

Jewelry Box

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Holiday 2017

A newsletter from

Joseph's Jewelry

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By Joseph Mirsky, Gemologist and Proprietor

www.jewelrynewsletter.com

Your community Jeweler since 1987

And a Silver Sixpence in Her Shoe

Something old,
 something new,
 something borrowed,
 something blue,
 and a silver sixpence in her shoe.

I'm sure you know about the old, new, borrowed, and blue — can't get married without them. But I'll bet you didn't walk with the silver sixpence.

This is the original version of that old English poem. References to it in the 1870's call it ancient. The most ancient it could be would be 1551, when the first silver sixpence was minted in the reign of Edward VI.

"A silver sixpence in the bride's shoe is a traditional good luck wedding gesture and customarily, it is the father of the bride who places the sixpence as a symbol of him wishing her prosperity, love and happiness in her marriage", according to the Royal Mint.

The something old and something blue (usually a garter that the groom removes on the wedding night) are supposed to ward off the Evil Eye which can make a woman barren, and the something borrowed should be underwear of a woman who has borne children. Something new symbolizes hope for the future.

Sixpences were pure silver from 1551 to 1816, sterling silver (92.5%) until 1920, 50% silver from 1920 to 1946, and base metal from 1947 until they were discontinued in 1970.

1551 silver sixpence \$488, 1920, \$17.95 online.



1551 silver sixpence

Football Faux Pas

Montpellier, France ordered shirts for its soccer team, which came in misspelled "Montpelier", one l short. Problem solved! They gifted them to Montpellier, the one l short capital of Vermont.

Ring Around the Collar

In 1968, Wisk detergent debuted its "Ring Around the Collar" commercial in which no amount of scrubbing by a housewife could remove the stain inside her husband's shirt. A chorus of "ring around the collar, ring around the collar" by unseen children harangues her in the background until she pours Wisk on it, which makes it disappear. In one version of the commercial, a pet parrot squawks the "ring around the collar," and in another, the suitcase she is packing for her husband flies open and the folded shirt inside screams it.

The commercial ran for 30 years, but there was a backlash of women denouncing it as sexist. One woman quoted in the *The Free-Lance Star* (Fredericksburg, Virginia) August 28, 1996 said the ad was sexist because "the man's dirty shirt collar was the woman's fault," and another woman said it made her so mad "I would talk back to the TV saying 'Lady, tell your husband to wash his neck.'"

The actress who starred in the commercial, Sally Ardrey, told *The New York Times* in January, 2010, "The whole thing is so sexist. The woman is packing his suitcase!"

Evidently she didn't share in the success of Wisk. Retired and then 71 she was forced out of her rent-stabilized Manhattan apartment in 2009 to make way for the Second Avenue Subway and is having a hard time making ends meet.

The MTA reneged on a \$65,000 offer to help her afford a more expensive non rent-stabilized apartment it found for her when she moved to an apartment with lower rent than her original one.

To this day my wife will not buy Wisk because of those sexist "Ring Around the Collar" commercials.

Actually, the ring around the collar problem was solved in 1827 when a housewife in Troy, New York cut off the collar of her husband's shirt, washed it, then sewed two pieces of white tape to it so it could be tied back on to the shirt, a detachable collar. This morphed into a whole detachable collar industry, with button-on collars that lasted into the 1930's.

For more on this topic, there is an article in my book, *Now and Then Again* titled, of course, "Ring Around the Collar".

If I Can Do It It's Not Art

That's what then Mayor Rudolf Giuliani said about a 1999 display of a composition of a cow's head, flies, maggots, sugar and water and a split pig carcass floating in formaldehyde in the Brooklyn Museum. (See the Fall '07 newsletter.)

In May, 2016 a teenager did some not art. He put his glasses on the floor of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Soon people gathered to eyeball the glasses, thinking it was a modern art installation. The teen tweeted this and it soon became a spectacle on the Internet.



The Bosom of Time

On The fashionable Mode of Ladies wearing their Watches in their Bosoms.

Amongst our fashionable belles
 No wonder now that *Time* should linger;
 Allow'd to lay his two-rude hands
 Where no one else dare place his finger.
 — The Guardian of Liberty, Newport, Rhode Island November 1, 1800



No battery Seiko solar watch with blue nylon strap. Works with ambient light. 10 month power reserve. 100 meter water resistant. Glow in the dark hands and markers. \$146.25. Also in khaki, \$153.75.

What's Good for the Goose is not Good for the Gander

"Elias Hartz is receiving considerable attention from various parts of the country, because his goose bone mild weather prediction was followed by snow and 8 inch ice. Mr. Hartz said the former predictions were made from gander bones. Charles Bitler, of Robeson, has now brought him a breast bone of a goose, this time, which shows a purple mark in the centre, which the gander bone did not have. The purple coloring indicates cold weather, and Mr. Hartz says that this goose bone exactly indicates the present cold season and that the best prophecies are always based on goose bones and not gander bones."

— The Reading Eagle, January 3, 1900

The 1980 Old Farmer's Almanac says that around Thanksgiving a goose would be cooked and eaten and the breastbone removed and put on a shelf to dry. The bone would then be watched for changes in color. "White indicated a mild winter. Purple tips were a sure sign of a cold spring. A blue color branching out toward the edge of the bone, meant open weather until New Year's Day. If the bone was a dark color, or blue all over, the prediction was for a real bad winter."

So you'd better take a gander at your geese to see which are geese and which are ganders. The gander has a thinner and longer neck. The goose's butt hangs lower than the gander's. The gander will always stand between you and his mate and will get aggressive if he feels you threaten her with fowl play.



Ring in 14 karat white gold with sapphire and diamonds. .30 carat total estimated. Fine quality estate piece. \$850.

How Now Brown Cow?

An April, 2017 online survey of 1000 adults found that 7% thought that chocolate milk comes from brown cows. 48% weren't sure where chocolate milk comes from. Even assuming a number of jokesters, that's amazing "agricultural illiteracy."

The survey was commissioned by The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy "a forum that leverages the collective power of the dairy community to address the changing needs and expectations of consumers through a framework of shared best practices and accountability."

In a 1990's study by the Department of Agriculture, 20% of adults didn't know hamburgers are made from beef.

But brown eggs come from reddish-brown-feathered hens with red earlobes, and white eggs from white chickens with white earlobes. I must confess that in my agricultural illiteracy I didn't even know that chickens had earlobes.

Big Bucks

Remember those old pictures of people with wheelbarrows full of money in 1920's Germany? It was so bad the Weimar Republic had to print money in denominations as large as 50 billion marks; in 1923 a loaf of bread cost 200 billion marks. But that was chump change.

Zimbabwe's money was so worthless that a loaf of bread cost 1.6 trillion Zimbabwe dollars in 2008 and a 100 trillion dollar bill was printed. Inflation hit 79.6 billion percent in November 2008 and it took 3 of those bills to buy a U.S. dollar.

In 2015, Zimbabwe officially phased out its dollar, trading them in at 35 quadrillion for one U.S. dollar, which, along with other foreign currencies, had been in use since 2009. Inflation has since disappeared with prices rising 0.3% in 2013 and declining by 0.8% in 2014.

The largest bill ever printed in the U.S. Is the \$100,000 with Woodrow Wilson on the front. It's a gold certificate and only 42,000 of them were printed in 3 weeks from December 18, 1934 to January 9, 1935. But it was only used for transactions between Federal Reserve banks and was backed up by Treasury gold. It was used into the 1960's when wire transfers became common.

Most of them were destroyed by the government with only a few specimens remaining, on display at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Smithsonian Institution, and Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond.

Forgeries are common, and all were accounted for, but even if you could come up with real one, it's illegal to have it.

Today, a Zimbabwe 100 trillion dollar note will cost you \$45.95 U.S. dollars in circulated condition and \$59.95 uncirculated on eBay.

The record for hyperinflation was set by Hungary in 1946 at 41.9 quadrillion percent.



Poverty Appropriation

That's what Scottish comedian Brian "Limmy" Limond tweeted about Golden Goose "Distressed Superstar sneakers." The sneakers feature dirt, scuffs, torn laces and faux duct tape patches and are sold at Barneys for \$585.

The sneakers created a twitter storm and critical articles in the media, saying that the overrich twits who buy them think its cool to look poor.

The sneaker has "retro silhouettes and signature distressing techniques to create effortlessly cool sneakers," according to Barneys. "The duct-tape reinforcements pay homage to the West Coast's skater culture — professional skaters..." who repair their shoes with it, said Golden Goose, the Italian manufacturer which sells to high-end stores.



Pendant in 14 karat white gold with colorful opal and diamonds, .06 carat total. \$450.

It Came From Outer Space

Sir Robert Ball (1840-1913), eminent Victorian astronomer and Royal Astronomer of Ireland, tells a story of a meteorite that landed on a farm in the United States in 1897. The landlord claimed the meteorite since he had mineral rights under the lease. The tenant countered that it was his since it wasn't on the ground when he leased the land.

An article in Scientific American November 20, 1897 goes on:

"The landlord then claimed it as flying game, but the lessee pleaded that the thing had neither feathers nor wings, and claimed it as ground game. But while the dispute was going on the customs officers seized the meteorite, on the ground that the revenue had been defrauded by its introduction into the country without payment of duty!"

Actually, it came from inner space. Sir Robert believed that meteorites were ejected from volcanoes on earth into orbit in past ages (the earth was thought to be 20 million years old). Volcanoes were much higher at the time and the atmosphere lower, so the escape velocity of a volcanic meteorite was much less than it is now.

May Force be With You

Jim Dumps was a most unfriendly man,
Who lived his life on the hermit plan;
In his gloomy way he'd gone through life,
And made the most of woe and strife;
Till Force one day was served to him
Since then they've called him "Sunny Jim."

This 1902 jingle along with drawings of Sunny Jim kicked off an advertising campaign for Force Cereal, with Sunny Jim appearing on trolley cars, in newspapers, magazines, and billboards.

Sunny Jim went viral, with hundreds more jingles written and thousands sent in by fans. In December, 1902, Printers' Ink, an advertising industry trade journal, reported with astonishment on a sign featuring Sunny Jim, at 15,416 square feet the largest ever painted. The sign covered two 11 story buildings at the corner of Broadway and Spring Street. Sunny Jim is 115 feet six inches tall, his legs 60 feet, his nose 10 feet, his hat 17 feet six inches, and even his buttons are a gargantuan 3 feet nine inches. His dog is 42 feet six inches. "Vigor, Vim, Perfect Trim, 'Force' made him 'Sunny Jim,'" was the jingle at the bottom of the sign.

"No current novel or play is so universally popular. He is as well-known as President Roosevelt or J. Pierpont Morgan," said Printers' Ink about Sunny Jim September 17, 1902. "Sunny Jim took on a life of his own, as songs, musical comedies, and vaudeville skits were written about him," said The Advertising Age Encyclopedia of Advertising.

To give an idea of how well-known was Sunny Jim, the cereal box image is from a 2011 auction of Sunny Jim memorabilia from Hakes's Americana and Collectibles. Also offered in the lot were sheet music "*Sunny Jim Characteristic March and Two Step* for piano by composer Floyd St.Clair (1871-1942) with Sunny Jim and his dog on the cover from 1902, a 24 page booklet titled *The Story of Sunny Jim*, a larger 36 page booklet from 1910 *Through Foreign Lands With Sunny Jim* "with wonderful illustrations by Wizard of Oz artist W.W. Denslow," a postcard with Sunny Jim leaping over a fence with children looking on with a poem "Children Cry Oh Look At Him! Such Vigor Proves He's Sunny Jim," and a button with Sunny Jim running on it. During the Depression, there was a brass Sunny Jim advertising token telling people to cheer up with Sunny Jim, right.

Minnie Maud Hanff (1880-1942) wrote the Sunny Jim jingles after her work was seen in street car ads. "I wrote the first dozen jingles in less than two hours," she told Printers' Ink in the September, 1902 article. She was referred to 16 year old Dorothy Ficken who drew the Sunny Jim Illustrations. Dorothy Ficken (1886-1978) was the mother of actor Fred Gwynne (1926-1993), Herman Munster in *The Munsters* TV series

The Printers' Ink article says that all the knowledgeable advertising people initially pooh-pooed the Sunny Jim ads as poor copy: "the Force folks had finally got started on the road to the demnition bow-wows" (a phrase from Dickens' Nicholas Nickleby meaning damned to go to the dogs), but grudgingly acknowledged that Jim was different and with the introduction of "his wife, his little daughter and his big one, his young son, his mother-in-law and the rest," he was interesting. And "no matter how heartily you disapproved of him, you knew 'Jim Dumps' on sight and knew what he advertised." Hanff said that "Every breakfast food ad that I had ever seen described the food as though it were a medicine." She said she wanted to "put in a little human interest and imagination. Goodness gracious! a breakfast cereal isn't all life, is it?"

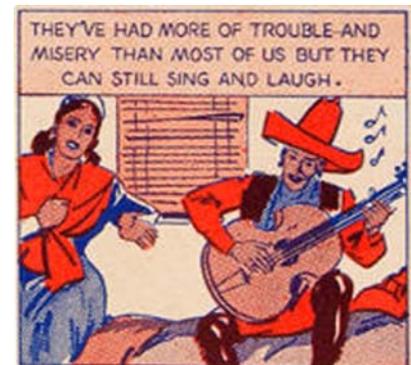
Force cereal was sold in the United States until 1983 and was popular in England until it was discontinued in 2013. The English box had Sunny Jim vaulting over a fence with the jingle "High o'er the fence leaps Sunny Jim, Force is the food that raises him."

On the back of the auctioned Force cereal box was a 12 panel cartoon that is eerily resonate today titled *Bobby Benson's Adventures, Mexicans are Real Folks*. Bobby Benson and the H-Bar-O Rangers was a hit children's 15 minute radio show from 1932-1936 sponsored by then Force Cereal manufacturer Heckers H-O. In the show, 12 year old Bobby Benson inherited his father's ranch. His guardian was the ranch foreman, Tex Mason. In the cartoon Tex tells Bobby that Mexicans are good people: "They're mighty fine people and not that different from us when you get to know them."*

* I was surprised Heckers put politics on a cereal box. Here's the context, from the Library of Congress, classroom materials for teachers:

The Great Depression of the 1930's hit Mexican immigrants especially hard. Along with the job crisis and food shortages that affected all U.S. workers, Mexicans and Mexican Americans had to face an additional threat: deportation.

As unemployment swept the U.S., hostility to immigrant workers grew, and the government began a program of repatriating immigrants to Mexico. Immigrants were offered free train rides to Mexico, and some went voluntarily, but many were either tricked or coerced into repatriation, and some U.S. citizens were deported simply on suspicion of being Mexican.



11/3/17 11/4/16 11/4/15

Gold	1267	1303	1115
Silver	17.09	18.30	15.26
Platinum	931	1003	971

**You can get live precious metals prices on the web site.
Joseph's buys old gold for cash**



Potty Joke

A Canadian plumber in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario had this design painted on the truck of his new business. He was just expecting some local buzz, but got caught with his pants down when photos of him in the truck went viral and his phone started ringing off the hook. The picture even got a good yuk on The Today Show August 25, 2016.

Deep Thought

Idealism is the contemplation of marriage. Realism is being married

— Adapted from The Boston Transcript 1909.

Note: the full 12 panel cartoon of *Bobby Benson's Adventures, Mexicans are Real Folks* in color is on an extra page of this PDF of the newsletter. Scroll down

Porcus Inter Pares

Winston Churchill was quite the animal lover. Chartwell, his estate, was liberally stocked with poultry, swans, pigs, sheep, cattle, goldfish, and even had a butterfly house. He had a pet poodle, Rufus, and was especially fond of his marmalade cat, Jock.

He resisted artificial insemination, saying "My beasts will not be deprived." He couldn't bear to slaughter his livestock, believing that he couldn't do that to an animal after wishing it good morning. When his wife Clementine served a goose for dinner, he handed her the knife saying "You carve him Clemmie, he was a friend of mine."

Pinched for funds in 1926, he sold off some of his livestock but couldn't part with his pedigreed Middle White pigs saying "I am very fond of pigs. Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals," according to The Telegraph January 27, 2015.

★ **Holiday Hours** ★

Mon. - Fri. Dec. 17 - 23 from 10-8
Sun. Dec. 24 from 12-4

HOURS	
MON - WED	10 - 6
THU - FRI	10 - 8
SAT	10 - 6
SUN	Closed

My Unlucky Day

I don't usually buy Powerball lottery tickets. The odds are too high and I don't need that kind of money. A million or two would do just fine. But when the jackpot went over \$700 million my wife insisted I be in the game, so I bought a ticket.

The morning of the drawing, August 23, 2017, while taking the dog out for a postprandial poop, I found two four leaf clovers. Riches on the way!!

Of course I lost to a woman in Massachusetts who claimed the largest grand prize won by a lottery ticket in U.S. History. I didn't even have a single number.

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The explanation: the odds of winning the lottery are 1 in 292,201,338. The odds of finding a four leaf clover are 1 in 10,000.

Now I can't even head up to Chicopee to buy a ticket on that same lucky machine. The 20 year old machine was retired by the Massachusetts State Lottery.

Oh well. As my dog would say, "s**t happens."

Herod Clause

To read or not to read, that is the question. All the terms and conditions for Paypal total 36,275 words, longer than Hamlet (30,066). That's 3 hours of reading. Apple iTunes weighs in at 19,972 and Facebook 11,195. Twitter is fittingly just a short story with 4445 (this newsletter is 3552 words). You ain't gonna read all that fine print and if you don't click the "Agree" button you ain't gonna get what you want, so you "agree".

The Cyber Security Research Institute of University College London did an experiment in 2014 setting up a portable Wi-Fi hotspot in some of the busiest areas of London to demonstrate how insecure public Wi-Fi was, with emails and passwords easily harvested.

Within a half hour 250 devices connected to it. For a short time, to get free Wi-Fi, people had to agree to terms and conditions that included a "Herod clause" that they "agreed to assign their first born child to us for the duration of eternity." After six people agreed to sacrifice their children, it was taken down.

The security firm that sponsored the experiment said "We have yet to enforce our rights under the terms and conditions but, as this is an experiment, we will be returning the children to their parents."

The terms and conditions of this newsletter are that since you get it for free, you agree to come to the store and buy something.

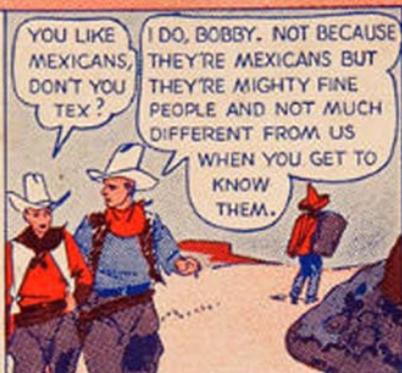


Ring in 14 karat white gold with rubies, .42 carat total and diamonds, .18 carat total. \$1100.

[The book of the Newsletters](#)

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BOBBY BENSON'S ADVENTURES *Mexicans are Real Folks*



MEXICO CITY, THE CAPITOL, IS ONE OF THE NICEST CITIES IN THE WORLD. EXCEPT FOR THE LANGUAGE YOU MIGHT BE IN NEW YORK OR CHICAGO OR EVEN PARIS.



ONE OF THE GREATEST ARTISTS IN THE WORLD IS A MEXICAN. HIS NAME IS DIEGO RIVERA AND HIS MURALS ARE WORLD FAMOUS.



THEY'RE GOOD SPORTS, TOO, AND THE UNIVERSITY IN MEXICO CITY HAS A REAL FOOTBALL TEAM WITH A FINE RECORD.



EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE A STRANGER, THEY'LL SHARE THEIR FOOD WITH YOU AND WON'T ACCEPT ANY MONEY!



THEY'RE BRAVE, TOO, AND IF YOU USE ONE AS A HUNTING GUIDE HE'LL RISK HIS LIFE TO KEEP YOU OUT OF DANGER.



THEY'VE HAD MORE OF TROUBLE AND MISERY THAN MOST OF US BUT THEY CAN STILL SING AND LAUGH.



ANYONE WHO HAS EVER LIVED ON THE BORDER WILL TELL YOU THEY'VE NEVER HEARD OF A MEXICAN HARMING AN AMERICAN WOMAN OR A CHILD.



I RECKON TODAY THERE ARE MORE BANDITS IN ANY BIG AMERICAN CITY THAN IN ALL MEXICO.



JUST REMEMBER ONE THING, BOBBY. JUST BECAUSE A MAN WEARS A BIG MUSTACHE AND HAS A DARK COMPLEXION, IT DOESN'T MEAN HE'S A BAD MAN! EVEN SANTA CLAUS HAS WHISKERS!

