

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

I'm Eggs-hausted

"Professional Screwball" publicity stuntman James Moran (1908-1999) sold an ice box to an Eskimo, had a bull led through a china shop, changed horses in midstream, found a needle in a haystack and sat on an ostrich egg for over 19 days until it hatched.

In 1945, Betty MacDonald wrote a memoir, *The Egg and I*, Life on a wilderness chicken ranch told with wit and high humor. It became a blockbuster best seller and film rights were bought in April, 1946 and the film was released in 1947.

Moran read about an egg abandoned by mother ostrich Eve on the Los Angeles Ostrich Farm after her 24 year old mate Joe started flirting with Mamie, "a slick young chick of 18 with a new set of spring plumes." Eve got off the egg and started pecking Joe. They had been married for 20 years. Moran made a deal with International Studios, which was filming *The Egg and I* to publicize the film for \$2,000 then went to see the manager of the ostrich farm and arranged to sit on the egg himself until it hatched.

On June 16, 1946, Father's Day, Moran began sitting on a special chair with a basket underneath holding the egg, wearing a headband with a foot-tall ostrich feather in front and a tailpiece of ostrich feathers hanging from his waist. He sat on the egg for 19 days, 4 hours, 32 minutes. He would leave the egg for short periods for bathroom and meal breaks. He slept with the egg at night so it wouldn't cool off. While sitting on the egg he read *The Egg and I* to pass the time. He called the 1500 daily visitors who paid 40¢ to watch him "crackpots."

At 10:05 a.m. July 6, a one pound 9 ounce ostrich chick hatched from the egg. A male quartet of musicians and composers crooned to the chick:

Let me out of here,
It's time to emerge,
I've got the urge,
Let me out of here

"I'm eggs-hausted," said Moran. The chick was named Ossip Moran and was donated to a zoo. A July 22 article in *Life* has a picture of Moran wearing his feather headband, with a cigar in his mouth

holding the chick in one hand and proferring cigars in an open box in the other. He had written "The Egg and I" on the egg which shows on the cracked shell.



How Many Crooks in Congress?

Five percent according to a July, 2018 experiment by the ACLU in which Amazon's Rekognition software compared congressional mugshots with those of 2500 criminals. 28 of your 535 representatives and senators were matched, 3 senators and 25 representatives.

It was close to bipartisan with 13 Republicans and 15 Democrats with only one woman and, of course, 11 blacks and Hispanics, including civil rights icon Rep. John Lewis, twice their percentage in congress.

Five of the fake crooks sent letters to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos demanding an explanation and a list of all government agencies using the fake face software.

Amazon says that the software was set to the default 80% confidence level rather than the 95% recommended for the cops.

This is an uptick in congressional criminality since 1933 when Senate Sergeant-at-Arms David S. Barry said "Contrary, perhaps, to the popular belief, there are not many crooks in Congress, that is, out and out grafters..." in a magazine article prematurely released a month before his scheduled retirement in March.

The Senate wanted to know who the crooks were. Barry, 74, was grilled for hours. "My idea in writing that was to defend the Senate from the popular belief that that there are crooks and grafters here," he explained.

Barry was ousted from his job by a vote of 53-17 three weeks before he would have lost it anyway with the change to Democratic control, damned for faint praise. David

Barry died three years later.

So how many crooks do you think are in Congress?

Belgium in the Buff

An application for the second nudist beach in Belgium was turned down by the Flemish Wildlife Agency on the grounds that "subsidiary activities" (read sex) in the sand dunes would scare off an endangered bird, the crested lark.

The Belgian Naturism Federation chairman said it would only be a tiny minority who would do it in the dunes: "These are not real naturists for us."

A proposal to fence off the dunes where the birds live was also rejected. The mayor of the town with Belgium's only nudist beach told a Belgian newspaper "Barbed wire against nudists? Pff. As if a man without clothes cannot get over barbed wire."

Body Count

I keep hearing that the apartments being built on the ruins of the Salvation Army will bring in new customers. Let's say the Salvation Army had 3000 customers who came 4 times a year. That's 12,000 people in shopping mode a year, plus people who donated. A hundred new people in apartment renting mode can't make up for that.

The day it closed three of my customers plus a man I hadn't seen before came in to ask what happened. That in itself says something about the quantity and quality of the traffic they had — not just poor people buying used clothes. I've bought furniture there myself. They'll still be my customers but they'll be in town less often.

Business used to be good because the town was full of stores people wanted to shop in. After the A&P closed over three years ago, the Salvation Army was the busiest store in town. Each store that dies lessens the traffic in all the stores. I've been in town for 32 years and in retail for 40 years. That's how it works.



Ring in 14 karat white gold with fine aquamarine, 1.49 carat and diamonds, .68 carat total. \$1900.

State Bug

Listen up germophiles. New Jersey now has an official state bug, *Streptomyces griseus*. Discovered in "heavily manured field soil" from the New Jersey Agricultural Experimental Station at Rutgers University by Albert Schatz in 1943, the microbe produces streptomycin, the first antibiotic to cure tuberculosis.

Schatz was a graduate student working under the supervision of Selman Waksman. Schatz was the lead author along with Waksman of the paper that reported the discovery of streptomycin and second author on the patent application. Schatz signed over royalties from the streptomycin patent to the Rutgers Research and Endowment Foundation at the request of Waksman in order to make the drug as inexpensive as possible.

But it turned out that Waksman had a private agreement with the foundation to receive 20% of the royalties, which were considerable. In 1950 Schatz sued Waksman and the foundation for a share of the royalties. The suit was settled out of court with Schatz getting \$120,000 for the foreign rights and 3% of the royalties. Waksman conceded in court that Schatz was the co-discoverer of streptomycin.

In 1952, Waksman was awarded the Nobel Prize for the studies that led to the discovery of streptomycin, conspicuously not for the discovery itself. Realizing that Schatz had been slighted, Rutgers awarded him the Rutgers University Medal, its highest honor, in 1994. Albert Schatz died in 2005 at 84.

The other official New Jersey bug is *Apis mellifera*, the honeybee, discovered by Winnie-the-Pooh in 1926.

For another bug, see below.

Deep Thought

The greatest humbug of all is the man who believes — or pretends to believe — that everything and everybody are humbugs.

— P.T. Barnum, *The Humbugs of the World, An Account of Humbugs, Delusions, Impositions, Quackeries, Deceits and Deceivers Generally*, in *All Ages*, 1866.

Can't Hack With Clickety-Clack

The FSO, Federal Protective Service, of Russia, decided to order typewriters after Edward Snowden leaked top secret NSA documents and the Wikileaks leaks. They spent about \$15,000 for 20 German Triumph Adler Twen 180 electric typewriters. They should have shopped around. *Ars Technica* says you could buy them for as little as \$162 on a German web site in a July, 2013 article.

A Peppercorn for Mr. Jefferson

In the election of 1800, incumbent John Adams of the Federalist party ran against his own vice-president, Thomas Jefferson, who was a Democratic-Republican (usually called just "Republican"). The politics of the day were incredibly nasty with newspapers affiliated with one party heaping vituperation on the other party and their candidates. (See *Nasty Politics* in the Fall '16 newsletter.) Jefferson in his inaugural address diplomatically said "We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists."

Jefferson wore unconventional shoes to his inauguration. Rather than slipper-type low shoes with silver buckles, his shoes came up over his ankle with laces. (Jefferson was size 12½, Washington 13.) This annoyed the Federalists. Jefferson wore "...shoes that closed tight round his ankles, laced up with neat leathern strings, and absolutely without buckles, considering them as superfluous and anti-republican, especially when a man has strings," said one Federalist as quoted in *A Peppercorn for Mr. Jefferson** by Bernard Mayo in the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Spring 1943.

The *Providence Journal*, a Federalist paper, March 18, 1801, reprinted an article from the *Gazette of the United States* (Philadelphia) also a Federalist paper, titled "Ludicrous!" The article said that some Jefferson supporters wanted to show solidarity with him by wearing novel shoes like his. There wasn't time to have enough of the shoes made so they converted "their boots into the *new-shoes*, which they did by amputation just above the ankle! — after the delivery of the speech, when it was discovered that Mr. Jefferson was no longer a *republican*, but a Federal republican, these disappointed creatures were seen seatered [sic] here and there among the shrubbery below the capitol, stitching the *legs* of their boots to the *feet* again!" A footnote explains that Jefferson's shoes came "over the ankle, in the manner of what are called snow-shoes."

*The odd title of this paper comes from an address to Jefferson from a man who had brought a mammoth 1235 pound cheese wheel the size of a millstone made by milk donated by the people of Cheshire, Massachusetts, although "Not one drop of milk was to come from a Federalist cow!"

The cheese was presented to Jefferson on New Year's day 1802 by a preacher from the town after a three day trip by sleigh. In his prepared remarks, the preacher said the cheese was presented "as a peppercorn of the esteem which we bear to our chief magistrate, and as a sacrifice to Republicanism."

The cheese was set out at a New Year's reception that day, "Republicans pronounced it the biggest and best ever. Federalists said the flavor was only so-so."

Divine Water

That's what you get when you find water with your divining rods, two metal L-shaped rods you hold in front of you. When they cross, start drilling for water. You can also use a Y-shaped twig held with two hands that dips to indicate water underneath your feet. This is also called dowsing, and people have been doing it for centuries.

A science blogger in Britain heard from her parents that a technician from their local water company had been using "two bent tent pegs" to decide how much of the road needed to be closed off."

Amazed, she contacted the water company asking about this latter-day witchcraft. The company said some techs occasionally use them, "However, we prefer to use listening sticks and other methods."

All told, she contacted 12 U.K. water companies and 10 of them said they still use divining rods. One of them, Yorkshire Water, said "they are only used to detect pipework and voids that may be caused by bursts or collapses."

Do you want to give it a try? "Copper Dowsing L Rods Kit: Chakra Pendulum and eBook Included \$24.95," on Amazon. (Only 14 left in stock. Order soon.)

"A pendulum works by tapping into your intuition and sixth sense. The pendulum acts as a form of receiver and transmitter, from your higher guidance, guardian angels and spiritual teachers," according to Holisticshop.co.uk

For your Sweet Mother-in-Law

If you missed National Mother-in-Law Day in 2018, you'll have to wait 11 years to give her a box of chocolates on National Chocolate Day.

National Mother-in-Law Day is the fourth Sunday in October, National Chocolate Day is October 28. 2012 was the last time these two important holidays were on the same day. The next two will be in 2029, then 2035.

Written in the Stars

"I Don't Believe in Astrology; I'm a Sagittarian and We're Skeptical." — Science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke, (1917-2008) author of *2001: A Space Odyssey*.



14 karat white gold earrings with rich blue kyanites, 4.13 ct. total and diamonds, .42 ct. total. \$1675.

I Can't Believe It's Not Margarine!

Not really. In a taste test between 16 fake butters and one real butter as reported in the Los Angeles Times October 29, 1992, "The butter was almost instantly identified by most tasters; no substitute rivaled it for taste."

But margarine is better for you, right? Not really. From a 1993 Harvard Medical School study: "The truth is, there never was any good evidence that using margarine instead of butter cut the chances of having a heart attack or developing heart disease."

The price of butter doubled in Europe between 1850 and 1870 and Emperor Napoleon III of France offered a prize at the 1866 World's Fair in Paris to whoever could come up with a cheaper butter substitute for the French Navy and for poor people.

French chemist Hippolyte Mège-Mouriès patented "oleomargarine" in 1869, made from beef fat, salt and milk, and dyed it yellow with annatto, extracted from Achiote tree seeds. He had noticed that even starving cows produced milk and deduced that the animal must be transforming some of its solid body fat into the soft butterfat component of milk. The name is from the Latin for beef fat and the Greek for pearl since solid crystals of his new substance have a pearly luster.

Mège-Mouriès patented his invention in France in 1869. He sold his recipe in Holland, which had repealed its patent laws in 1869, in 1871 to what was to become the largest margarine company in the world. His 1873 U.S. patent was bought by the U.S. Dairy Company in 1874, which then began large-scale production of margarine.

Margarine started to edge out lower grade butter made by small family-owned producers, who started to export to Europe. Margarine oil was also exported to be turned into the final product in England and Holland. These producers usually sold margarine as butter.

Fearing a ban of U.S. butter in European markets, the dairy industry got labeling laws passed in 1877 that required margarine to be labeled as such.

In 1882, the National Association for the Prevention of Adulteration of Butter was formed by the dairy industry. In 1884, New York state banned margarine and other states followed. In 1885 the bans were overturned by the courts as unconstitutional.

The dairy lobby got a tax on margarine passed with the Oleomargarine Act of 1886, which imposed a 2 cent per pound tax on margarine, which then cost 13 cents a pound, half that of butter. In addition, license fees were imposed on manufacturers (\$600/\$15,000 in 2017), wholesalers (\$480/\$12,000) and retailers (\$48/\$1200).

Dairy industry propaganda portrayed margarine as made from "the slag of the butcher shop." Between 1886 and 1902, 32 states passed laws against yellow margarine. Vermont, New Hampshire, and South Dakota passed laws that margarine be dyed pink! (Overturned by the Supreme Court in 1898 as mandating adulterated food.)

In 1902, an amendment to the Oleomargarine Act raised the tax to 10 cents a pound for yellow oleomargarine but slashed it to ¼ cent for undyed white margarine. It also reduced the license fees substantially for white margarine.

By World War I, margarine was made from vegetable oils from corn, cottonseed,

peanuts and others. Some of it was naturally yellow. In 1931 The Oleomargarine Act was amended again to tax all yellow margarine at 10 cents a pound, dyed or natural color.

To get around this, white margarine was sold with packets of yellow dye for the housewife to mix in to color it. This was later made easier by incorporating a capsule of yellow dye in the margarine package which allowed the dye to be worked into the margarine by kneading the plastic package without having to open it. I remember doing this as a kid circa 1950. Ironically, summer butter from grass-fed cows is yellow, but winter butter and that from corn-fed cows is nearly white and is dyed yellow.

Butter shortages during World War II helped popularize margarine and after the war margarine producers use of vegetable oils made from domestic crops won the support of farmers for repeal of margarine regulations.

Lever Brothers and other margarine producers organized letter writing campaigns and picket marches by housewives in front of the Capitol with signs demanding repeal of the margarine tax.

There was even a Miss Margarine. There is a photo of her wearing her Miss Margarine sash signing a petition on a huge prop postcard addressed to Mr. John L. Congressman with a Broadway star April 25, 1948. "Who comes first...the consumer or the butter lobby?"

Millicent Coleman won the Miss Margarine title at a National Margarine Day ceremony at the New York Museum of Science and Industry.

Finally, in March, 1950, the federal tax and license fees on yellow margarine were repealed. But it required that margarine served in restaurants be in a triangular pat. By 1955, yellow margarine bans were repealed in every state except Minnesota and Wisconsin. Minnesota did so in 1963, but Wisconsin, "the Dairy State", waited until 1967.

Margarine was banned outright in Canada from 1886 until 1948. (The ban was temporarily lifted from 1917 to 1923 due to wartime shortages of dairy products).

Pennsylvania became the 40th state to allow yellow margarine in 1951. "Colored Oleo on Sale As Governor Signs Bill; Supplies Rushed to City" headlined the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily news August 25, 1951. Kraft Foods rushed margarine from New Jersey to the Philadelphia area in a fleet of 12 Yellow Cabs immediately after the bill was signed, according to the article, which was accompanied by a photo of men loading cartons of margarine into a cab.

By the way, that orange cheddar cheese you love is dyed with annatto.



4/8/19 4/6/18 4/7/17

Gold	1300	1331	1266
Silver	15.14	16.28	18.40
Platinum	914	911	967

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

Joseph's buys old gold for cash

Slipping Across the Border for a Drink

Although publicly supporting Prohibition, Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover (under both Harding and Coolidge) would slip into the Belgian embassy, technically foreign soil, for a martini on the way home.

Hoover had organized massive food relief for Belgium during World War I and was revered there.

The father of Prohibition was Representative Andrew Volstead from Minnesota. The Volstead Act was the law that put into effect the 18th amendment.

This inspired a Volstead bar in Mexico and a Volstead cocktail in Paris (recipe in the Spring 2017 newsletter.)

Just across the border from Douglas, Arizona was Agua Prieta, Mexico, billed in a 1925 Douglas brochure as "happily pre-Volsteadian." Of the many bars was the Volstead.



Lackabucks Disease

Lackabucks disease is caused by atrophy of the pecunial sac. Can progress from falling from the lap of luxury to noseprints on windows to sniping in the gutter to running out of green before you fade to black. The cure is a shot in the arm of lotsabucks (or lotterybucks).

Donkey Business

A visitor at a Cairo zoo in 2018 noticed that a "zebra" was actually a painted donkey. The ears were wrong and the paint on its face was smudged. He uploaded a picture to his Facebook page writing in Arabic "The stupidity has reached new heights in this country — they brought a local donkey and painted it to look like a zebra."

The director of the zoo begged to differ: "The zebra is real and not painted," he said, adding that the animal was well-cared for.

A veterinarian contacted by a news organization also begged to differ saying that zebras have smaller ears and dark snouts. PETA said that skittish donkeys would be stressed by being restrained and painted and that the paint might cause an allergic reaction.



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

Fire Up Your Kindle

The 300 page book of the newsletters plus a whole lot of other stuff, Now and Then Again, The Way We Were and the Way We Are Is now available for Kindle (in color) for \$9.95, only 5.47 hundred thousandths of a cent per word. A bargain!

A tablet size screen would be best since it has fixed format larger pages with many pictures. A free Kindle app from Amazon will let you read it on any device so you won't need a Kindle. The print edition is \$16 at the store, \$16.95 on Amazon.

Anatomy of a Lawsuit

I reported to you about British "conceptual artist*" Damien Hirst's \$100 million diamond skull, diamond baby skull, and downmarket painted plastic skulls (Fall '07, Spring '13).

In 1999, Hirst created a 20 foot high, 6 ton painted bronze sculpture of a partially dissected man called *Hymn*, which he sold for £1 million.

Hirst's sculpture was copied from his son's toy, *Young Scientist Anatomy Set*. Norman Emms, the sculptor who made the original of the £14.99 toy said "It is an exact copy, completely and utterly exact - even the hair, the eyebrows."

In 2000 Hirst was sued by the toy's manufacturer, Humbrol Limited for copyright infringement. Hirst settled for an undisclosed sum donated to two children's charities. Emms said he was disappointed with the settlement.

Emms was paid less than £2,000 for the model for the toy. "I'm a commercial sculptor not an artsy-fartsy sculptor. My sculptures are mainly for merchandising. If I had done a 20 foot one, who would have known it?", he said as reported by the Guardian May 18, 2000.

*Con art is what artists who can't draw or sculpt do.



The 10 inch toy

The 20 foot con



Substantial pendant in 14 karat white gold with fine color sapphires and diamonds, .38 carat total. \$1500.

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