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KNIGHT LETTER

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A Boston Tea Party

MARK BURSTEIN



Ah, Boston and environs. Famous for its tea party, and a place where Wonderland lies not just in one's imagination but at the end of the "Blue" MBTA subway line (it's a greyhound-racing track in Revere). Erstwhile home to the Girl's Latin School, where the only one of Carroll's pennings to be published exclusively outside of England was printed, and present home to the Harcourt Amory collection, where Carroll's own vellum-bound copy of *Wonderland* now is housed. More below.

On Friday, the Maxine Schaefer Memorial Reading took place at the Perkins School for the Blind in nearby Watertown. The Perkins School, founded in 1829,¹ educates blind and deaf-blind students, and is proud to be the alma mater of Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller. Maxine's daughter Ellie began the hour-long visit, attended by about fifty students from their middle- and high school classes, by explaining who Maxine was and why she was so important to our society. Despite being a bit "under the weather," the fabulous Patt Griffin performed a memorable rendition of the Caterpillar scene. After the enthusiastic applause died down, Alan Tannenbaum, David and Mary Schaefer and grandson Mickey Salins answered questions. The students and the school library were then presented with CDs of *Wonderland*, the first time the fund has been used in a medium other than books. "It truly warms my heart to see the children's excitement when they attend one of these readings and receive their gift. The readings have occurred for over seven years now! My mother would be so proud!" ~ Ellie Schaefer-Salins.

The general meeting took place the next day, a hot, muggy Saturday, May 8, within the air-conditioned comfort of the Houghton Library at Harvard University in Cambridge. We sat in a darkish green, neo-Georgian room amidst glassed-in incunabula and other books with brown bindings and gilt stamps, a room in which Mr. Dodgson would surely have felt most at home—save for the laptops and digital projectors, of course. Through the generosity of Arthur

A. Houghton Jr., class of 1929, Harvard (founded in 1636) became the first American university to construct a separate research facility for the housing and study of rare books and manuscripts by establishing the eponymous library in 1942.

The meeting began with a few announcements by our president, Alan Tannenbaum,² including sad news about Kay Rossman (p. 29), the schedule of our next meetings (p. 30), and a proclamation heralding the present author's ten years of editorship of the *Knight Letter*.



Armory Collection bookplate.

Peter Accardo, whose title is "Acquisitions Bibliographer, Department of Rare Books" at the Houghton, bade us welcome. He led off with an excerpt from John Ruskin's autobiography, *Praeterita*, describing an afternoon tea with the Liddell girls, and went on to discuss the Houghton's Carroll holdings. In 1926, the university received the outstanding Lewis Carroll collection of Harcourt Amory, class of 1876.³ Just a minuscule sample of their noteworthy holdings were on display: downstairs in a case were Carroll's own copy of the 1865 *Wonderland*, bound in white vellum; handwritten manuscripts of one of the issues of the *Rectory Umbrella* and one of *Mischmasch*; the table-of-contents page for *Looking-Glass* with Carroll's handwritten corrections;⁴ and other treasures. Scattered around the meeting room or in Accardo's hands were: a copy of *Phantasmagoria* with Carroll's corrections and handwritten copies of reviews; a first-edition *Looking-Glass* with drawings, touched-up proofs, and letters from Tenniel to the brothers Dalziel bound in; and a large electrotpe (raised white-on-white letters!) edition of *Wonderland* made, coincidentally, for the Perkins School for the Blind (above) in 1904. And these were just the "teasers" from their vast collection.

Our first speaker was Frederick C. "Rick" Lake, Harvard class of 1980, lyricist, ballroom dancer, and investment advisor—to give you just a flavor of his wide-ranging mind. He presented warm, anecdotal

sional layout and design skill from Andrew Ogus, the *Knight Letter* gets better with each issue.

Finally, you may have noticed that the Society is now accepting online payment for meetings and membership dues, using PayPal. This free and secure payment system will be expanded in the near future to pay for the Society-published books in our inventory. We plan to make the process easy by having forms on our Web site, but in the interim, you can simply use the PayPal account LCSNA@IvoryDoor.com to send money to the Society and save the time and expense of an envelope and postage. We also accept major credit cards through PayPal.

See you in California!



KIRK: We're not leaving until McCoy is released.

PARMEN: This isn't the Enterprise. You are not in command, captain.

PHILANA: Why discuss it? Get rid of them.

PARMEN: No, my dear. That might offend the good doctor. You wish to stay? By all means. You can help us celebrate our anniversary. In the process, I hope we can persuade you to join our tiny republic.

McCoy: You won't persuade me.

PARMEN: I think we will.

KIRK (*singing*): "I'm Tweedledee, he's Tweedledum,"

SPOCK: "Two spacemen marching to a drum."

KIRK & SPOCK: "We slither among the mimsy toves
And gyre among the borogoves."

The Star Trek (original series) episode 65, "Plato's Stepchildren," aired November 22, 1968, and featured this abysmally sung duet. The episode itself has a place in history for containing the first-ever interracial kiss—between Kirk and Uhura while under telekenetic influence—to be shown on American network television.

Both Mr. Shatner and Mr. Nimoy produced dreadful albums of their "singing" during this era. Their in-



imitable vocalizing is available in the compilation CD Golden Throats: The Great Celebrity Sing-Off (Rhino, 1988), the original LP albums (Shatner's The Transformed Man, 1968; The Two Sides of Leonard Nimoy and his The Way I Feel, both 1968) and all over the Net wherever horrid singing is celebrated. Shatner's rendition of "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" must be heard to be believed.



ELI CROSS (*Peter O'Toole*) to
CAMERON (*Steve Railsback*): Now
listen to me: That door is the
looking-glass, and inside it is
Wonderland. Have faith, Alice,
close your eyes and enjoy . . .

The Stunt Man (1980)



Wonderland

© 1998 Carol Borzyskowski

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previously appeared in the *American Poetry
Monthly*.

Black, cold, narrow
as a grave,
I didn't see the hole —
didn't look before I stepped
down.
Long, long I fell

past shards
empty as plastic
champagne glasses,
past deflated balloons
pink and yellow,
past a magician's
empty black hat
dead rabbit,
curiouser
and curiouser.

Past the touch of your lips
brushing my neck —
a silver moth in flames,
onto barren lunar landscape
I stopped.

And Alice,
it's true what they say
it's not the fall
that kills you.

Eachtraí Eilise i dTír na nÍontas (Wonderland in a new translation into Irish, but you knew that) from Coiscéim & Everttype, 2003. See www.everttype.com/gram/eachtraí-eilise.html. Best way to order is through the An Siopa Leabhar bookstore. Email them a credit card # or send it via post: ansiopaleabhar@eircom.net; An Siopa Leabhar, 6 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2, Ireland. Hardcover €20.00 + postage, paperback €7.50 + postage.

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ARTICLES

The Lincoln Center Theater Review, Issue 37 (Winter/Spring 2004) discusses the play *King Lear*, here directed by Sir Jonathan Miller and starring Christopher Plummer in the title role. The front cover photograph was J. M. Cameron's *King Lear Allotting His Kingdom to His Three Daughters*, 1872, featuring Alice Liddell as Cordelia. Inside was her *Alethea*, also featuring Miss Liddell.

An article by Ruth Gledhill in the *Times* (London), March 24, 2004, discusses Princess Louise, Queen Victoria's sixth child, and alleges that the Reverend Robinson Duckworth, he of the trip-up-the-Isis fame, was Louise's lover as well as her religious guide.

In *Children's Literature*, the annual of the Modern Language Association Division on Children's Literature and The Children's Literature Association, Volume 32, 2004, is "The Boy Who Lived: From Carroll's Alice and Barrie's Peter Pan to Rowling's Harry Potter" by Amy Billone. It asks the question, who is today's most beloved child character and argues that Harry Potter competes with Alice and Peter Pan and wins, by combining both of them inside himself.

"Missionary Mail from Tristan da Cunha, Part 2" by Robin Taylor in *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, June 2004, contains a photograph of a letter

from Edwin Dodgson to "My Dearest Maggie" and a complete transliteration of it, speaking about the difficulties of sending and receiving mail. The article is illustrated with Tristan stamps commemorating Dodgson's arrival on the island and the ships involved in his voyages. The article can be read online at www.gibbonsstampmonthy.com. You must register (free) before reading it.

The Vandeboncoeur Collection of Images, Issue Three (March 2002) has a 13-page color section on Harry Rountree, including his Alice work. images@bpib.com. 3809 Laguna Ave., Palo Alto CA 94306. \$20.

*
CYBERSPACE

Internet navigator—and a lot more!—Alexa (www.alexa.com) rates sites daily on the basis of traffic (of other Alexa toolbar users). Under "Lewis Carroll," the LCSNA has two of the top five (our Society page is #2, our Lewis Carroll home page #4). Surprisingly, the #1 most visited site is Ruth Zaroff's interactive adventure (*KL* 58:22), #3 is the Carroll page at www.literature.org, and #5 is the Pazooter Works' "Secrets of Lewis [*sic*] Carroll Revealed" (*KL* 67:27). Speaking of our Web site, there is a new page about the *Knight Letter* at lewiscarroll.org/kl/kl042004/KnightLetter.htm. Our "Lewis Carroll Home Page" is averaging 22,000 hits a month, from 132 countries.

"*Alice in Wonderland: A Children's Book or a Migraineur's Diary?*" by Deborah Wirtel suggests Carroll was actually a migraineur, and that Alice's manifestations in the book were representative of his migraine auras, which she discusses, along with "Alice in Wonderland Syndrome." It is a good summary and has some useful links. headaches.about.com/od/profiles/a/carroll_1.htm.

The Disney Channel's early '90s TV series *Adventures in Wonderland* has a fan site at www.lanceandeskimo.com/journal/alice.shtml. One of the programs (also in book form) was the rather peculiar *White Rabbits Can't Jump*, featuring O. J. Simpson as the title character.

Everything known about Kaulbach Island (Canada) and its 1976 *Wonderland* stamps can be found at www.rpsc.org/Library/kaulbach/more8.htm.

A picture of the Cheshire Catmobile from the 2001 Burning Man Festival at www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,46557,00.html.

"Twisted Alice, a spiritual prophylactic" rant at cosmicircus.com/twisted.htm.

A Mad Tea Party of mechanical dolls at www.ellenrxford.com/htmls/2mechdollsdyspla.html.

The "word of the day" on March 12 at Merriam-Webster's online site www.m-w.com was "jabberwocky." "This nonsensical poem caught the public's fancy, and by 1902 'jabberwocky' was being used as a generic term for meaningless speech or writing. The word 'bandersnatch' has also seen some use as a general noun, with the meaning 'a wildly grotesque or bizarre individual.' It's a much rarer word than 'jabberwocky,' though."

All you need to know about "Cheshire cells" ("The Cheshire group is the space group of the crystal when its material contents are removed leaving only the symmetry elements, like the smile that was left when the Cheshire Cat disappeared") can be found on www.ccp4.ac.uk/ccp4/html/cheshirecell.html.

Cutesy Korean cartoon characters called "Pucca" took a trip to Wonderland in June, according to their downloadable icon and "cross-stitch" [*sic*] patterns. Visit puccaclub.com/eng/.