

Fall 2019

A newsletter from

## Joseph's Jewelry

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By Joseph Mirsky, Gemologist and Proprietor

[www.jewelrynewsletter.com](http://www.jewelrynewsletter.com)

Your Community Jeweler since 1987

### Turing Test Number 2

In 1950, Alan Turing proposed a test to distinguish between a human and computer. An interrogator would try to figure out which was the human and which the computer by written replies to written questions. If the interrogator can't tell which is which, the computer passes the "Turing Test" and the birth bay doors open to deliver an Honorary Anthropoid Life, HAL. (See *Artificial Art* on page 4)

A pair of MIT researchers devised a Minimal Turing Test in 2018 in which 936 people suggested words that would be hardest for a computer to understand. The top ten words were love, please, human, compassion, mercy, empathy, robot, banana, alive, and poop.

A second group of 2405 were given random pairings of the ten words and asked which was from a machine and which from a human. Poop was deemed the essence of humanity and came in first. (Computer poop is called spam.)

Alan Turing was a brilliant mathematician who conceived of the Turing Machine, an abstract computer that used 1's and 0's that was the logical foundation of modern digital computing in 1936. He helped crack the German Enigma cipher machine at Bletchley Park in England during the war.

Turing reported a burglary and revealed that he had a male lover in the house. Homosexuality was a crime in England then, and he was arrested and tried in 1952. Rather than go to prison, he accepted estrogen injections to reduce his libido for a year, during which he grew breasts.

His security clearance was revoked because gay men were considered a security risk, and he was forbidden to leave the country. He committed suicide in 1954 by cyanide. He was 41.

Turing was posthumously pardoned by Queen Elizabeth in 2013 and will be on the 50 pound note in 2021.

### Online Shopping Offline Ordering

When you come into the store looking for something I don't have, I pull out those humongous catalogs to flip through. Those catalogs are from one of my primary suppliers, Quality Gold. You can go on their web

site and see what they have yourself. Google "Quality Gold" and navigate through their various categories. If you see something you want, write down the item number and bring it into the store and I will order it for you. Price will be at least a third off their list price for gold, more for silver. Be sure to check if it says it is in stock.

### Hot Waitress Indicator

Check out your waitress next time you go out to dinner. If she's a looker, better order something less expensive: the hotter the waitress the weaker the economy. (But don't cheap out on the tip — she can't afford to go out to dinner like you.)

Hot waitresses are a leading economic indicator, predicting the future economy. In good times attractive people can easily find higher-paying jobs but in a bad economy they'll be forced to settle for less.

An article in New York Magazine August 2, 2009 quoted a waitress at a New York City club: "They slowly let the boys go, then the less attractive girls, and then these hot girls appeared out of nowhere. All in the hope of bringing in more business. The managers even admitted it."

Guys, after checking out the waitress, you'd better open your drawers' drawer (or your briefcase) and check 'em out after you go home.

In the Fall '16 newsletter, I told you about Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan's favorite economic index, the MUI, Men's Underwear Index. Men hold off replacing their tatty underwear in a recession without anyone except underwear stores knowing since it's worn under. Sales fell 2.3% in 2009 as the Great Recession kicked in.



### Tea for Shoe

Do your stinky feet stink up your shoes? Problem solved! Just put two or three tea bags in each shoe and let them sit for 24 hours in a cool dry place.

Your plantar hyperhidrosis (sweaty feet) is what causes your calceamenta foetidum (stinky shoes). Bacteria in the sweaty moisture causes the odor. Tea bags are very absorbent so they dry out your shoe. But don't forget to take out the tea bags before you put on your shoes, otherwise you'll have stinky tea,

### Royal Dogs

#### King Tries Hot Dog and Asks for More And He Drinks Beer With Them

Later it was ascertained that the king not only came back for more hot-dog sandwiches but that he drank beer with them, the beer being served from a tap manned by experts from near-by Poughkeepsie. — The New York Times June 12, 1939.

The king was George VI of England. He was visiting President Franklin Roosevelt at his Hyde Park, New York home along with his wife, Queen Elizabeth (mother of Queen Elizabeth II). The hot dogs were served at a picnic on June 11. The hot dogs were a first for the royal couple.

The head archivist of the Roosevelt Presidential Library told the New York Times in a June 9, 2009 article that the hot dogs were served on a silver tray but the royal couple ate them off paper plates along with everyone else. The king ate two Swift hot dogs "with gusto" according to historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

The queen was perplexed by this plebeian American food and asked Roosevelt "How do you eat it?" "Very simple. Push it into your mouth and keep pushing it until it is all gone," said Roosevelt. But the queen used a knife and fork, said the Times article citing the book *Roosevelts and the Royals* by Will Swift.



Earrings in 14 karat with rich green tsavorite garnets, .54 carat total, surrounded by rhodolite garnets. Made here. \$750.

## Pay More for Payless

Discount (read cheap stuff cheap) shoe store Payless went hoity-toity for a day, opening a store with a new fake upscale brand, Palessi.

Palessi shoes were, of course, just regular Payless shoes touted as luxury wear made by fake designer Bruno Palessi and priced accordingly.

Payless filed for bankruptcy in April, 2017 and closed 673 stores before it emerged from bankruptcy 4 months later with about 3500 stores in 30 countries.

A Brooklyn advertising company suggested the stunt as an out-of-the-box promotion. A former Giorgio Armani store in an upscale Santa Monica mall with Tiffanys and Louis Vuitton was rented for six days.

An interior designer gave the display the right upscale touch with gold mannequins, a gold lion and giraffe and a large angel carrying shopping bags. Shoes were displayed on glass shelves left in the store.

Fashionistas were recruited for the launch party on October 27, 2018 from the street and social media by telling them they would be paid \$100-250 for feedback on the new store and brand.

Paid interviewers and cameramen asked the shoppers questions dictated by managers in the back room into their earpieces watching the camera feed on monitors.

The customers paid hundreds of dollars for shoes that normally retail for \$20 to \$40. A \$34.99 sneaker was sold for \$645.

The Washington Post reported some of their reactions:

"Palessi is just such high quality, high fashion, taking your shoe game up to the next level," said one man wearing spiked necklaces, holding a knee-high boot. "It looks really well made."

"It's just stunning. Elegant, sophisticated and versatile," said a woman, as she held a pair of floral stiletto heels.

"For me to experience this as an Italian designer is amazing," said another man with an accent.

Then the shoppers were told that the shoes were really from Payless:

"Shut up! Are you serious?!"

"You've got to be kidding me," said the woman with the floral stilettos.

"We wouldn't have ever known. We were really convinced, They had us fooled, like completely."

The shoppers got their money back and were allowed to keep the shoes. Payless used clips from the videos in ads for the holiday season.

But it didn't work. Payless closed 2500 stores in the U.S. and Canada this year and Bruno was carried out feet first.

## Lobster Pot

Lobsters are boiled alive for your dinner. Do they feel pain? No one knows but it sounds like torture to me. A Maine lobster restaurant figured that if the lobsters got high first it would ease their pain.

In an experiment, Roscoe the lobster was put in a covered box with two inches of water and marijuana smoke was pumped in. Roscoe mellowed out. His claw bands were taken off and he was observed for three weeks. He stayed calm and didn't attack the other lobsters, who also seemed calmer.

Roscoe was then released back into the ocean. The restaurant will offer stoned lobsters on request.

Although it would be unlikely you could get stoned from eating a stoned lobster, the restaurant will heat the lobsters to 420 degrees first. THC, the part of pot that gets you high, breaks down at 392 degrees. The restaurant owner has a medical marijuana caregiver license in Maine.

## It's Raining, It's Pouring

It's raining, it's pouring,  
The old man is snoring.  
He got into bed  
And bumped his head  
And couldn't get up in the morning.

"A tinny, distant rendition" of this old nursery rhyme sung by a young child would play at odd times during the night in Ipswich, England, sometimes repeating for hours, waking a woman living with her two children, reported the Ipswich Star September 12, 2018.

After a year of this spooky nocturnal singsong, the woman reported it to the Ipswich Borough Council. The music was finally traced to an industrial warehouse nearby where it was played over a loudspeaker.

It was triggered by motion sensors to deter thieves. It turned out that spiders crawling across the lenses of the motion sensor cameras were the culprits.

Although it was supposed to be heard only on the property, the volume was too high and after it was turned down and the spiders roused, the woman was able to finally get some sleep.

The itsy-bitsy spider  
Crawled up the burglar scout  
Down came the song  
And freaked the woman out.

## Deep Thought

*If stupidity got us into this mess,  
then why can't it get us out?*

— Will Rogers

## Straighten Up and Fry Wrong

A Maine hot dog restaurant reported receiving threats of violence after changing their french fries from their traditional crinkle-cut to straight.

Bolley's Famous Franks in Waterville, Maine opened in 1962, closed in 2014 and then reopened with new owners in 2017.

In June, 2018 the restaurant made the change. The crinkle-cut fries require special blades, which "are ridiculously pricey and flimsy," said the owner on Facebook. It cost \$2,000 a year for the blades, which had to be changed once a month.

"We have encountered some pretty disturbing and hostile customers apparently very unhappy with our straight cut french fry," Bolley's posted on Facebook. One man angry about the fries threatened to hit the owner when he was asked to leave the restaurant for being disorderly.

The Facebook post went viral with articles about the fries in papers as far away as Florida. The restaurant got calls from a newspaper in China wanting to try their fries and calls from the Rachel Ray show and the Today show, which posted an article about it on the show web site.

One person wrote a post saying he tried the new fries and they were "way too thin" and he hasn't been back since then. Another said she likes both and another woman said she liked the straight ones better.

But all the publicity has been good for business, with the curious coming in to check out the fries.

## From Your Mouth to Big Brother's Ear

Feeling feverish? Now you can take your temperature with a new smart thermometer. A digital screen will tell you how bad your fever is and then upload it to the Internet (anonymously, of course — for now).

The Kinsa smart thermometer made a deal with Clorox to get the zip codes of the feverish and in flu season when there's a cluster of burning foreheads to direct ads for things like sanitary wipes to those areas,

Big Sister will take care of you, too. If Alexa detects sniffing or coughing when you talk to her, she will give you a recipe for chicken soup or let you order cough drops with one hour delivery.



Ring in 18 karat white gold with rubies, .37 carat total and diamonds, .16 carat total. \$675.

## Jumping the Shark

On July 3, 1799 the American brig Nancy left Baltimore for Curaçao in the Lesser Antilles just north of Venezuela with a cargo of dry goods, lumber, and provisions. Her captain was Thomas Briggs.

She was forced by a storm to land at Aruba, a Dutch colony open to all ships when the British Navy forbade American ships in the French Caribbean as part of a blockade against Napoleon.

Briggs went to Curaçao, 50 miles away, in a sailing barge and returned with an agent of the German-American trading company that owned the Nancy and the ship headed back to Curaçao, then to Port-au-Prince, Haiti to pick up coffee for the return trip.

In another storm her main topmast was lost and she was forced to head for Île-à-Vache, a small island off the south coast of Haiti for repairs. But on August 28, 1799 Nancy was captured by HMS Sparrow. Briggs produced papers showing she was a British ship, but her construction looked American. The Nancy was sealed and her papers collected. She was then taken to Port Royal, Jamaica along with a captured Spanish ship.

The Court of Vice-Admiralty at Kingston brought a suit for salvage on behalf of the captain of the Sparrow, Hugh Whyllie, on September 9 and Briggs and the company agent filed a claim for dismissal with costs on September 14 on the grounds that there was no evidence of smuggling.

Sparrow had been cruising with another ship, Ferret. They separated for a few days and rejoined off Jacmel, on the southern peninsula of Haiti at dawn on August 30. The captain of Ferret, Michael Fitton, signaled Whyllie on Sparrow to join him for breakfast.

While waiting for Whyllie, Fitton noticed a floating dead bullock being attacked by sharks. The bullock was taken under tow and the sharks followed. He determined to catch an especially large one in the pack to make a walking stick of its backbone. He baited a hook with beef, then pork and was able to reel in the shark.

When the shark was cut open a bundle of papers tied with string was found. They were the real papers of the Nancy, thrown overboard when she was captured by Sparrow.

When Whyllie came aboard for breakfast, "During their conversation he learned of Whyllie's good fortune in capturing the 'Nancy' a few days earlier. Stunned, Fitton exclaimed, 'But I think I have her papers!' Whyllie, in shock himself, retorted, 'That's impossible, I have them. I sealed the ship myself.' Fitton simply stood up and gestured for Whyllie to follow him to the shark," according to Pieces of the Past from the Jamaica Gleaner February 10, 2003.

On September 14, Fitton appeared in court with the papers and gave a deposition attesting to how they were found. Shortly before, on the same day, both Briggs and the company agent had committed perjury by swearing that no papers were destroyed or thrown overboard.

Other incriminating papers were found later on the Nancy concealed in the captain's cabin "So hard drove in that it was with difficulty they could be taken out' and in a cask of salt pork," according to Journal of the Institute of Jamaica, November, 1891 quoting "official documents of undoubted trustworthiness" at the Institute. The Nancy was then declared a lawful prize on November 25.

Fitton had the shark jaws set up on shore with the inscription "Lieut. Fitton recommends these jaws for a collar for neutrals to swear through."

The "Shark Papers" were kept by the Vice-Admiralty Court Archives until 1890, when they were put on display at the Institute of Jamaica along with Lieutenant Fitton's affidavit and the shark jaws.

## Roach Revenge

I reported to you in the Fall '13 newsletter about Animal Planet adding cockroaches to its live-streaming animal cams. (Sponsored by Orkin exterminators.)

Now you can have your own cockroach cam. The El Paso Zoo will name a cockroach after your ex and feed it to meerkats. You can watch it live on Valentine's Day.

I also reported in the article that cockroaches beat Congress 45-43 in a favorability poll by Public Policy Polling. Congress then had a 9% favorability rating. In 2018 it sank to 6%. Maybe congress should be fed cockroaches.

**Quit Bugging Me !!!**

EL PASO ZOO

**Name a cockroach after your Ex!**

Names will be displayed on our meerkat exhibit and on our social media starting Feb. 11th!  
Watch live Feb. 14th at 2:15pm on Facebook or our meerkat webcam to see our meerkat mob crunch down on these little bugs!

## A Musical Note

When the talking heads show you're listening to on the radio starts to sound like yadda yadda yadda and you don't want to listen to the sound of silence, google up some classical guitar.

Searching for YouTube followed by Tatyana Rhyzkova, Ana Vidovic, John Feeley, Andre Segovia, Julian Bream, Liona Boyd, Sharon Isbin, John Williams, and Christopher Parkening will get you off to a good start. Or rev up with a little flamenco from Manitas de Plata (Little Hands of Silver) who died in 2014 at 93.

The Chaconne from Bach's Partita No. 2, Recardos de la Alhambra, Asturias, Capricho Arabe, Lagrima, Sheep May Safely Graze, Air on the G String, Bach Lute Suite No. 2, Berceuse from the Dolly Suite, Cavatina from the Deer Hunter...and on and on. Enjoy.

## Dessert With Mayo

An artisanal ice cream shop in Falkirk, Scotland has come up with a new ice cream flavor: mayonnaise. The shop's owner said the novel dish made with Hellman's mayonnaise has a "full on hit of fat and cream followed with an eggy milky aftertaste...yum!"

Actually, it was more like yuck! Twitter lit up with with pro and gross out tweets about it, mostly the latter. "I'm going to report this page for hate content. How dare you desecrate the honor of ice cream with this monstrosity?! Ew! No! \*recoils in horror,\*" tweeted one person. "I like Mayo and I like Ice Cream so why not?," was one of the few likes.

The most common origin story about mayonnaise is that the Duke de Richelieu's chef invented it in 1756 when he couldn't find cream to make sauce on the Mediterranean island of Minorca during the Duke's siege of Port Mahon in the Seven Years' war. It was then dubbed mahonnaise.

## Made in China

Like everything else, those boxes I put the elegant jewelry you buy in so you can give your loved one an elegantly displayed present are made in China.

I just ordered more and was charged a 10% tariff on top of my cost, an extra \$30. No, I'm not going to raise prices; it's not that big a deal — yet.

Guess who pays for tariffs. We do.



Leverback earrings in 14 karat white gold with bead-set diamonds, .30 carat total. \$650,

8/14/19 8/14/18 8/14/17

<b>Gold</b>	<b>1513</b>	<b>1197</b>	<b>1282</b>
<b>Silver</b>	<b>17.12</b>	<b>15.04</b>	<b>16.97</b>
<b>Platinum</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>968</b>

**You can get live precious metals prices on the web site.**

**Joseph's buys old gold for cash**

### Rustling Match

In October, 2018 during a concert in Malmo, Sweden of Mahler's Symphony No. 5, a woman in the second balcony decided to chew gum. The rustling of the bag of gum during a quiet part of the symphony enraged a man sitting next to her and he grabbed the bag of gum and threw it to the floor.

The woman sat quietly through the rest of the symphony but the moment the music stopped the woman turned toward the man and said something then slapped him on the face hard enough to knock off his glasses. The man then started fighting back and the woman's companion, an older man, grabbed him by the shirt and began throwing punches at him. The brawl ended when audience members were able to calm them down.

This was mild compared to what happened during a Stravinsky concert in Paris in 1913. Below is an excerpt from my book *Now and Then Again, The Way We were and the Way We Are* about fuddy-duddy freakouts to pop music titled *All Shook Up*.

"Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* debuted in Paris on May 29, 1913. The boos started with the opening bars of a bassoon solo so unnaturally high in pitch the instrument was unrecognizable. When the curtain rose on dancers in pagan costume stomping rather than dancing there was laughter which escalated into an uproar that drowned out the music. 'As a riot ensued, two factions in the audience attacked each other, then the orchestra, which kept playing under a hail of vegetables and other objects. Forty people were forcibly ejected,' according to a contemporary account by *The Guardian* (London)."

But there are rustle free bags.

"Ah Science! Now Come Noiseless Popcorn Bags. At last it's possible for us to attend the movies without listening to the crackle of paper sacks," headlined *The Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky) June 11, 1949.

The inventor of the noiseless bag, a San Francisco theater manager, said it's "a 'hushed' model of specially processed, laminated cellophane. It's the lamination that cuts out the crackle," reported *The Billboard* September 6, 1947.

### Papers, Please

A couple from New Mexico applied for a marriage license in Washington, D.C. A clerk refused to accept the groom's driver's license as identification, asking the foreigner for his "New Mexico passport."

Better get a U.K. Passport if you're from New Jersey, New Hampshire, or New York. If you're from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, or Maine, don't say you're from New England.

If you're from New London, New Bristol or New Bedford it's a New England double whammy.

HOURS	
<b>MON - WED</b>	<b>10 - 6</b>
<b>THU - FRI</b>	<b>10 - 8</b>
<b>SAT</b>	<b>10 - 6</b>
<b>SUN</b>	<b>Closed</b>

### Pressure Tactics

Some people try to change their watch batteries themselves. They pry off the case back and if they're lucky it's just take out and slip in without loosening screws on the battery clamp. Then just press the back on and you'll start aging again.

Then they come in to the store. No amount of thumb pressure will close it. Even their pet gorilla can't do it. That's because you need a case press to close it — the secret is leverage. Mighty Joe Old has one and will do it for you at no charge.

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### Artificial Art

On October 25, 2018 Christie's auctioned a "painting" done by a computer. The blurry portrait that vaguely resembles an old painting was ink jet printed on canvas. The initial auction estimate was \$7,000-\$10,000, but it sold for \$432,500 including a buyers fee of \$82,500.

The painting is titled *Edmond de Belamy*, from *La Famille de Belamy*, a fictional name based on *bel ami*, a rough French translation of *Goodfellow*, the last name of the developer of the underlying software, *Generative Adversarial Network, GAN*.

A Paris art collective named *Obvious* used the GAN algorithm to make the painting. 15,000 portraits from WikiArt from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century were used teach one part of the algorithm, the generator, the characteristics of portraits — two eyes, ears, mouth, nose, etc. This took two days.

The generator then created new images that were run by the discriminator part of the algorithm. The discriminator's job is to guess which images are the real portraits and which are from the generator. The generator learns from each failure and when it passes its solipsistic Turing test, it is declared an artist and the portrait is hung on the wall. (See Turing Test Number 2 on first page.)

I guess fuzziness wasn't wasn't considered an indication of artificial stupidity by the discriminator.

The portrait is signed with the GAN algorithm formula. D stands for discriminator and G for generator.



$$\min_G \max_D \mathbb{E}_x [\log(D(x))] + \mathbb{E}_y [\log(1 - D(G(y)))]$$

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