in 1869 and died shortly thereafter.

These and other sloppy, careless, or just misleading statements abound. In short, the "facts" are not recorded accurately, many of the assumptions are completely unjustified and unwarranted, and the psychological analyses are amateur and unoriginal at best. I suggest that to read this book is to waste time, effort, and money.

"Alice in Wonderland: A Ballet Adventure"

Interview ©1996 Alice Fuld

"A book is not a ballet. Literature and dance achieve their ends in quite different ways." That's the problem Jose Mateo confronted in creating a ballet from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.

Mateo, the artistic director of the Ballet Theatre of Boston, had been thinking about an "Alice" ballet for several years, but he could not find a workable narrative line for his dancers, and he couldn't think of a composer whose music fit the familiar children's story.

"I finally realized that the various encounters in *Alice* are themselves shorter, independent stories," Mateo said. This approach led to a ten-scene ballet adapted from Carroll's book with music by different composers. "The dances are very different from one another, and that called for different composers."

Mateo chose episodes from *Alice in Wonderland* that he felt could be interpreted in dance. He also incorporated "The Garden of Live Flowers" and "Tweedledum and Tweedledee" from *Through the Looking Glass*. "They were very good subjects for ballet, and I needed them," Mateo admitted.

As he began to look at other adaptations of *Alice*, Mateo discovered that adapters took all kinds of liberties. "It's difficult to tell how arbitrary the sequence is in Carroll, but the events almost invariably get shifted around in plays and films. It made me feel less guilty," Mateo said. "Once I gave myself that license, I tried to be true to the book, but it's a different medium with different requirements."

Mateo describes his "Alice in Wonderland" as a "ballet adventure." He uses music by Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Ravel, Mozart and Bach, among others. He looked at music especially for children and at the youthful works of noted composers, but in the end, Mateo chose music that he felt described the characters in each scene. "A Mad Tea-Party" is set to well-organized Mozart because Mateo wanted to convey the idea of a formal high tea, even though the party is more than a little askew.

"Tweedledum and Tweedledee" will be accompanied by a movement from a Stravinsky violin concerto. "Some of it sounds irrational, but it's appropriate," Mateo said, as the strange twins themselves are not entirely rational either.

Bach accompanies the uproarious trial of the Knave of Hearts while the Live Flowers waltz to Ravel's "La Valse."

The ballet opens and closes with music by Prokofiev, who composed "Cinderella" and other traditional story ballets. "It starts like most ballets, and then it delves into the underground," Mateo said.

Like most readers of *Alice in Wonderland*, Mateo saw John Tenniel's original illustrations in his mind's eye, but he needed to get away from them to come up with his own ideas. So the abstract sets and costumes for this production designed by Roger LaVoie will not reflect the traditional illustrations.

For example, the royal courtiers in Wonderland are a pack of cards. Mateo didn't want to conceal dancers beneath sandwich boards, which is how the cards appear in many illustrations. The dancers will wear robes which are not stiff and sometimes stand sideways in line to resemble a pack of cards, "but they can dance," Mateo said.

Celebrating Martin Gardner

Review by Fran Abeles and Stan Isaacs

The "Gathering for Gardner II" was held at the elegant Hyatt Regency Hotel in Atlanta, GA from January 17-21, 1996. This "by invitation only" occasion brought together magicians, mathematicians and puzzlists from around the world (about 100 altogether.) Everyone had some connection with Martin Gardner, arguably the most highly regarded popularizer of mathematics and related endeavors in the world. Lewis Carroll Society members know Gardner as the author of *The Annotated Alice* and *The Annotated Snark*. He was also the former editor of the "Mathematical Games" section of *Scientific American* where between 1960 and 1975 he wrote about recreational mathematics, including many of Carroll's games and puzzles. This spring St. Martin's Press will publish *The Night Is Large*, a book of Gardner's collected essays, including "Lewis Carroll and his *Alice* Books."

Several events in the packed formal program directly or indirectly dealt with Carroll. John Conway, a Princeton University mathematician, spoke about his improvement of Carroll's rule to find the day of the week for any given date (*The Pamphlets of Lewis Carroll*, vol. 2, pp. 280-82.) permitting the calculations to be done faster mentally. Binary Arts Corporation, of Alexandria VA distributed a fascinating moving-piece puzzle of the Cheshire cat, based on the picture of Alice looking at the Cheshire Cat. When the three pieces are arranged one way, she is looking at *five* Cheshire cats; when the top two pieces are exchanged, she is only looking at *four* cats, plus the smile. In his talk about puzzle cards, Jerry Slocum showed rebus cards reminiscent of the rebus letters Carroll wrote to child friends.

Perhaps the most dazzling event, one that Carroll himself would have delighted in, was the after-dinner demonstration by the mathematician Arthur Benjamin of Harvey Mudd College who was able to multiply two five-digit numbers mentally, giving a correct answer ten digits long!

Gardner, now 81, attended the talks, dinners, demonstrations, and magical performances with his wife, Charlotte. He appeared delighted and bemused by all the fuss being made over him.

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I would classify myself as an:

- academic ___
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- hear of new publications ___
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-
-

I am currently involved in a Lewis Carroll related project ___ (elaborate)

I would like to be active in LCSNA projects

- Meeting programs ___
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-

I would attend a LCSNA meeting if:

- there was one in my state ___
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 - the program was great ___ (for instance) _____
-

The *Knight Letter* should have more __, less __, current amount __ of academic content
should have more __, less __, current amount __ of collectible information.

should have more __, less __, current amount __ of member's personal accounts.

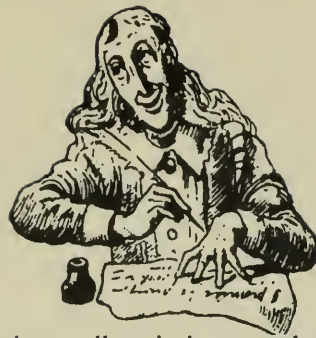
- Other comments _____
-

Name (optional) _____

Please help us in the pleasant struggle to try to understand and please our membership by returning a photocopy of this completed survey to: Joel Birenbaum, 2765 Shellingham Drive, Lisle, IL 60532. Feel free to take up as much space with comments as you like!



From Our Far-flung



Correspondents

Books

A "New Illustrated Edition" of *The Hunting of the Snark* has been produced by Gavin O'Keefe in Australia. Gavin "has done all the illustrations in a style like the best modern fantastic drawing combined with humour, draftsmanship, imagination and a little horror" - Dr. S. Burstein. ISBN: 0-646-26543-1 or write to him at P.O.Box 1272 North Fitzroy, Victoria 3068, Australia.

For Snark hunters, the *Do-It-Yourself Book of Blank Maps* was published by Willow Spring Press, 1992.

The Hunting of the Snark: Second Expedition is a kind of "sequel" to Lewis Carroll's original. Written by Peter Wesley-Smith, with illustrations by Paul Stannish, it can be ordered from Cherry Books, PO Box 258, Camperdown, NSW 2050, Australia. The poem tells of another nonsensical attempt to find a Snark and involves a whole new set of characters and situations.

Articles

"The Hunting of the Snark: the moral status of the embryos, right-to-lifers, and third world women" by Alta R. Charo, *Stanford Law and Policy Review*, 1995, vol. 6, no. 2.

"Alice in Cyberspace" was published in *Colorado Business Magazine*, Aug. 1995, vol. 22, no. 8.

"Conflict in the Classroom: Wonderland Welcomes Alice", *Journal of Legal Studies Education*, vol. 13, no. 2.

A long article on David Del Tredici entitled "A Composer Who Finds Lasting Inspiration in *Alice in Wonderland*" appeared in the Long Island Supplement to the *New York Times* 3/3/96.

Holistic Nursing Practice, vol. 10 no. 1, October 1995, discusses "AIDS and Nursing Care: Toward the Year 2000" and ends with an Epilogue whose theme, "interpretative paradigms for understanding life-threatening illnesses could emerge from childhood readings"

includes an allegorical case study of a mother and her HIV+ son using the two *Alice* books as an example.

Disney's 1992 "Adventures in Wonderland" series, based on the television show, contains the volume *White Rabbits Can't Jump*. On page 30, the White Rabbit addresses O.J. Simpson and utters the fascinating line "Hey, wait a minute! You can't be in two places at once!"

Cyberspace

Those of us who missed the English National Ballet's performances of *Alice*, can relive it virtually at <http://www.enballet.co.uk/ballets/alice/>.

Any "42" collectors would be well advised to visit <http://www.empirenet.com/~dljones/index.html>, devoted to sightings of Our Favorite Number in literature, pop culture, and so on.

Art and Artifacts

Delia's Winter '95 catalog shows a red on black "Wonderland Dress" on its cover. \$48. Write to 435 Hudson St., New York NY 10014 or call 1.800.335.4269.

A full color, hand silk-screened 10" x 5" Cheshire Cat beanbag is available for \$15 from "Cats, Cats & More Cats", Route 17M, P.O.Box 270, Monroe, NY 10950. 914.782.4141.

The Danna Michaels catalog offers two garden sculptures of cast stone featuring the Queen of Hearts (12" x 9") and a Cheshire Cat planter (5" x 12"). They each cost \$49.95. 1.800.944.4384.

"Lewis Carroll Garnet Earrings" whose "looking-glass shape brings this Victorian writer to mind" - \$49 gold plated or \$149 in 14k gold from the Museum of Jewelry catalog. 300 Larkin St., San Francisco, CA 94109. 1.800.835.2700.

Expatriate sculptor Harry Marinsky is creating a series of eight quite lifelike

Alice sculptures which will be exhibited in his home town of Pietrasanta, Italy (4/20-6/16) before finding their permanent home in a specially created garden in the Museum of Outdoor Art in Englewood, Colorado sometime next year.

There is a miniature company (a company that makes miniatures, that is) called Hantel Victorian Miniatures that includes in their product line a selection of Alice figurines "meticulously modeled after Sir John Tenniel's original drawings, of solid pewter and hand-painted" and priced about £15 to £25. Their address is: Bruiach House, Kiltarlity, by Beauly, Iverness-shire, IV4 7HG, Scotland, UK. Telephone 01463 741297, fax 01463 741483.

Audio and Video

Alice in Wonderland: a Dance Fantasy featuring the Prague Chamber Ballet and the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra with Viktor Kalabic conducting his own music is a waste of 27 minutes of videotape. Described as a children's performance "interweaving ballet, mime, acrobatics, and theater", it is in reality a high-school level mishmash of stilted choreography, people running about aimlessly, and music which is third-rate Janáček. Nice costumes, though. V.I.E.W. Video, 34 E.23rd St, New York NY 10010.

Alice of Wonderland in Paris V-419-1 VHS COL 52 min Stories by Ludwig Bemelmans, Crockett Johnson, James Thurber and Eve Titus. Episodic animated film of Alice, who dreams of going to Paris, and François, the mouse, who is conducting a cheese survey. Stories include "Madeline and the Bad Hat" by Ludwig Bemelmans, "Anatole" by Eve Titus and "Many Moons" by James Thurber. Deitch, Gene, 1965.

Boojum! is a musical, first performed at the Adelaide Festival of Arts in 1986 before Her Majesty the Queen, written by Martin Wesley-Smith (book and music) and Peter Wesley-Smith (book

Far-flung, continued from p.11 and lyrics). It is sub-titled "Nonsense, Truth and Lewis Carroll" and is an attempt to explore aspects of Carroll's (or Dodgson's) personality through his ideas and characters. In its present version (as performed in San Diego and Pasadena) it is suitable for choir and soloists, either with staging effects or in a concert version.

For inquiries, contact Martin Wesley-Smith, 22 Ryan Street, Lilyfield, NSW 2040, Australia; tel (61 2) 810 2238; fax (61 2) 230 3747.

To order the double CD of the show, performed by the Sydney Philharmonia Motet Choir, contact Vox Australia, PO Box N690, Grosvenor Place, Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia.

Places and Events

The biggest crowd-pleasers in the Rose Bowl Parade included a "flirtatious Humpty Dumpty" and the float that won the Sweepstakes Trophy for most beautiful commercial entry was "Tea with Friends (*Alice in Wonderland*)" by Florists Transworld Delivery.

The College of Mt. St. Vincent's Library Gallery in Riverdale NY had an exhibition of quilts which "portray the political 'wonderland' of Washington DC by juxtaposing Sir John Tenniel's illustrations of the Lewis Carroll fantasy with images of the President and other D.C. icons." Ran through February 2.

The Boston Harbor Hotel presented "Tea with Alice in Wonderland" on Saturdays from January 13-March 2. "Gentle tidbits of etiquette are combined with a proper tea service" featuring nine costumed characters.

The Showcase Theatre (The Masque Unit, Junior Theater of Marin) performed "Dorothy Meets Alice, or The Wizard of Wonderland" from March 19-22 at in the Marin Center (San Rafael, CA). "Two of literature's most unforgettable young ladies get mixed up together in a magical, musical meeting that produces hilarious results. The fun filled romp follows Alice and Dorothy and their well-known coterie as they attempt to unscramble their stories with the help of a contemporary lad."

Macy's 22nd annual flower show (Herald Square, New York, 3/31-4/13), described as "265,000 square feet of blossoms" displayed "Wonderland in the Windows: a floral fantasy inspired by the famed character illustrations of John Tenniel... As a special enhancement, the music of composer David Del Tredici's opera *Final Alice* fills the springtime air. High above Herald Square, a jolly 25-foot tall Humpty Dumpty celebrates Spring as he teeters atop our Broadway marquee." There were readings, character impersonations, and television coverage (ABC) as well.

The Chicago Children's Theater is performing *Alice in Wonderland: A Musical Circus*. March 26 - April 21 at the Diller Street Theater, 310 Green Bay Rd. Winnetka, IL. The show will reopen May 15-17 at the Skyline Stage, Navy Pier, Chicago, IL (call 312-262-9848 for reservations and information).

The Missoula Children's Theatre is a traveling troupe which will tour over 600 communities this season, integrating their directors and actors with local children. One of their 19 "original musicals" is a production of *Alice in Wonderland*.

We found out about it through a performance in El Paso, Texas, featuring Britany Matthews as Alice. Contact Jim Caron at 200 North Adams St., Missoula MT 59802-4718 or 406.728.1911.

Visitors to Monterey and Carmel, California, might wish to stay at the Jabberwock, a "country inn" whose rooms are named after Jabberwock creatures and contain the *Alice* books where one might expect Gideon Bibles. 598 Laine Street, Monterey CA 93940, Jim and Barbara Allen at 408.372.4777. Not extensively Alician, but a friendly place to stay. \$100-185/night.

The Seattle Children's Theater is performing *Alice in Wonderland*. It opened April 9, and plays through June 9 at the Charlotte Martin Theater.

The Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon, located in Pendleton, Oregon, will include an exhibit on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* when it opens in July, 1996. The interactive exhibit will feature Tenniel's illustrations (colorized) with appropriate quotes for each character, as well as three-dimensional renderings of the Caterpillar and the Cheshire Cat. An Ames distorted room will be a centerpiece, where children can simulate the shrinking and growing that Alice experienced. There will be giant chess pieces that children can move on the checkerboard floor. Alice will be climbing through the looking glass, where children can try their hands at mirror writing. Chess puzzles, line puzzles, optical illusions, and riddles will be offered. A segment will feature the different types of poetry found in the *Alice* books (shaped, acrostic, parody, and nonsense).

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