

Holiday 2019

A newsletter from

Joseph's Jewelry

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By Joseph Mirsky, Gemologist and Proprietor

www.jewelrynewsletter.com

Your Community Jeweler for 32 years

To Boothia and Back in Time for Dinner

The Mechanics' Magazine (London) April 17, 1868 tells of an article in an American newspaper of life a hundred years in the future: "A lady is entertaining a few friends just before dinner, and she tells them they will not have long to wait—her husband has gone to pay a visit in the neighbourhood of 'Boothia' and she expects him in New York on his return from the North Pole every minute!!!" (The Boothia Peninsula is the northernmost point of mainland Canada.)

The Mechanics' article goes on to say that you can't fly to Boothia and back in time for dinner because people have been trying to imitate the way birds fly. Ships don't propel themselves the way fishes do and locomotives don't go by walking.*

The solution is to fly like a bullet: "we would propose that the condensed air should be manufactured in the aerial locomotive and be judiciously expelled from it with great force and in a constant stream flowing toward a point or line." In other words, like a jet engine. Once someone figures out how to do it, "we should probably find ourselves traversing the winds with the same facility and with greater rapidity than we now do the waves."

**Although it is true there is to be a steam man...But he is only talked of, and has not yet given any signs of life. And besides we must remember this is an American story." (next page)

The It Girl

Vandals defaced a sign in The Scottish Maritime Museum twice in four months, scratching out "she" and "her" on a sign in North Ayrshire about the iron-hulled steamship Rifle, built in the 1860's and recently raised after being sunk in 1939.

Rifle was used to carry goods on Loch Arkaig. The ship was being broken up when it sank. During World War II it was blasted or towed into deeper waters since it was blocking a pier and was missing her bow when raised.

The Museum then changed the wording on its signs from "she" and "her" to "it" and "its." The museum director said the signs were expensive and as a small charity couldn't afford to replace them

without siphoning funds from other uses. The museum said the gender change was started before the vandalism. A former head of the Royal Navy said it was "political correctness gone mad".

Lloyd's List, which has been the journal of shipping news since 1734, started neutering ships in 2002. The editor said it was done because "it was time to catch up with the rest of the world."

Ships have been female since at least 1375. This gender heresy could escalate to the mother of all battles of the sexes and father a new generation of misogynists.

(Clara Bow starred in the excellent 1927 silent movie "It." "It" was a hit and Clara Bow then became known as the "It Girl.")

By the way, manholes in Berkeley, California are now "maintenance holes."

Ovation for Chef Alexa

A 2018 poll in the U.K. asked 1000 people what they asked their voice assistants. 20% of people with voice assistants asked them how long to boil an egg.

Almost half of them said they got strange answers to questions because their voice assistants didn't understand their regional dialects: "Ah dinnae ken what yer sayin' hen." 70% of the hens were Alexas.

40% were worried that their voice assistants would start talking to each other in a language they didn't understand and 80% were worried that their conversations would be secretly recorded.

Try asking Alexa how to make Guy Kibbee eggs. In the 1935 movie Mary Jane's Pa, actor Guy Kibbee (1882-1956) tore a hole in the center of a slice of bread, put it in a pan, cracked an egg into the hole and fried it over easy. You can watch it on YouTube: google Guy Kibbee egg.

What the Heck?

A multiplex theater in Dickson, Tennessee changed the signs for the new 2019 supernatural superhero film *Hellboy* to *Heckboy*.

The theater manager explained that it does not use "profanity" on signs since "We are located next to an elementary school and across from a church," she said.

We might have not won World War II if Audie Murphy had gone To Heck and Back. What the hell were you thinking?

Purple Cow She's Real

If in your roaming to and fro.

You see a purple cow,
You've really seen her, so don't fret;
We've prohibition now.

— Tennyson J. Daft Ortonville Independent (Minnesota) April 21, 1920.

Tennyson J. Daft was the pen name of Thomas P. Morgan (1864-1928), who wrote short stories and humorous pieces for all the leading magazines of his era. He was also friends with Will Rogers.

The purple cow reference is to the 1895 nonsense poem by Gelett Burgess (1866-1951) of that title:

I never saw a Purple Cow,
I never hope to see one,
But I can tell you, anyhow,
I'd rather see than be one!

"Professional stuntman" and publicist Jim Moran (1908-1999) (see the article about him sitting on an ostrich egg for 19 days until it hatched in the Spring '19 newsletter) showed up at the Imperial Hotel on Broadway where Burgess lived at 5:00 on New Years eve 1940. After a telephone request Burgess came down to the lobby and Moran brought in a purple cow.

The purple cow was named Notable Nymph. "By nature Notable Nymph is a fawn color, but Jim rendered her purple by mixing a cosmetic dye, government certified for human use, with flour and talc and dusting her hair with it. Three of her teats were gold tipped, and one was silver. She was quite gaudy, and Mr. Burgess swore he would never forget the sight of her as long as he lived," reported *Low Man on a Totem Pole*, a 1941 book by H. Allen Smith.

On Whom the Tolls Fall

In the last newsletter I told you that I was charged a 10% tariff on my jewelry boxes. When a backorder came in it had risen to 25%. We pay for tariffs.



Star ring in 14 karat white gold with very bright diamonds, .32 carat total. \$550

Big Game Hunting

In 1969, Skamania County Washington passed an ordinance forbidding killing a Bigfoot.

At the time, Sasquatch mania caused a flood of people hunting them with weapons. The ordinance notes that "both legend and purported sightings and spoor" support the possible existence of creatures known as "Sasquatch, Yeti, Bigfoot, or Giant Hairy Ape."

Since all those hunters with firearms were a danger to public safety, the ordinance discouraged the hunters by making the killing of a Bigfoot a felony with a \$10,000 fine and/or up to 5 years in the county jail. The ordinance said this was an emergency and it went into effect immediately.

Even though the law was issued on April 1, it wasn't a joke.

The ordinance was amended in 1984 after the Bigfoot craze had diminished. Now if you kill a Bigfoot you're a misdemeanor, not a felon and you'll only have to pay a fine of \$1,000 and/or spend a year in jail.

Bigfoot was classed as an endangered species and Skamania County was designated as a "Sasquatch Refuge."

In 2001, the Scottish Natural Heritage, a government-funded body, stipulated that if the Loch Ness Monster, Nessie, was caught it should have a DNA sample taken and released back into the loch.

This put into practice a 1938 recommendation by the Chief Constable in a letter to the Under Secretary of State in the Scottish office in London. The letter said that a man told an officer that he was having a special harpoon gun made and would return with 20 men and was "determined to catch the Monster dead or alive."

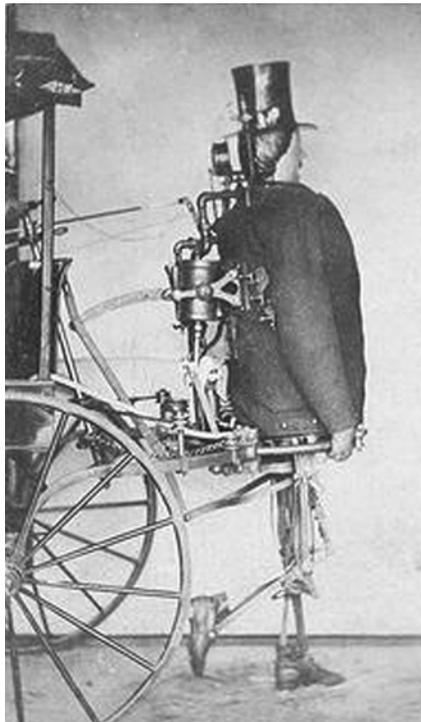
The Chief Constable said "That there is some strange creature in Loch Ness seems now beyond doubt." He didn't think that the police could protect it, but that he had warned the hunter it would be desirable to leave it alone.

You can't kill a Yeti, either but you'll have to pay up to go find one. A 1959 letter from the U.S. Embassy in Nepal to the State Department detailed three Nepalese regulations concerning expeditions to find a Yeti.

1. A 5000 Indian rupee fee. (\$1050 then, \$9177 inflation adjusted to 2019, but only \$70 at today's exchange rates.)

2. You cannot shoot at or kill a Yeti unless in self-defense. Any photographs of a Yeti or one captured alive or dead must be turned over to the government of Nepal.

3. Any reports of sightings or other indications of the existence of Yetis must be given to the government and not publicized without government permission.



Newark Steam Man

The January 8, 1868 Newark Advertiser described a wonderful new invention — a steam man. Invented by two Newark men, Zadoc Dederick and Isaac Grass, he was 7 feet 9 inches tall and weighed 500 pounds. In his torso is a 3 horsepower piston steam engine. "The legs which support it are complicated and wonderful. The steps are taken very naturally and quite easily. As the body is thrown forward upon the advanced foot the other is lifted from the ground with a spring and thrown forward by the steam."

He is attached to a carriage and there is enough water in a tank under the front seat for half a day and enough coal could be stored under the back seat to last a day.

Although Steam Man would be capable of running at 60 miles an hour, that could be unsafe on uneven ground so he would be run at half that. Spikes or corks are attached to his feet to prevent slipping and he could stop quickly by leaning 45 degrees or bending his knees backward.

So as not to frighten horses, he will be got up to look human. The boiler and other hot parts "will be encased in felt and woolen undergarments. Pantaloon, coat and vest, of the latest styles are provided," and "The face is molded into a cheerful countenance of white enamel."

His hat is literally a stovepipe hat, a chimney for smoke. Every two or three hours when he needs coal, he will be stopped, his vest unbuttoned, a door opened and coal shoveled in. Cost will be \$2000 (\$31,800 in 2018).

Steam Man was exhibited on Broadway in New York City but "he is not permitted to 'travel on his muscle,' but is hung in slings and merely 'marks time,' as our military friends would say." Some say it was a restriction of the insurers of the hall, others the need to vent the smoke outdoors with a fixed pipe attached to his hat.

Steam Man was exhibited in various cities across the U.S. but the only accounts of it actually on the road are in parades of the Mystic Order of the True Blues, a social organization, in Schenectady, New York September 3, 1868 and September 7, 1870.

In the first parade there was "a human steam engine" but "at certain point in the parade, the engine got too hot and had to be removed to save the human from incineration," and in the second parade, "There was another steam man eight feet high," according to an article by the Schenectady County Historical Society, February 1, 2010.

Steam Man inspired the first science fiction dime novel, *The Steam Man of the Prairies*, by Edward S. Ellis published in 1868 and reprinted 6 times until 1904.

In the novel, teenager Johnny Brainard, "hump-backed, dwarfed, but with an amiable disposition that made him a favorite with all with whom he came in contact," invents a steam man. Johnny, a trapper nicknamed Baldy since he was scalped by Indians, and an Irishman and a Yankee, who had rescued Baldy after a steamboat exploded on a river, set out on an adventure-filled journey over the plains on a wagon pulled by the steam man.



The Steam Man of the Prairies



Pendant in 14 karat white gold with fine color aquamarine, 1.73 carat and diamonds, .18 carat total. \$1075.

Ugly Contest

In the Spring '17 newsletter I told you about Frank Eddy (1856-1929), Minnesota congressman, who was awarded the title "His Homeliness" in a 1904 newspaper article.

Well, move over Frank Eddy, Napper Tandy has taken your title by a knockout.

James Napper Tandy (1737-1803) was a founder of the Dublin branch of the United Irish Society in 1791. The Society was dedicated to a unified Catholic and Protestant Ireland free of British control, inspired by the French Revolution.

In a debate in the Protestant-controlled Irish Parliament on a proposal to give equal rights to Catholics in 1792, attorney-general John Toler said they would not be "taught by political quacks." He said he had seen proposals with "Napper Tandy lending his countenance. It was rather odd they could not contrive to set a better face on the matter..."

This allusion to his notable ugliness enraged Tandy and he challenged Toler to a duel. The House of Commons treated this as a breach of privilege, and he was arrested at his house. He escaped through a window after giving a pretext of fetching his hat. A warrant for his arrest was published but he managed to elude capture for two months, then turned himself in on the last day of the Irish Parliament's session in April. He was sent to Newgate Prison in Dublin but released after a few hours after the end of the Parliamentary session. Tandy was indicted and tried in June and was acquitted.

After Tandy, a Protestant, took the oath of the Defenders, a radical Catholic group, in 1793 with the goal of uniting them with the United Irish Society, he was threatened with arrest. In 1795 he fled to America. In 1798 he went to France, then at war with Britain, and was made a general in the French army. He was given a ship, the *Anacréon* (see below), and a small force and set off to invade Ireland. The ship had quantities of arms and ammunition to equip the 30,000 Irish Tandy had persuaded the French would rise up and overthrow the British and free Ireland. He took possession of a village, hoisted an Irish flag and issued a proclamation,

But no one rose up and the ship sailed to the north of Scotland to avoid the British fleet to Bergen, Norway and Tandy and a few companions then made their way to Hamburg, Germany. He was arrested under pressure from Britain and extradited to London. He was jailed and tried in 1801. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to death. However, Napoleon Bonaparte demanded his release and he returned to France and was given a general's pension where he died in 1803.

The United Irish Society wore green as their emblematic color and Napper Tandy is immortalized in *The Wearing of the Green*, a song about the persecution of the supporters of the 1798 Irish rebellion:

I met with Napper Tandy, and he took me by the hand

And he said, "How's poor old Ireland, and how does she stand?"

"She's the most distressful country that ever yet was seen

For they're hanging men and women there for the Wearin' o' the Green."

Anacreon was a 6th century B. C. Greek poet famous for sexy drinking songs: "I'll instruct you, like me to entwine; The myrtle of Venus with Bacchus's vine."

The Anacreontic society was an 18th century English gentleman's club of amateur musicians. The club's theme song was *The Anacreontic Song*, commonly known by its opening line "To Anacreon in Heaven." The melody of the song was used for *The Star-Spangled Banner* written by Francis Scott Key in 1814.

The ship *Anacréon* was a French privateer, a privately owned ship commissioned to attack enemy ships. She captured two British merchant ships on the way to Bergen with Napper Tandy.

Anacréon was captured in 1799 by the British; the French accent was clipped off and she (see *The It Girl* on first page) became HMS *Anacreon*.



Frank Eddy

Napper Tandy, from life, in Newgate prison (London) in 1799.

Fish Story

One of the oldest surviving words from Proto Indo European, the language of the Asian Steppes that spawned most modern languages is "lachs," meaning salmon, today "lachs" in German, "lax" in Swedish and similar in other languages. Would you like some lox on your bagel?

Deep Thought

Idealism is the contemplation of marriage. Realism is being married

— Adapted from *The Boston Transcript* 1909.



Cheesy Music

In a 2018 experiment in Switzerland, nine 22 pound wheels of Emmentaler cheese were serenaded with music. The cheese wheels were put in separate wooden crates and music sound waves were channeled directly into the cheese with transducers rather than loudspeakers. A team from Bern University of the Arts did this in a cheesemaker's cellar.

Five wheels had one song played in a loop 24/7 for six months. Three wheels were played high, medium, and low frequencies of sound and one wheel listened to the sound of silence.

A track from A Tribe Called Quest's *We Got It from Here... Thank You 4 Your Service* album of hip hop music was played for one wheel, and others listened to Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Led Zeppelin's *Stairway to Heaven*, techno music *UV* by Vri and ambient music, *Yello's Monolith*.

The cheeses were then tasted by food technologists and "a star-studded panel of judges, featuring artists, chefs and politicians" carried out two blind taste tests.

Hip hop was the winner: "the cheese exposed to hip hop music displayed a discernibly stronger smell and stronger, fruitier taste than the other test samples," said the technologists. The star-studded panel said the hip hop cheese and the low frequency cheese were slightly sweet, although one taster liked the Mozart cheese the best, according to a press release by the test project.



Leverback earrings in 14 karat white gold with blue topaz, 4.35 carat total and diamonds, .03 carat total. \$390.

11/1/19 11/1/18 11/1/17

Gold	1514	1231	1277
Silver	18.08	14.45	16.94
Platinum	948	852	931

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

Joseph's buys old gold for cash

XI. Thou Shalt Proofread

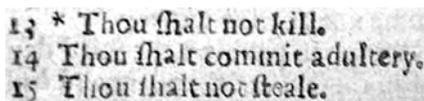
In 1631, His Majesty's Printers published a reprint of the King James Bible. The first printing was the translation commissioned by King James and published in 1611, the original King James Bible. It was a hit and a second printing was arranged by King Charles I, son of King James, who died in 1625.

Unfortunately, a typo omitting the word "not" in the seventh of the ten commandments then commanded people to commit adultery.

The 1000 Bibles printed were recalled and burned but a few escaped and the 11 survivors are now called the Wicked Bible and are worth considerable money. In 2015, one was sold by Bonhams in London for £31,250 (\$40,946).

A year after this typographical sin, the printers, Robert Barker and Martin Lucas, were fined £300 (about \$64,000 today) and their printing license was revoked.

Robert Barker then was in and out of debtors prison where he died in 1645.



There's Only One Way to Skin a potato

In June, 2018 a woman paid \$1.99 for a bag of TGI Fridays Sour Cream & Onion Potato Skins at a convenience store in the Bronx. The restaurant chain has its own brand of snacks. The problem was that there were no potato skins in the bag.

A class action lawsuit against TGI Fridays in March, 2019 said there were potato flakes and potato starch but no potato skins in the snack. The suit said that the Idaho Potato Commission said that potato skins were healthy eating and

consumers perceive that and would be scammed if they thought the fake skins were real.

"The skins are loaded with disease-fighting nutrients and weight-friendly fiber," said an article in SFGate, the web version of the San Francisco Chronicle.

Troncoso v TGI Friday's Inc is the lawsuit in the U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York if you want to follow up next year.

Target Practice

For 15 years John Burke has thrown crockery, the smaller articles of household furnishings and food at Mrs. Burke without ever scoring a direct hit, let alone a bulls-eye.

— Pittsburgh Post Gazette Aug. 1, 1927

The wife of the Yonkers, New York man "perfected her dodging, ducking, side-stepping and false starts so that now she can avoid a missile by a mere flick of the head without even pausing in her work."

But one day he went too far, choosing eggs to throw at her and she took him to court where he was arraigned for disorderly conduct. When the judge disdainfully noted his poor aim, his wife said his aim was fine but "my dodging is better."

The judge said he wanted a further conference with the couple before he ruled.

★ Holiday Hours ★

Mon.- Fri. Dec. 16-20, 10-8, Sat. Dec 21, 10-6, Sun. Dec. 22, 12-4, Mon. Dec. 23, 10-8, Tues. Dec. 24 until dusk

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



Braided band ring in 14 karat white gold with rubies, .23 carat total and diamonds, .21 carat total. \$689. Also in all diamonds, .20 carat total \$699.

Bubbles in Space

Legendary French champagne maker G.H. Mumm is prepared for the coming wave of space tourists: they have invented the zero g champagne bottle. It took three years and a lot of money to develop,

It was successfully tested in September 2018 in an Airbus A300 Zero-G plane that climbs and dives steeply to create about 20 seconds of weightlessness, used to train astronauts. A lucky group of astronauts flew on the champagne test flight.

Once you pop off the shallow cork you pull a finger controlled valve that releases the fizzy gas which the aluminum strip at the top of the bottle captures as a blob of champagne foam. You rotate the bottle and the blob floats in the air and you scoop it into a tiny glass and then scoop it into your mouth.

French astronaut and Space Shuttle veteran Jean-Francois Clervoy, who heads the Zero G Airbus company, said "It's really magical because the Champagne lands not just on your tongue but on the palate, the cheeks – the gastronomic sensations are magnified," as quoted in the Daily Mail September 12. (Clervoy was nicknamed "Billy Bob" by American astronauts who couldn't pronounce his name.)

But of the 30 journalists on the flight, a few found out that the plane lived up to its nickname, the Vomit Comet.

Of course you could just sip your champagne with a straw but that would be so déclassé.



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