



# The Cayuga Poker Society

## A Comprehensive Collection of The Newsletters

January 1994 through October 2006

by Don Cooke

## Introduction to the Cayuga Society Poker Newsletters

Don Cooke was born in 1918 and took up the game of poker in his early days. In his book of memories he wrote of playing poker for books among his young friends. He notes that it was an odd combination but it does explain two of his biggest passions.... books and poker. He also mentions having a full size pool table in his bedroom that he somehow finagled from a speakeasy that had gone out of business. Don was no stranger to gambling or its trappings.

He continued to play poker at St. Joseph's Prep and St. Joseph's College where he graduated in 1940. He served in General Eisenhower's HQ in World War II as a weatherman and refined his poker skills during the war years in Europe and North Africa before returning in the summer of 1946.

An excerpt from his memory book:

"Poker was a pretty common way for many to spend their time. This was even more so after the war ended. There were games almost every night and the weekend game would start Friday afternoon and last until Monday morning. When I first got into the army I thought I was a pretty fair player. I soon found out that I was mistaken and had to relearn the game and eventually became pretty good at it. The games in which I played were for large stakes and were played with American money in the form of \$100 postal money orders (we never played with the money the army issued - we only used real money."

"But the stakes were high - I remember one bet of \$700 in a game of five-card draw and I had a full house which I folded, a move that turned out to be correct. But \$700 in 1946 was worth much more than \$700 today. Nowadays, I would not dream of playing for stakes anywhere close to those. I came home with a lot of money - I even won \$1,500 more on the ten day trip back to the U.S. on the Sedalia Victory. June's engagement ring came out of the poker winnings as well as most of the furniture in setting up our first home."

After joining the Cornell University faculty he founded the Chemistry Department game which still continues 60 years later. Upon retirement, he broadened his poker community and whimsically founded the Cayuga Poker



Society. A self described "unusual organization with no by-laws, no dues, no officers and no meetings". He began writing monthly newsletters that initially focused on upcoming games and locations but expanded to several pages of subject areas that revealed Don's interests and passions. To read the newsletters is to know what Don Cooke was all about. Aside from the obvious poker related material, he delved into sports, politics, history, science and many other subjects with a keen eye on questioning accepted notions by applying logic, statistics and sometimes exhaustive scientific research. His sense of humor is also evident as is his eye for sultry and curvaceous women whose images he would splash across the newsletter banners. Don would meticulously compose the newsletter late into the evenings incorporating scanned images and his extensive library of fonts. The early newsletters were hand colored until he purchased a color printer. The mailing list grew to about 100 family and friends.... far more than those actually attending the games.

He published about 150 monthly newsletters from January, 1994 to October, 2006. In a brief but poignant paragraph introduction to the final issue he announced that he was ending the series due to June's failing health. A few weeks later she passed away. She was his beloved companion of sixty years and also his faithful proof reader.

Don continued as an active poker player in his final year. His poker companions would adjust their schedules and the locations of the games to accommodate Don's increasing immobility. His health deteriorated after June was gone but he was active until the end of his life lining up games a few days before he died on the September 20, 2007 of heart failure at the age of 89.

Always an observer of the political scene we can only imagine what Don would have written about the age of Obama, the economic collapse and the rise of the Tea Party movement.

The Cooke family hopes you enjoy the collection.



## About the Cayuga Poker Society



The Cayuga Poker Society is an unusual organization. It has no by-laws, no dues, no officers and no meetings. It is a loose confederation of about sixty individuals held together by a monthly poker schedule and newsletter. The Society has an exceedingly diverse membership. Ages range from undergraduates to emeritus professors. The list includes carpenters, a broker, a physician,

contractors, students, restaurant workers, a psychologist, an accountant, a company president, professors, computer types, people in real estate, scientists, house painters, writers, a veterinarian, an architect, - to name a few. There are fathers and sons involved but no mother - daughters. We are short on the distaff side.

The poker games are as varied. Currently there are ten different games. Stakes range from a \$2 maximum bet to one with a \$5 ante, pot - limit, table stakes. One game is limited to casino games but in another anything goes. Some allow wild cards but such looseness is not tolerated in others. Some games are chatty and others are more serious. Some members play in only one of the games, others in many. All the games are characterized by good fellowship and an enjoyment of the get-together. An angry word is a rarity and markers have always been made good.

In November 1997, seven members of the Society participated in the FARGO poker tournament at the Foxwoods Casino. One of us got to the final table and finished sixth ( of 75 ).

The origin of the Society goes back to 1987 when Don Cooke retired from Cornell. With 60 years of experience at the table, he decided that, with more time on his hands, he would broaden his poker horizons. As the number of games increased it was felt that a monthly schedule would be useful. Then some poker anecdotes were added and now there is a two or three-page newsletter covering poker, gambling, statistics, war stories and anything Don feels the membership might enjoy.







Poker Alice  
1850-1931

## THE LEGAL TENDER SALOON

The next poker tournament at the  
Legal Tender will be on Friday,  
November 5, 1893. at 8:00

Don Cooke, Proprietor

The Legal Tender was a frontier bar near Santa Fe that is still in business as an upscale restaurant. Poker Alice was born in 1850 to a wealthy English family and attended exclusive English schools. Her family came to Virginia and her father was a prosperous landowner. All was lost in the Civil War and Alice, as a young woman, found herself in Silver Dollar, New Mexico. She invested her stake in a poker game, after a long hassle about being allowed to play. She played well and became a legendary gambler, playing poker until her final days.







A Private Poker Game



November 15, 1993

### Poker Schedule:

The game on Friday, December 3, will be at Bob Raimon's. The one on Friday, December 10, will be at Don Cooke's. Both at 8:00.

For two months in the summer, New York throughbred racing moves to the Saratoga track. At the turn of the century, there was a lot more gambling at Saratoga than was evident at the track. There were a number of casinos (highly illegal - but the police got 15% of the profits). The best known one was the Club House which occupied a palatial building, now a museum. It was owned by Richard Canfield, who also had a couple of casinos in New York City until a Police Commissioner named Teddy Roosevelt decided to enforce the law. Women or local Saratogans were not allowed to gamble at the Club House, but the elegant restaurant was open to them.

But the big gambling was at the private poker games in the Saratoga hotels where such personalities as "Bet a Million" Gates and "Diamond Jim" Brady exchanged huge amounts of money. This was probably the heyday of big poker games, played by very rich men, with stakes involving hundreds of thousands of dollars.

One of Whistlers paintings, titled "His Reverency", depicts a clergyman with an impish smile. The reason for the impish smile may be that the model for the picture was none other than the notorious gambler, Richard Canfield.

Big Don 273-7745

# A Report on the Lottery



*You guys are probably wondering what happened to all those lottery tickets. Well i watched all 80 tickets go through the machine with nary a ripple. Sob Sob.*

*But then there were all those rub-off chances. Well I got a bit of a response there with a total of \$7. Figuring that this was not what you guys had in mind, I bought seven Pick Five tickets.*

*Miabele Dictu, four of the seven were winning tickets. One was \$25 and the other three were free plays.*

*So I have \$25 and three live tickets.*

*As the saying goes ( Yogi Berra ? ) It ain't over til' it's over.*

*The book is wonderful - in fact, I had it half finished the night of the game and it's a great source of stuff for the poker newsletter.*

*But it was a wonderful party which is greatly appreciated. After all, I have something that is better than winning the lottery - a goup of fine friends. Besides, I am afraid that if I won the \$25 million it would mess up a life with which I am very satisfied .*

*Don*

*PS With the \$25 I am going to buy one lottery ticket each week for the next 25 weeks.*





# THE MAD DOG CASINO

## House Rules For the Game of Poker

1 - Dealer's Choice - Dealer antes \$2

January 28, 1894

2 - Betting - Three raise limit- Last round \$5, next-to-last round \$2, all previous rounds \$1, except in five card draw where the opening round has a \$5 limit and the bet after the draw a \$10 limit. In Draw poker, the dealer antes \$3 and each player \$1.

3 - A raise can not be less than the previous bet/raise.

4 - The best low is 5 4 3 2 1, Straights and flushes do not count against low. In high-low, a pair of aces is lower than a pair of deuces.

5 - In high-low games a high-low declarer splits any ties. Players can not back into winning.

6 - In replacement games, a player may decline to replace one round and replace a following round. There is no betting after the declaration.

7 - Check and bet is part of good poker.

8 - At the end of a hand, all contested hands must show.

9 - If the dealer flashes a card in a case that cannot be remedied with the following card, the card is burned.

### Other Rules

Foul language is forbidden except when justified.  
Gentlemen do not play poker while wearing hats.



All you can eat or drink, \$3





# AN INVITATION

TO THE 2ND ANNUAL DON COOKE  
POKER TOURNAMENT AND PARTY

FROM PAUL RUBIN

**WHEN: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 3:00 PM**

**WHERE: PAUL RUBIN'S, 530 HUDSON STREET**

Come one, come all. Come to play, come to watch or to just enjoy the occasion. Bring the family, including the kids.

The buy in for those who play will be \$25 (with the option of \$25 rebuys if you lose the first stakes), plus a \$5 contribution for beer, soda, etc. Non-players are guests. The game will be no limit Hold'em. When the tournament is decided, there will be other games at whatever stakes players prefer.

Hudson Street begins about 100 yards south of State and Aurora (to the left). 530 is the only house between the South Hill School and Oak Hill Manor. Since it is a Saturday, you can park in the South Hill School parking Lot.

If you plan to play let me know or give me a call a call at 272-1870





To:  
From: don cooke <wdc2@cornell.edu>  
Subject: Heretical poker player.  
Cc:  
Bcc:  
X-Attachments:

Hi Guys:

All the books telling you how to play poker (and some are by the best players) have a uniform bit of advice: When you have a good hand, thin out the field. This gets rid of weak hands that may beat you with that river card. This strategy is so commonly held that is like gospel truth.

I question the strategy but it is so widely held that I would be dismissed as an ivory tower professor. But listen to what I have to say.

There is no question that such aggressive play increases your chance of winning. But there is a down side - you win less money with fewer players. So the decision involves a tradeoff between the chances of winning and how much you win.

Certainly slow play is appropriate in some cases. If, for example you have a lock you want as many players in as possible. Or better, you want the maximum amount of money in the pot.

Lets look at a few illustrative samples.

1 - A few nights back in a hold'em game, Don Slatoff raised under the gun. Everyone folded and he showed a pair of aces. He won \$7 with the best possible hand.

2 - You are in a head-to-head no limit hold'em game, starting with a pair of aces. You have an 85% chance of winning. You surely want that guy in the game even though you have a 15% chance of losing. Or you could drive him out early to make sure you are going to win a smaller amount?

3 You have wired nines, and the flop is 9, 9, Q. There is a chance that there is a hand out there with a pair of queens, and another queen might come up. Or someone can hold a high pair and the turn and the river might match that pair. You can increase your chances of winning by chasing a few players.

4 - The vast majority of hold'em hands have lousy expectations. You have a strong hand - do you really want those 9, 6 off suit hands to fold? They might beat you, but poker is a game of chances.

I hope that the above examples show that the decision as to aggressive or more gentle play is a tradeoff.

You have a pair of aces in hold'em. Would you rather play against four opponents or nine? If the hands are played over and over, the aces certainly have a better chance of winning with four, 56% vs, 31%. But the aces will return more vs. nine opponents, \$3.10 per dollar bet vs. \$2.80.

I did do a study which, I realize has significant limitations. I deal out ten hold'em hands (from a deck) with one being wired aces. then ran 100,00 deals on my computer program. Then I took the same ten hands and folded what I thought were the five worst hands. and ran 100,000 five handed runs.. I other words what do you gain by driving out five hands? I repeated this



experiment eight times.

Here are the results:

Win Rates %		
	Against Nine Opponents	Against Five Opponents
Deal #1	52%	82%
#2	38	50
#2	30	54
#4	37	62
#5	47	60
#6	39	55
#7	29	49
#8	33	56

As expected, in all eight trials the aces won a higher percentage of times when the five worse hands were folded.

But the Expected value ration shows a different story:

#### Expected Value Ratio of the Pair of Aces

	Against Nine Opponents	Against Five Opponents
Deal #1	\$5.24	\$4.10
#2	3.77	2.50
#3	3.02	2.73
#4	3.74	3.12
#5	4.73	3.01
#6	3.93	2.76
#7	2.96	2.49
#8	3.30	2.80

Eight trials are not very many but the pattern is clear. For what it's worth it is what I expected.

Don't forget - the experts can be wrong. How about weapons of mass distruction.

Don

## A Tale of Nine Irishmen

The year 1848 was a catastrophic one for Ireland. It was the time of the Great Famine. The potato crop, essentially the total diet of the poor, had failed for the third straight year. People died of starvation, a million in all, and another million emigrated. Dead bodies were commonplace along the roads and whole villages were deserted. To make matters worse, the British landlords were evicting the tenant farmers from their homes and demolishing the houses under the threatening eye of the armed British militia ( In 1849, 30,000 families were evicted...). The problem was not a shortage of food, there was corn, wheat, cattle, pigs, eggs, flour, lard, all of which the landowners shipped to England so the English would not have to pay higher prices for food from the continent. Irish members of Parliament argued to allow some of the food to be kept in Ireland but the British government had its own "ultimate solution" to allow the people to starve and force the emigration of those who survived. It was ethnic cleansing as defined by the present-day Serbs. The Quakers did try to help and had food shipped to Ireland and distributed at their own expense. America and the Sultan of Turkey also sent shiploads of food.

The British had 50,000 troops in Ireland to maintain order but there was little necessity because the population was so debilitated that revolt was hardly possible. But it did come, not from the peasants, but from the sons of the Irish gentry, the rich and the professional class who formed a group named Young Ireland. Irish Catholics and Protestants were joined in common cause and many of the group were Protestants. They preached independence from England. But the planned revolution, or "rising", to use the Irish term, failed because the people just did not have the strength for it. Further, the Catholic Church was opposed because it was feared that the British army, with their overwhelming power, would find a rising to be a legitimate excuse for a general massacre.

British reprisals against the Young Irelanders was swift and brutal – the charge was high treason, in most cases because of seditious speech or writing. Members of the outlawed group fled into hiding all across Ireland with the support of the peasants who spurned both the threat of retribution and the offers of rewards. Most were trying to get on ships to America, usually in disguise, because such ships were under continuous surveillance. Many were captured, but some did escape.







One of the first trials found four leaders of the Irelanders before the Court. For a century the juries had been stacked by the prosecution and this was no exception. Catholics were essentially barred from the jury and two of its members had the an unusual name, Going, the same name as the arresting sheriff. The defendants were defiant and unrepentant. They argued that justice was on their side, that they were in the right and declared that they would follow the same course of action again if they ever got the opportunity. The jury found the four to be guilty and the judge sentenced all to be executed by hanging. But one of the defendants was a well-liked member of Parliament and by action of Parliament all the sentences were commuted to "transportation" ( a euphemism for banishment ) to Australia. Few of those so banished ever returned.



Those sentenced to transportation included John Martin, Thomas Francis Meagher, John Mitchel and Kevin Izod O'Doherty, a medical student. One defendant, Charles Gavan Duffy, defied the odds and was not convicted. The Crown indicted him five different times and, even with stacked juries, could not get a guilty verdict.

Some slipped through the net and got to America. Four of those who escaped were John Blake Dillon, Thomas Darcy McGee, Richard O'Gorman, and Patrick J. Smyth.

What finally happened to these nine men is a remarkable story of the indomitable spirit of these Irish patriots.

**John Blake Dillon** After escaping to New York he was admitted to the Bar and became a prominent New York City lawyer who established a law office with Richard O'Gorman. Returned to Ireland and became a member of Parliament. His son was a leading member of Parliament for forty years.

**Charles Gavan Duffy** Emigrated to Australia in disgust over the Irish question. Was appointed Minister of Agriculture. Served twenty five years in the Victorian Parliament, four years as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and finally, as Premier Of Victoria. Knighted by Queen Victoria in 1878.

**John Martin** Pardoned in 1858 and returned to Ireland. He was again arrested for his fiery speeches but was acquitted. He became a member of Parliament.



Thomas Darcy McGee

Editor of the New York edition of the publication, The Nation. He went to Canada where he established a newspaper, The New Era. He was appointed Postmaster General and in 1857 was elected to the Canadian Parliament. In 1864 he became President of The Executive Council of the Dominion of Canada.

Thomas Francis Meagher

Member of the Bar in New York City. Established a newspaper, The Irish News. Distinguished service in the Civil War as a Brigadier General. He was appointed Military Secretary of the Territory of Montana and subsequently Governor of the Territory. A statue of Meagher on horseback presently stands in front of the State Capitol.

John Mitchel

Escaped from banishment to America in 1853. Became editor of the New York Daily News. He was sympathetic to the Southern cause and edited The Enquirer, the house organ of Jefferson Davis. He returned to Ireland in 1874 and was elected to Parliament. He was denied the seat because of his previous conviction. A county in Iowa is named after him, and his grandson, John Mitchel, was elected Mayor of New York City in 1913.

Kevin Izod O'Doherty

Finished his medical degree in Australia and became a surgeon and leader of the medical community. In 1865 he was elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly. In 1885 he returned to Ireland and became a member of Parliament.

Richard O'Gorman

Smuggled onto a ship sailing for Constantinople, eventually reaching the United States. Became a member of the Bar and established a law firm with John Dillon. Became a Judge of the Superior Court of the State of New York.

Patrick J. Smyth

Escaped to America by boarding a ship disguised as a priest. Became a reporter for the New York Tribune. Returned to Ireland and served as a member of Parliament from 1870 to 1880. In 1871 he was awarded the Legion of Merit from the government of France for his work with the Irish Ambulance Corps.

This tale supports the old adage "You can't keep a good man down". It may help to be Irish.



# BAT MASTERSON'S DENVER EXCHANGE



CREEDE COLO. 1891



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Bob Raimon's - Friday, January 7 - 8:00  
 The Lake Game -Boehlecke's - Saturday 8 - 5:00  
 Big Don's - Friday 14 - 7:00 ( note change of time ).  
 JEG's Omaha Club Tuesday 18 - 7:00  
 at Chris Murison's 506 Spencer Road ( upstairs ).

Most frontier lawmen, such as the two noted above, were primarily gamblers and usually owned and/or ran one of the gambling halls in town. ( The possibility of a conflict of interest seemed to be a quaint idea back in those days ). And they played both sides of the table. When things got slow at there own establishment they wouldbuck the tiger at faro at one of the rival casinos. This may seem dumb since they knew that the odds were all in favor of the house, even if the game was honest, and they were often, if not usually, crooked. Perhaps there is some truth to the old story about the sourdough who asked his friend why he played in a poker game that everyone knew was crooked. His friend responed " I know, but it's the only game in town ".

Earp and Masterson, who were close friends played the gambling circuit of frontier towns, Leadville, Cripple Creek, Tombstone, Dodge City, Silver City, Abilene, Deadwood and many other lesser known towns. They followed the gold and that is why Earp wound up in Nome, Alaska.

After 1900, civic minded citizens got laws passed banning gambling and casinos. They may have felt good about the laws but they made no difference whatsoever in the practice. It was not until World War One that casinos began to fade. Earp retired to Los Angeles where he died in 1929. Masterson was appointed a Deputy U. S. Marshall and in 1902 became a sports writer for the New york Morning Telegram. He held this job until his death in 1921.





Bar & Casino  
Leadville, Colo. 1880

## POKER SCHEDULE FEBRUARY, 1994



Leadville Colo.  
1882

Friday, February 4	Bob Raimon's	8:00
Saturday, February 5	Bob Boehlecke's	5:00
Friday, February 11	Don Cooke's	7:00
Tuesday, February 15	Jerry's Omaha Game at Bart Deluca's	7:00

As of July 1, 1887, the town of Deadwood, Dakota Territory, had 75 saloons and casinos. Included were The Bella Union, The Grand Central, The Little Bonanza, The Headquarters, The Red Bird and The Health Office ( an interesting name). Later, there was a Bagoda, an establishment that still exists with the same name in the same location. The names of these saloons were often whimsical and ranged from the sacred to the profane. The Church Casino got its name from the fact that it boasted a gothic, stained glass window. I do not know about the origin of the name of the St. Anne's Rest Casino. Some of the more outrageous names include; The Bucket of Blood, The Slaughter House, The Morgue and the Hog Ranch.

Another of the saloons in Deadwood was the Nuthill and Mann's Temple of Music. It was here on August 2, 1876, that Jack McCall walked up behind Wild Bill Hickok and shot him in the back of the head. McCall was acquitted of murder because he claimed that Hickok had killed one of his brothers. Later, however, in the Territorial capital of Yankton, after he bragged about the killing, he was arrested, tried, convicted of the murder and hanged. I guess they did not bother much with double jeopardy but then, frontier justice did not always include the niceties. In fact, it usually did not.





February 28, 1994

## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

March 5, Saturday, 5:00 Bob Boehlecke's

March 11, Friday, 7:00 Don Cooke's

March 15, Tuesday, 7:00 (Casino poker) Bart DeLuca's

March 18, Friday, 8:00 Bob Raimon's

The February schedule had two casinos, St. Ann's Rest and The Church. There were others with toney names such as The University Club, The Canterbury and even The Professor Saloon, named after Professor Dieffenbaugh, of whom I know nothing. Here are two at the other extreme, The Hog Ranch and The Morgue. John Owen owned many saloons, dance halls and gambling houses in Wyoming and Nebraska. Owen, a celebrated gunman and civilian scout for the Army, got into a poker game one night at a saloon in Chubbs Spring, a stage station on the Fort Laramie - Cheyenne. He had a good night and by morning he owned the saloon, the first of many.





I'll be  
gone from  
April 14 to  
May 15  
Paris

### *Poker Schedule for April*

*Bob Boehlecke's Saturday, April 2, 5:00    Don Cooke's Friday, April 8, 7:00*  
*Bart Deluca's Tuesday, April 19, 7:00    Bob Raimon's Friday, April 15, 8:00*

## **SAN FRANCISCO**

*The California gold rush of 1849 brought a lot of money, mostly in the form of gold dust, to San Francisco. Gambling houses sprang up overnight to take care of the influx. By 1851 there were over 1000 establishments where one could draw a hand of poker. This number did not count the places where the Chinese gambled. Aside from cultural, language and prejudicial problems, there was another barrier to a non-Chinese playing in the Fan-Tan houses. The game of Fan-Tan was incomprehensible to the Western mind.*

*The most popular saloon was the Bella Union. Perhaps because they had a unique ( a woman ) roulette croupier, a Frenchwoman by the name of Mademoiselle Simone Jules, who attracted a great deal of attention as well as a lot of money.*

*A few of the other names of the gambling houses were the El Dorado, the Mazourka, the Alhambra, the Empire, the Veranda and the La Souciudad ( French names tried to convey a bit of class which may or may not have been delivered ).*

*An newspaper ad of 1851 indicates that truth in advertising may not have been a strong point on the Barbary Coast, nor attitudes toward women.*

*At the Bella Union*

*You Will Find*

*Platin Talk and Beautiful Girls !*

*Really Beautiful Girls !*

*No Back Numbers, but as Sweet and Charming  
Creatures As Ever Escaped a Female  
Seminary.*

*Covely Tresses ! Covely Lips ! Buxom Forms !  
at the*

**BELLA UNION**



# Bonanza



France



USSR



Austria

Bob Raimon's	Friday, June 3, 8:00
Bob Boehlecke's	Saturday, June 4, 5:00
Don Cooke's	Friday, June 17, 7:00
Bart DeLuca's	Tuesday, June 21, 7:00

Also:

Tom Reiss's Thursday, June 2, 7:30  
and Thursday, June 16, 7:30  
Chemistry Dept, Ben Widom's Friday, June 10, 8:00  
English Dept, Dan McCall's Wednesday, June 8, 7:30



Italy



Japan



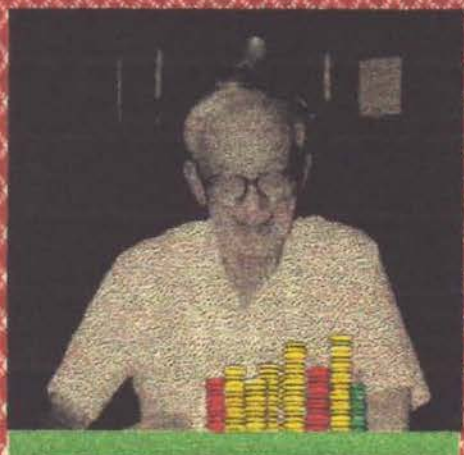
England



Spain

1994

**BIG DON'S  
PLACE**



# THE POKER SCHEDULE FOR JULY



Bob Raimon's Friday, July 1 8:00



Bob Boehlecke's Saturday, July 9 7:00

Note Date different because of the holiday  
Time different for the summer



Don Cooke's, Friday, July 15, 7:00

Note date different than previously decided



Bart Deluca Tuesday, July 19, 7:00

## Poker News

The most recent World Series of Poker at Binion's Horseshoe Casino was the 25th anniversary of the event. Binion's decided to award the winner his or her weight of silver to commemorate the occasion. The winner, Russ Hamilton, weighed in at 330 pounds ( and \$28512 ).

I am sure you guys are tired of hearing me say that in over 60 years of poker playing ( at a pretty good frequency ) I have never had a royal flush. On may 17, at the Mirage Casino in Las Vegas, at 4:00 PM., a fellow named Alex Hemstreet drew a royal flush in \$10-20 seven card stud. Fair enough --- but in the next hand he got another royal flush. Back to back royal flushes ---!!!!



# THE MAD DOG

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## SALOON

### *Poker Schedule for August*

*Bob Ralmon's Friday, 5th, 8:00*

*Bob Boehlecke's Saturday, 6th 7:00*

*Bart DeLuca's Tuesday, 16, 7:00*

*Don Cooke's Friday, 26, 7:00*

I am sure that those of you who were at the game at my house on July 15 will remember that, at the end of the game, the pot was short \$54. It was hard for us to imagine any circumstances that would explain the shortage. The reason that it was so hard to explain is that the pot was not short. In such a circumstance there is a mind set that the pot is short. But there is another explanation - there are too many chips. I am almost certain that is what happened. To begin with, the discrepancy was \$58 because I discovered another \$4 that I did not bother to declare. In fact, the discrepancy was probably \$60. Explanation --- I have two racks of chips, one is tailored for this game with the appropriate mix of denominations of chips. The other is essentially dead storage. Before the game I counted out six stacks of chips. But I did not have enough chips for the distribution and went to the other rack. It vaguely crossed my mind that this was odd because it always worked before. When I was putting the chips away after the game there was not enough room in the rack because of the extra chips and then came the dawn. The extra chips were needed because I had generously given all six players \$30 in chips instead of \$20. So there was \$60 more in chips than the money in the pot. The improvised solution of everyone contributing \$9 to the discrepancy (it should have been \$10) was just right. All of you know that I don't add too well.

### Poker at Atlantic City

I tried my hand at casino poker -- sucessfully. Since it was my first go, I picked a little game at the Claridge, no ante, \$1 - \$5 seven-card-stud, high only. I guess the players were mostly tourists -- the real poker players were elsewhere in bigger games. I reached that conclusion quickly -- with seven players, five or six met the first bet and there were three or four still in at the last bet. Further, in the three sessions there was not one instance of check-raise, which is allowed. Here is an example -- in one session I went two hours without winning a hand and was down only \$40. My first win profited me \$30, so I was only down \$10. Then I went another hour before the second win which gained me \$40 --- so after winning only two hands in three hours, I was ahead about \$10. I was playing very tight in a very loose game. In the next half hour I won three or four hands and walked away \$70 ahead.

Not only were the player not too strong but the staff was amateurish - see the enclosed letter.



# THE ORIENTAL CASINO



FIFTH ST. and ALLEN  
TOMBSTONE ARIZONA  
1880

## Poker Schedule for September

Bob Boehlecke's game will be at Bart DeLuca's at 7:00 Saturday, September 3. Game will end at midnight because Bart is off to a Las Vegas poker tournament at 8:00 the next morning.

Bob Raimon's at 8:00 Friday, September 16

Bart DeLuca's casino-rules-game at 7:00 on Tuesday, September 20

Don Cooke's game at 7:00 Friday, September, 23

Richard Brinsley Sheridan Clark was born in Cayuta, New York on April 15, 1838. He was a legendary gambler in the western frontier, usually, but not always, behind the table. He had one unusual characteristic for the times -- he was honest. He ran casinos throughout the West including one in Dodge City. In the late 1870s the Kansas cow towns became stogie and the real action moved further west. In 1880 Clark opened a casino in Tombstone, the Oriental. According to the Tombstone Epitaph it was the most elegantly furnished saloon east of San Francisco with crystal chandeliers and carved mahogany bars. Clark had a number of famous dealers including Bat Masterson, Luke Short, Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday, all of whom had moved on from Dodge City to follow the action.

### LONG SHOTS

In a previous issue of the poker schedule I noted the incident of a poker player with back-to-back royal flushes in seven card stud. Long shots and amazing coincidences do happen. Many "events" "happen" to one in a day, perhaps hundreds and, in a year, perhaps a million. So one can, over time, experience some amazing events, the one-in-a-million shots. Here's one which happened to me.

About 20 years ago there was a scientific conference at Cornell and I served as host for three visitors. We wound up at the bar in the Statler late at night on the final day and things went on. We had a pleasant young bartender who joined in the conversation. In the wee hours of the morning the bartender told us he was off to a new job in the morning and this being his last day, the drinks were "on the house".

The next morning I found myself on an early plane to Cincinnati for another conference. Following the afternoon sessions I was walking down the main drag of the city and decided I would have a drink before dinner. So I walked into a promising hotel bar. Who is behind the bar? You guessed it -- the young man who served me much earlier in the same day. After a couple of startling expressions of recognition he came out with this quickwitted remark "It's my first day on the job you gotta pay for your drinks."





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

Bob Boehlecke's	Saturday, October 1, 7:00
Don Cooke's	Friday, October 7, 7:00
Bart DeLuca's	Tuesday, October 18, 7:00
Bob Raimon's	Friday, October 21, 7:30

( Note change of time )

Mike Caro is a poker entrepreneur. He writes a column for *Cardplayer's Magazine*, writes articles, produces videos and runs a school for poker players. How good he is at the game, I don't know.

Recently, he has been pushing to change the color of the suits on playing cards. Spades would remain black and hearts would remain red.. However, diamonds would become blue and clubs green. He already has decks available but I don't think such decks are on the market. The idea is not a new one and has been around a long time. How it will go over or whether it will even get off the ground is anybody's guess. I thought you might like to see how they would look.





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER

<b>DON COOKE</b>	Friday November 4. 7:00
<b>BOB BOEHLECKE</b>	Saturday November 5. <b>5:00 NOTE TIME</b>
<b>BART DELUCA</b>	Tuesday November 15 7:00
<b>BOB RAIMON</b>	Friday November 18 7:30

### *Cheating at the Frontier*

Between 1850 and 1900 there were a number of first class casinos in western cities such as Denver and San Francisco. They featured crystal, mahogany, French wines and elegant women. The games were honest and the house depended on the reliable odds. But elsewhere, the sourdough, the cowboy and the soldier often had to face a vanishing small chance of winning in rigged games. Casinos were at times no more than a tent. There was vigorous competition among gambling houses to hire the "best" faro dealers. Since a faro dealer supposedly played a purely passive role, the "best" dealers were those who could deal with a house advantage. Cheating must have been rampant as evidenced by the ubiquitous advertisements for various items such as marked card, devices to load dice and to shave cards, and holdout apparatus. There appears to be a curious ambivalence about cheating. The use of marked cards, holdout devices and short changing were "dishonest" and indulged in a one's peril. However, the skillful manipulation of cards, such as dealing seconds, seemed to have been accepted as part of a good player's repertoire. Professional gamblers were generally considered to be professionals in the same league with the doctors and lawyers. Some of the cheating was not of the "tinhorn" variety. In 1847 during the U. S. -

Mexican War the soldiers played a game called Spanish monte. The cards used were Mexican so the usual marked cards were not useful. A syndicate, headed by one Bill Glemmens, bribed a Mexican card manufacturer to produce 14,000 decks of cards for which the investors supplied the plates. Inconveniently, the war ended before the scam could make much headway and the syndicate had a lot of funny cards, on their hands. Fortunately for them, gold was discovered in California which already had a large Mexican population which played Spanish monte. So the miners coming to San Francisco became victims of the syndicate. A lot of money was made and some members pulled out of the dangerous game. Others hung in long enough to order another 28,000 desks. By the time they became available everyone caught on that the cards were marked.

Some of the well known gamblers were honest in our sense of the term. "Poker Alice" Ivers ( featured in a previous schedule ) was good enough that she did not need any help







## POKER SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

<b>DON COOKE</b>	Friday, December 2, 7:00
<b>BOB BOEHLECKE</b>	Saturday, December 3, 5:00
<b>BOB RAIMON</b>	Friday, December 9, 7:30
<b>DON COOKE</b>	(Chemistry)
	Friday, December 16, 8:00
<b>BART DELUCA</b>	Tuesday, December 20, 7:00

## FARO



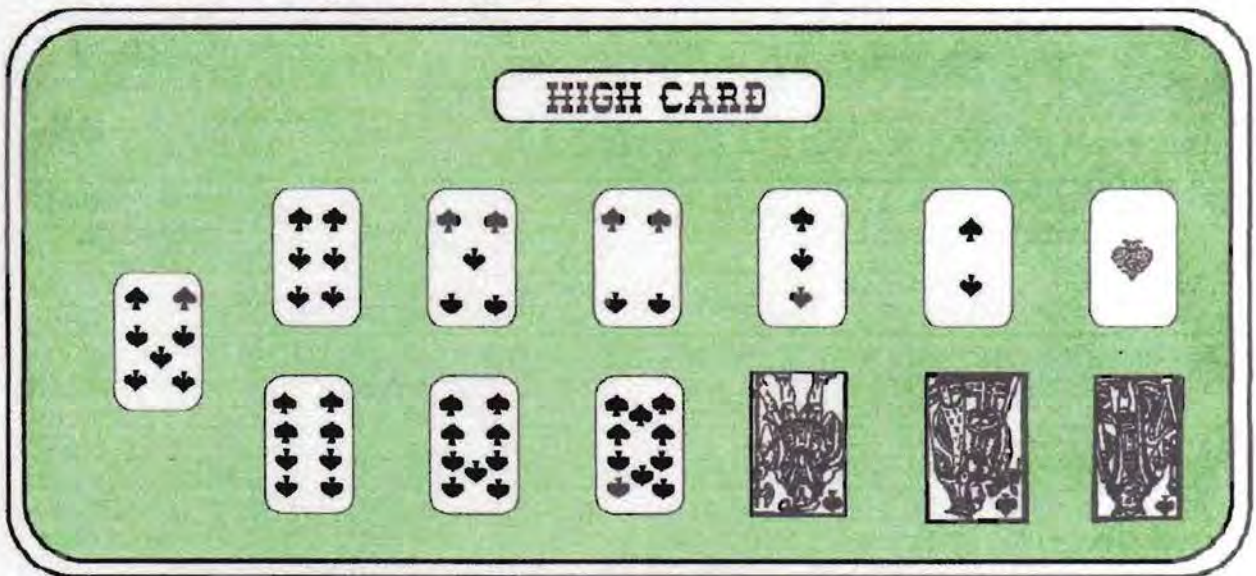
On the Western frontier there was probably more money wagered on Faro than any other form of gambling. For a variety of reasons it began to disappear about the turn of the century, usually replaced by craps. But even through the nineteen sixties a few of the Las Vegas casinos had a token Faro layout, mostly for old times sake.

The game came to America from France via New Orleans. In France it was known as Pharaoh but was played throughout Europe under different names and somewhat different rules. In the West cards were dealt from a shoe, conventionally decorated with tiger themes, and establishments that offered a Faro bank advertised with a picture of a tiger. To play against a Faro bank was known as "bucking the tiger".



3 rans  
Poker 16/9/94  
black  
green  
red

Faro was a banking game pitting the player against the house and was played with the usual deck of 52 cards. The betting was based in the order in which the cards were exposed from the shoe. Suits were irrelevant although a Faro layout was always shown with spades.



Players would place their bets by putting their chips on one of the ranks shown on the layout. The dealer would shuffle the cards and place them face up in the shoe. Bets would be placed and the top card would be slid out of the shoe and exposed. This first card was dead and was called the "Soda" (thought to be a corruption of zodiac). The dealer then drew out two more cards and placed them face up on the table. The first card of the pair is a loser and the second is a winner. For example, if the first card of the "turn" was a queen and the second a king, those who had bet on the queen lost their bets while those who had bet on the king won and were paid even money. Bets on cards other than the king or queen were undisturbed. After a turn, players were free to change their choice, or add to or withdraw their bets. The dealer then withdrew two more cards and the process continued. There was no house advantage in the odds offered but this advantage came into play when the two cards drawn were paired (called a split) in which situation the house took one half of the money bet on that particular card.



Not all Faro games were uniform and various other bets might be available. But all games had at least two other bets. One of these was the "high card" option and the place for this bet is shown on the layout above. This bet paid even money if the winner, the second card of the turn, was higher than the first card. If the two cards were paired, some casinos took half the bet, but others let it ride, giving up any house advantage on high card bets.



4 runs

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The other betting option was "calling the turn". After 24 turns, and counting the Soda, there were three cards left in the shoe. Players could place bets on the order of these three cards and were paid four to one. The correct odds are five to one so the house had a 16% advantage. If the last three cards contained a pair, the payoff was at two-to-one, the correct odds. You might ask why anyone in their right mind would bet on "calling the turn" when it was possible to make bets with no house advantage. The answer is in the nature of gamblers. In a modern-day casino the house advantage on the basic layout of craps is only about one percent and can be as low as 0.7%. But there are other possible bets on the layout with horrendous house advantages, such as 15%. Does anyone bet on these? They certainly do. Is it because they do not know about the high house advantage? Most know and make the bets anyway. The term "calling the turn" still exists in our language.

It may have occurred to you that, if in the course of the play, three aces have been turned, a bet on the ace has no house advantage because it cannot be paired. You did not even have to remember the cards that had been turned because the house did it for you with a case and a casekeeper.



The "case" was an abacus-like device which kept track of the cards which had been turned and the casekeeper was a houseman that managed the case. The case shown on the left indicates that three aces had been played and the fourth ace is still in the case, or the "case ace". (That's where our present day term originated). Of course the house did not like gamblers to play on the case cards on which it had no edge

so in some establishments you had call the turn in the previous round in order to bet on case cards. Even so it was better to bet on those ranks where some had been dealt. For example, if two deuces showed in the first three cards, deuces are less likely to pair which would result in the loss of half of your bet and are thus a better bet. The house advantage on random play is 29%. If one card shows, the edge on that card drops to 2%, if two cards appear it is only 1% and with the case card there is no edge.

Each player had his own color chips to avoid confusion with other bets. Also provided were a number of hexagonal tokens, called "coppers". By placing a copper on the bet meant that the original purpose of the bet was reversed. Players were also provided with rectangular chips. These chips could be used in lieu of a regular chip if a







## Poker Schedule, January, 1995

Don Cooke  
Bob Boehlecke  
Bart DeLuca

Friday, January 6, 7:00  
Saturday, January 7, 5:00  
Tuesday, January 10, 7:00

Note change to second Tuesday.  
Bart will be at a poker  
tournament in Las Vegas on the  
usual third Tuesday

Ben Widom

Friday the Thirteenth, 8:00  
(Chemistry)

Bob Raimon

Friday, January 27, 7:30

Throughout almost all of the United States gambling became illegal about the turn of the century. (Nevada was a notable exception). But, naturally, gambling did not stop— it just went underground. The big money games shifted from the West to the East. There were eight casinos in Saratoga, one of which was the Saratoga Club House, a very upscale establishment that I covered in a previous monthly schedule. In the late thirties there were 50 casinos in Miami, from sawdust joints to luxurious establishments where one was required to wear evening dress. One of these was the Beach Club which operated from 1898 to 1941. In fact, casinos operated relatively openly in most big cities.

Probably the most profitable establishment was The Barn, a sawdust casino in Fairview, New Jersey which operated between 1937 and 1952. It was not a clandestine sort of place. It had limousine pickups at New York City hotels and a bus system to bring customers to Fairview. There was a large clientele, which did not include locals. It is worth noting that all large gambling places tried to exclude locals for the obvious reason that people who play in casinos lose money. If a lot of the locals lost money it might be counterproductive.

The Barn was run by the Mob, primarily Willie Moretti, the kingpin of Bergen County. Profitable it was. Its monthly gross profits averaged more than the annual gross profits of the Monto Carlo Casino.

John Scarne, who writes about gambling, notes in one of his books that he witnessed Moretti bet \$60,000 against \$120,000 that he could make a four — he didn't. The real action was not against the house but between the Big Boys who bet cash against each other on the side. On the night of September 1, 1946 the Barn had a profit of \$1,250,251.

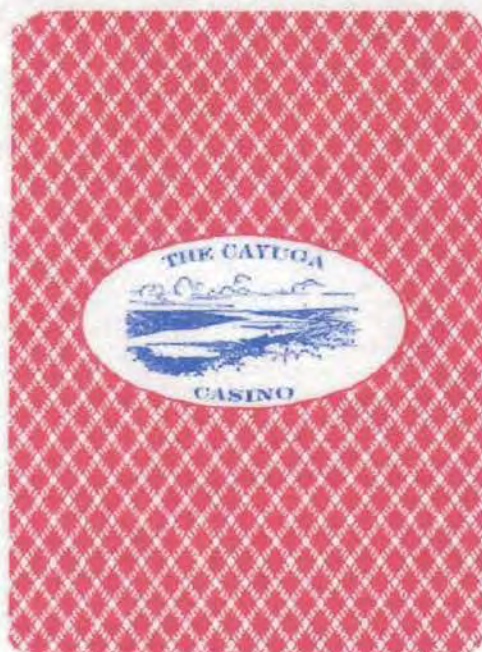
The big operations went out of business in the early fifties as a result of the exposures of the Keafaufer congressional commission.



Father Time has taken care of 1994, so have a

# HAPPY NEW YEAR & GOOD LUCK IN '95





## Poker Schedule for February

<b>Don Cooke</b>	<b>Friday, 3rd</b>	<b>7:00</b>
<b>Bob Boehlecke</b>	<b>Saturday, 4th</b>	<b>5:00</b>
<b>Chemistry(Len's)</b>	<b>Friday, 10th</b>	<b>8:00</b>
<b>Bob Raimon</b>	<b>Friday, 17th</b>	<b>7:30</b>
<b>Bart DeLuca</b>	<b>Tuesday, 21st</b>	<b>7:00</b>
<b>Tom's Game</b>	<b>Thursday, 9th</b>	<b>7:30</b>
<b>( At Tom's )</b>	<b>Thursday, 23rd</b>	<b>7:30</b>

## The Greek Syndicate

The Greek Syndicate was a group of four individuals, three who were the rich backers of Nico Zographos who was the player. Zographos was a powerful force in the posh casinos of Europe in the 1920s and 1930s and considered by many to be the most exciting professional gambler in history. He was also a charming man who made friends among the leaders of European Society. (The Syndicate had no connection with the American Nicholas Dandolos who was known as Nick the Greek ).

Zographos was born in Athens in 1885, the son of a university professor of economics. He went to Paris after the first World War where he became a bookmaker. In 1922 he convinced three rich countrymen that he was a good investment as a gambler. Zographos had an extraordinary memory. For example, Baccarat at that time was played with six decks of cards dealt from a shoe and dealing was continued until there were fewer than nine cards left. More often than not, Zoagrophos could name the cards remaining in the shoe and the order in which the 300 + cards had been dealt.

The Syndicate took on the worlds most famous gamblers for huge stakes both in private games and in casinos. In the casinos the game was Baccarat, which was then played differently than the present-day casino game. At that time one of the players could be the dealer and the house would take a cut of the winnings or make some other arrangement. When a player took over the deal he announced how much he was willing to stake on the coming hand, or coup.

The other players, in turn, could take a piece of the action, up to the total amount wagered by the dealer. The dealer had one hand and the players had one hand representing them all and was played by the person who has bet the most. There was no room for argument as to how the one who played the hand had performed since all actions are mandated by the cards that are held.



*A Busted Flush*





Briefly, the object of the game in Baccarat is to get closer to a total of nine than the opponent. With ties there is no bet. One cannot bust out because of the fact that tens do not count – if one had a total of five and was dealt a seven, the total would be two instead of twelve. Face cards have a value of zero.

In 1926 André Citroën, the automobile manufacturer, took on Zographos and lost 13 million francs ( about \$3,000,000 ) in one session. As a result he temporarily lost control of his business. It is estimated that, over time, Citroën lost over \$7,000,000 to Zographos and he eventually did lose the business.

A wealthy American once challenged Zographos to a single hand of Baccarat for a quarter of a million dollars. Zographos agreed to the bet but for the best of three hands rather than one. Zographos lost the first hand but won the next two.

Of course he did not always win and sometimes he lost big. A Chilean finance minister once won \$4,000,000 from Zographos and offered a bet of double or quits for the four million. For once in his life he declined to accept a bet.

In 1928 Zographos had a prolonged losing streak and was down to his last million francs ( \$250,000 ). He decided to go all in with a single hand of Baccarat. Big gamblers took up the challenge and the event took place at the Monte Carlo Casino. Zographos dealt and the opponents got two down cards and stayed. ( By the rules of the game, the player would have to have a total of 5, 6, or 7. ) Zographos had two face cards, a total of zero. He turned over the next card from the shoe and it was an unbeatable nine of diamonds. The nine of diamonds (\*) became his personal emblem, e.g. the pennant on his yacht ( he lived a luxurious life ).

Zographos never looked back from that close call and when he died in 1953, unlike many big gamblers, he left an estate of \$20,000,000. On the other hand Gordon Selfridge, founder of the famous London department store died with an estate of only \$8000, owing Zographos \$320,000.



(\*) The nine of diamonds is known by two names, the "Pope" and "The Curse Of Scotland". The origin of the name Pope is well established. It comes from a Victorian card game which was called Pope Joan. ( Legend has it that there was a female pope in the ninth century called St. Joan ). One could make a bet on the Pope, the nine of diamonds. The origin of the name the Curse of Scotland is not as straightforward. One theory is that the nine of diamonds resembles the coat-of-arms of the Earl of Stair, who was detested in Scotland because of his role in the Massacre at Glencoe in 1692 where 40 members of the MacDonald Clan were killed by Loyalist troops.





# POKER SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

Bob Boehlecke	Saturday, the 4th,	5:00
Tom's game at Don's	Thursday, the 2nd, Thursday, the 16th, Thursday, the 30th	7:30
Don Cooke	Friday, the 10th	7:00
Bart DeLuca	Tuesday, the 21st	7:00
Bob Raimon's game at Bart's	Friday, the 17th	7:30
NOTE CHANGE		
Chemistry	Friday, the 24th	8:00
At Fred's, note change of date; still tentative		



## LONG SHOTS



If you thought that this is a scene from a James Bond movie you are close, but not quite right. Is that not Bond played by Sean Connery at a roulette table surrounded by beautiful women? Actually, it is Sean Connery, but in real life, not playing the role for which he is so well known. He is shown at a casino on St. Vincent Island in 1963 and he really is surrounded by glamorous women. How come the photograph? A photograph in a casino is a very rare event and only happens when the casino can get some favorable publicity by showing big winners. Connery did not win that big (\$40,000) but he did it in an unusual way. It started with a small bet (about a dollar) in roulette on the number 17. Seventeen hit and he let the winnings ride for another turn. Again 17 – again he let it ride (he now had a bet of over \$1000 on the number). And, as you might have guessed, a third 17 came up. The odds against a specific number three times in a row is somewhat over 50,000 to one. I don't think that the director of even a James Bond movie, would be bold enough to build such an improbable event into the show.



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Three hits in a row for a number in roulette is not all that unusual. For any unspecified number, it's only about 1000 to one. The record for hits in a row in roulette is unknown, but it is recorded that the number 10 came up six times in a row at the El San Juan Casino on July 9th, 1959. Such an event calls for odds of about one hundred million to one. ( I gambled at that casino at about that time ).

In 1931 the Casino at Monto Carlo had a consecutive run of 28 even numbers ( odds, about 268 million to one ), and I have read that there is a pair of dice on display at a Las Vegas casino with which a young man had a streak of 27 passes ( odds, about 134 million to one ). And then there is the recent case at the Mirage in Las Vegas of a player getting two royal flushes back-to-back in seven card stud.

The first reaction to all these long shots is amazement that such a thing could happen. But another reaction could be sort of a "ho-hum". It all depends on how one looks at the situation and how the accounting is done. For example, as noted, the odds on the 27 passes in a row in craps is 134 million to one. But, of course, those odds only apply to a single attempt. Considering that a craps table might have a thousand come-outs a day ( a ball-park guess ), or a thousand tries, the odds of having 27 passes in a row at a craps table in the course of a day drop to only 134,000 to one. If a casino operates ten tables the chances of a casino having 27 consecutive passes in a single day is 13,400 to one, or in the course of a year 36 to one. So, using these guesses as to the level of activity, a casino should expect to experience one run of 27 passes in a row once every 36 years. Since there are more than 36 casinos in the country, the event should happen to somebody, somewhere, more than once a year.

It is worth noting that Ian Fleming, who wrote the James Bond series of books, knew a lot about espionage. He was Deputy Director of Intelligence for the British Admiralty during World War II and was instrumental in the establishment of the CIA. The British sent him over to help us with the organization of the agency. I worked at the Admiralty for a short time during WWII planning for D-Day, as did Fleming, but I never met him

Fleming had an interest in casinos ( he could afford to indulge ) and that's probably why they figure so prominently in his books. In the late 1930s he came across Zographos of the Greek Syndicate ( who was covered in a recent poker schedule ) and, according to Fleming's biography, he was so fascinated by Zographos' verve and courage that he became a role model.



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR APRIL



<b>Bob Boehlecke</b>	Saturday, April 8, 7:00 NOTE DATE & TIME
<b>Bob Raimon</b>	Friday, April 14 7:30
<b>Bart DeLuca</b>	Tuesday, April 18 7:00
<b>Tom Reiss</b>	Thurs. April 13 & 27 7:30 At Don's
<b>Don Cooke</b>	Friday, April 28 7:00
<b>Chemistry Dept.</b>	Friday, April 14, 8:00
<b>English Dept.</b>	Late April at Don's Date not yet established

## NICK THE GREEK



### Nick the Greek with Jack Dempsey

To the average American, Nick the Greek is probably the best known gambler. A problem in writing about him is that he became a legendary figure, and legends usually get embellished. Much of what has been written is conflicting and a great deal of it stretches credulity. This little piece attempts to separate the wheat from the chaff but it's a bit difficult to know which is which.







Nicholas Andrea Dandalos was born in Crete in 1883, the son of a wealthy rug merchant and the godson of an even wealthier ship owner. He received a bachelor's degree in philosophy and his father wanted him to go to Oxford to continue his studies. But traveling was considered to be broadening for young men so, at age nineteen, his godfather sent him off to America to a relative in Chicago. It so happened that the relative ran a bar and restaurant and gambling was not unknown on the premises. There was a great deal of poker, mostly five card stud, played in the Greek community, and young Nick initially took his lumps from the old hands. But he did learn. After an unhappy love affair he went off to Canada and was initiated into thoroughbred racing. Fortunately he was on the right side of the wagering since he had a friend who was a bookmaker. He spent about a year in Canada and was fabulously lucky and built up a large stake. It seems that the name "Nick the Greek" came about from a story about him in the Daily Racing Form.

The early decades of the twentieth century was the time of the high rollers. Most of the big players were very rich businessmen who competed fiercely against each other across the green baize. There were only a few that were professional gamblers. Nick was one. Perhaps the most prominent one was Arnold Rothstein. Dick Canfield was another who was a professional but made his money by running casinos, particularly in Saratoga. And then there were members of the Mob who ran most of the illegal gambling operations but who were not adverse to betting against the house and each other.

In the Twenties Rothstein arranged a shootout ( with dice ) in New York City for eleven players with a half-a-million dollar buy-in, winner take all. It's interesting that this game was played with cash, not chips or markers. But in those days \$10,000 bills were in circulation and was the coin of the realm for this affair. Dandalos was in the game as well as another professional, "Titanic" Thompson. The eight others were wealthy men. There was Tiffany Wolfgang, who owned diamond mines in South Africa; a Kentucky horse breeder, Lance Kingman; "Neptune" Daniels, a yachtman from Maine; Efemio Salazar who had sugar plantations in Cuba; "Tiger" Pat







O'Neill of Tammany Hall; Joshua Cogden who was into steel and Charles Stonham who owned railroads. Rothstein won the \$5.5 million and for "car-fare-home money" presented each of the ten losers with a Rolls Royce. Rothstein was not adverse to improving the odds. He was suspected of using ringers in horse races and was probably the instigator of the Black Sox scandal although the trial verdict was "not guilty". Rothstein died of acute lead poisoning (two bullets) over a gambling debt involving the Mob. There was a trial which acquitted mobster George McManus of the murder.

Nick took a shot at the European casinos and met up with Nick Zographos (subject of a previous newsletter) with whom he got along famously. Together they had a fling with the Dolly sisters who were two Hungarian actresses in the retinue of George Selfridge, the British department store mogul. That was before Selfridge went broke in 1935, in no small part as a result of his failures at Baccarat.

As the big games wound down in the late Thirties, Nick spent more and more time at Las Vegas, eventually moving there in 1943 where he became quite a tourist attraction. In 1953 the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce polled visitors to the city and one of the questions asked what natural resource of Nevada would they most like to see. Nick the Greek edged out Boulder Dam by eight votes.

Over the long run he did not do very well. But it appears that he was such an attraction that he became a shill, gambling with the casinos money. In the Sixties, however, as the number of visitors greatly increased, the subterfuge became counterproductive. The crowds watching Nick gamble became so large that it attracted gamblers away from the primary business of the casino, keeping the customers at the tables. So Nick moved on to Los Angeles. He was never able to get a stake together again and died there in 1966. The casino owners brought his body back to Las Vegas for an elaborate funeral, one last insult—a sad case.

It appears to me that Nick the Greek, while flashy, flamboyant and a well-known plunger was not an astute gambler. He seems to be better known for his losses, like the \$600,000 poker pot he lost to Arnold Rothstein. He also bet a lot at the track. That's OK for amusement or the bookies, but I don't think anyone can beat the large track cut to make a living. (However, there is a rare situation in racing which favors the bettor— I'll save it for a future newsletter ).





# POKER SCHEDULE FOR MAY

1995



*The Stuff from which  
Dreams are Made*

Bob Boehlecke	Saturday, May 6, 7:00
Bob Raimon	Friday, May 12, 7:30
Bart DeLuca	Tuesday, May 23, 7:00 NOTE CHANGE
Tom's game	Thurs. May 11 & 25, 7:30 At Don's
Don Cooke	Friday, May 26, 7:00
Chemistry Dept.	Friday, May 5, 8:00 at Ben's
English Dept.	Monday, May 1, 7:30 At Don's

Being away for ten days in late April prevented me from completing a poker newsletter story. However, I am enclosing something that I hope you will find interesting. I am always sending things to my grandchildren. Because I have three granddaughters I look for role models and Babe Didrickson fits the bill wonderfully. She was a phenomenon.

## The Ultimate Put-down

But I have one gambling story. King Farouk of Egypt was a heavy gambler in the casinos of Europe. He was immensely wealthy. He was also a playboy, a womanizer and had a personality that made him easy to dislike. He traveled between casinos in his private train (not car, but train). When he went to Cannes he reserved 42 rooms for his entourage at the posh Carleton Hotel.

This incident happened in 1950 as reported by Charles Graves, who wrote a book about the Greek Syndicate. Farouk was playing baccarat at the casino in Deauville and a beautiful young woman was playing in a seat next to him. He was making continuous advances to her with no success. As the evening wore on the young lady was losing heavily and was down to a few chips. Farouk passed her a million franc plaque which at the time was worth about \$20,000, a considerably sum in 1950, or even in 1995. Without hesitation, the beautiful unknown passed the plaque to the croupier with a sweet smile and the comment, "pour le personnel". Graves writes that Farouk's face was a study.

Farouk was deposed in 1953 by a group of young army officers.



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR JUNE

1995

Bob Boehlecke

Saturday, June 3, 5:00  
At Bart's NOTE CHANGE

Bob Raimon

Friday, June 16, 7:30  
At Don's NOTE CHANGE

Bart DeLuca

Tuesday, June 20, 7:00

Tom's game

Thurs. June 8 & 22, 7:30  
At Don's

Don Cooke

Friday, June 30, 7:00

Chemistry Dept.

Friday, June 2, 8:00  
at Fred's

English Dept.

Monday, June 19, 7:30  
At Glen's



## The Casino Gambler's Dilemma

*This discussion is limited to those casino games in which no skill is involved such as craps. Of course, in the long run there is no way to beat the game, but the fickleness of statistics does allow you to have some great winning nights. Since the games are purely random, at first glance, it might seem that it makes no difference how you play. I think that this presentation will show that how you play makes a tremendous difference. The only advantage the gambler has over the house is the control of the size of the bets to be made and the decision as to when to quit. ( But they are not enough to overcome the house edge ). For the purpose of this discussion, I devised a concept which might be called a Win Percentage, defined as the percentage of the times that you walk out of the casino with some of their money. ( The amounts of money won and lost are of great importance but not for the point I am trying to make ).*

*The operating concept in this discussion is that the nature of statistics allows large relative fluctuations from normal in short runs but they get smaller and smaller as the runs become longer and longer. A conclusion of this premise is that a gambler maximizes the chance of a winning night by deciding on the amount to be wagered, placing it all on one roll of the dice and, win or lose, walking away. Not a very attractive way to spend an evening especially after the effort of getting to the casino. The converse situation is that as the amounts which are bet become a smaller and smaller percent of your stake, your chances of winning get worse and worse. In fact, if the bets are very small the chances of winning become insignificant.*





*I have featured so many frontier saloons in past newsletters that I thought I would try one from another time and another place.*

Assuming you will not want to maximize your chances of winning by making a single large bet, the following analyses illustrate how a longer stay at the tables affects your chances of walking away a winner.

The methods of betting used in these analyses are not how players generally gamble, but the concepts can be generalized to almost any way of wagering.

Let's assume you approach the craps table with the following plan: you will invest \$100; if you lose the hundred you will walk away; if you reach \$200 you will quit with \$100 of the casino's money. The variable here is the size of the bets you make and how this factor affects your chances of going home ahead. If you make one bet of \$100, you will either go broke or leave with a winning of \$100. The Winning Percentage for this bet is 49.3%. Instead of a \$100 bet suppose you decide to bet \$25 on each roll. You will be able to play longer (average 16 bets) but at a cost of a lower Winning Percentage, 41%. If you make bets of \$5 you can probably play all night (average about 350 rolls), but the Winning Percentage has dropped to 37.5%.

Here is another analysis. You decide you will make a predetermined number of bets of a fixed amount and then quit. This analysis shows how the number of bets affect your Winning Percentage. The amount you bet on each roll does not matter in this analysis. If you make a single bet, the Winning Percentage is 49.3% as above.

The table below shows how the Winning Percentage declines as the number of bets increases.

<u># Bets</u>	<u>Winning Percentage</u>
1	49.3 %
50	40.5
500	36.0
5,000	15.7
50,000	0.9

The last line shows that if you have the stamina for 50,000 bets you will go home a loser more than 99 times out of a hundred.

Another way of looking at the phenomena is that the house takes a 1.14% cut (come bet) of your money every time you win. For a roll or two of the dice it won't account for much. But if you persist, this cut accumulates and eventually the casino has all your money. The people who manage casinos are well aware of the statistical advantage. That is why there are no clocks, no place to sit down and you can't see outside to know if it is getting dark (or light). The longer you play the more likely they are to drive you down to the felt.





The effect of the number of bets on the Winning Percentage becomes more significant at the tail ends of the distribution curve. Here is another example. You have a \$1000 to bet at craps. You can make 10 bets of \$100 and quit, win or lose. Or you can make 40 bets of \$25 each and quit. To move from the center portion of the distribution it might be asked what are the chances of winning at least 80% of the bets and winning \$600 or more in both of these cases?

In the case of the ten \$100 bets, you would have to win at least eight of the ten bets to win \$600 or more. In the case of the forty \$25 bets you would have to win at least thirty-two bets to win \$600 or more. Winning at least eight of the ten bets intuitively, seems within the realm of possibilities and it is. It's about an 18 to 1 shot. However, winning thirty-two or more of the forty \$25 bets is a very different story --- 7000 to 1. Another example which demonstrates that the longer you play, the smaller are your chances of winning.

So the dilemma comes down to whether you throw the dice a few times which give the best chance of winning, or enjoy an evening at the craps table giving the house an even larger advantage.

There is another side of the coin. In games which involve skill, such as blackjack and poker, if you feel the odds are in your favor, the longer the play goes on the greater your advantage. In such a case the statistics grind along in your favor.

In the three examples covered above, the data for the first two were simulated from a computer based craps program I dreamed up. The third was a theoretical calculation.

In the English Department game on May 1st, playing seven card high-low, Tony Caputi was dealt two aces in the hole and then an ace up. His fourth card was also an ace for rolled up quad aces, a once-in-a-lifetime event at 270,000 to 1. He won high.

The odds on any rolled up quads are 21,000 to 1. I defied these odds by twice getting rolled up quads, sevens and eights, in the last 18 months. Strangely, the quad sevens did not win. In Tom Reiss' game there is something called "control", a seven card game in which, after the fourth up card, the high hand can call off the hand. Turk Rose, with a pair of aces showing, called the hand off. Bad luck? Not at all. I eventually won the hand anyway, and the pot was larger. You never know.

Do you know that there are two kinds of dice, right and left handed?

Left-handed  
1,2,3 are counterclockwise



Right-handed  
1,2,3 are clockwise

Most casinos use left-handed dice



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST



Bob Boehlecke	Saturday, August, 19- 7:00 At Bob's NOTE CHANGE
Bob Raimon	Friday, August, 18-7:30 At Don's
Bart DeLuca	August 15, 7:00
Tom's game	Thurs. August 17 & 31 7.30 At Don's Note Change
Don Cooke	Friday, August 25, 7:00
Chemistry Dept.	Friday August 18 8:00 at Frank's
English Dept.	Wednesday, August 2, 7:30 At Dan's

## BETTING ON THE HORSES

In one of the newsletters a few months back I mentioned that there are two instances when the track odds can favor a bettor. There has been, as might be expected, some skepticism expressed about the remark, so this month's schedule is devoted to an explanation.

First, for those of you who may not be familiar with racetrack betting, a word about how track odds are calculated may be useful. Before the race begins, the odds on each horse to win will be posted. For example, the favorite, the horse with the shortest odds, may go off at two to one which means that a \$2 winning ticket would pay the holder \$6 ( the \$4 won and the \$2 bet ). The odds in a race are determined by a pari-mutual system. ( The "pari" part comes from Paris where the system was first developed ). This method calculates the odds assigned to each horse by the pattern of those betting on the race. To make the calculation, the amount bet on all horses to win is totaled and the track cut is deducted. The remaining dollar amount is called the "winning pool" which is divided among all those holding winning tickets. Therefore, the more \$2 tickets sold on the winning horse, the smaller the return on the \$2 bet.

One of the circumstances where betters can have the odds in their favor is when betting on horses that are overwhelming favorites. These horses return less than \$2 . 50 for every \$2 bet. in other word the odds are in favor of the horse winning by at least one to four. That is not a very exciting wager - to bet \$2 to win fifty cents or less.





Many books have been written about betting at the racetrack and a common theme running through all of them is that the short-odds horses are a much better bet than the long shots. The phenomena is explained by the fact that people prefer to bet on the long shots. It is so much more fun to win \$50 on a \$2 wager rather than a lousy fifty cents. The result is that bettors shy away from the short-odds horses to a disproportionate degree meaning that the bet is a better one for those who stick to the short-odds horse.

But no one had hard data until a gentleman by the name of Fabricant analyzed 10,000 races which were run between 1957 and 1962. He showed that for horses ( 129 examples ) paying 50 cents or less, the odds were in favor of the bettor by 3.4%. On the other hand horses going off at 20 to 1 returned only 74 cents on the dollar.

One can convincingly argue that once such a fact becomes known, people will move in to benefit from the advantage and it will thus disappear. But there are two factors that work against this course of action. First there are few races where a horse goes off at odds of one to four or less. At a New York City track there may be only one such race in a period of a week or two. The other factor is that if you pour a lot of money into backing a horse you reduce the payout so it would be hard to make much money. A later study by Professor Ziemba ( with whom I have corresponded about betting ) of the University of British Columbia examined all the New York City races for 1980. He found that overwhelming favorites ( 3 to 10 or less ) yielded a 6% advantage to the bettor. However, he only had 19 races in his sample so the results do not mean much. I have results for two years of racing at New York City tracks in the early nineties. I'll study the return on overwhelming favorites for these races and let you know, in a future newsletter, if the bettor's advantage is still holding up.

It is hard to make a living at the racetrack. The track takes a big cut ( 17% in New York State ) and gets an additional 2% by rounding off the payout to the nearest lower dime. It is difficult to overcome such a house advantage. Even the experts don't do well. The New York Daily News, the Racing Form and the Associated Press have experts who make their selections for the edification of the betting public. I followed the fortunes of these newspapermen for a full session at Saratoga one recent year. The Daily News had four experts. The best of the four returned 82 cents on the dollar and the others returned less than 80 cents. The Associated Press people returned 76 cents and the Racing Form 70 cents. Since the track returns 80 cents, they didn't do as well as the average bettor. But the newspaper experts are at a distinct disadvantage. They have to make their choices at least 24 hours before the race with



with no knowledge as to what the odds on the horses are going to be or no information as to the condition of the track. They also have to bet on every race whether or not they have any confidence in their predictions.

A day at the races can be enjoyable but, on average, you can't expect to come out even. Whatever you do, resist the temptation to bet on the longshots. I analyzed 1000 races in New York City. In these 1000 races there were 190 horses which went off at odds of 80 to 1 or longer. Not one of them won a race.

The other situation where the odds can favor the bettor involves the Pick-Six bet at New York City tracks. With this bet one tries to pick the winners of six consecutive races, the second through the eighth. The Pick Six pool may be about \$50,000 and, as you can imagine, there won't be many tickets picking the winners of the six races, so the payoffs are large, even when there are multiple winners. Like other bets at the track, the Pick-Six is a poor bet, given the house cut of 20%. But, about once in every eight or ten races, no one has a ticket picking the six winners. In such a circumstance most of the pool is added to the Pick Six pool for the following day. Since the people who bet the \$50,000 yesterday have given up their money, the odds now favor the bettors. Most people are aware of this, so there might be \$100,000 bet on the second day for a pool of perhaps \$125,000 or more. If there is no winning ticket on the second day, the undistributed money is again carried over and the pool can approach a million dollars, serious money. For the ordinary bettor, even given favorable advantage on the wager, there is the problem of trying to beat the thousand-to-one shot. The big boys have an answer. They form syndicates with each partner contributing a substantial amount to the cause. They then reduce the thousand-to-one shot by laying a lot of bets. For example, if they have little confidence in the eighth race they could buy enough Pick Six tickets to include every horse in the eighth race. Then it does not matter which horse wins in that race. They wind up with thousands of tickets but it is a favorable bet and their chances of winning are greatly increased.

## THE SYNDICATE



P. S. The logo on the envelope is a product of my imagination, but the Club House did exist. It was an elegant casino which ran during the racing season at Saratoga at the turn of the century. It had a restaurant which was rated the best in the country (and also charged the highest prices). Gambling was illegal and a large percentage of the operating expenses went for bribes. The facility was operated by Richard Canfield, a well known gambler who also ran a posh casino in New York City at 5 East 44th Street. The artist Whistler is famous for the portrait of his mother. He painted another portrait entitled, His Reverancy. The model for this work was none other than the notorious Dick Canfield.



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER

KENO \$Bet <b>5</b>									
1	2	X	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	X	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	X	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	X	59	60
61	X	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
THE CAYUGA CASINO									

Bob Boehlecke Saturday, Sept. 9, 7:00  
NOTE CHANGE

Bob Raimon Friday, Sept. 8, 7:30  
At Don's

Bart DeLuca Tuesday, Sept. 19, 7:00  
Tournament - Razz

Tom's game Thurs Aug. 31 & Sept. 21  
7:30 At Don's  
NOTE CHANGE

Don Cooke Friday, Sept. 22 7:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday Sept 29  
8:00 at Don's

English Dept. Wednesday, Sept. 6.  
7:30 At Isaacs

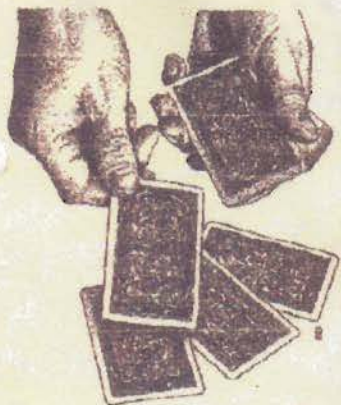
## The man who outfoxed the casino ~ fair and square

Keno is the sucker game of the casinos. The house advantage averages 20%, which is worse than the slots. In the game, 20 numbers are randomly selected from the numbers 1 to 80 and the player bets on which numbers might be in the 20 numbers that come up. A player betting \$1 on a single number to be among the 20 is paid \$320. The real odds are 3 to 1 (paying \$400). One of the more popular bets is the selection of 10 numbers to appear among the 20 which pays the princely odds of 25,000 to one. (The real odds are 112,500 to one, but the bettor also gets paid something for at least five correct).

At one casino, the security people began to develop an interest in one player who was winning consistently and big. He was always around but he did not play very much - but when he did, his luck was phenomenal. Such a pattern is bound to attract the attention of the "eye in the sky". It almost seemed like the player knew what numbers would come up! As a matter of fact, that was the case. The player knew exactly what the twenty numbers would be before he made his bet. Imagine being in a casino and being able to predict the future!!!

What's the explanation of this gift of foresight? Well, at one time, the numbers in Keno were chosen from numbered ping pong balls rattled around by a jet of air with those coming up being announced by a pretty girl. Then someone decided that computers could generate random numbers. So why not speed up the process (speed is very important in casinos) and get rid of the expenses of the pretty girl by using a computer instead of ping pong balls? Well and good, if done very, very carefully.





Random number generators are an integral part of many computer programs. For example, they are used scientifically, in Monte Carlo calculations, as well as to control the outcome of computer games. However, they are not perfect and the quality of different generators is very variable. In fact, an early IBM program, RANDU, which was widely used for scientific purposes, was eventually discovered to be horribly flawed.

Aside from the fact that the generated numbers are not perfectly random, they have another problem. They cyclically repeat the same sequence of numbers. The length of the cycle varies from program to program and computer to computer, although, with modern sophisticated technology, the cycle can be so long as to be infinite for most purposes. In older, ordinary programs, the cycle could be short enough that an observer with enough patience could discover bits and pieces of the sequence, especially if the operators were careless in starting up the system. Then, with more patience, the gambler could wait for a familiar sequence to appear. Once that happens, the numbers which are to follow are known, and the gambler is no longer gambling; he owns the goose that lays the golden eggs.

I came across this story in an article reporting on the fiftieth anniversary of the breaking of the Russian code by the Americans in 1945. The article went on to explain that the Russians used a "one-time pad" with which the sender and the receiver code and uncode the message using a shared table of random numbers. Such a cipher is unbreakable, as long as the message is shorter than the number of random numbers available. But the Russian program ran out of random numbers and the sequence started to repeat. It was then no longer invulnerable and the code was compromised.

Buried in the article was a couple of sentences noting that the same system was used to compromise a casino Keno game. There were no details and I have been unsuccessful in finding any other reference. So I have speculated as to what might have happened. It would be nice to know how much money was involved and how the casino wised up. I can imagine how the security people were thinking. They eventually must have had a strong suspicion they were being taken. They could have probaby ejected the player but then they would possibly lose the opportunity of discovering how he was doing it. I bet he surely got a lot of attention. My guess is that they eventually called in the consultants and discovered the problem. I would further guess that they could not charge the individual with cheating. Perhaps he could be charged with stealing --- like taking candy from a baby.

N. Y. State will introduce an electronic Keno game in bars and restuarants beginning on September 6th. There will be a drawing every five minutes for 13 hours a day. That's 12480 numbers a day or 45 million a year. mmmm - I wonder how long the repeat cycle is? Is the algorithm crackable?



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER



**Bob Boehlecke** Saturday, Oct. 7, 6:00  
NOTE CHANGE- YES 6:00

**Bob Raimon's Game** Friday, Oct 20, 7:30  
At Don's

**Bart DeLuca** Tuesday, Oct. 17, 7:00  
Tournament - 7 stud Hi.

**Tom Reiss' Game** Thurs Oct 12 & 26  
7.30 At Don's

**Don Cooke** Friday, Oct. 27 7:00

**Chemistry Dept.** Friday Nov. 3  
8:00 at Milt's \*\*

**English Dept.** Wednesday, October, 11  
7:30 At Al's \*\*

## GAMBLING IN THE SOUTHWEST MOM & POP CASINOS

*In July we traveled to Durango, Colorado, to visit son Don and his family. Since we travel by train, we went via Santa Fe, New Mexico, which gave me an opportunity to try the casinos in both states. In both cases, the casinos are relatively newly established and operated by Indian tribes.*

*There is a striking difference between these operations and those at Atlantic City and Las Vegas. There is no glitz. In fact, the decor is so rudimentary that I had the feeling that I was in some sort of illegal bookie establishment. I almost expected to find sawdust on the floor.*

*In Colorado, the casino near Durango offered poker, blackjack and slot machines. Craps and roulette are not allowed in the state. There were three poker tables but only one game in progress, \$1 - \$3, 7 Stud, which I joined. Thinking that \$1 - \$3 poker is a pretty small game, out of curiosity, I phoned the poker room of a casino in Denver and found that the biggest game they had going was \$3 - \$6. Colorado does not seem to have much in the way of high-stakes poker.*

**\*\* Al Silverman and Milt Zaitlin both live on Northview Road, Milt at 111 and Al at 132. To get there, go up South Hill via Hudson Street and bear left onto Coddington Road ( a sign for Therm Inc. will be on your left ). Continue on Coddington for 1.0 miles to Northview Road, passing Spruce Street on your right and Juniper on your left. Take a left on Northview.**



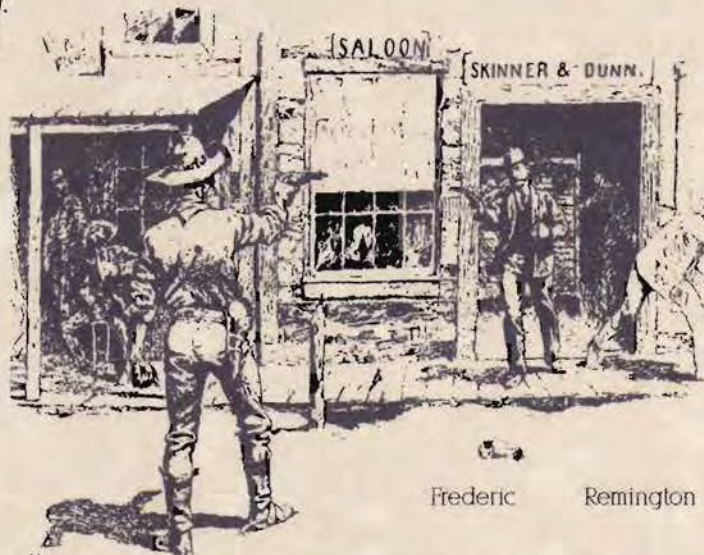


In New Mexico, the casino near Santa Fe was every bit as dingy as the one in Durango. In addition to blackjack and slots, it had craps and roulette but only one table of each. There was a poker game operating \$1, \$3, no blinds, dealer's choice. The choices available to the dealer were: 7 Stud Hi, 7 Stud Hi/Lo, Hold 'em and

Pineapple. Pineapple is Hold 'em with the variation: players are dealt three cards of which they keep two.

In both cases, I was odd-man-out. Everyone was on friendly terms. You feel a bit isolated when the dealer announces to one of the player's "Tom it's your bet". Tom replies "No it isn't Dick, I checked, it's Harry's bet. I suspect they lie in wait for the tourists but I must have been a disappointment to them because I won each time. It can't be easy for anybody to win because the stakes are so small that the house cut is essentially 10%.

The casinos in New Mexico have given rise to a constitutional crisis. The Indian tribes were given the right to operate casinos by the Governor on his own authority. Some people objected and the case went to court, eventually to the Supreme Court of New Mexico. The Court decided that the Governor did not have the power to authorize the casinos and that they were operating illegally. The Governor refuses to enforce the law and the casinos are still running.



In the Nineteenth century, the White Man took everything they could think of away from the Indians. I always thought that there was some justice in the fact that they never thought of the non-taxable casino. Now they are thinking about it. A group of Republican senators, at the behest of Donald Trump, are introducing a bill to make profits from Indian casinos subject to a 34% federal tax.



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER

1995



<b>Bob Boehlecke</b>	Saturday, Nov. 4 at 5:00
<b>Bob Raimon's Game</b>	Friday, Nov. 10, 7:00 At Jerry's **
<b>Bart DeLuca</b>	Tuesday, Tues. Nov. 21 7:00 Tournament - Texas Hold'em
<b>Tom Reiss' Game</b>	Thurs Nov. 9 & 30 7:30 At Don's
<b>Don Cooke</b>	Friday, Nov. 17, 7:00
<b>Jim Garrard</b>	Tues. Nov. 7, 7:00 **
<b>Chem. Dept.</b>	Friday Nov. 3 8:00 at Milt's **
<b>English Dept.</b>	Wednesday, Nov. 8 7:30 At Lamar's

## A Proposition Bet

Imagine that you are at a party and the conversation turns to betting. As a result, someone offers you a bet on the following proposition. He tells you that you can open any volume, like an almanac, which contain tables with lists of numbers such as populations of countries, deaths from catastrophes, votes by state in a presidential election or county budgets. Then he says " Now my friend, there are nine digits, one through nine. So I am going to offer you a generous bet. In the table you pick we will go down the list of numbers and I will give you a dollar for each number that begins with 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 and you give me a dollar for each number that begins with 1, 2, 3, or 4. I pay you on five numbers and you pay me on four, so how can you lose " ? As with all such proposition bets, you are about to lose.

How can that be ? The reason is counter-intuitive. Strangely, in such compilations, there are more entries that begin with smaller digits than larger digits. To demonstrate, I selected some tables from the World Almanac and counted the times the numbers began with an digit below and above five.



Jerry Gerner lives at the Northwood Apartments, across from the entrance to the airport on Warren Road. Building 22, Apartment 1A. 257-8897

Jim Garrard's address is 1805 Slaterville Road, rear house. 1805 is on the right, past Burn's Road but 100 yards short of German Cross Road. 273-7319

Milt Zaitlin lives on 111 Northview Road. To get there, go up South Hill via Hudson Street and bear left onto Coddington Road ( a sign for Therm Inc will be on your left ) Northview is 1.0 miles. Take a left on Northview. 273-5106





In all five cases, the percentage of initial digits below five was greater than the expected 50%. Here are the compilations that I selected and the percentage of the numbers that began with a digit less than five.

The Population of Alabama by County.	55% below five
Deaths from Major Earthquakes	79% "
Votes for Dukakis by County in N. Y.	73% "
Elevation in Feet of North American Cities	63% "
The Number of Local School Districts by State	82% "

If you had thought quickly enough, you might have selected a table of fielding averages, by player, in the American League. There would be a long list of players and all the averages would begin with a 9.

The phenomena has nothing to do with the nature of the tables selected but is inherent in the decimal system. Here is an illustration. In a list of the numbers, 1 through 9, there is one number that begins with the digit one and one number that begins with the digit nine. However, in the series of numbers 1 through 19, there is still only one number beginning with a 9 but there are ten numbers starting with a 1. Continuing to count upwards, you will have to get to ninety-nine before the numbers beginning with 1 and 9 are again equal. So, in the series of numbers from one to ninety nine, initial digits of 1 outnumber initial digits of 9 in 97 of the 99 cases.

It is curious that no one seems to have noticed the phenomena until 1938. The story goes that an engineer at General Electric happened to notice that a book of logarithms seemed to be more worn at the beginning than at the end and asked himself why people would look up the logarithm of numbers starting with 1 more often than they would look up numbers beginning with 9.

Proposition bets always seem like sure winners. But there is an old adage which takes many forms, such as the following :

You are walking down the street in New York City and a shifty-eyed character sidles up beside you with a proposition. He says, " See that policeman across the street ? I'll bet you \$500 that in two minutes he will take off his cap and there will be a canary on the top of his head. That canary will fly over here, perch on your finger and sing Yankee Doodle. " Don't bet - somehow or other you will be out \$500.

On the other hand you never know. Scenario number two. You are walking down a street in downtown Manhattan and you come across this shifty-eyed character behind a card table selling jewelery. He has a home-made sign - TIFFANY JEWELRY - \$200. Of course you walk by --- big mistake; you just passed up the buy of a lifetime. There was a long article in the NY Times a few weeks back about a big heist in Tiffany's where thieves made off with a large quantity of choice merchandise. It turned out to be an inside job but in the beginning the police had no proof. The perpetrators were real amateurs and did not know how to fence the hot ice. So they had a brilliant idea - why not sell it on the street ? So they bought a card table and went into business. It did not work out - they did not make a single sale. Worse for them, it led to their downfall. A jeweler passed by and recognized that the stuff really was from Tiffany's and that items worth \$20,000 to \$50,000 were being offered for \$200. He blew the whistle and the case was solved. What kind of a rube would buy Tiffany jewelery from a cardtable on the sidewalks of New York ?



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

1995



**Bob Boehlecke** Saturday, Dec. 2  
at 5:00



**Bob Raimon's** Friday, Dec. 15  
**Game** 7:00 At Jerry's

**Bart DeLuca** Tues. Dec. 19, 7:00  
Tournament - Hold'em

**Tom Reiss'** Thurs Dec. 14 & 28  
**Game** 7.30 At Don's

**English Dept.** Thurs. Dec. 7  
7:30 At Mike's

**Chem. Dept.** Friday, Dec. 1  
8:00 at Ben's

**Don Cooke** Friday, Dec. 8, 7:00 **Jim Garrard** Tues. Dec. 5, 7:00

## Memorable Thoroughbreds

*The greatest thoroughbred? Its a very hard question because it is difficult, if not impossible, to make comparisons over time and place. For example, modern racecourses are far faster than those of the past and the training and treatment of the horses has advanced to a science. But we might look at the accomplishments of some of the great horses of organized racing.*

*Any list of contenders for the title of the "best" must include the Hungarian horse Kincsem, who raced in the period 1876 to 1879. Kincsem went to the post 54 times and crossed the finish line a winner 54 times. He was not racing at some backwater track because he traveled throughout Europe and also won the Goodwood Cup in England. There is one racetrack in Hungary, Kincsem Park.*

*In more recent times, 1953 to 1955, a Puerto Rican thoroughbred named Camarero won 73 Of 77 races with a streak of 56 wins.*

*For American thoroughbreds, three great ones come to mind. Secretariat who raced in 1972 - 1973, Citation in the late 1940s and Man-o-War in 1919 and 1920.*





Man-O-War as a  
\$5000 yearling

Secretariat and Citation were winners of the Triple Crown, that is they won the Kentucky Derby, The Preakness and the Belmont Stakes, three of the most competitive stake races in America. Only eleven horses have accomplished this feat and Secretariat was the ninth, in 1973. Man-o-War never ran in the Derby because his owner, Sam Riddle, felt that the one and a quarter mile was too long a distance for so early in the season.

Secretariat won 16 of 21 starts and was out of the money only once. He broke three American records and two world records. His record time of 1.59 2/5 for the Derby in 1973 still stands, as does his 224 for the

Belmont Stakes. Perhaps his greatest race was the Belmont Stakes. On June 9, 1973, before 48,023 spectators ( which included one of our poker colleagues, Tony Caputi ) he set a world record for the distance and won by 31 lengths. There is a famous film clip of that finish which is frequently rerun when television is covering horseracing.

Citation won 32 of 45 races, and was out of the money on only one occasion. What makes this horse stand out is his performance in 1948. He went to the post 20 times ( a lot of racing ) and won 19, including the Triple Crown and 16 other stake races ( A stake race is highly competitive ). This performance made Citation the leading money maker at the time.

Man-o-War raced in 1919 and 1920. He started in 21 races and won 19 with one second place. He broke four American records and one world record. The race that he lost was to a horse, appropriately named Upset, a horse he had previously beaten and would beat twice more. Man-o-War was a horse that everyone, including those who had never placed a bet, followed enthusiastically. He so outclassed the competition that many owners withdrew their horses rather than race in a losing cause. In 1920, in the Belmont Stakes, a famous and prestigious race, all horses except one, Donnacona, were scratched. Man-o-War won by 20 lengths and set a new world record. He was certainly a favorite of the betting crowd and on three occasions he went off at 1 to 100, which means that about 99% of the money was on Man-o-War. It is unfortunate that movie cameras were not so prevalent in 1920 as they were for the Secretariat film clip. In the Lawrence Realization Stakes at Belmont on September 4, 1920, again, all but one horse was withdrawn. Man-o-War set a record for the distance which I believe still stands. A visual record of the finish would not be very exciting anyway, because there was no other horse in sight. The second horse had not yet turned into the stretch.

Man-o-War carried a burden, not figuratively, but real. Handicappers kept increasing the weight he had to carry ( horses are assigned different weights to carry in an attempt to even out the race. ) In the Potomac Handicap he carried



138 pounds while the other horses had 104, 108, and 114 for Paul Jones, the winner of the Kentucky Derby earlier in the year. Man-o-War set a new track record.

It was the 138 pounds assigned to his horse combined with the threat of the handicappers to go higher, that persuaded Sam Riddle to withdraw Man-o-War from racing to avoid injury to his beloved horse. But there was one race left - a match race against the Canadian thoroughbred, Sir Barton, the Triple Crown winner of the previous year. A romp with a victory of 7 lengths and a new Canadian record. For my money, Man-o-War was the best American thoroughbred.

Here are some other memorable horses. Ruffian ( 1972-1975 ) was a horse that stole the heart of the American public. Perhaps because she was a filly and beat the colts at their own game. In ten races she set two American records and seven stake records. More to the point, she was wire-to-wire ( a horseman's term for first from start to finish ) in all ten. She never had a horse ahead of her. Her eleventh race was a match race against Foolish Pleasure. During the race she broke a leg - a sickening sight on TV - and had to be put down.

Stymie ( 1943-1946 ) was the leading money winner of his time. But he did not get off to an auspicious start. His first start was a \$2500 claimer ( a very low level race. ) He went off at 31 to 1 and finished seventh. He then proceeded to be out of the money for the next 14 races. He was claimed for \$3,300 by a skillful trainer who saw something in the horse besides an abysmal record. It was a good investment. Stymie was an exciting horse to watch in a race. He never got off to a good start and had to come thundering up on the leaders to win.

But for come-from-behind horse, there was Malicious. He had no class, no record - a real loser. The Santa Anita track introduced a two-mile race and Malicious' owner decided to have a go at it, perhaps in desperation. At the mile marker, Malicious, true to form, lagged the field by 50 lengths and at that point, the owner may have been thinking about the glue factory. But then a miracle happened. Malicious was gaining on the pack ! Length by length over the next mile he closed the gap and won the race. He did the same thing, in the same fashion, for four consecutive wins. The crowd loved it and would join the race announcer in a loud chorus when he intoned " and here comes Malicious ". Malicious was honored in the Rose Bowl parade and as he went along the parade route the crowd would voice the then familiar slogan.

This newsletter has been devoted to thoroughbreds. If one were to broaden the field to all racehorses, a harness horse by the name of Dan Patch, who raced at the turn of the century, is the best. No competition. More about Dan Patch in a future edition.

P.S. Some of you have asked where I get all the old stamps. I like the effect and even save money by using the old stamps. Surprisingly, one can buy stamps up to 50 years old for face value, or less, and no sales tax. I guess that many people found out that new postage stamps were not such a great investment after all.



**And to all a good night  
( at the table )**



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

#23



Bob Boehlecke Saturday, Jan. 6  
at 5:00

Bob Raimon's Friday, Jan. 12  
Game 7:00 At Jerry's

Bart DeLuca Tues. Jan. 23, 7:00  
Tournament - Razz

Tom Reiss' Thurs Jan. 11 & 25  
Game 7.30 At Don's



English Dept. Wed. Jan. 24  
7:30 At Glen's

Chem. Dept. Friday, Jan. 19  
8:00 at Barry's

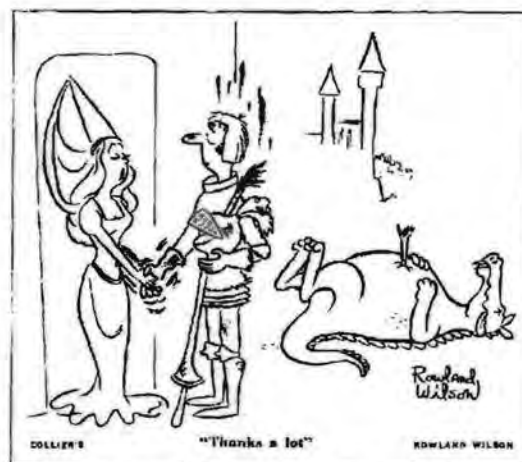
Don Cooke Friday, Jan. 5, 7:00

Jim Garrard Tues. Jan. 2, 7:00

## The Four - Minute Mile

With the busy holiday season, I am again falling back on one of the letters from Grandpa's Computer Works to the grandchildren. I hope that you will find the story interesting. It comes in two parts.

I am happy to report that Donald Trump's initiative in Congress to impose a 35% federal tax on the income of Indian - run casinos has failed.



A FUNNY TO  
BRIGHTEN  
YOUR DAY.

P. S. St. Anne's Rest was a real place but the logo is a product of my imagination. I thought it was an intriguing name for such an establishment so I tried to track down some background on the place. I only found that it was one of the more popular bars of the one hundred and fifty in this frontier mining town.





February 7, 1994

Dear Thea and Chloe:

On May 7th, 1954, the New York Times, carried a story on the front page with the headline

## 4 - Minute Mile Is Achieved By Bannister of England

Here is the picture from the front page showing Roger Bannister breaking the tape at the end of the mile race.



Why is it that a sporting event made the front page? As you might guess, it's because there is a story behind the event. So here is the story which raises an interesting question. It is because of this question that I am writing this letter.





The reason that the newspaper gave the story such a big play is that a four - minute mile had become a symbolic goal of sports, the Holy Grail, as it were. Ten years before ( 1944 ) the world record for the mile race was four minutes and one second. Thousands and thousands of races had been run in those ten years, but no one was able to run the race one second faster to bring the record down to less than four minutes. Finally, Bannister accomplished this feat on the track at Oxford University. The race was one of the major events in sports history.

I remember listening to the race on the radio. Your Dad was there, but I am not sure he remembers since he was only six years old. ( Why don't you ask him anyway ). Uncles Pete and Buff were there, but Buff was only two. I well remember the circumstances. We were on Route 79 headed for either New York or Philadelphia ( my memory fails me on the point ) and the announcement of the race came over the car radio. We pulled off the road to hear the race and were thrilled at Bannister's great accomplishment. The ten year struggle for the four minute mile had been achieved.

This is all a bit of sports and family history but it is not the reason that I wrote you. It is what happened after the race that is interesting. In the two years following Bannister's epic accomplishment, the four - minute mile was broken 317 times - it seemed like a dam had burst. It's hard to believe that the previous ten years experience was so quickly rewritten. Why did it happen ? Were athletes able to run under four minutes because they now knew it was possible and hung in there longer. Was the barrier all in their minds ? Reading about Bannister, he was quite confident that he could run the mile in less than four minutes and trained with this conclusion in mind. Is there something to the child's story about the Little Engine That Could - " I think I can, I think I can " ? I guess the experience can be summed up by saying you need a positive attitude when approaching something difficult and without that attitude, it's hard to accomplish much.



Love from Ithaca





February 17, 1994



Dear Thea and Chloe:

There is an old saying which advises you:  
*Not to believe everything you read in the newspaper*  
On February 7th I sent you a letter about the first mile race which was run in less than four minutes. My story was based on a quotation which appeared in a newsletter which the business school at Cornell sends to its graduates. The quotation was featured as follows:

**QUOTATION**

*Within two years after Roger Bannister showed the world that a four-minute mile could be done, the feat was duplicated 317 times.*

I thought it made a great story and that's why I wrote you about it. But after I sent the letter I got to thinking that the statement is hard to believe. Then I got to thinking more about it. Track is an outdoor warm weather sport and there might be 150 days in the track season or 300 days for the two years. That would mean that, on average, someone would run a mile in less than four minutes almost every day. That did not seem to be possible, so I phoned the editor of the newsletter to find the source of the quotation. It turns out that she did not know the source of the story and said that she had heard it from a friend.

So I decided to see what I could find out. Off to the library - a wonderful place. I found a book, "The Milers", which gave the times of the fastest miles run ( international ) for each year. It turns out that the number of mile races run in less than four minutes was two in 1954 ( including Bannister's ), three in 1955 and two through May of 1956. So, in the two years following Bannister's great accomplishment, his feat was matched six times, not 317. Great story, but, not so. You wonder how the it got started and why exactly 317? Anyway, don't believe everything you read in a newspaper, or for that matter, everything grandfathers tell you - lesson for the day.

*Love from Ithaca*





# POKER SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

Bob Boehlecke Saturday, Feb. 3 5:00

Bob Raimon's Game Fri. 23, 7:00 at Don's

Tom Reiss' Game Thurs. Feb. 8 & 22, 7:30

Bart DeLuca Tues. 27, 7:00

Jim Garrard Tues. Feb. 6 7:00

Don Cooke Fri. Feb. 16 7:00

Chem. Dept Fri. Feb. 9 at Barry's

English Dept. Thurs. Feb. 15, 7:30 at Dan's

## Disillusionment

I have always thought that it would be more difficult to knock off a casino than it would be to try to steal the payroll at the Pentagon. I had imagined that if anything went amiss the exits would be blocked by a line of ex-professional defensive linemen armed with Uzi machine guns. Not so. A story in the NY Daily News of August 26, 1995, reports that a gunman held up three different Atlantic City casinos (The Claridge, Showboat and Trump Plaza) in as many weeks. Simplicity and boldness works. On the casino floor, a man walked up to one of the attendants handling cash, pulled out a gun, took the money and disappeared before any reaction could set in. The amounts were of the order of a few hundred dollars in each case. The story reports that the casinos were nervous that the man was able to pull off such a stunt with the crowds, the eyes in the sky and all the security.

I kept watching for a follow-up story but never found one. Perhaps, the perpetrator's bones are gracing the ocean floor somewhere off Cape May.

The incidents got me to wondering whether there have been other attempts on casinos. I suppose that such holdups occurred at the frontier gambling establishments although I found no such record. Nor did I come across any incidents at modern casinos. Of course, when the Mob ran the illegal gambling houses, if one got knocked off it would hardly be expected to appear in a newspaper story and it would be quite unlikely that the police would be involved. Of course, that does not mean that the guys who may have made such a heist did not have to worry.

Note  
Change  
3rd Tues





Whether robbery was the reason for the bomb blast at the Monte Carlo Casino about ten o'clock in the evening of April 24, 1880, is unknown. If it was the reason for the explosion, the attempt failed. Panic ensued and people rushed to the doors and windows. But not the croupiers - they had been trained to remain at the tables no matter what. The gas lights were extinguished but the operators had, for decades, continuously maintained oil lamps to provide sufficient lighting. No one was seriously injured.

In reconstructing the explosion, it was believed that the bomb had been hidden under a hat on a fireplace mantel. From then on no one was allowed to bring a hat in the casino. Further, the oil lamps continued to be lit every evening even after electric lighting with emergency generators was installed.

## A Proposition Bet

Mike Caro's column in the December 5th issue of *Card Player* described a clever proposition bet. Three starting hold'em hands are laid out on the table  $4\clubsuit 4\spadesuit$ ,  $10\heartsuit J\heartsuit$  and  $A\clubsuit K\spadesuit$ . You are asked to bet on one of these hands for a game of hold'em and the guy with the shifty eyes will select one of the two remaining hands. The remaining 48 cards are shuffled and flops of five cards each are dealt out with the higher hand winning after each flop. When the deck is depleted the game starts over but you can change your selection of the starting hand. Then you can continue to play until your money runs out as it probably will, because whatever hand you pick the odds are against you. If you pick the  $10\heartsuit J\heartsuit$  shifty eyes will pick  $A\clubsuit K\spadesuit$  with a 18% edge. If you pick  $4\clubsuit 4\spadesuit$ , he will take  $10\heartsuit J\heartsuit$  and have a 6% advantage. And there is no hope because a selection of  $A\clubsuit K\spadesuit$  against  $4\clubsuit 4\spadesuit$  gives him an 8% edge. As Caro explains it, one hand's strength can be ideally suited to beat some hands but not others that would appear to be even weaker.

## A Football Hero

Harold "Red" Grange



The Galloping Ghost  
U. of Illinois All American,  
1923, 1924, 1925

Way back when I was a young boy, one of the national heroes was Red Grange who played for Illinois. In 1924, the University of Illinois built a new stadium and its dedication was celebrated by a game against Michigan which was undefeated in 20 games. Illinois elected to receive and Grange, untouched, ran the opening kickoff 95 yards for a touchdown. (Now that's the way to dedicate a stadium). Subsequently, he broke through for a 67 yard touchdown, scored a touchdown with a run of 54 yards and another from 44 yards out. In six carries he scored four touchdowns and rushed for 287 yards - all in the first twelve minutes. No wonder he was called "The Galloping Ghost". For some reason, the coach, Bob Zuppke, who seemed to have no sense of history, had Grange sit out the second quarter. In the second half he scored a fifth touchdown and threw a pass for a sixth. In 41 minutes of play he rushed for 339 yards and passed for 64. Illinois won 39 - 14. One reason Grange could do so much in such a short time, is that back in those days, the scoring team received.



The following year Illinois traveled to Franklin Field to play Penn which was undefeated and aspiring to a national championship. ( It may seem odd to you that Penn could be competing for #1 status, but you should know that Cornell was #1 in both 1921 and 1922 - and that Cornell defeated Ohio State in 1939 and 1940 - times have changed ). The field was a quagmire which cut down on Grange's long gains but he did manage runs of 55, 55 and 40 yards. But he carried the ball 36 times and rushed for 363 yards and three touchdowns. Pretty good for a muddy field. ( The current record for rushing yards in a single game is 393 yards by Tony Sands of Kansas, set in 1991 ). Despite the fact that Penn was beaten 24 to 2, when Grange left the field every man in the stands rose and lifted his hat in tribute. Yes, they wore hats to football games in those days ( mostly homberg's ) in addition to jackets and ties - I even wore a derby in my youth.

In 1925, Grange joined the Chicago Bears and was paid over \$100,000 for the year. That was an unbelievable sum in the days when pro football players were paid by the game, usually a couple of hundred dollars. How that came about is a story in itself.

First, it must be realized that Grange was a national hero who caught the imagination of the public in a way that would not be possible these days. There were many fewer athletes and the Galloping Ghost was a threetime All - American. The critical operator in this story was Charlie Pyle who owned a movie theater in Urbana and was, possibly, the first agent for an athlete. Pyle, after receiving from Grange the right to represent him, approached George Halas of the Chicago Bears with a proposition. Grange would play for the Bears for a percentage of the gate. Pyle must have been a persuasive entrepreneur for the agreed cut was 50%. It was a good deal for Grange but a magnificent opportunity for the Bears and the NFL. Normal attendance for a pro game had been 2000 people but, with Grange, when the Bears played the Giants in the Polo Grounds, there was a gate of 65,000 with others being turned away. Grange, singlehandedly, brought pro football into its own. It was also a great deal for Charlie Pyle - he got a 40% cut of Grange's income.

Grange did well in the pros, but in 1927 he injured a knee and never quite recovered the ability to thrill the crowds with those long touchdown runs. However, he did play until 1935 and was good enough to make the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He then spent 26 years as a sports announcer, retiring in 1961.

P. S. There was one game in which Grange was outshone. On Thanksgiving Day, in 1929, the Chicago Bears played the Chicago Cardinals. The Cardinals won 40 - 6 with Ernie Nevers ( whom I remember ) scoring all the points with six rushing TDs and four PATs. This is still the pro record ( untied ) for both total points and the number of TDs.



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

#25



Bob Boehlecke Saturday, March 2, 5:00

Bob Raimon's Game Friday, March 8, 7:00 at Don's

Tom Reiss' Game Thurs. March 7 & 21, 7:30

Bart DeLuca Tues. March 19, 7:00

Jim Garrard Tues. March 5, 6:00 (to midnight)

Don Cooke Friday, March 22, 7:00

Chem. Dept. Friday, March 15, 8:00 at Frank's

English Dept. Thurs. March 14, 7:30 at Isaac's



## THE SEMINOLE'S REVENGE

Jim Garrard, in his recent travels, stopped in at a Florida casino operated by the Seminole Tribe. He reports that the glossy brochure that he had been given at the entrance was decorated with pictures of one hundred dollar bills. When he got to the poker table he found that the only game available was seven-card stud, high only. And there was only one betting level, twenty five /fifty. Not twenty five / fifty dollars but twenty five /fifty cents! Even odder things were to come. When the pot reached the maximum size of ten dollars, betting stopped and the cards were run out. Each player contributed a quarter every hand for the privilege of playing. I calculate that as a 17% house cut. That is a pretty good edge for even the strongest players to overcome.

There was a ongoing seven-high tournament with a forty-dollar buy in for \$500 in chips with a minimum of eight players required to start a new round. The payouts were \$125 for first place, \$75 for second and \$50 for third. The most unusual aspect of the game is how the winner was determined - the person with the most chips after 25 hands was the winner. That is a different kind of poker than anything I ever saw and can you imagine the jockeying for position in the final rounds of the tournament? The reason for this crazy way of doing things must be to maximize the number of tournaments that can be run. The house makes at least \$70 on each tournament and the shorter the time involved the better (for the house). The house cut on these games is even worse than the regular games - at least 22%. But I believe the Seminoles deserve every penny they can get from the foolish white man considering what was done to them



In the early part of the nineteenth century, the military commander of the Southwest, Andrew Jackson, decided that it was "best for the Indians" to move them to what is now Oklahoma and Arkansas. Most tribes agreed, but the Seminoles fiercely resisted and America had its first Vietnam. A few hundred Seminole warriors, allied with some runaway slaves, waged guerrilla warfare in the Florida swamps against an army of 10,000 men. The Seminoles held out for seven years while fifteen percent of the U. S. Army died in the attempt. In 1842 Zachary Taylor finally prevailed and most of Indians were transported to Oklahoma. But many just disappeared into the Everglades. It is their descendents who are operating the casino.

The chip on the previous page represents a real chip from the casino. But notice that the place is not called a "casino" - it is named the Seminole Gaming Palace. "Gaming" is now a euphemism for "gambling". We now have "gaming commissions" and "the gaming industry". While "gambling" has a low-brow connotation, "gaming" sounds quite elite. It is analogous to the change from "pool rooms" to "billiard parlors". I wonder if the use of the word "palace" is an attempt to dump the word "casino"

## A VERY BUSY AFTERNOON



In 1935, Jesse Owens was a member of the Ohio State track team. A week before the Big Ten Championships on May 25th, Owens was horsing around with a friend and fell down a flight of stairs injuring his back. He did not work out all week and had to be helped out of the car that drove him to Ann Arbor for the meet. His coach suggested that he should not compete but he decided to go ahead, on an event-by-event basis, to see how it would go. Here is how it went.

In a forty-five minute period, 3:15 to 4:00, he equaled the world record for the 100-yard dash, broke the world record for the long jump, broke the world record for the 220-yard dash (which also bettered the world record for the 200-meter), set a new world record for the 220-yard low hurdles (as well as the 200-meter world mark). Six world records in an afternoon - not bad. He was so busy that he had time for only one attempt at the long jump and set a record that lasted 25 years. A good day. (Source: New York Times Book of Sports Legends).

Peter Hoyt checked out the proposition bet from Mike Caro's column that appeared in the last newsletter. He devised a poker simulation program for Omaha and ran thousands of hands. The results were as Caro had predicted. He also notes that of the three Omaha hands, A♣K♠ won 34.8%, 10♥J♥, 36.4% and 4♣4♠, 28.8% of the times.

Does anyone know where I can get a poker simulation program for the Mac?





# POKER SCHEDULE FOR APRIL

1996  
original

#26



Bob Boehlecke Sat. April 6, **6:00**

Jim Garrard Tues. April 2, 7:00

Don Cooke Friday, April 5 7:00

Tom Reiss' Game Thurs. April 4 & 18, 7:30

Bart DeLuca Tues. April 9 7:00 **Note Change**

Bob Raimon's Game Friday, April 19 7:00 at Don's

Chem. Dept. Friday, April 12 7:30 at Fred's

English Dept. Thurs. April 25 7:30 at Lamar's



## A Policeman's Lot is not a Happy One

The poker game had been going on for 28 years and it convened every weekday about 5 o'clock. The only odd thing was the location - on the Metro-North Hudson Commuter Line to Westchester County leaving Grand Central at 5:35. The game on September 30, 1994 got an early start and was well under way before the train left the station. A young lady stopped by to watch the action. One hand started off well and the pot was building ( it was \$141 in greenbacks as it turned out ) when the young lady flashed a badge, identified herself as a Metro-North police officer ( she was in plain clothes ), told them that they were under arrest and they would have to leave the train. It turned out that one of the four arrested was a lawyer ( not a long shot for a commuter train leaving New York City ) who advised his friends to cooperate. The men were handcuffed, marched through Grand Central Station to a paddy wagon, put in holding cells, fingerprinted and photographed. They were charged with "possessing a gambling device, otherwise known as a deck of cards". They were released in time to catch the 7:20 for home.

On October 5, the District Attorney's Office announced they were dropping the charges. A spokeswoman for Metro-North speculated that the arresting officer had been struck by the impressive pile of greenbacks in front of the men. She assured riders that the arrest did not signal a crackdown on a form of recreation enjoyed by thousands of riders. She further stated that " It's a relaxing and enjoyable thing to do on a ride home", noting that Metro-North's own commercials mention card playing as a diversion on the train. "We have no prohibitions against friendly card games", she said.

As you might easily imagine, that was not the end of the affair. The four poker players brought a civil suit against Metro-North for \$4 million. In May, 1995, Metro-North announced that an out-of-court settlement had been reached for an undisclosed sum. WCBS Radio reported that each man received between \$30,000 and \$40,000.

( Source: NY Times 10/6/94 & 5/13/95 )



One might wonder why the charge was not gambling, or, to use the legal terminology, with being a "common gambler". It may be that the district attorney was aware of legal precedent. In 1961 there was a case in the City Court of Buffalo, *The People of the State of New York v. Victor A. Marconi*. The police had arrested Marconi as a common gambler in that the defendants were sitting and some standing around a large table at which table a card game was in process. That a quantity of money to wit: \$15, four decks of playing cards and a quantity of poker chips were found on said table. The judge, William J. Ostrowski, dismissed the case on the basis "that the information was insufficient for failure to allege any facts showing that the defendant's participation in the gambling game had a professional or commercial aspect".

The Court found that: "Participating in a gambling game or even a series of gambling games on the same terms as other players, for amusement or recreation, is lawful in this state. What is prohibited by Section 970 ( of the Penal Law ) is professional or commercial gambling. Gambling assumes that aspect when, for example, the defendant receives a percentage of the money bet, has some advantage over the other players, engages in gambling for his living or gambles habitually and frequently".

Not being a lawyer, I'll leave the interpretation of the court's finding to you.



## THE GAME



*The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Harvard team that day.*

*The score stood Yale up by sixteen, with but forty-two seconds left to play.*

In some circles in New England "The Game" has nothing to do with the Superbowl, the Rose Bowl or the Final Four. It is the Harvard - Yale game which ends their season. The game is hoary with age and tradition, going back to 1875 ( only the Lafayette- Lehigh series goes further back ). But 1968 was a special year. Both teams were undefeated and untied for the first time in fifty-nine years. Harvard had not been undefeated since 1920. All week, the Boston Globe had been featuring the game. They published pages of statistics, interviews with players, coaches and experts, historical aspects of the series - real hype. There was a problem - Harvard Stadium only seated 40,000, far fewer than the number of requests for tickets. Harvard gave only two tickets to each alumnus who requested tickets but it was obvious there would not be enough to go around. So they made a tough decision - to fill the orders starting with the oldest classes first. They ran out by the class of 1949, leaving the 19 most recent classes out in the cold. After this decision they took the phones off the hook.

The game started badly for Harvard. They could not get anything going and could not stop the Yale offense. The score was soon 22 to 0 and things were going from bad to worse, an embarrassment. Finally, in the waning minutes of the first half, the Harvard coach, John Yovicsin, called on his second string, junior quarterback, Frank Champi, who had hardly played all season. With 39 seconds left in the half Harvard finally scored but missed the extra point because of a bad snap - the score, 22 to 6.



In the third quarter Harvard capitalized on a Yale fumble on their own 25 yardline and scored a touchdown and extra point. Score 22 to 13 and a bit of hope shone through in the Harvard stands. But Yale continued to dominate the game and scored again - score 29 to 13. Now, in the closing minutes of the fourth quarter, Yale was driving easily toward another touchdown with the Yalies chanting "You're number two" and the spectators were pouring out of the exits. But Yale fumbled on the Harvard thirteen and Harvard recovered. Campi had his work cut out for him - three minutes and thirty seconds left with 85 yards to go and down by 16! But he kept completing passes. With one minute to go Harvard had the ball on the Yale 42 and there was a busted play. A Harvard lineman scooped up the ball and lumbered to the 15 with 42 seconds to go. A Campi pass was caught in the end zone - score 29 - 19. Of course Harvard went for two points with another Campi pass. But the pass was incomplete - Yale wins! Not quite - a flag on the play - interference. Harvard then went over from the one yard line for the two-pointer.



And now for the on-sides kick. Yale fumbled the ball - Harvard recovered on the Yale 49 yard line! Once more Campi trotted out - with a chance of a tie 49 yards away and with 30 seconds on the clock. After a couple of completed passes Harvard was on the Yale eight with three seconds left. One last shot. Campi took the snap and was under desperate pursuit by a pack of blue jerseys - back and forth across the field he ran - then spotted a man open in the end zone - **Touchdown!** - with the clock reading 00:00. Now for the two-pointer. Another Campi pass in the end zone - caught!! 29 - 29! Just one miracle after another.

The game attracted the attention of the nation and on Sunday the entire game was televised (perhaps a Harvard man owned the network). Despite the fact that there was no prior notice of the telecast, it drew as many viewers as the Presidential State of the Union address which was on at the same time.

The Boston Globe carried the story for three more days. Many of the stories were about those who had left the game before Harvard came alive - like the poor Harvard alumnus who left and went to a bar to drown his sorrows. When he got there everyone was talking about the Harvard victory and the most remarkable finish of the century. Sob.

And then there was the Monday morning headline in the student newspaper, the Harvard Crimson. **Harvard Wins 29 to 29.** And so they did.

( Sources: The Boston Globe issues and Sports Illustrated, November 1968 ).





# POKER SCHEDULE FOR MAY

1996

#27

Bob Boehlecke Sat., May 18, 7:00

Jim Garrard Tues May 7, 7:00

Don Cooke Fri. May 31, 7:00

Bart DeLuca Tues. May 21, 7:00

Bob Raimon's Game May 10, 7:00 at Don's

Tom Reiss' Game May 2, 16 & 30, 7:30

Chemistry Dept. Game May 24 8:00 at Don's

English Dept. Game Not established at time of mailing

*Note the change of date and time of Boehlecke's game. The date was changed because we needed every player we could get. Hoping to get some who have left the game to return there will be a \$20 cap on bets. Most games are running shorthanded - feel free to join or give me a call.*

## Knocking off the Casinos - Revisited

*A couple of poker schedules ago I had a piece about a small-time robber who hit three Atlantic City casinos for a few hundred dollars each. I speculated at the time about other possible assaults on casinos. But I knew of no efficient way of establishing whether or not such events had actually happened. Now I find that there is a way. I came across an information system in the Cornell Library - a new toy for me.*

*The system abstracts all the articles in about a dozen major American newspapers and puts them on-line, with the entries going back about six years. One can search the abstracts for key words or combinations of words. I searched under "casino" plus "robbery" and got three hits. Then I went to the newspaper microfilms and got the full text of each story. Two of the hits were not exactly what I was searching for. One was the robbery of a Brinks truck outside the MGM Casino in Las Vegas. The other concerned an employee in the counting room of the Trump Plaza Casino in Atlantic City who stuffed \$450,000 in cash ( that's 4500 one-hundred dollar bills ) under his coat and walked out the door. He had been recorded on the eye-in-the-sky tape and was caught a couple of days later trying to cross the border into Canada.*







The third hit was an actual armed assault on Merv Griffin's Casino in Atlantic City on February the 21st, 1994 at 10:38 am. Two holdup men wearing ski masks entered the casino and confronted a security guard who was wheeling a cart loaded with bags of money from the cash-exchange windows in the middle of the casino. They both went for the bags and when the guard resisted, one pulled out a pistol and shot her in the face. ( She screamed but the scream and the gunshot hardly put a ripple into the gambling ).

Each of the robbers grabbed a bag of money and headed for different exits. One had \$423,000 and the other \$687,000. The people behind the eyes-in-the-sky and the security people stood transfixed watching the drama unfold. It was up to a patron, an off-duty policeman, to tackle one of the bandits who dropped the bag but got out the door, only to be arrested a short time later. The other got clean away, but made a slight mistake - in his flight he dumped the jacket he was wearing into a trash-can outside the casino. It so happened that, in a pocket, the police found a New Jersey Casino Commission identification card complete with his photograph. It was an inside job, both were convicted and are now in prison. The security guard recovered.

I used the information system to explore other things, such as "poker". I got hundreds of hits. But most of them had nothing directly to do with the card game. Typical would be a story about China and Taiwan engaging in a high stakes poker game. I even got a hit on a story where a fireplace poker was used as a murder weapon.

I am enclosing a copy of an article by John Tierney from the New York Times Sunday Magazine of a couple of weeks ago. If you have not already read it, I hope you will enjoy it. It is about New York State Off Track Betting. The author points out that this operation is the only bookie in the world that loses money. OTB returns only 75% of the money bet and still loses money while illegal bookies return 90% and make money.

The gambling industry ( oops - I should have said the "gaming" industry ) spares no expense when it comes to influencing legislators. The New York Times of December 18, 1995 reports that the industry employed 74 lobbyists to work with the legislature of the State of Texas. That's more than two for every state senator. One would think that they would get in each others way in the crowded corridors of power.





JOHN TIERNEY  
THE BIG CITY

## A Fool and His Money

**M**Y NIGHT OF GAMBLING BEGAN IN the basement of a brownstone on the Upper West Side. It was a comfortable studio apartment with a couch, a television set showing ESPN and, in the center of the room, a table covered with telephones, tape recorders and paperwork. Around the table were three young, clean-cut bookmakers; one of them, in tortoise-shell glasses and a white button-down shirt, could have modeled for a Brooks Brothers catalogue.

There was also a fourth man, older, unshaved and disheveled. He was the brains of the operation, the one who adjusted the office's point spreads as betting proceeded on the evening's college basketball games. In the bored voices of veteran telemarketers, the four men took calls from their customers, answering questions and reciting the evening's favorites and point spreads:

"Your figure is 6,700 our way."

"Villanova, 19. Tulsa, 13. Long Beach, 6. Utah, 12."

"Your figure's three dimes your way."

"Utah? It's up to 12 now."

"You want Utah, minus 12, 15 times."

Each bookmaker had a computer printout listing the bettors' code names and the current balance of their accounts, called the bettor's figure. When a customer placed a bet, the bookmakers wrote it on a triplicate slip and repeated it to the customer (as well as to the tape recorder attached to the phone).

My guide for the evening, a 40-year-old retired bookmaker named Peter Alson, interpreted: "When they say 'Utah, minus 12, 15 times,' that means the customer is betting on Utah winning by more than 12 points, in the amount of 15 times \$5, or \$75. The jargon for money gets a little confusing. A dollar means \$100; a nickel means \$500; a dime means \$1,000."

Alson's career was interrupted more than a year ago by Charles J. Hynes, the Brooklyn District Attorney and self-appointed scourge of bookmakers citywide. His men used a battering ram to visit the office where Alson was working on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. After 26 hours in jail, Alson decided to rethink his long-term goals. He wrote "Confessions of an Ivy League Bookie," a grimly entertaining account of his path from Harvard University to the Brooklyn House of Detention. Last month, on the eve of its publication, he led me on a different kind of book tour, one sure to appall Joe Hynes (as the District Attorney is known) and the three or four other New Yorkers who profess concern about the immorality of gambling.

We started at the bookmakers' basement office,



NO WONDER THE  
GOVERNMENT WANTS  
TO SHUT THE BOOKMAKERS  
DOWN. THEY GIVE  
BETTER ODDS THAN OTB  
OR THE LOTTERY.

where I bet \$30, taking Montana and the 12 points against Utah. Then we headed off with the older bookmaker — call him Lee — to meet one of his business partners at a bar on Amsterdam Avenue, Boomer's Sports Club. The partner — call him Bill — handed Lee a brown paper lunch bag.

"Here," Bill said, "my mother sent you some brownies." Inside the bag was a three-inch wad of \$100 bills totaling \$10,000 — an account properly settled. The money didn't always come in so easily.

"When one of my customers wouldn't pay," Alson said, "I had to make good on the \$3,000 out of my own pocket. You can try to deal with a laydown by showing up at his home or his office, but other than embarrassing him, there's not much you can do." Bill and Lee insisted that their collection techniques did not include leg breaking.

"Do we look like the Mafia?" Lee asked. "We have nothing to do with organized crime. I got approached by wise guys a couple of times. They said, 'Give us 25 percent and you'll never have collection problems.' I said: 'Look, it's nothing personal, but I'd rather close my business than get involved with you. Now when they bust us, I get out in 24 hours. If I'm mixed up with you, I could go in for a while. I'd rather take the laydowns.'"

The bookmakers watched with pity as I bought tickets for Quick Draw, the New York Lottery's latest game, which flashed a new set of winning numbers every five minutes on an overhead screen. I lost \$17 in 20 minutes. Our next stop was the Offtrack Betting Corporation, at Seventh

Avenue and 37th Street, where a fistfight was in progress in the parlor. The bookmakers grimaced at the clientele. "I never took money from people this poor," Alson said. We went upstairs to OTB's restaurant, the Winner's Circle.

"Imagine what this real estate is costing them," Bill said, looking around the empty dining room. He could understand how OTB had become the world's only bookmaker to operate at a deficit. "Real estate and labor, that's what killing them. If I ran OTB, I'd close a third of the parlors. The degenerates that bet at those places will always find their way to a parlor in the next neighborhood." As we ate dinner, watching horse races from Monticello and Yonkers, I lost \$62. The dinner was another \$28.

The only good news of the night came after midnight, when I went home and watched Montana upset Utah. That won me \$30 — not enough to offset the \$79 I'd lost on Quick Draw and the races, but satisfying nonetheless. I clearly saw the crucial moral distinction between illegal bookmaking and government-sponsored gambling: the bookmakers give better odds. No wonder the government wants to shut them down.

The official excuse for Hynes's raids is that bookmaking profits go to organized-crime families. But even if Hynes is right, even if Bill and Lee really are connected with the Mafia, why should we care? The Mafia is a genuine problem in some industries, including construction and trash carting, because it forces clients to buy services, and at artificially high prices. Bookmakers don't force anyone to bet, and they compete to offer lower prices. Of every dollar bet on basketball games, Lee pays back his customers 95 cents.

OTB pays back barely 75 cents, and the lottery pays a measly 48 cents. These bureaucracies' overhead expenses alone consume more than 10 percent of the bettors' money. They couldn't survive if private bookmakers could compete openly, as they do in Britain and Las Vegas — and as they did earlier this century at New York's race tracks, until the state-sanctioned monopolies were established.

So the next time Joe Hynes rounds up bookmakers, don't dismiss it simply as a waste of police resources and a cheap publicity stunt. On behalf of Lotto and OTB, he's using the classic Mafia strategy for dealing with business competitors: send out the boys to break down their doors and take them for a ride. Think of him as Killjoy Joey, the Capo di Lotto — but don't let him intimidate you. Remember that it's not illegal to place bets, only to take them. With the basketball playoffs approaching, stand up for good, clean gambling. Support your local bookmaker. ■



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR JUNE



Bob Boehlecke No game

Bob Raimon's Friday June 21, 7:00  
Game

Bart DeLuca Saturday, June 15, 7:00

Tom Reiss' Game Thurs. June 27, 7:30  
No game June 13th

Don Cooke Saturday, June 29, 7:00

Chemistry Dept Friday, June 28, 8:00 at Ben's  
English Dept. Wednesday, June 26, 7:30 at Don's

*Note the changes in the schedule.* Some were made to maximize the number of players for each game - we are losing too many players.

For this June mailing I had intended to write about biased roulette wheels and dice. But I found so much material on the subject that I ran out of time and will save that topic for another month. So I am again falling back on something that I sent to my granddaughters, the Tunguska Event. I hope you find it to be interesting. But here are some short items.

## The New \$100 Bill

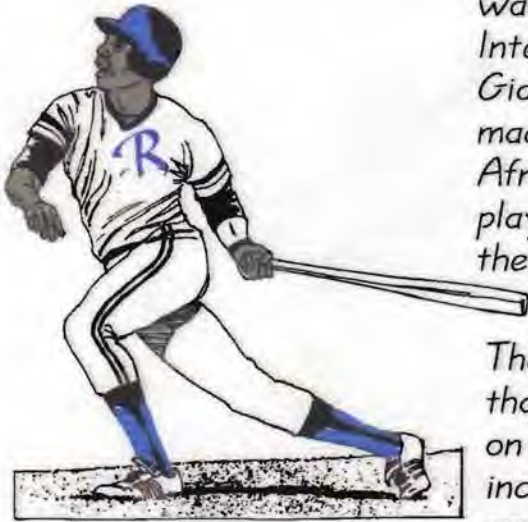
If you were to look at a table of the dollar value of goods exported from the United States, one of the largest items will not even be listed. You will find that in 1994 we exported \$4 billion worth of corn, and \$3 billion of wheat. The big ones are \$18 billion in airplanes and \$16 billion in telecommunications equipment. But what is not mentioned is that we also exported \$18 billion in another commodity --- \$100 dollars bills. It might be argued that this item has essentially no inherent value and therefore should not be listed.

The New York Times (2/24/96) reports that the total amount of U. S. money in circulation is almost \$400 billion. The surprising fact is that two-thirds of this amount is circulating outside of the country, mostly in \$100 bills. In many countries, the \$100 bill is the de facto coin of the realm. For example, in Russia, while the ruble is the official currency, the real currency is the American dollar. Will Safire, a columnist for the Times, note that the U. S. accrues \$24 billion (\$18 billion from overseas) a year from the "float" on the money in circulation. Here is how he reasons - The mint prints a \$100 bill for relatively zero cost. A bank will buy the bill for \$100 in true worth. The government has this money available until that \$100 bill is returned, worn out, to be redeemed. In the meantime, the feds have loaned that money out at 6% interest. What a deal! The U. S. Mint is a money making machine in more than one way.



The Times reports that the real reason for issuing the new \$100 bill is that excellent counterfeit \$100 bills ( called Superdollars ), printed in the Middle East, began showing up in Europe about five years ago. The Superdollars are so good that the CIA believes that only a government would have the resources to produce such quality. Iran is suspect. The United States feels it cannot afford to have their 18 billion dollar business ( with nearly a 18 billion profit ) undermined, hence the new bills.

## The First Day on the Job



The day was the 18th of April in 1946 and the place was Jersey City. The Montreal Royals of the International League were playing the Jersey City Giants on the opening day of the season. What made this opening day different was that an Afro-American athlete, Jackie Robinson, was playing second base for the Royals, a farm team of the Brooklyn Dodgers.

The first time at bat Jackie grounded out but that was the end of that nonsense. He got a hit on each of the next four trips to the plate, including a 335 foot three-run homer. He scored four runs and drove in four. He stole second base twice and when on third, so rattled the pitcher, Phil Oates, by feinting a dash for home, that a balk was declared which brought him home. To show that he was human, he was charged with an error on a wild throw to first base. The Royals won 14 - 1.

When Robinson first came to bat he was greeted warmly by the fans but without wild enthusiasm. But when the game ended, he was virtually mobbed by fans pouring onto the field. An auspicious beginning.

Robinson moved up to the Dodgers the following year and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962.

Source - The New York Times 4/19/1946

## A Memorable Headline.

Memorable because it still crosses my mind after all these years. The headline read:  
**Willy Mays Drops another Fly Ball**

The first sentence of the story was:

"Willy Mays dropped a fly ball nine years ago, last night he dropped another one "



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR JULY



**Aunt Sam**

**Bob Boehlecke** No game

**Bob Raimon's** Friday July 12, 7:00  
Game

**Bart DeLuca** Saturday, July 20, 7:00

**Tom Reiss' Game** Thurs. July 11, 25, 7:30

**Jim Garrard**

**Don Cooke** Saturday, July 27, 7:00

**Chemistry Dept** Friday, July

**English Dept.** Wednesday, July

## *Bias in Roulette Wheels*



When scientists encounter a situation which is so complicated that mathematical methods are too difficult to handle, they often fall back on Monte Carlo calculations. Such calculations depend on the generation of random numbers. The method is named after the mother of all random number generators, the roulette wheel at the Monte Carlo casino. But are the numbers generated by a roulette wheel truly random or are there built in biases?

The randomness of the Monte Carlo wheel was studied by Professor Karl Pearson, a British statistician and one of the founders of modern statistics, in a paper published in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1894. Professor Pearson had at his disposal a record of the numbers which occurred in 4274 spins of the wheel for the two week period in the month of August, 1892. He noted that the number of reds and blacks and odds and evens were very close to the expected values. He also found the succession of odd and even numbers followed the laws of chance. But he was surprised to find that the succession of red and black were at great variance with expectations. Excluding the zero, the statistical expectation is that a red would be followed by a black 50% of the time and a red 50% of the time. But Pearson found that in the series the color changed far more frequently than expected. In other words red colors were followed by black colors far more than statistics would dictate. He calculated that the results which were recorded in this two week period were so far from expectations that they would not be expected to occur since the beginning of geological time on earth. My own calculations are even more extreme indicating that such a run of red and black would not occur if the casino had been running since the beginning of the universe. (For those into statistics, the results were ten times the standard deviation.)



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Whenever one is faced with such an extremely unlikely happening, one can call on Ockham's Razor, or the Law of Parsimony. Ockham was a 13th Century philosopher who suggested that when things get impossibly complex, cut it all down to a simpler solution. For example, in the case of the unbelievable sequences of red and black, just assume that it never happened that way, and that there is a more likely, simpler explanation. . Starting with that assumption, I consulted with Tom Gilovich, Professor of Psychology at Cornell, who knows a lot about dealing with streaks. We both agreed that such an occurrence never happened and there must be another explanation. He makes a good case for coding errors in the basic data. Undoubtedly, Pearson was given a series of numbers which then had to be translated into odd/even and red/black. Odd and even numbers are relatively straightforward but in the case of red and black the numbers had to be translated into colors. There is a possible source of error here and Tom points out that peoples' minds expect that a red would be followed by a black, giving the result which was observed. It is strange to be critiquing a paper which is a hundred years old.

Let me digress a bit on Tom Gilovich. He is the author of a marvelous and perceptive book, **How We Know What Isn't So**, which has a subtitle "The fallibility of human reasoning in everyday life". He has so many interesting things in the book that I'll devote a future Newsletter to some of his findings. But the finding that drew the most attention was an analysis of the basketball shooting records of the Philadelphia 76ers for the 1980-81 season (Cognitive Psychology 17, 295). He showed that there is no such thing as a hot streak. In other words, shooting a basket is like tossing a coin, the previous shot has nothing to do with the success of the following shot. Of course, few agree with his finding (I happen to be convinced that he is 100% right). Coaches, who believe that Tom lives in an ivory tower and that the tower is located far out in left field, responded gleefully. Red Auerbach was quoted as follows: "Who is this guy? So he makes a study. I couldn't care less". The coaches don't need a study, they already "know" that there is such a thing as a hot streak. As Tom would say, they "know" what isn't so.

Back to roulette wheels - are they biased? It must be so that all roulette wheels have a built-in bias because it is not possible to make a "perfect" machine. At some level, there will be imperfections. But that is not the right question to ask. A better question would be "do wheels have imperfections that are significant enough to be detected in a reasonable time and large enough to overcome the house advantage".

In 1873, an English mechanical engineer, named Joseph Jagers, hired six individuals to sit at six roulette wheels at Monte Carlo for six weeks and record the sequences of numbers. He then analyzed the results and started to play at a particular wheel. He won a great deal of money before the casino started switching wheels and parts and started the day with entirely different wheels. Jagers reportedly won over \$300,000. Was the wheel biased or was Jagers just lucky? More on that point later.

There are many examples of beating roulette by finding defective wheels. In fact, there is a book available on the subject, **Beating the Wheel**, by R. T. Barnhart. In 1947, the San Francisco Chronicle ( 11/20/47 ) reported on two Cal Tech mathematics students who studied a roulette wheel in Las Vegas and won \$5000 before being shown the door. However, Harold's Club invited them to play, feeling that the publicity was worth the loss. They won another \$3000 before going back to class. They returned the following year and won \$15,000. In 1969, the N.Y. Times ( 1/26/69 p. 3 ) followed the exploits of a Richard Jarecki, Professor of Medicine at Heidelberg University, who analyzed a wheel at San Remo Casino on the Italian Riviera. He won \$272,000 before he was barred from the establishment.

Of course there are uncounted numbers of unknown gamblers who analyzed roulette wheels and lost their shirts. But you never read about them - a headline about a man losing at roulette does not get much attention.



There remains the question as to whether the system worked or the players were just lucky. There are a couple of cases which indicate that roulette wheels can have a bias large enough to offset the house advantage. The book, *Beating the Wheel*, records how a group, the Billy Walters Syndicate, in 1986 ravaged the Golden Nugget in Atlantic City for \$3,800,000 betting on five numbers at \$10,000 on each spin of the wheel. They returned to the Claridge in Atlantic City in 1989 and six members of the group recorded the spins of the wheels for four days. Then the bettors moved in betting a \$1000 at a time. In eight hours of play they were ahead by \$200,000. The Claridge called on a consultant who examined all the wheels and found two of them, including the one on which the Syndicate was betting, to be in terrible shape. Inexplicably, the casino continued to use these two wheels and the Billy Walters group won another \$300,000 before the management removed the two wheels from play. It appears that, in this case, the wheels were biased and the system was working. There are also other cases. A paper published in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association* (77, 660) by N. Ethier entitled "Testing for Favorable Numbers on a Roulette Wheel" (and supported by the National Science Foundation, no less) studied 26,113 spins of a wheel which had been recorded by a group at the Nevada Club in Reno in 1955. The author found that the number 26 had an astounding 19% edge in favor of the bettor.

It seems pretty clear that casinos have been beaten because of biased roulette wheels. Whether one can now find a flawed wheel is a different question. My guess is that after the Billy Walters incident, the manufacturers of roulette wheels went back to the drawing board and developed better wheels and that casinos are more inclined to take the problem more seriously. I believe that it would now be extremely unlikely that one could find a wheel with a large enough bias to make an assault worthwhile.

Of course there are other ways to beat roulette. A flaw can be introduced in a wheel and a number of instances are on record of such events. In 1898 a mechanic, who worked on the roulette wheels at Monte Carlo, was found to have gaffed a wheel which was subsequently played by a confederate. In London, an individual managed to hide himself in a casino when it closed and fixed a wheel. The fact was established, post facto, by a security camera which had been inadvertently left on overnight. The perpetrator was never identified.

There have been other attempts to beat the wheel. In the early sixties Professor Edward O. Thorpe, of blackjack card-counting fame, once worked with Professor Claude Shannon of MIT, an eminent mathematician, on the equations of motion of the ball of a roulette game. They developed a small timing device which fit in a shoe and was operated with one's toes. There was also a computer to solve the equations and signal which quarant to play. Thorpe did use the device a few times in a casino for some low level betting. Then there is the case of a group of graduate student hackers, physicists and assorted techies, chasing the good life in California in the late seventies, who developed a sophisticated device for tracking the roulette wheel using the equations that NASA used for the Apollo moon landings. They did use it in casinos (and won) but were plagued by hardware breakdowns. One of them wrote a book about the project, *The Eudaemonic Pie*, by Thomas Bass ("eudaemonic" is a Greek word meaning conducive to happiness). That was the last hurrah because it is now a felony to use an electronic device in Nevada casinos.

### ***A Proposition Bet***

A shifty-eyed guy sidles up to you and says "You look like a gambling man, so you must know it is easier to roll a seven than a six or an eight". When you agree that you do, he offers you a bet that he will roll a six and an eight before you roll two sevens. He will even allow you to use your own dice and you can do the rolling. He says, "If a seven is easier to roll than a six or an eight, the odds must be in your favor - right? Wrong! Shifty-eyes has a 16% advantage. Why? because he can win two ways, with a six, eight or an eight, six while you are stuck with seven, seven. Look at it this way - at the start, it is much easier to roll either a six or an eight than a seven.



# The Cayuga Poker Society Newsletter #29 August 1996

## POKER SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST



**Bob Boehlecke** Bob won't be playing this summer.

**Bob Raimon's** Friday August 23, 7:00 Game

**Bart DeLuca** Friday, August 9, 7:00

**Tom Reiss' Game** Thurs. August 8 & 22, 7:30

**Jim Garrard** No game in August

**Don Cooke** No game in August

**Chemistry Dept.** Friday, August 16, 8:00 at Frank's

**English Dept.** Wednesday September 4, 7:30 at Tony's


### BiaSed Dice

After the most recent newsletter about biases in roulette wheels I thought it might be interesting to examine dice from the same viewpoint. My initial thoughts were that dice are inherently biased because they are not symmetrical. For example, if one side of a die has six pips and the opposite side only one pip there must be a built-in asymmetry. In the case of dice which use dimples, or indentations, as pips, one would expect that the side with the six pips would be lighter than the side with the single pip and therefore there should be a bias toward higher numbers. Starting with this assumption, I searched the literature for papers that reported on the results of large numbers of rolls of dice. ( It always surprises me that some investigators are willing to throw dice or toss coins thousands of times just to see if things come out as expected ).



I did find a paper which was directly applicable to the matter under consideration. It was published in *The American Mathematic Monthly* ( Vol 26, p351, 1919 ). The author was associated with the Mathematics Department at Harvard but, at the time, was reporting from Camp Devens, Massachusettes. He followed 9900 outcomes of dice cast by his comrades-in-arms. Some of the results are recorded as follows:

Point is 10	Expected wins 275	-	actual wins 297	+ 8% above expectations
Point is 4	Expected wins 275	-	actual wins 267	- 3% below expectations
Craps 12	Expected losses 275	-	actual losses 293	+ 7% above expectations
Craps 2	Expected losses 275	-	actual losses 259	- 6% below expectations











It is obvious from these data that there is a significant bias toward high numbers. In fact, the deviations are so great that a bet on the number 10, which, with fair dice, has a 66% advantage to the house, would have a 1.4% advantage to the bettor with the dice used by the soldiers at Camp Devens.



Intrigued with the information in this paper, I searched for further data and found two additional papers published in the nineteenth century. Both of these papers reported a significant bias towards high numbers. For a brief moment the thought crossed my mind that there might be a way to beat the craps table. It did not last very long because I reasoned that if I could figure this out, many other people would have done so and casinos are not exactly charitable institutions. I then found a more recent paper ( *Psychometrika* 36 #1, 1971 P. 1 ) which tallied the results of over four millions tosses of 4 different types of dice.



( The article does not report on how many years it took the individual to throw a single die four million times ). There were four different brands of dice used in this study. One brand had dimpled pips, but the other three were dice used in Las Vegas casinos in the early seventies. The dice with dimpled pips, as in the previously quoted papers, showed a significant bias toward high numbers, but the casino dice closely approached expectations. The pips on the casino dice were made by glueing on very thin white circles to minimize the asymmetry of the cubes. I don't know if casinos ever used dimpled dice, but if they did you could beat the house.



I thought that it would be interesting to find out how modern dice are made so I looked up some manufacturers of dice in Thomas's Registry. On the first call I hit pay dirt in the form of a gentleman by the name of Richard Taylor, of T. K. Specialty Co. in Las Vegas. Mr. Taylor had been in the business of manufacturing dice for forty years. He was able to answer all the questions I asked and also answered questions that I never thought to ask. He must know as much about dice as anyone. My first question was how could the dice be symmetrical if the markings were not symmetrical. He explained that after the cube is made holes are drilled for the pips and then filled with a white substance of the same density as the material of the dice. ( A very clever idea to maintain uniformity ). The sides of the dice are then polished to an optical flat. A modern die is an object of exquisite precision. The dimensions of the die are guaranteed to be within a ten thousandth of an inch, but Mr. Taylor told me that most dice are ten times better than that. The reason for such precision is to keep the areas of the six faces as uniform as possible. ( Scarne, in his book *Scarne's Complete Guide to Gambling*, notes that shaving two thousandths of an inch off the side of a dice is enough to give the cheater an advantage. ( I calculated that advantage as being 0.6% ). He also told me that because the dice are so precise they can become biased by hitting a hard surface and that is the reason that dice are retired after eight hours of play in a casino. I presume that it is this factor that allows the dice manufacturers to make money on selling such precision objects for a few bucks apiece.

A couple of other facts about dice. The custom of having opposite faces add up to seven is hardly new. Such dice were used in the 18th Egyptian Dynasty ( 1340 BC ). Nor are loaded dice a recent invention. Ancient examples were found in Roman ruins.



## *A Convention of Thieves*

On Wednesday, May 29th, they began arriving in Las Vegas from all over the country. While they belong to a very loosely structured organization and did not go through the Las Vegas Convention Bureau, they convened in large numbers. It was not a coincidence that a show, attended by 35,000 jewelers, opened the following day. The Cleveland Plain Dealer ( 6/7/96 ) reported that Las Vegas was awash with jewelry and that 4 to 8 billion dollars worth was on display. Halfway through the convention 18 million dollars in gems had been reported stolen.



The term "tinhorn gambler" refers to a small-time, low-stakes bettor. The origin of the term probably goes back to the frontier game of chuck-a-luck where gamblers bet on combinations of three thrown dice. The dice were shaken in a horn which was usually made of tin. Of all the games of chance, chuck-a-luck allowed the lowest stakes. So, a small bettor became known as a tinhorn gambler.





## Poker Schedule for September



Bob Boehlecke	No game in Sept. perhaps October
Bob Raimon's Game	Sat Sept. 21 7:00 at Jerry's
Bart Deluca	Fri. Sept. 27 7:00
Tom Reiss' Game	Thurs. Sept. 5 & 19, 7:30
Jim Garrard	No game in September
Don Cooke	No game in September
Chemistry Dept.	<b>FRIDAY THE 13TH</b> 8:00 at Frank's
English Dept.	Wed. Sept. 4, 7:30 at Tony's

### Dan Patch, Wonder Horse



It just wasn't in the cards. On August 10, Cigar failed in his effort to beat Citation's "record" of 16 consecutive wins. I put "record" in quotations because the definition is highly selective. It ignores races on foreign soil such as the 54 straight wins of the great Hungarian thoroughbred, Kincsem (1870s) who raced throughout Europe. Not only was it 56 in a row but he never lost a race. Closer to home, the record does not count the 56 consecutive wins of Camarero (1953-1955) or the 39 of Galgo Jr. (1930's) because they ran in Puerto Rico which is thought to be a less competitive arena. Even races in the United States are excluded if they are not in the "modern era". Leviathan (1790's) had 23, First Consul (1800-1806) had 21 and Lottery (1805-1810) 21. But the ploy worked. Del Mar Park had a record attendance of people hoping to see the "record" broken.

In a previous newsletter on thoroughbred racing, I expressed the opinion that Man-o-War was the greatest American horse. However, I qualified the statement by saying that, if harness racing were to be included, Dan Patch would be easily be the front runner.

Dan Patch was a pacer who raced in the early years of this century when harness racing was much more widespread than it is today. He raced for ten seasons and never lost a race. He was bested in two of 56 heats but went on to win both races. Back in those days some races were run in heats.



In modern harness racing there is only a single race to decide the winner. Then such a race was called a dash. It used to be that a number of heats were run. ( Perhaps this was because of a shortage of horses and it was better to have two or three races rather than only one ). In this system, if the winner of the first heat also won the second heat, that horse was declared the winner of the race. If a different horse won the second heat there was a third heat. Winning two of the three gave that horse the race. If still another horse won the third heat, those three would run a fourth heat to establish the winner of the race. In the case of Dan Patch, he twice lost in the first heat but went on to win the next two heats to win both races.

Dan began his racing career at the age of four in 1900. In 1903 he set a new world record of 1:59 for the mile, the conventional distance for harness racing. In 1903 he again broke the record with a 1:56.25 and once more in 1904, with 1:56. In 1905 he ran a mile in 1:55.25, a record that would stand for the next 33 years. He never ran a competitive race after that because there was no competition. Further, owners did not want to take a chance at bringing down Dan Patch who had become a national hero.

After the competition disappeared, the pacer continued to race, but now in exhibitions against the clock. He traveled all over the country in his white private train car. Everywhere he went it was Dan Patch day. It is reported that 70,000 people turned out to see him in Allentown Pennsylvania in 1905. ( I am a bit skeptical of that number ). But the 60,000 at the Minnesota State Fair could be true. Dan Patch was a household word. It is easy to understand that there would be Dan Patch cigars and tobacco but there were also coasters and sleds, pillows, scarves and something which is a bit harder to understand, a Dan Patch washing machine.

Why is Dan Patch my choice for the greatest horse? From his spectacular record. When he was foaled, the Holy Grail of harness racing was the two-minute mile. In his ten-year career on the track, he paced 73 miles and averaged a time of 1:59.5. He ran thirty consecutive miles below 2:00 when hardly a horse around could get below two minutes, even once. In Dan's career he knocked 4 seconds off the world record. It took 33 years to lower the record another 0.25 seconds and 59 years to better Dan's time by a full second. What a champion! The great pacer died at the age of 20 in 1916. His owner, M. W. Savage, died the following day.

## Petty Cash

I recently finished reading an article in the New York Times (8/10/96) and was ready to pass on to something else when I gave it a double-take. While there was nothing inherently humorous in the article, it struck a funny bone in my psyche. The article reported that a Mr. John M. McNamara, a car dealer on Long Island, had been sentenced to five years in jail for stealing money from General Motors over an eight year period. Nothing unusual about that, but it dawned on me that the amount of money was unusual - what about \$422 MILLION! Now, by my standards, that is a bit of cash and one wonders how a car dealer could get that amount away from GM for so long without being caught. Of course, you can look at it as a mere \$50 million a year or so, which may not have attracted anyone's attention. But no, Mr. McNamara made his money the old-fashioned way, a Ponzi scheme.



The scam began in 1984 when Mr. McNamara borrowed money from General Motors to finance the purchase of a large number of automobiles. Instead of proceeding with the purchase, he decided to use the money for other things, such as investments. Over time, he bought up companies, dabbled in land development and played the stock market. If money got tight when payments to GM came due, he just borrowed more money to pay the older loans. He became a pillar of his community and gave large sums to charity. At the same time he was taking long vacations around the world in his private nine-seat jet. The house of cards began to come apart in the recession of the late eighties.

The part that I have difficulty absorbing is that he was, as a single individual, able to borrow 6.2 billion dollars. That kind of money is even noticeable in the federal budget. I estimate that, at \$20,000 a pop, the money would buy over 300,000 automobiles. Perhaps the problem was in reliance on computer systems which just continued to send out money. No one ever told the computer to print out TILT when one guy got money to buy 300,000 cars.

## A Night in Las Vegas



In my reading I came across the fact that, in 1951, a hotel room in Las Vegas cost the princely sum of \$4. A suite of rooms could be had for \$10 and a dinner, including a ticket to the show, was \$1, or if you splurged, \$2. I like to verify what I send out, so I checked the Hotel Red Book for 1951 and found that \$4 was a good median price for Las Vegas hotels, although you could get a room for \$1.50. The top of the line was the Flamingo at \$10. I was not surprised at the low prices because it is widely believed that the hotels are subsidized by the casinos. But since I had the book in my hand, I wondered how New York City prices would compare. I was surprised to find that the median price for a hotel room was also \$4. At many hotels you

you could get a room for \$1.50 or you could go upscale to the Plaza or The Waldorf Astoria for \$7. So there was little difference between New York City and Las Vegas.

Past prices have to be put into perspective by considering inflation. By 1995 the median price of a hotel room in Las Vegas had increased to \$45, a factor of ten over 1951, while for New York City the median price had increased to \$200, a factor of fifty.

From 1950 to 1996, the average price of goods and services, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, has increased by a factor of only six and a half. I wonder why hotel prices, particularly in New York, have so greatly outpaced inflation? I talked to a professor in the Hotel School and he could think of a couple of factors (unionization and an increase in travel) but could not understand such a large increase. But the situation reminded him of an old Statler Hotel sales pitch - "A room and a bath for a buck and a half".



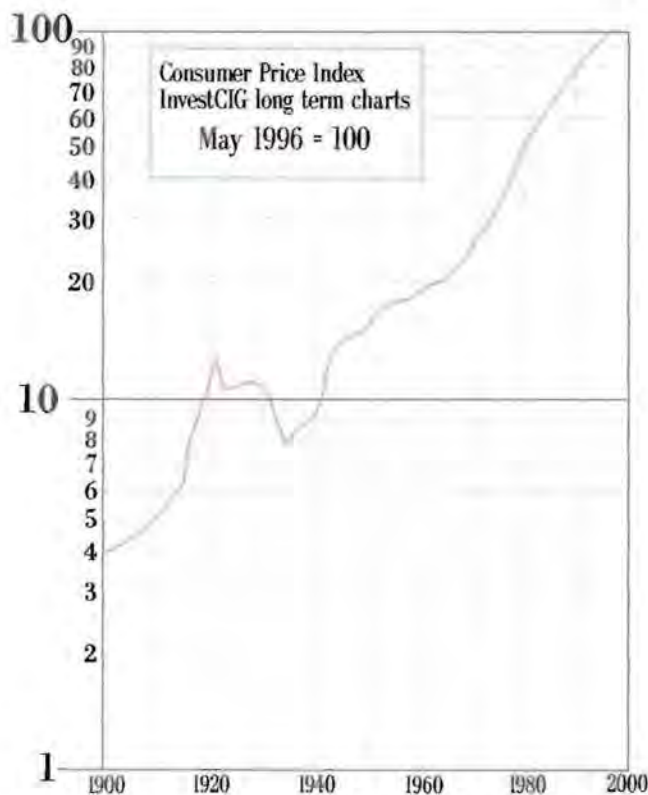
# Poker Schedule for October



Bob Boehlecke	Saturday, Nov. 2 6:00
Bob Raimon's game	Fri. October 18, 7:00 at Jerry's
Bart Deluca	Sat. Oct. 26 7:00
Tom Reiss' Game	Thurs. Oct. 3 & 17 at 8:00 No game the 31st. Halloween
Jim Garrard	No game in October
Don Cooke	No game in October
Chemistry Dept.	No October game - too many travelers
English Dept.	Wed. Oct. 9, 7:30 at Glen's
Tom Hunt	Wed. Oct. 30, 7:30

Tom Hunt's game is a \$2-\$4 game on the last Wednesday of the month. He lives in Cortland on this side of the town. Give him a call at 256-9278 for further information.

## INFLATION



In the last Newsletter it was noted that the median cost of a hotel room in New York City in 1951 was \$4 a night. If one inflated that amount to present day prices, the cost of a room in New York would be \$26, instead of the present price of \$200. Therefore, in the 45 years, the cost of staying a night in the city went up eight times faster than inflation. With this fact in mind, I began to wonder what sort of items went down, in real price, to compensate for those that increased.

In 1935, one could buy a gallon of gas in New Jersey for 13 cents. In 1950, the price had increased to 25 cents and is currently \$1.20. In real dollars, considering inflation, which is cheaper? If the 1935 price was inflated to 1996 it would be \$1.48 and the 1950 price would be \$1.63, so gasoline is now cheaper, in real dollars, than in either of the previous years. The 13 cent gasoline may seem like a bargain but it was not.

The graph on the left allows one to make such comparisons. It shows, for example, that, in 1900, the price of all goods and services was 25 times less than in 1996 (4 compared to 100) and the average price in the early 1940s was one-tenth of current levels.



In 1950 you could buy a Ford for about \$1800. Inflating this price to 1996 ( a factor of 6.5 ) yields \$11,700. A medium size basic Ford now goes for about \$13,000, so the real price has increased somewhat in 45 years. But one has to be careful with such comparison. Is the purchased product the same in both cases ? The New York City hotel room has probably not changed very much in the 45 years. But the car you get for your money these days is a far better vehicle than its 1950 counterpart. Such things as tires, batteries, headlights, heaters and brakes are far better than they used to be. The 1996 cars have features that were not thought of in 1950 such as air-conditioning, air bags, cassette players, power steering and brakes, automatic transmissions etc. Further, performance is vastly improved. It used to be hell to get a car started on a very cold morning and, on the first hot day of the year, many cars would be on the side of the road with overheated radiators. So, all-in-all you get more for your money these days.

Another factor is that the 1996 car is much more affordable. In 1950, the annual median per capita disposable income ( income after taxes ) was \$1369 - no, that is not a mistake. Inflating that figure to 1996 gives \$8900, but the disposable income is now about \$20,400 so income has risen over twice as much as inflation and people have more buying power. When I was a young man in 1935, the median annual income was \$420. Given that, filling a tank of gas for \$2.00 does not seem all that easy. The fact is that one rarely filled a tank. It was much more common to hear "Gimme a dollars worth of gas".

The increase in college tuition verges on a national scandal. In 1950, Tuition at Cornell was \$600 and in 1996 is \$20,900, an increase of a factor of about five compared to inflation. But, in the same period, in New York State, expenditures per pupil in the public schools has increased from \$298 to \$9244, a rate of increase comparable to Cornell's.

Not unexpectedly, federal spending went from 92 billion in 1950 to 15 trillion in 1995, a factor of 56 greater than inflation. In 1950, the Dow-Jones Industrial Average was 210 and it is now 5600, a growth rate four times inflation.

From 1950 the cost of food has declined a bit in real dollars as has manufactured goods, except for electronic items which have declined precipitously. In 1950 a black and white, 12" television set cost about \$250. Now a 12" color set can be had for \$150, a decline of a factor of 10 in real dollars.

A most dramatic change in price is concerned with computers. In the early 1940s the Army sponsored the building of a computer at the University of Pennsylvania. When ENIAC went on line in 1946 it was the world's most powerful computer. It weighed 30 tons, had 18,000 vacuum tubes, consumed 200 kilowatts and cost \$485,000 ( about 4 million in 1996 dollars ). Today, one can buy the same computing power in the Cornell Campus Store - a battery operated hand-held calculator for \$39.95.



## A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE ABOUT INFLATION

It was June of 1946 and I had just arrived at Fort Dix ( halfway between Philadelphia and Trenton NJ ), after three years overseas. My pockets were bulging with thousands of dollars of poker winnings. The first item on my agenda was to see my girlfriend who was a nursing student in White Plains, about 20 miles north of New York City. ( Yes, still the same girl - in fact, I have known June since she was fourteen ). Three years previously she waited in vain on the corner of 57th Street and Fifth Avenue because I did not show up for a date. I was out on the Atlantic aboard the Queen Elizabeth I with 15,000 other troops. But White Plains was a long way away ( Tripquest on the World Wide Web tells me it's 105 miles ) and there was no chance of an overnight. ( This was before Mr. Hertz thought about renting cars ). The only way I could think of would be to go by taxi, so I went to the ever-present line of cabs outside military bases and asked what it would cost to go to White Plains. The driver first believed that I was kidding, then got a map to find out exactly where White Plains was, thought for a while and then said, " Fifteen dollars ". Off we went. I met June at the White Plains train station and we went to Howard Johnson's for a soda. Then to get back to Fort Dix. No problem - a \$15 dollar offer was so quickly accepted that I began to feel that I had been a victim of price gouging. But the expenditure of \$30 worked out - October 5th is our 50th anniversary.

## A NEW RULE IN FOOTBALL

The new rule, which eliminates tied games, can result in some curious outcomes. The rule has been in effect in Division I-AA games for 15 years. In 1982 Rhode Island beat Maine by a score of 58-55. However, at the end of regulation play the score was 21-21 and they then went into a long overtime. For those of you who have not heard of the new rule, it goes like this. If the game ends in a tie, there is an overtime. One team gets the ball on their own 25-yard line and keeps the ball until they either score or lose possession. Then the other team gets the ball on their 25 yard line for their attempt. The process is analogous to extra innings in a baseball game. The initial possession is decided by the toss of a coin. The winner of the toss has a big advantage and will opt for the opponent to go first. That way, when their turn comes they know what the other team has done in the top half of the inning.

## TIGER WOODS' DEBUT

Tiger Woods was probably disappointed with his finish of 60th place in his first round as a pro. But he did shoot rounds of 67 and 68, won \$2544 and even got a hole-in-one to cheer him up. When Jack Nicklaus debuted in 1962 he finished 50th and won \$33. ( But Jack went on to win the Open that year ). But Woods can hit a ball. His average drive for the four rounds was 323 yards. To put this in perspective, John Daly, the Tour leader in driving, is averaging 287 yards this year. What impressed me the most was the fact that on the 485 yard 4th hole he hit a three-iron off the tee and followed with a six iron to the green. That's awesome.





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER



Bob Boehlecke     Saturday, Nov. 2, 6:00

Bob Raimon's game     Saturday, Nov. 9, 7:00 at Jerry's

Bart Deluca     Friday, Nov. 22 7:00

Tom Reiss' Game     Thursday, Nov. 7 & 21 at 8:00

Don Cooke     Saturday, Nov. 16 at 7:00 (\$5 / \$10)

Chemistry Dept.     Friday, Nov. 8, 8:00 at Don's

English Dept.     Wednesday, Nov. 13, 7:30 at Dan's

Tom Hunt     Wednesday, Dec. 4, 8:00

## A \$10,000 BET ON THE IRONMEN



It was the Spring of 1869 and, after six long, hard years, the transcontinental railroad was nearing completion. The Central Pacific had started in Sacramento and was building east while the Union Pacific was building west from Omaha. There was a great competition between the two because each company would receive 6,400 acres of land and a \$65,000 bond from the federal government for each mile of track they completed to the satisfaction of the inspectors. Since each company was trying to lay as much track as possible, speed was paramount and each crew was trying to beat the record of the other for miles of track per day. In fact, the race caught the imagination of the country and newspapers carried the daily figures for trackage per day for each company.

In late winter, the Union Pacific crew laid six miles of track in one day for a new record. Charlie Crocker, boss of the Central Pacific crew, stated that he intended to put down ten miles of track in a day. Thomas Durant, who was in charge of the Union Pacific effort, bet Crocker \$10,000 that the deed could not be done. Crocker accepted and choose April 28th for the effort. The choice of the day did not seem to make much sense because the ten-mile stretch was upgrade and had a number of curves which required a time consuming process for bending of the rails for those sections. But Crocker had another reason for his timing. He had waited until the Union Pacific was within seven miles of Promontory Point, the meeting place, and thus would be unable to come back with an even greater effort. While the nation and the businessmen would focus on the May 10th ceremonies at Promontory Point, April 28 was the great day for the men who did all the work, they were the stars. Except for those chosen for the effort, everyone in both camps were given the day of watch the effort. Dignitaries, company officers, soldiers and newspapermen were thr 5000 in all. It was a national event, an old-fashioned "Superbowl".





Crocker had 11,000 men at his disposal, ninety percent of them Chinese. (Ninety percent of those pushing west were Irish). But he opted for a select team of 840 men for the construction crew which was supported by a cast of thousands to bring up the supplies. There was no mechanical help and everything was done by manpower and horsepower. Crocker gave the men an incentive by promising each member of the crew four days pay if they reached the ten miles.

The men were divided into teams, each of which was assigned a specific task. First came the pioneers who placed the ties. Next came the team which brought up the iron rails and were called the ironmen. Then came the track gaugers and a group of twenty spikers who drove ten spikes to each rail and were followed by the crew which bolted the rails together. The last and largest group were the 400 men who put down and tamped the ballast on the roadbed. Off to the side were the crews who put up and wired the telegraph poles. There was a backup crew for each team to take over when the first crew tired.

The smallest but the most critical group were the ironmen. They were only eight in number, divided into two four-men teams. Each team carried a 30-foot rail weighing 560 pounds from a flatcar to the roadbed. It was this group which determined how much track could be laid and, for this effort, all the ironmen were Irishmen.

Work began at 7:00 with a frantic effort, the unloading of the eight freight cars for the first mile of track. As the morning wore on, exhausted men were replaced by fresh blood and tiring crews were rested by replacement crews. A newspaper man on the scene reported that the construction crew stretched out for two miles moving ahead about a mile per hour, leaving the finished track behind.

At 1:30, with six miles of track already down, and little doubt about the outcome. Crocker called for a hour of rest and food. On starting up the afternoon drive, many crews were changed except for the original ironmen who declined to accept any help at all. The ten-mile point was passed well before the 12 hour day had ended and Crocker won his bet. It was a remarkable effort. There were 25,800 ties laid, 3,520 rails placed and 35,200 spikes driven. To put these numbers in perspective, over the eleven hour work period, a new tie went down every 1.5 seconds. It is too bad that movie cameras were not available in those days, it would be interesting to see how it was done. The work must have been choreographed like a precision ballet.

The real heroes were the ironmen who went the whole day and performed a Herculean labor. By the nature of the task, this crew was limited to only eight men. How hard did they work? Each team of four muscled a 560 pound rail to the railbed every 23 seconds for an eleven hour stretch and, in the course of the day, each man hefted 123 tons of iron. These men do not seem to have been commemorated anywhere except that, whenever you read the story of their effort, their names are recorded, so here they are: Michael Shay, Patrick Joyce, Michael Kennedy, Thomas Dailey, George Elliott, Michael Sullivan, Edward Kileen and Fred McNamara. They were ironmen in more ways than one.

I wonder if the name of the Ironman Triathlon competition, a measure of stamina, is derived from the exploits of these stalwart Irishmen?





## SO CLEVER, BUT AN OVERLOOKED TWIST

The story in the New York Times of May 13, 1993, begins at the Buckland Hills mall in Connecticut. A Mr. Mills, President of Electronic Cash Machines Company, persuaded the manager of the mall to place one of their ATM machines in the lobby for the convenience of the customers. Shortly afterward, three uniformed movers delivered the machine and quickly had it operating. When people began to use the new machine they would be greeted by name and asked to input their personal identification number. Then the message would show up on the screen apologizing that the transaction could not be completed and the card would be returned. It is easy to imagine people walking away muttering to themselves about a brand new machine that did not work. They would be wrong - the ATM was functioning perfectly. It was recording the bank identification code, the customer number and the personal identification number, just like it had been programmed to do. Two weeks later the same uniformed crew came and removed the machine. Then the same three, using 120 counterfeit ATM cards, descended on New York City ATMs and drew out \$107,460 in cash. It took a while for the banks to discover that something was amiss but it took almost no time for the police to crack the case. The thieves seemed totally oblivious to the fact that they were being videotaped by cameras that had been mandated for New York City ATMs a few months earlier. The happy faces were familiar to the police because of previous bank fraud activities by the individuals. Two of the thieves were sentenced to two and a half years in federal prison and one for five months. They were also ordered to repay \$464,000 in restitution which included \$300,000 from another caper in Virginia.

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## A LOW TECH APPROACH

At a bank in Paramus N. J., the night depository had a sign which read :

**The depository is out of order, please make your deposits**

**in the depository in the parking lot**

A depository, of sorts, had been placed there by two men after the bank had closed and in the morning everything which had been deposited was gone, including \$12,000 in cash. The police were searching for suspects.

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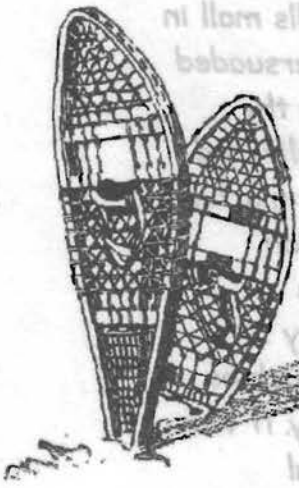
## MAKE A GUESS

Make a guess as to the world record for the 100 meter dash - in snowshoes. The answer is on the other side of this page.





## SO CLEVER BUT AN OVERLOOKED TWIST



If you made a guess, it was too high. The 100 meter record was established by Jeremy Badeau in Canserga, N. Y. in 1991. His time was 14.07 seconds. (The Guinness Book of Records). The world record for the 100 meter dash without snowshoes is 9.86 seconds. I would like to see a movie of that effort.

The story in the New York Times of May 13, 1995, begins at the Buckland Hills mall in Connecticut. A Mr. Mills, the manager of the mall to place the convenience of the customer, the machine and quickly they would be greeted by a number. Then the message would show up on the screen apologizing that the transaction could not be completed and the card would be returned. Imagine people walking away muttering to themselves that did not work. They would be wrong - the ATM was functioning perfectly. Regarding the bank identification code, the customer number and the personal identification number. Just like it had been programmed to do. Two weeks later the same uniformed crew came and removed the machine. Then the same three, using 130 counterfeit ATM cards, descended on New York City ATMs and drew out \$107,460 in cash. It took a while for the banks to discover that something was amiss but it took almost no time for the police to crack the case. The thieves seemed totally oblivious to the fact that they were being videotaped by cameras that had been mandated for New York City ATMs a few months earlier. The happy faces were familiar to the police because of previous bank fraud activities by the individuals. Two of the thieves were sentenced to two and a half years in federal prison and one for five months. They were also ordered to repay \$24,000 in restitution which included \$300,000 from another copier in Virginia.

## A LOW TECH APPROACH

At a bank in Paramus N. J. the night depository had a sign which read: The depository is out of order, please make your deposits in the depository in the parking lot. A depository of sorts, had been placed there by two men after the bank had closed and in the morning everything which had been deposited was gone, including \$12,000 in cash. The police were searching for suspects.

## MAKE A GUESS

Make a guess as to the world record for the 100 meter dash - in snowshoes. The answer is on the other side of this page.





# POKER SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

Bob Boehlecke     Saturday, Dec. 7, 6:00

Bob Raimon's game     Saturday, Dec. 14, 7:00 at Jerry's

Bart Deluca     Friday, Dec 21 7:00

Tom Reiss' Game     Thursday, Dec. 5 & 19 at 8:00

Don Cooke     Friday, Dec. 27 at 7:00

Chemistry Dept.     Friday, Dec. 20, 8:00 at Barry's

English Dept.     Wednesday, Dec. 18, 7:30 at Isaac's

Tom Hunt     Wednesday, Dec. 4, 8:00

## *Blackjack - The Day of the Lamb*



The above subtitle arises from a statement made by a Nevada casino operator on a TV talk show in the 1950s. When asked if players won at times, he responded with a statement that must have horrified his public relations people - "When the lamb goes to the slaughter he might kill the butcher. But we bet on the butcher". When Professor Edward O. Thorp, of MIT, publicized the fact that blackjack, when properly played, was a player advantage game, the day of the lamb had arrived and the game would never be the same.

In the early 1960s Thorp received a great deal of press coverage and wrote a book *Beat the Dealer*, which became a best seller. When he delivered papers on the topic at meetings of the American Mathematical Society there were always overflow crowds and a large percentage of the audience seemed more like Willie the Weasel than academic mathematicians. The initial reaction of the casinos went along the lines of "We have a lot of customers with systems and we just love them". The casinos would eventually realize that the game of blackjack has an Achilles' heel and they have been struggling with the problem to this day.

For background, there are two aspects of the game of blackjack that allow it to be a player-advantage game. The first is the optimal strategy of play (when to hit and when to stick) and the second is that the house advantage changes as cards are dealt.

The basic strategy, or zero-memory strategy, is a purely statistical concept. But it was not until the advent of computers in the 1950s that the statistical solutions could be easily obtained. Tables are now readily available which direct the action of the player in all possible circumstances. For example, if you have a total of 16 and the dealer's exposed card is a 10, from the statistical point of view, it is best to hit. The basic strategy concept substantially reduces the house advantage. Depending on the rules of a particular casino, the advantage can range from a few tenths of a percent in favor of either the casino or the player.





The basic strategy is simple to follow as illustrated in the following table which directs your action depending on the cards you have and the card shown by the dealer.

		Dealer's up card										
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A	
Your Total	>16	Always Stick										
	16	Stick						Hit				
	15											
	14											
	13											
	12	Hit		Hit								
	<12	Always Hit										

There are a few other things such as when to double down, when to split pairs and how to play if you have an ace, but these too are simple. With just a little effort you can play pretty close to even against the house. If anyone would like similar tables for splitting pairs and doubling down, I'll be happy to provide them.

As previously mentioned, the odds change as a deck is dealt and the player can take advantage of this fact to tilt the odds in his favor by monitoring the cards as they are dealt. This process is called card counting. When Thorp burst on the scene, casinos dealt blackjack with a single deck which made card counting much easier.

To illustrate the changing of blackjack odds as the cards are dealt, imagine you have a powerful memory: you are playing alone with the dealer and you have been monitoring the deck until only a few cards remain. You know the remaining cards are 7, 7, 8, 8, 8. In such a case bet all you possibly can because you are going to win. The dealer cannot get over 16, therefore must hit and will bust. The odds depend on the composition of the cards remaining in the deck. In general, when the number of high cards is larger, the odds are more favorable to the bettor. For example, a deck which has no aces gives the house an advantage of 0.02 % while a deck without fives favors the player by 0.04 %.

The idea behind card counting is to monitor the cards as they are dealt and to make small bets when the house has the advantage and large bets when the odds favor the bettor. There are at least a dozen systems which can be used to monitor the ebb and flow of the odds and they range from those that are quite simple to the quite complex.

The casinos were slow to react to the players who had adopted the Thorp concept. Then their first reaction was to change the game to make it more favorable to the house. As a result, the average players stayed away in droves and the casinos reverted to the old rules. Their only recourse then was to increase the number of decks in play to make card counting more difficult.

Increasing the number of decks in play, made it more difficult for card counters but did not eliminate the practice. The next stage in the cat and mouse game was for the casinos to identify the card counters by their style of betting ( sudden, big increases in the size of bets ) and give them a little muscle. After losing a law suit over the muscle, they simply barred suspected counters from the game and the Nevada legislature went along.



The Atlantic City casinos were unable to get the Gambling Commission to allow the barring of suspected card counters and had to develop other defenses. The major line of defense was to have dealers who were card counters themselves and who were able to monitor whether the odds favored the player or the house. When the odds swung in favor of the player, the dealer would shuffle the cards and start a new round. (The house does not like to do this because reshuffling reduces playing time and decreases profit). Both in Las Vegas and Atlantic City players had to hide the fact that they are card counters to avoid either expulsion or card counting dealers. All sorts of ruses were developed. Players use disguises so that they would not be recognized or play the part of a drunken fool. They would wear uniforms such as those of bus drivers, display Rotary buttons or adopt the identity of conventioners. A common ploy is to work as a team. One of the team plays for low stakes, or merely watches, and monitors the course of the changing odds. When the situation is favorable to the players a signal goes out to a team member who comes into the game with large bets.

The doyen of card counters was Ken Uston. Like Thorp, Uston was not an ordinary gambler. He was a Senior Vice President of the Pacific Stock Exchange, a gambler in the biggest game in town, the stockmarket. In his book, *Million Dollar Blackjack*, Uston writes in great detail of his assault on Atlantic City in 1980 with teams of 15 - 20 card counters. In one 14 day period they won \$140,000 and in another 13-day session, \$600,000. He claims that, overall, his teams won \$4 million.

Thorp played in the casinos only a few times then went on to the big game, Wall Street. He wrote a book about how to beat the market and opened a brokerage office. Uston was found dead in a Paris apartment in 1984. While no autopsy was performed, those who knew him suspected that the cause was a drug overdose.

Thorp was not the first to devise the basic blackjack strategy although his book publicized the method. This distinction goes to four Army draftees at Fort Aberdeen who, in the early fifties, apparently not having much else to do, spent a couple of years with desk calculators doing the computations for the basic strategy. They published a paper in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association* ( Vol. 51, 429 ) entitled *The Optimum Strategy for Blackjack*. It is my guess that some form of the basic strategy must have been previously worked out by some gamblers just by dealing blackjack hands. But the publicity came from individuals who were not gamblers to begin with. What real gambler is going to publish a paper when he learns how to beat the casino? It would be the last thing to enter his mind.

### *A Lousy Beginning*



There is a new book entitled *Baseball Letters* authored by Seth Swirsky. Swirsky wrote to baseball players of an earlier generation asking them how they felt about their game and a large number replied. One was Virgil Trucks. Trucks was a pitcher, mostly for the Detroit Tigers, who compiled a 177 - 135 record in an eighteen-year career starting in 1941. He also pitched two no-hitters. His story was about his first appearance in the major leagues when he started against the Boston Red Sox. The leadoff hitter punched his first pitch for a single. The second pitch resulted in a double. On the next pitch Ted Williams got a double. The manager called time and walked out to the mound for a conference with Trucks and the catcher. He ignored Trucks and said to the catcher " Say - doesn't Virgil have it today?" To which the catcher replied " How the hell do I know? I haven't caught a pitch yet."



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Bob Boehlecke     Saturday, Jan. 4, 5:00  
Bob Raimon's game     Friday, Jan. 10, 7:00 at Jerry's  
Bart DeLuca     Saturday Jan. 18, 7:00  
Tom Reiss' Game     Thursdays, Jan. 2, 16, & 30 at 8:00  
Don Cooke     Saturday, Jan. 25, at 7:00  
Chemistry Dept.     Friday, Jan. 24, 8:00 at Fred's  
English Dept.     Tuesday, Jan. 21 7:30 at Mike's  
Tom Hunt     Wednesday, Jan. 8, 8:00



## KUDOS

December, being what it is, gave me little time to do a newsletter, so I am again falling back on another of my letters to the grandchildren. I hope it amuses you.

First, since this is the last newsletter of the year, I thought it would be appropriate to recognize those members of the Cayuga Poker Society who did well in the national competition.

There is a World Series of Poker equivalent on the Internet. There is no money involved, just bragging rights. The game is no-limit Texas holdem and each contestant starts with \$10,000 in mythical money. The game started in the Fall of 1995 and finished in the Spring of 1996 and was the fifth annual event. There were 472 entries and Clark Olsen was the winner! Unfortunately for us, Clark has gone on to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in the warmer climes of California.

Bart DeLuca played in the \$500 buy-in Queens Summer eight-or-better tournament in Las Vegas. There were 87 contestants and Bart made the final table and finished fifth.

There is a casino poker tournament associated with the Internet poker competition and Jerry Gerner entered this competition at Resorts in Atlantic City. He finished 2nd in the Holdem Tourney and was ranked 2nd overall. He also won the Mid-Atlantic TARGET Satellite Tournament with one of the prizes being an expenses paid trip to Las Vegas and a buy-in to a satellite competition for the Binion's World Series of Poker - the ultimate competition. Jerry came close to the final table in the satellite at Binion's.

Now that the kudos have been handed out, how about the Booby Prize? There is no question as to who gets this. Tis I. On a visit to my son's family in Durango, Colorado, I discovered that there was a Omaha, Hi/Low, tournament at the local casino with a \$50 buy-in. It was my first casino tourney. After things settled down a bit, I did not think much of the competition. There were ten players at my table and, with every hand, at least six paid to see the flop. In fact, in one hand, nine called. (I was the odd man out.) In the first round three players had to buy more chips. Money was being thrown around like it was going out of style. Wow! I thought - amateur night at the casino. Well, it did not turn out as I had hoped. After about 25 hands I had only seen two flops and each time went no further. With the blinds escalating and my time beginning to run out, I went all in before the flop with a J, Q, K, A - unsuited. I did not improve and, incredibly, a pair of tens won high in an immense pot. I was gone without raking a single chip from the pot for my entire effort.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

Bob Boehlecke     Saturday, Feb 1. 5:00

Bob Raimon's game     Saturday, Feb. 15. 7:00 at **DON'S**  
**NOTE CHANGE**

Bart Deluca     Saturday Feb. 8. 7:00

Tom Reiss' Game     Thursdays, Feb. 13 & 27 at 8:00

Don Cooke     Saturday, Feb. 22. at 7:00

Chemistry Dept.     Friday, Feb. 21. 8:00 at Milt's

English Dept.     Tuesday, Feb. 11 7:30 at LaMar's

Tom Hunt     Wednesday, Feb. 5. 8:00



### What ever happened to Doug Flutie ?



Some of you might remember the Boston College quarterback, Doug Flutie, who was the Heisman Trophy winner in 1984. His effort in one game, even one play, made a significant contribution to his being awarded this honor. The game was the Boston College - Miami contest on Thanksgiving weekend in 1984. Miami, the defending national champion, had a record of 8-3 while Boston College entered the fray with a 7-2 record and one of the nation's best offensives. Flutie would go on to break the AAU career record for passing with 10,579 yards. The opposing quarterback, Bernie Kosar, was also a Heisman Trophy candidate.

The game was a passing circus. Flutie completed 34 of 46 passes for 472 yards and three touchdowns, while Kosar made 25 of 38 for 447 yards and two touchdowns. I remember watching the game on TV and it was spectacular. The lead changed back and forth and at the beginning of the fourth quarter the score was tied at 31 - 31. Then it went like this: BC 34 - 31, Miami 38 - 34, BC 41 - 38, then with 28 seconds remaining, Miami again took the lead, 45 - 41. Miami kicked off and Boston College got the ball on the 20 yard line. A victory was 80 yards away with the wind and the rain blowing in their faces. Flutie completed two passes at a cost of 20 seconds. Now the ball was on the Miami 48 yard line with 8 seconds on the clock - one more play. Miami had 7 pass defenders downfield. Flutie was chased back to his own 37-yard line when he let fly and time expired with the ball in the air. Most the defenders stopped at the goal line, thinking Flutie could not throw that far. But Flutie's receiver and roommate, Jerry Phelan, knew he could, and caught the ball just inside the end zone for a great victory. It was this pass that coined the phrase "a Hail Mary play" - one last deperation attempt. And, perhaps, this play counted for a few votes with the Heisman judges.

Even with the Trophy, Flutie did not fare well in the NFL draft, being selected as the eleventh player. The trouble was that he was small, less than 5' 10" and only weighed 170 pounds. The people who knew said that he was too short to be a quarterback because he would not be able to see what was going on downfield.



Flutie decided to go with the Jersey Generals of the newly formed United States Football League. The League was one of Donald Trump's failures and folded after one year. He then went to the Chicago Bears where he spent most of the time on the bench. In 1987 he was traded to the New England Patriots and the fans welcomed him back to Boston with open arms. He was a Boston hero from his high school days and even had a street named after him. He was right up there with Ted Williams, Bobby Orr and Bill Russell. But the Coach, Raymond Berry, was not so enchanted. He again rode the bench until the third game of 1989 when the starting quarterback, Eason, faltered and he assumed the position. He won six of the next nine games when, for reasons no one understood, was replaced by Eason. When asked why he benched Flutie he replied " whenever he goes on the field I never know what is going to happen ". Of course that is one of the things the fans liked about him plus the fact that they could relate to a guy that wore the same shoe size they did.

To digress a moment, Flutie was a lot like Gary Wood, a Cornell quarterback in the early sixties, who went on to the New York Giants as backup quarterback to the great Y. A. Tittle. Wood was about the same size as Flutie and when he trotted out onto the field the crowd knew that something exciting was going to happen. Sometimes it was good and sometimes not so good, but it made for a great spectator sport. It was Wood that was the cause of a famous statement by Y. A. Tittle when he announced his retirement - " I thought it was time to retire when my backup quarterback asked me if he could date my daughter ".

In 1990 Flutie was released by the Patriots and dropped out of sight. Last month, at Heisman Trophy time, a sports reporter for the Times wrote a story about Heisman Trophy winners and how each one fared in the pros. They were ranked from excellent to "flops" and Flutie was listed with the "flops".

Whether Flutie dropped out of sight or was a flop depends a great deal on where you live. In 1990 he went to the British Columbia Lions as their starting quarterback and had a good year completing 2960 passing yards. But the following year was spectacular. He shattered the league record for passing with 6619 yards ( The NFL record for most passing yards in a season is 5084 ) and completed 38 touchdown passes. He was voted the league's Most Valuable Player. In 1992 he went with the Calgary Stampeders and led them to a Grey Cup victory. ( In Canada, the Grey Cup is equivalent to the Super Bowl ). He was designated the leagues Most Valuable for the second time and also the MVP of the Grey Cup game. In 1993 he was again the league's MVP and once again in 1994 for an unprecedented four times. In 1995 he was out most of the season with an arm injury. In 1996 he went to the Toronto Argonauts ( who in 1995 had a record of 4 - 14 ) and led them to a Grey Cup victory. He was, for the fifth time, league MVP and also the MVP of the Grey Cup game.

Flutie has rewritten the record books for quarterbacks in the Canadian League. In 7 seasons he has thrown for 35,850 yards for an average of 5121 yards per season. To put this number in perspective, Ron Lancaster, holder of the record for passing yardage in the Canadian League, accumulated 50,535 yards in 19 seasons for an average of 2660 yards per season while Fran Tarkington, the NFL record holder, threw for 47,003 yards in 18 seasons for an average of 2611 yards per season - both about half of Flutie's average.



Here are some other facts. Flutie is the highest paid player in the history of the League and is the only quarterback to call his own signals. And some of the Canadian sportswriters have this to say about him: " He has brought Canadian football back to life " ; " The most dominant player in Canadian football's long history " ; " He is the Michael Jordan of Canadian football " .

So to designate Flutie as a " flop " is highly chauvenistic - perhaps the sportswriter was unaware of his Canadian success. It also seems that quarterbacks who are only 5" 10" can compensate in other ways.

## Good Poker Players are Born Pessimists



The game is 7-card stud, high/low with an 8 qualifier for low. You look at your hand and you see ace, two and three of spades. Wow! Visions of a big pot dance in your head. Realistically, the hand is probably going to cost you money. Forget about the straight flush ( the steel wheel ) - that's a 200 to one shot. Any wheel is 20 to one against. The chances of any low is just short of 50 - 50, 46%. The chances of a good low, say, 7-5 or better, is just short of 2- to one against, 29%. How about the high end ? The chances of a flush are 6 to one against. The chances of getting aces up or better

( excluding straights and flushes ) is about 8 to one against. The chances of getting a " good " high ( aces up or better, including straights and flushes ), is about one in three. The odds on getting both a good high and a good low are about one in 13 ( 7.4% ).

Overall the chances of getting a good high or a good low, or both, is a bit better than even, 58%. But I estimate that, with seven players, about 25% of these " good " hands will lose to better hands, yielding the overall chances of winning something like 44%.

But don't jump to the conclusion that an ace, two, three suited is a poor hand just because you have only a 44% chance of winning. It is a fine hand. Look at it this way. In a seven handed high/low game there will usually be two winners, a high and a low. That is two winners out of the seven seats or, on average, a 28% shot at a winning hand. A 44% shot is a lot better.

These data come from my own statistical calculations and simulation of 360 hands. Not enough for a definitive answer but enough for an estimation.

## 1932 ~ More Innocent Times

A little filler appeared in the Ithaca Journal of January 23rd to the effect that Whoopi Goldberg went down to the Clinton inauguration by car and had a police escort through Delaware and Maryland. It recalls an earlier innauguration in 1932 when Roosevelt, as Governor of New York, defeated Herbert Hoover. At a press conference in Albany in early March ( inaugurations were in March in those days ) it became known that Eleanor Roosevelt was going to drive the family car from Albany to Washington along with the two dogs. Later, when asked by a reporter why she would take such a trip alone, she replied " Well, I like to drive and how else would we get the family car to Washington " .





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

Bob Boehlecke     Saturday, March 1, 6:00  
Bob Raimon's game     Saturday, March 29, 7:00 at Don's  
Bart Deluca     Saturday March 8, 7:00  
Tom Reiss' Game     Thursdays, March, 13 & 27 at 8:00  
Don Cooke     No game this month  
Chemistry Dept.     Not yet settled  
English Dept.     Tuesday, March 18, 7:30 at ?  
Tom Hunt     Wednesday, March, 5, 8:00



### Maximum Effort

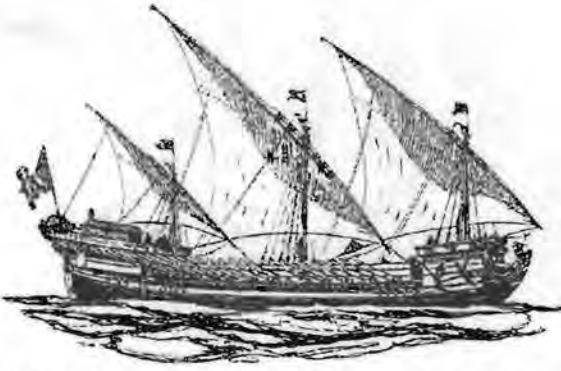
One of the recent newsletters described the efforts of the construction crew of the Central Pacific Railroad to lay ten miles of track in a single day. The effort was an dazzling display of organization and ability motivated by a \$10,000 bet. There have been other such displays for one purpose or another.

In the wartime Spring of 1942 things were not going at all well in the North Atlantic. The ocean was controlled by German submarines and, in the month of April alone, the toll of sunken ships off the Atlantic seaboard rose to 133. (Nothing ever appeared in the newspapers but I was an Aviation Cadet at MIT and, at night, we could see the red glow of burning ships out over the Boston Harbor). To lose 133 ships in one month bordered on catastrophe. In 1939-1940 America had put a high priority on shipbuilding and had produced only 50 ships a year.

To replace the diminishing fleet of freighters, the nation turned to Henry J. Kaiser who had built the Boulder, Bonneville and Grand Coulee dams ahead of schedule. Kaiser realized that there was no way to build enough ships to replace such a rate of loss using conventional shipbuilding practices. He hit upon the idea of building parts of ships in many locations and bringing the pieces together for assembly at the many Kaiser shipyards. The only component built at the shipyard was the hull. When the hull was ready, cranes lowered the bulkheads, decks, fuel tanks and superstructures into place. The resulting freighters were called Liberty ships and were 441 feet long displacing 8000 tons. Kaiser employed 15 million workers in the effort. A large percentage of these workers were women who, for the first time, were given a "man's" job. By 1943 Kaiser shipyards were producing close to five Liberty ships a day.

To give encouragement to the homefront, Kaiser decided to demonstrate how fast a ship could be built - a maximum effort demonstration. From the laying of the keel to the launching of the ship consumed 80 hours and thirty minutes. But after the ship was launched there was a great deal of work left to do to make the vessel ready for sea. That was not the case in a much earlier demonstration of a maximum effort being expended in building a ship.





In the time of Louis XIV the French fleet consisted of two separate forces, the sailing vessels and the galleys. The galley fleet was stationed at Marseilles while the sailing navy was at Toulon. Because of the intense rivalry between the two factions they could never be in the same town. The director of the Port of Marseilles, Simon Chabert, hopeful that the King would visit his command, planned an entertainment for his royal highness.

His plan was an ambitious one. He would build a galley in a day. A French galley was, typically, 185 feet in length, displacing 200 tons with 52 oars and five men assigned to each oar. In order to assure himself that the feat could be accomplished, Chabert made a practice run. He assembled 500 carpenters, divided into 10 workforces with each group having different colored hats to avoid confusion. There were 50 nailers with still different colored hats. Two companies with 40 porters each were assigned to carry the materials. There were a hundred caulkers ready to go once the ship's planks were in place as well as numerous other workmen with particular assignments. In mid-afternoon enough of the hull was finished for the caulkers to begin their task. They finished at 10 p. m. and the ship was filled with water to check for leaks. At dawn the basin was flooded and the ship was afloat. By 7 a. m. 260 oarsmen ( convicts and infidels ) were brought aboard and chained to their benches. By 9 a. m. the ship cleared the harbor and was on the open sea. The date was November 11, 1678. After all the planning and effort, the King never did visit Marseilles.

Source: Fighting Ships and Prisons, Bamford, 1973



## The Red Ball Express

There was another spectacular effort and one that I actually observed. In August of 1944 the German Army did something totally unexpected. They withdrew from France back to the Siegfried Line on the border of Germany. Patton's Third Army and Hodges First Army pursued the fleeing Germans but the allied armies ground to a halt when they ran out of gas. The supply lines stretched 400 miles from the beaches in Normandy to the front. The retreat was so unexpected that there were no plans to deal with the situation and improvisation was the order of the day. The Transportation Corps assembled 6000 trucks ( they stole some from other units ) and established a one-way route to the front with another back to the beaches. The route was designated as the Red Ball Express ( an old railroading term for high priority freight ). These 6000 trucks were not the only traffic on the road and the concrete highway was ground to pebbles within a day.

At the time I was in Air Force Headquarters and we moved from London to Paris. We left all the radio equipment back in England for continuity. ( Desks, chairs, file cabinets etc. accompanied us in C-47 aircraft ). Needing to replace the radio facility, I was put in charge of a ten-truck convoy to go back to the Normandy supply areas. There the ten trucks were loaded with radio equipment, I signed for it ( for a long time worried about getting a bill for ten truckloads of equipment that was unaccounted for ) and we went back to Paris.



My two days on the Red Ball Express was an unforgettable experience. There was an overpowering volume of traffic. Lines of trucks extended as far as the eye could see. It was particularly impressive when you could see the line extending up distant hills. Everything was moving about 45 miles per hour. The Transportation Corps had established a speed limit of twenty-five miles per hour but they forgot one thing. After being unheralded cogs in the background of the war machine, the drivers were suddenly the heroes of the day. The newspapers were filled with stories of the mighty endeavour. They took to the role with enthusiasm and ignored the speed limit, especially with the MPs at the crossroads urging them to go faster and faster. The drivers said that the Army could have supplies or rules but not both.

What moved along the road was fantastic. There were huge tank-recovery vehicles, ammunition carriers and truckloads of new troops on their way to the front. There were earthmovers, cranes and strange vehicles whose purpose I could not fathom. But above all, were trucks loaded with gasoline. The need for fuel, 800,000 gallons a day, far outstripped the capacity of the available tanker trucks and gasoline was shipped in five-gallon Jerrycans, truckload after truckload - millions of gallons of gasoline in five-gallon containers! If a vehicle broke down it was pushed off the road and abandoned. And a lot of trucks broke down because they were all overloaded by fifty to one hundred percent.

There were a large number of very long flatbed trucks loaded with pipe for a gasoline pipeline. One truck would dump its load of pipe and the following truck would proceed a couple of hundred yards further and dump its pipe. Then a horde of engineering troops would set to work connecting the pieces into a pipeline. In thirty days this crew finished three pipelines, averaging up to thirty miles a day.

This semi-organized chaos, known as the Red Ball Express, went on for 81 days, 24 hours a day. The Transportation Corps alone delivered an average of three and a half tons of supplies per minute for the entire time.

Source : My personal experiences and Soldiers, February, 1989.

## **Good Poker Players are Born Pessimists #2**

You are playing Omaha, high/low, with an eight qualifier. You pick up your hand and see that beautiful ace-deuce. Visions of building a huge pot and you having the lock-low dance through your head. Well, it's a long way to a lock-low.

First there is the three card flop, after which there is a fifty-fifty chance you fold, or should fold. There could be three high cards or an ace or a deuce which means there is no low for you. Or there might be a useful low card so you have one shot in eight to get a low and should ordinarily drop.

Suppose you do OK and get two good low cards on the flop. ( There is one shot in eight that the flop will yield three useful low cards and your lock-low is made ). With two low cards what is the chance of getting another good low card in the next two common cards? About 60% which is good. But if the fourth card is high, depending on pot odds, you might want to drop because the chances of getting the low card on the river, the fifth card, is about two-to-one against.

Suppose you are lucky and get that beautiful lock-low. There is still a problem since you might be tied with another player and lose money by getting only a quarter of the pot. In a seven-handed game, presuming any other player with an ace-deuce is still in, the chances of not being tied are two out of three in your favor. But there is still another hurdle. If either an ace or a deuce also shows, the chances of being quartered increase to over 50%.

So, overall, that beautiful ace-deuce beginning has, at best, one chance in five of resulting in a non-quartered lock-low. Life at the poker table can be discouraging. But that is the nature of the game. In a seven-handed game ( one-way ), if you win one out of seven, you are not doing badly.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR APRIL

Tom Hunt	Wednesday, April 2, 7:30
Bob Boehlecke	Saturday, April 5, 6:00
Tom Reiss' Game	Thursdays, April 10 & 24, at 8:00
Bart Deluca	Saturday, April 12, 7:00
Bob Raimon's game	Saturday, April 19, 7:00 at Jerry's Note: This will be a non-smoking game.
Don Cooke	Saturday, April 26, at 7:00
English Dept.	Tuesday, April 29, 7:30 at Don's
Chemistry Dept.	Always traveling - the next game Friday, May 9, 8:00 at Ben's



Don't forget  
April 15

## When Women Played Hardball



When one thinks of women's baseball, it is the softball version that comes to mind. It was not always so. It was not until the Thirties that softball became the game for women - it was "less strenuous for their more delicate constitution".

Baseball, with the usual rules, was played at Vassar, Smith and Wellesly in the 1870s and in 1876 there was a team with uniforms. The Vassar Resolutes. The uniforms included an ankle length skirt and a cap not unlike that of the Expos in the 1980's.

While baseball was encouraged at women's colleges, the same can not be said for co-educational institutions. In 1904, at Penn, a group of five young ladies joined their fellow male students in an ongoing game. The faculty (naturally, all male) was shocked and thundered out a resolution stating that "if the girls wanted to play baseball they must not do so on campus".

In the Gay Nineties women took to hardball. While they were called "bloomer teams", the uniforms were the same as those that the men wore. There were scores of such teams and they toured the country playing men's teams, rarely playing each other. These teams played until the mid-thirties.

I have not been able to find much in the way of records as to how well these teams fared except for a few bits and pieces. For example, in 1903 the Boston Bloomer Girls won 28 games in 26 days and defeated a Tulsa team in both ends of a doubleheader, 11-0 and 11-3. Maud Nelson was the Boston Bloomers Girl's pitcher. Despite such a heavy schedule she pitched almost every game and when she did not she played third base. Talk about ironmen! Maud's constitution hardly seemed delicate. She was associated with women's baseball for 40 years as player, coach and owner.



In addition to those who played hardball on women's team there were those who competed on men's teams. There was Lizzy Murphy who played with a semi-pro team. the Boston All-Stars. She was no "flash in the pan". She played first base, about 100 games a year, for 17 years ( 1918 - 1936 ).

There was also Jackie Mitchell who signed on as a pitcher for a minor league team, the Chattanooga Lookouts in 1931. In an exhibition game against the New York Yankees she struck out both Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. When Kennesaw Mountain Landis, the Commissioner of Baseball, heard of this event he voided the contract with Mitchell. Incidentally, when Landis was the Commissioner he ruled with an iron hand and the owners had little to say about anything. It is worth noting that in 1951 the major leagues reinforced the ban on women players - a ruling that could not possibly stand if challenged.

In 1928 a 14 year old girl was featured in national news stories. She was Margaret Gisolo who played for the Blanford Cubs in an American Legion Indiana Junior Division ( under 17 years old ). In the Junior World Series the Cubs won the county title. But a protest was lodged by the losing team because Blanford had a girl on the team. But nothing could be found in the rules that excluded girls, so the game was allowed to stand. The Cubs won the state title but lost in the first round of interstate play. In the playoff games Margaret had nine hits for 21 times at bat for .429, made ten put outs and had 28 assists without an error. The reason that there was no rule barring girls from playing is probably that the thought had never occurred to those who wrote the book that a girl might want to play. After the season, the American Legion took care of this oversight by explicitly excluding girls from the teams.

In 1934 that great athlete, Babe Didrickson, pitched for the entire season with The House of David, a barnstorming team. As I mentioned in a previous newsletter, I remember seeing her pitch in one of those games on a Philadelphia sandlot.

In 1944, when it was getting harder and harder to field a baseball team, Phillip Wrigley, owner of the Chicago White Sox, decided to establish a women's baseball league, The All-American Girl's Professional Baseball League. This organization was the basis for the movie " A League of Their Own ". There were ten teams with names like The South Bend Blue Sox, The Kenosha Comets, and The Rockford Peaches. The operation did well financially, outdrawing many minor league clubs. The league folded in 1954, probably as a result of the televising of baseball games. But the movie was not quite true to the story. The game was not really hardball. It began as softball but over the years moved closer to hardball. It was not until the final year that they went over to conventional hardball.

After the AAGPBL folded in 1954, it would be forty years before women got back into hardball. In 1994 Coors Brewery supported the concept of a women's baseball team. Phil Niekro signed on as coach and 1300 women showed up for the tryouts. The Colorado Silver Bullets travel the country playing minor league, semi-pro, college and amateur men's teams. In 1996 they played 52 games in 27 states, traveling 25,000 miles. While their won-loss record is not great at 18-34, they gave a good account of themselves and finished winning 9 of 11 games in late summer. The team has had as many as 30,000 fans attend one of their games. In a game against The Grand Junction Generals, Missy Coombes struck out 14 batters and yes, they can hit the ball out of the park.



## Quick Cash

When you withdraw money from an ATM it all seems so simple. But in the few seconds between the time you punch in your PIN number and you get your money, here is what happens. The information is transmitted from the ATM to the bank that owns the machine. From there it goes to a central processing facility, most likely in Secaucus New Jersey ( regardless of the location of the ATM in the U. S. ) which queries your bank as to whether you have sufficient money in your account. The message as to sufficient funds goes back to Secaucus which sends it on to the bank which owns the ATM then to the ATM which either gives you the money or says - Go Away.

There are a number of these central facilities in Secaucus and they handle many types of electronic transfers of money. With upcoming changes, these operations will be processing about one trillion dollars a day. A trillion dollars a day is a lot of money - for comparison, the annual federal budget for 1995 was 1.3 trillion. You won't find the addresses of these places in the phonebook. Even though there is no cash involved, security is intense. While the money is evanescent, the smell of a trillion dollars does bring out the worst in some people.

## Things Are Not Always As They Seem

Someone puts this question to you : In a high-only game is it better to have three tens or three deuces ? Actually, the answer is not so obvious. The correct response to the question is "In what game". In seven-card-stud trip tens is far better than trip deuces. But, as Lawrence Hill points out in the September 20, 1996 issue of *Cardplayer*, the trip deuces will win more often in hold 'em.

How can that be ? With the three tens, at least one of the tens must be in the common cards. All straights must contain either a ten or a five. Having a ten on the board allows five possible straights while the deuce allows only two. In a seven-handed game this is enough to offset the advantage of the higher ranking trips. Using a simulation computer-run, where all hands are played to the end, Mr. Hill gives the three tens a 43% chance of winning, while the trip deuces have a 47% shot. Poker can be subtle. And keep an eye on those fives and tens.

## Workers of the world - Eat your hearts out





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MAY

Bob Boehlecke Saturday, May 10, 6:00 Note, 2nd Sat.

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, May 17, 7:00 at Don's

Bart Deluca Saturday May 24, 7:00

English Dept. Tuesday, May 27, 7:30 at Dan's

Don Cooke Saturday, May 31, at 7:00

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, May 8 & 22 at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, May 9, 8:00 at Ben's

Tom Hunt Wednesday, May 7, 7:30



Spring in Ithaca is so nice because it contrasts with Winter in Ithaca which is not so nice.

## THE EVOLUTION OF POKER; IT'S STILL NOT RIGHT - NEVER WILL BE



There seems to be general agreement that the game of poker, as we know it, began in New Orleans in the early 1800s. Until very recent years it has been pretty much an American game although it has its roots in the French game Poque, the English game Brag and even the Arabian game. As Nas. The rules for the ranking of hands evolved during the 19th century and by 1900 they settled into the present situation. I found a ranking of hands in the mid -1800s. The straight flush was not listed and four aces was the highest hand. Another big difference was that the flush required only that the cards be of the same color, not necessarily the same suit. However, it was still ranked higher than a straight. This was an anomalous situation where a less probable hand was stronger than a more probable hand but this discrepancy disappeared over time. One might presume that, in our present game, a hand that was harder to get would win over one that was easier to get. Well, that is not the way it is. W. Lawrence Hill, a columnist for *CARDPLAYER*, in the August 9, 1996 issue, presented a table of the number of possible hands by rank and high card. ( By rank, in this context, I mean categories such as two pair, full house etc. ) The tables are shown on page 3 of this newsletter. It is possible to obtain a good deal of insight into the game by studying these data. In a five-card hand, as you can easily imagine, the probability of getting four deuces is the same as getting four aces. Our forefathers in the game arbitrarily decided that four aces would be the better hand. If some sharp-minded poker parlor operator in New Orleans, around 1850, had decided that, in his games, the four deuces would beat the four aces, the game might have evolved in a more consistent manner.



It is easy to understand why four aces are considered the better hand even though they are no harder to get than the deuces. The ace has always been considered the strongest card. In fact I found a reference in the book *The Compleat Gamester*, published in 1674, that states that the ace is higher than a king. And of course royalty had to be highly ranked. I do not know the origin or symbolism of the ace and why it is above the king. The Almighty perhaps?

If you look at the flushes in the five-card table, things start to come apart. Thirty-nine percent of all flushes are Ace-high. The Ace-high flush is 125 times more likely than the seven high flush yet, it wins. Note that the rank order of the flush hands is just the opposite of the difficulty in drawing them. It is easy to see the reason with the two-pair probabilities. There is only one threes-high two-pair, threes and deuces, but there are twelve Ace-high two-pairs. Therefore, a threes-high two-pair is twelve times less probable than an Ace-high two-pair; never-the-less it loses to the Aces. In fact, if, within ranks, the low hand were to win, the game would be consistent with probabilities. Strangely, I have never seen this point made.

Things are even more curious with seven-card hands. The same patterns persist but even the rank of hands is wrong. It is harder to get a hand with nothing at all than it is to get two pair. Also notice that it is harder to get a pair of fives or tens than other pairs. The reason for this is, that hands with seven cards having a pair of fives or tens, are more likely to hit straights and would be categorized as straights because the high hand is a straight, not a pair.

There are other things one can learn from the tables. For example, in a five-card hand, trip aces, against one other hand, will win 99.3 % of the time. But in a seven-card game it will win only 89.2 % of the time. But remember, these data apply to hands as they are dealt. With people dropping or with replacement cards the information can be used only in a general way.

## **BAD NEWS, GOOD NEWS - BIG TIME**

In April 1967 I was attending a meeting in New York City when, with no previous history, and out of the blue, I had a cardiac arrest. Now that is pretty heavy-duty bad news. But the good news was equally spectacular. The meeting happened to be at the Cornell Medical School and the topic of the meeting happened to be the opening of the new emergency cardiac care center. I was surrounded by a covey of cardiologists and one of them got me going within, what is known as, the five-minute window of survivability. Sometimes you have to hit a very long shot to stay in the game.

## **TIGER WOODS**



Everyone getting this newsletter knows about Tiger Woods' spectacular victory in the Masters and probably about some of the new records he established. But here is some of the fine print. For the first two rounds his drives on four and five par holes averaged 355 yards. ( I don't know about the later rounds ). The 15th hole is 500 yards. Woods was close to the pin in two. But his second shot was with a wedge! In the second round he did not use an iron on the fairway that was longer than a seven. The third hole is a 360 yard uphill par 4 he

drove for the green ! He didnt make it, but not because he did not have the distance. I think it can be said that no golfer on this, or any earlier tour, could match this exhibition of power or do any one of these things. His short game is not so bad either. He went 37 holes without a bogie. If you don't play golf take it from me that these are awesome feats. Jack Nicklaus applied to Woods the same compliment that Bobby Jones had paid to him when he was starting out " He plays a game with which I am not familiar ".



Five Cards									
High	Nothing	One pair	Two pair	Trips	Straight	Flush	Full House	4s	Str. flush
A	502,860	84,480	19,008	4,224	1,020	1,972	288	48	4
K	335,580	84,480	17,424	4,224	1,020	1,316	288	48	4
Q	213,180	84,480	15,840	4,224	1,020	836	288	48	4
J	127,500	84,480	14,256	4,224	1,020	500	288	48	4
10	70,380	84,480	12,672	4,224	1,020	276	288	48	4
9	34,680	84,480	11,088	4,224	1,020	136	288	48	4
8	14,280	84,480	9,504	4,224	1,020	56	288	48	4
7	4,080	84,480	7,920	4,224	1,020	16	288	48	4
6	-	84,480	6,336	4,224	1,020	-	288	48	4
5	-	84,480	4,752	4,224	1,020	-	288	48	4
4	-	84,480	3,168	4,224	-	-	288	48	-
3	-	84,480	1,584	4,224	-	-	228	48	-
2	-	84,480	-	4,224	-	-	228	48	-
	1,302,540	1,098,240	123,552	54,912	10,200	5,108	3,744	624	40
	50 %	42 %	4.7 %	2.1 %	0.4 %	0.2 %	0.14 %	0.02 %	0.002 %

### Highest Five of Seven

High	Nothing	One pair	Two pair	Trips	Straight	Flush	Full House	4s	Str. flush
A	13,177,920	4,573,800	5,042,736	498,916	747,980	1,584,704	271,392	17,296	4,324
K	6,309,240	4,573,800	4,575,744	498,916	603,560	1,046,844	270,688	17,296	4,140
Q	2,657,340	4,538,160	4,110,588	497,904	603,560	657,772	269,984	17,296	4,140
J	916,860	4,502,520	3,656,340	496,892	603,560	389,000	269,280	17,296	4,140
10	217,560	4,466,880	3,213,000	495,880	603,560	212,224	268,576	17,296	4,140
9	15,540	4,472,820	2,778,300	495,880	603,560	103,280	267,872	17,296	4,140
8	-	4,472,820	2,352,240	495,880	603,560	41,964	267,168	17,296	4,140
7	-	4,472,820	1,934,820	495,880	603,560	11,856	266,464	17,296	4,140
6	-	4,472,820	1,526,040	495,880	603,560	-	265,760	17,296	4,140
5	-	4,466,880	1,128,168	495,880	603,560	-	265,056	17,296	4,140
4	-	4,502,520	745,740	496,892	-	-	264,352	17,296	-
3	-	4,538,160	369,684	497,904	-	-	263,648	17,296	-
2	-	4,573,800	-	498,916	-	-	262,944	17,296	-
	23,294,460	58,627,800	31,433,400	6,461,620	6,180,020	4,047,644	3,473,184	224,848	41,584
	17 %	44 %	23 %	5 %	5 %	3 %	2.6 %	0.16 %	0.03 %



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JUNE

Bob Boehlecke Saturday, June 7, 7:00 Note time change.

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, June 28, 7:00 at Don's

Bart Deluca Saturday, June 21, 7:00

English Dept. Wednesday, June 25, 7:30 at Glen's

Don Cooke No game this month - At the beach with grandchildren. Saturday June 14 is open.

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, June 5 & 26 at 8:00 Note date change

Chemistry Dept. Friday, June 20, 8:00 at Frank's

Tom Hunt Wednesday, June 4, 7:30



## A Game of Highs and Lows



This story was provided by Herb Rycroft who plays in Tom Reiss' game:

"We often experience wide-ranging emotions while playing poker - we can be disappointed one moment and elated the next. One of the poker hands I'll never forget resulted in such extreme feelings. It happened in a July 1996 game. There were six players at the table that evening. The game was 5-card draw high/low, with a roll after the draw. I opened my hand to find a full house, Jacks over sevens. Elation! My goal was to build the pot so I raised in the opening round. Pete Cooke also raised. The draw revealed that Pete also had a pat hand. I was not worried - I presumed him to be low or perhaps a straight or a flush. On the first roll I revealed one of my sevens and Pete showed a Ace. Good! He was headed low. With the second card rolled, I showed a Jack and Pete a Ten, not suited with the Ace. He was not flushing and probably had a straight. His next two cards were a Ten and an Ace. Uh-oh. I was showing Jacks over and he was showing Aces over. I knew he had a full house but knew also that mine could be better. The board appeared to favor me - one of the other Aces was showing elsewhere but neither of the other tens were in evidence. Pete appeared quite confident however, so now I was betting the minimum to kill the bets. Following the declare and betting rounds I got to see the hole cards. Pete turned over an Ace. Tremendous disappointment!



Play was suspended for several minutes while we began to appreciate what we had just seen. Six five-card hands were dealt and two were full houses. My emotions began to change again, certainly not to elation, but my disappointment was tempered by the realization that I had witnessed something that I was unlikely to see again.

Still, I would have preferred a somewhat different vantage point for this spectacle.

The next time you are at the table and a high/low game is called, pause for a moment to reflect on how aptly this phrase describes the feeling we encounter so often while playing this wonderful game."



I calculated how long would it take for Herb to have another pat full house and lose to another pat full house in a six-handed game. It would take some time, in fact. 47,562 deals. At 40 deals an evening, and 25 games a year, Herb could expect a similar situation on average, in the year 2045. Of course, with the vagaries of statistics, it could happen next month or, perhaps, not until the year 2102.

We must not forget that long shots happen all the time in poker. Suppose you are dealt the following hand, 2♠ 3♥ 7♣ 8♦ Q♠ - a real throwaway hand. But now imagine that in this particular game, this hand is called a Lollipalooza. Of course a Lollipalooza should beat all other poker hands - it is 624 times harder to get than a four-of-a-kind and four times more difficult than a royal flush. It is easy to see why. There are four possible royal flushes but only one possible Lollapalooza. In fact, depending on how you look at it, every time you pick up any five-card poker hand you just hit a million-to-one shot (actually, 1.3 million) that you would get that particular hand.

## A Skeet ?

Awhile back I was working on a crossword puzzle which had a clue "poker hand" and a space for five letters. Well, I thought to myself, this is going to be easy - flush is the only five-letter poker hand. As I continued on, "flush" did not seem to fit, nor did "fours". When I finally worked out the puzzle, the word turned out to be "skeet". What the hell kind of a poker hand is a skeet? Off I went to the dictionary and, sure enough, there was the word and it described a poker holding. It is a strange hand - a deuce, plus a five and a nine with the two other cards being below ten - for example a 7, 5, 9 6, 2. A skeet beats trips, but loses to a straight. But it was the last sentence in the dictionary that intrigued me. It said "sometimes called a kilter or a pelter". This sentence seemed to indicate that the hand was used to some degree somewhere. I have been unable to find any reference to a skeet in any of my poker books. I am intrigued and wonder about the background of the hand and when and where it was played. Any ideas out there?





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JULY

Bob Boehlecke No game in July - see next item

Jon Lucente's Saturday, July 5, 7:00 \$5 ante, pot limit, table stakes

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, July 12, 7:00 at Don's

Bart Deluca Saturday, July 19, 7:00

English Dept. Monday, July 27 at Arnie's

Don Cooke Saturday, July 26 at 7:00

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, July 10 & 24 at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, August 1, 8:00 at Fred's

Tom Hunt Wednesday, July 2, 7:30



Having been at the shore for a couple of weeks I ran out of time to do a full newsletter, so, again, I am falling back on one of my letters to the grandchildren - one which seems appropriate to the month. I hope you find it interesting. But here is a bit of poker news.

### POKER IN NEW YORK CITY ?

You bet - says the ad of the Diamond Club, at 132 West 20th. Street, in the May 30 issue of *Card Player*. The Club is for members-only and offers poker tournaments (\$40 buy ins ), pot limit stud and \$10 - \$20 games. The player is charged \$3 per half-hour.

The Diamond Club must have checked out their mode of operation with a battery of lawyers. The District Attorney must be aware of the operation and is probably checking with a different group of lawyers and Donald Trump must have his legal office on the case. It would seem that the Diamond Club is not patently illegal or it would not have gotten this far. I find the circumstances to be a fascinating example of the fine points of the law. While I am not a lawyer, I think that if the games were roulette or craps, in which the house bets against the players, the operators would already have been indicted. I also believe that if the club was taking a cut of the pots they would be in violation of N. Y. State Penal Code. ( *People vs Marconi 1961* ). But then there is the case of the *People vs. Calkins, 1961* where a defendant committed the crime of being a common gambler by aiding and abetting in operation of gambling establishment. Is the Diamond Club a "gambling establishment" ? It seems that common gambling must have a professional or commercial aspect. Is it possible that the Club is a nonprofit operation ? ( Being nonprofit does not exclude the payment of very high salaries to the officers ).

After the above speculation, I think I have finally found an applicable ruling. The case was *People Vs. Pack, Court of Special Sessions, Manhattan, 1942*. "Where membership corporation maintained social club where only members were permitted to play card games for stakes but regardless of who won or lost all were required to pay fixed charges for cards and club house charges varying as to stakes played for by the club members, the clubs manager, steward and hostess who received fixed salaries, and were subject to direction of the corporate board were not guilty of keeping a gambling establishment". Penal Law 27. 973. ( The funny language in the finding does not result from typos - it's how these things are written ). While one can easily understand this ruling being applicable to a game among friends at the Harvard Club, The Diamond Club seems like another matter. I don't think that N. Y. State will tolerate gambling without their involvement and if they can't stop the Diamond Club in the courts they will in the legislature.



# THE BOSTON MASSACRE



In Boston, on the evening of March 5th, 1770, a detachment of British soldiers fired upon a group of civilians, killing five and wounding six, an incident which is depicted to the left in a drawing by Paul Revere. This picture of the carnage inflamed the population of the Colonies and became a rallying cry for the leaders of the revolution. It also appears in many histories read by present-day schoolchildren.

The etching shows a line of seven soldiers, led on by an officer, firing into a crowd which is carrying away their dead and wounded from a previous volley and crowd is positioned at a respectful distance. But there is something wrong with the drawing. That is not quite the way it happened and it's not the whole story.

In March 1770 the atmosphere in Boston was tense. British troops occupied the town and the citizens were smarting under the government of King George III. Incidents between the British soldiers and the people of Boston were reaching a fever pitch. Fistfights were breaking out between soldiers and civilians and groups of young boys were inciting the soldiers.

During the day of March 5th there was a heavy snowstorm and by evening there was a foot of snow on the ground. Groups of people were gathering on street corners and in taverns sensing that violence was in the air. A group of young boys started throwing snowballs at a British sentry, Private Hugh White, who was guarding the Custom House. Soon a large crowd had gathered and pressed in on the soldier, who fixed his bayonet and loaded his musket. The crowd became ugly and started to pelt him with chunks of ice, shouting "kill him" and "fire, damn you, fire".

Word soon spread to the main barracks that Private White was besieged and Captain Preston, the officer in charge, worried about what to do. He understood that, by law, he could not go out and disperse the crowd unless a civilian authority called on him to do so and he had no hope of rousing a magistrate to confront the mob. On the other hand, one of his men was in serious trouble. He thought a long time before gathering a contingent of six men to rescue Private White. The group of soldiers elbowed their way through the crowd and reached their besieged comrade.

As soon as the detachment reached Private White, Captain Preston ordered his men back to the barracks. But the crowd was spoiling for a confrontation and surrounded the detachment, within inches of the bayonets. Calmer heads in the crowd tried to avert the impending disaster but to no avail. Captain Preston stood in front of the rifles of his soldiers so that they would not fire. Suddenly, a cry went up from the crowd that Justice of the Peace James Murray was coming to read the Riot Act. He arrived but was chased away by a barrage of snowballs. The crowd knew that without civilian authority the soldiers were helpless. Again things became ugly with the crowd shouting "Kill them". Everyone, except Captain Preston, was shouting "Fire". Missiles came flying through the air and one struck Private Hugh Montgomery who fell to the ground. He got up, cocked his rifle and fired. Other soldiers followed his lead while a furious Captain Preston was knocking their rifles skyward.



Our history books are silent on what happened after that dreadful night. Thomas Hutchinson, the governor of Massachusettes, went immeadiately to the site and promised the crowd that the law would have its course. After the crowd had dispersed, Hutchinson sent out justices of the peace to get information from eye witnesses. By 3 am, Captain Preston was in jail.

John Adams, a staunch patriot, and later to become the second president of our country, defended Preston and the soldiers for the sum of only a single guinea. Money was not an issue but Adams felt that a fair trial was. The trial was by jury and the patriotic group, The Sons of Liberty, went to great pains to make sure that the trial was fair. They wanted it to be a model of provincial justice. The strongest defense of the soldiers came from the grave. One of the patriots killed was Patrick Carr who lived for four days before dying of his wounds. The doctor who was treating him questioned the young man about the events surrounding the shootings. Carr told the doctor that he thought the soldiers were greatly abused and was surprised that they had not fired sooner in self defense. He believed that the soldiers would have been injured if they had not defended themselves and he added that he did not blame the soldier, whoever he was, that had shot him. Such powerful evidence from a dying man apparently had a great effect on the jury. The prosecution countered that it should be remembered that Patrick Carr was a Roman Catholic, leaving unsaid the implication that a Catholic could not be trusted with the truth. Captain Preston and five of the soldiers were found not guilty. Two of the soldiers were found to be guilty, not of murder but of manslaughter. They were sentenced to branding by fire and the sheriff branded their thumbs with a hot iron.

When Paul Revere drew the picture of the Boston Massacre, in all likelihood, he purposely distorted the facts for his own purposes. He conveyed a scene where the British soldiers were firing into a docile, retreating crowd at the command of their officer. If you look closely, there is a sign above the Customs House, on the right, that screams, " Butcher Hall ". Nowadays we would describe his efforts as propaganda. But he was sucessful in arousing the populace against the British. Ten to twelve thousand people attended the funeral of the five martyrs and the troops were soon withdrawn from Boston.

The moral of the story is not to believe everything you hear or read and be cautious before jumping on someone's bandwagon.

*Love from Ithaca*



**1995**



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST

Bob Boehlecke No game this month see next item

Paul Rubin Saturday, August 2, 7:00 \$5 progressive

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, August 9, 7:00 at Don's

Bart Deluca Saturday, August 23, 7:00

English Dept. Tuesday, September 2, 7:30 at Don's

Don Cooke Game on hold - too few players

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, August 7 & 28 at 8:00

**NOTE DATE CHANGE**

Chemistry Dept. Friday, August 1, 8:00 at Fred's

Tom Hunt Wednesday, August 6, 7:30

Note: The 16th and 30th are open.



## *Scheherazada and a Proposition Bet*



Imagine that you are sitting at a bar and you strike up a conversation with a guy next to you. The conversation soon changes to gambling and betting and he asks if you have two coins in your pocket. You look, and come up with two quarters. He asks you to shake them up and put them on the bar under your hand. He then offers you a bet - if one of those coins is a head, I will give you \$6 if the other one is a head. But if the other one is a tail you only have to give me \$5. You begin to think how can a guy who seems to know about gambling be so dumb? So off you go. Soon you are down about \$100 and you are thinking of quitting. Just then he mentions that maybe you should change the game to tails - if one of the coins is a tail, he will give you \$6 if the other is a tail, and you give him \$5 if the other

is a head. So you get out another \$100 and it seems to disappear in no time at all. It is beginning to dawn on you that this guy may not be so dumb after all and decide to quit. Then you try to sort it all out so you say to the guy that since the coins were yours and only you handled them, it must be that the odds in the game are not even. You ARE a smart fellow his says - the odds are not even and I should be paying you \$10 when you win instead of \$6 - the bet is two-to-one against. What! you say, how can that be? Your new-found friend then explains that the human mind sometimes works in funny ways. When I said that "if one of the coins was a head" - mentally, you assumed that the coin had already been tossed and therefore the chances were 50-50 that the next toss would be a head. In other words you presumed that the two coins would be tossed sequentially. If that were the case, he said, it would be I that would be going broke, not you. But, he went on, the coins are not thrown sequentially but simultaneously. Let me show you, he said, and asked the bartender



eight quarters. He then proceeded to make four pairs of two quarters each. He noted that there are only four possible combinations of two quarters. There is the TAIL-TAIL - but this does not count because the bet specified that at least one of the coins had to be a head. The next combination was a HEAD-HEAD, the winner. The other two combinations were one with a HEAD on the right side and a TAIL on the left and the other with a TAIL on the right and a HEAD on the left. Therefore, of the three possible combinations, you won on one and he won on two, a two-to-one bet. He then wished me well and hoped that I thought that the \$200 statistics lesson was worthwhile. As he went out the door, he added that another part of the lesson is that one should never accept what looks like a dumb bet in a bar.

I dreamed up this proposition bet after reading a riddle in the book *The Riddle of Scheherazada*. This tale involved two cats, one of which was male, but the principle is the same. If you are not yet convinced, you can try tossing coins. But you don't have to because I have done it for you. In 39 bets you won 13 times and lost 26 - right on target.

## FINANCIAL EUPHEMISMS



In May of 1901 and again in October 1907 the stock market took a tumble and the newspaper headlines screamed **Panic on Wall Street**. In fact, the periods became known as the Panic of 1901 and the Panic of 1907. Naturally, neither the stock brokers nor the politicians liked the use of the word "panic" because of the impression that the word conveyed about the state of the market and the economy. In 1929 the stock market debacle was headlined **Wall Street Crashes** and the following economic disaster was called a "depression". (For those who were there, "despair" would have been a better word). But the word "depression" was still too gloomy and evolved into "recession". But the work of cleaning up the economy was

not finished. There had to be a more positive spin. So now, when the market goes down we have a "correction". It's as though it is good for the market to "correct" itself and gain strength by going down. An ever more imaginative expression is "profit taking" which implies that you can make money when your stocks go down. The financial world and the politicians have come a long way from "panic" to "profit taking" to describe a declining stock market. And you think that the spin doctors on Madison Avenue don't earn their money?

## SMART ALECK

One thing that the people (or at least the men), had in the depression was their athletic heroes, especially Babe Ruth. The year 1931 was a good one for The Babe. He hit 347, had 46 home runs, 165 runs-batted-in and was the highest paid baseball player at \$80,000. But it was not such a good year for the country. It was in the depths of the depression, the unemployment rate was unthinkable and there was not much hope that things would get better. At the end of the season a reporter asked Ruth why was he making more money than President Hoover. "Well", he replied, "I had a better year".



# Poker Schedule For September

Bob Boehlecke No game this month see next item

Paul Rubin Saturday, September 6, 7:00

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, September 13, 7:00 at Don's

Bart Deluca Saturday, September 27, 7:00

English Dept. Tuesday, September 2, 7:00 at Don's

Don Cooke No game - traveling again

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, September 4 & 18, at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. September game not yet scheduled

Tom Hunt Wednesday, September 10, 7:30

Saturday, September 20 open



## Another Paradox from Scheherazade



"My most glorious husband and Sultan of all India", says Scheherazade. "Tonight I am going to entertain you with another puzzle. Here I have three chests each having two drawers. In the first chest both drawers contain emeralds. In the second chest there are two rubies. In the third chest one drawer has a ruby and the other an emerald. So it is emerald + emerald, ruby + ruby and emerald + ruby. I will now open a door at random - ah ha! there is a ruby. Now, my Gracious Majesty, I ask you what is the chance that the other drawer in the same chest will also contain a ruby".

"My dear Scheharazade - you insult my intelligence. It is obvious that if the drawer you opened has a ruby in it, then the chest with two emeralds is not a consideration, and the ruby must be in one of the other two chests. Of the two remaining chests, one has an emerald in the second drawer and the other has a ruby in the second drawer. Therefore, it is equally likely that the other drawer will have a ruby or an emerald. I am disappointed in you, dear wife, because of your foolish puzzle".

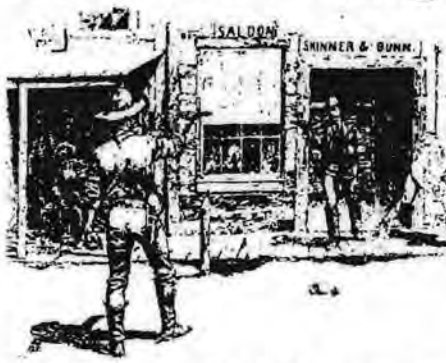
"But, my Noble Master, when God made Adam he did not do well with that part of the mind which handles intuition. In that region there are dark recesses which lead to dead ends and confuse the senses. (What Scheharazade did not tell the Sultan was that when God got to making Eve, He did a much better job on the intuition part of the mind). You have to back up a step. In the three chests there are three rubies - two in one chest and one in another. If you open a drawer containing a ruby, it is twice as likely that you opened a drawer in the chest with two rubies than the chest with one ruby. Therefore, if you open a drawer with a ruby, it is twice as likely that the other drawer in the chest will also contain a ruby rather than an emerald. So, My Lord, it is not an even bet".

"Scheharazade, my love, you never fail to amaze me".

The Sultan was pleased and Scheherazade got to live at least one more day.



# Fast Draw - Really Fast



The legendary gunmen of the Wild West, such as Wyatt Earp, Wild Bill Hickock, Bat Masterson and John Wesley Hardin would not stand much of a chance against a modern gunslinger. In fact, in a shootout, a 19th century shootist would probably already have a bullet through him before his hand reached his gun. Members of the World Fast Draw Association, using modified pistols and ammunition, hold competitions and keep records. An event starts with the hand above a holstered single-action pistol which is cocked, aimed and fired at various targets and distances.

An electronic clock measures the period between a randomly generated signal light which starts the process, and the time the bullet ( wax ) hits the target. The world record draw for a silhouette target at fifteen feet is held by Joe Nelson. It is less than a quarter of a second - 0.240. ( To qualify for a record, a shooter must reproduce the time within 0.03 seconds on a second try ). The response time to the light is about 0.15 seconds so, drawing, cocking, aiming the gun and pulling the trigger occurs in somewhat less than a tenth of a second. Fast draw indeed !

And then there was Ed McGivern who traveled the U. S. in the Thirties giving exhibitions of pistol shooting for the Colt Revolver Co. On August 20, 1932 ( without a draw ) he hit a target the size of a half of a dollar from 15 feet with five bullets in 0.45 seconds. On September 13, of the same year, firing two guns with both hands, he put 10 bullets through two playing cards at 15 feet in 1.2 seconds. A good man to have had on your side in a shootout. Source: World Fast Draw Records and the Guinness Book of World Records.

## Remarkable !



Hitting a baseball is another feat that requires exquisite precision. When watching a big leaguer hit a baseball it is almost impossible to imagine how difficult it is. The ball might be arriving at the plate at 95 miles per hour ( 140 feet per second ) and the bat is moving at 70 miles per hour. The ball is in transit for a mere 0.6 seconds and the batter has about 0.3 seconds to decide whether to swing. Then comes the hard part - knowing exactly when to start the swing. For a right-handed batter, if the bat is 0.008 seconds too late, it is a foul ball down the right field line. If 0.008 seconds too early - a foul ball to the left. And that is not the only problem. To hit the ball properly, the bat should be moving at maximum speed when it contacts the ball. The window for peak power is narrow - only 0.01 seconds. So to hit a home run over the center field fence requires a precision measured in milliseconds.

Source: The Physics of Baseball, Robert K. Adair



A King of Acorns



# Poker Schedule for October

Bob Boehlecke Saturday, October 4, 6:00

Paul Rubin Saturday, October 11, 7:00

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, October 25, 7:00 at Don's

Bart Deluca Saturday, October 18, 7:00

English Dept. Tuesday, October 7, 7:30 at Isaacs

Don Cooke Game on hold

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, October 9 & 30 at 8:00  
note changes in dates

Chemistry Dept. Friday, October 3, 8:00 at Don's

Tom Hunt Wednesday, October 1, 7:30



## A Poker Extravaganza

The gods and goddesses of chance were frolicking at the Chemistry Department poker game on August 29. The evening started off in an auspicious manner. It was seven-card stud and my first three cards were kings and the fifth card brought me the fourth one. In the first round (6 players) there were two more four-of-a-kind (no wildcards). I calculated that the odds of such an event was 50,000 to one. This means that the chemist's game, which plays once a month, can expect a repetition of the event along about the year 2060.

But the gods were not finished. Before the evening was over there were three more four-of-a-kind and two straight flushes. The straight flushes were in Omaha and were back-to-back to the same player.

But one should not forget that extremely long shots happen all the time. For example take a deck of cards and deal yourself seven cards. Congratulations, you just hit a 600 billion ( $52! / 46!$ ) to one shot - the odds against getting those exact cards in that order. Probabilities only seem to make an sense when there is some consideration before the fact. If you were to say that the next four cards will be aces and they actually come up you have just hit a real 270,000 to one shot.



## State of the Nation

At an auction in New York City, a photograph of three ex presidents together, Ford, Carter and Nixon, and autographed by each, sold for \$275. A photograph signed by The Three Stooges, Larry, Moe and Curley went for \$1870.



## A Spade in the Hole ?

There is a common situation in seven-card-stud in which an opposing hand shows four cards of one suit (say spades) with three down cards. Whether there is another spade in the hole to make a flush could be a very important question. This will be a statistical approach to the possibilities, so I will disregard all other information, or disinformation, that one may have from betting and playing patterns.

I believe that most people overestimate the probability of the spade in the hole. A simplistic approach would be to reason that there are four suits and there are three cards in the hole so you have three tries at four possibilities so the chances of there being a spade in the hole is 75%. But that intuitive approach is not correct. Take any three cards from a deck and the chances are 59% that at least one of them will be a spade. But your opponent has four spades showing which reduces the chances below 59%. If you do not have a spade in your hand, the possibility of a spade in the hole is 54%. If you have one spade, the chances drop to 49%, if two, to 44% and if three, to 39%.

You may have further information from cards that are showing in the other hands. But you must be careful. For example, suppose there are three other hands with a total of two spades showing. Such a situation would increase the chances of the flush. One has to worry, not only about the number of spades but also the non-spades. Having only two spades, instead of the expected three, in the twelve cards that are showing, increases the proportion of spades to non-spades in the unknown cards and the chances of a flush. What I do is to see if the ratio of spades to non-spades is above or below one-quarter. If above, the chances of a flush are decreased and vice-versa.

## Speaking of Vice Versa

Many ambulances have **ƎꞀꞆꞆꞆꞆꞆꞆ** written across the front so that drivers, looking in their rearview mirrors, will see **AMBULANCE**, the mirror image. When you look at yourself in a mirror, your right side is the image's left side. Have you ever thought about why the mirror doesn't do the same thing in the vertical mode, making the top the bottom ? Plato and Alice did worry about it.



FOR THOSE WHO MAY NOT KNOW,  
ST. SWITHIN'S DAY IS JULY 15



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER

Bob Boehlecke Saturday, November 1, 6:00

Paul Rubin Saturday, November 8, 7:00

Bob Raimon's game No game - Thanksgiving weekend & Company

Bart Deluca Saturday, November 22, 7:00

English Dept. Tuesday, November 11, 7:30 at Mike's

Don Cooke No game this month

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, November 6 & 20, 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, November 7, 8:00 at Ben's

Tom Hunt Wednesday, November 5, 7:30

No game, Saturday, November 15, five players in FARGO tournament at Foxwoods



### According to Hoyle



Just to illustrate how difficult it is to write a set of rules to cover every possibility, consider what happened at the English Department game on September 2. The last of the flop cards was an ace of hearts to make the third heart. The lock high hand was two hearts with one being the king. The betting was vigorous and two players went high and one low. At the showdown, both highs said they had the lock. In a way they both did because both had a king of hearts. The deck we had been playing with all evening was defective with fifty-three cards and two kings of hearts. What to do about the high half of the pot? Should the hand with the next highest heart take the high end? It was decided

two high hands should share the high half. It was felt that they were both betting with the "knowledge" they had the lock high.

This event was mentioned at another game and Bart Deluca and Jerry Gerner both mentioned that they had seen a defective deck in play at a casino. In one case the floor manager ruled that the hand was invalid and after reconstructing the betting, the money was returned to the bettors. The trouble with this ruling is that all previous hands played with the deck were also invalid. But someone has to decide something.

### An Intriguing Paradox

The word "paradox" is derived from "para", opposite and "dox", opinion. In other words, the opposite of what you might think. That concept is true of this one (at least for me). There is a deck of cards face down on the table and the cards are turned over one at a time. What is the most likely place in the deck for the first black ace to appear? (Or the first red seven, it does not matter.) Take a guess before going on to the next page to find the answer.



I found it hard to believe when I read the answer that the most probable position for the first black ace was the top card. The probability of the first black ace being at any particular position  $N$ , in a deck of  $n$  cards, given by the following equation :

$$P = (N - 1) / \Sigma (1, + 2, + 3, \dots, (n - 1)) = 51 / 1326 = .038$$

Therefore, the probability of the first ace being the top card is 0.0385 and the probability decreases as you go down the deck. For the second card down, the probability is 0.0377, the 26th card, 0.0188 and the 51st card, 0.0008 (it cannot be the 52nd). The probability of 0.0008 is identical to the probability of randomly drawing the two black aces from a deck.

The situation is symmetrical. The most probable place for the second ace is the last card and the probability for this position is also 0.0385

The picture might be a bit clearer by considering a deck of only four cards, two black aces and two red sevens. The six possible combinations of these four cards is as follows :

	1	2	3	4
	—	—	—	—
a -	A	A	7	7
b -	A	7	A	7
c -	A	7	7	A
d -	7	A	A	7
e -	7	A	7	A
f -	7	7	A	A

As you can see, the first ace is the top card in three cases, a, b, and c. It is the second card in two cases, d and e and the third card in one case, f. The same numbers apply to the first seven. I believe that the reason the answer surprised me so much was that I missed the significance of the question - the first of the two black aces.

If you are still not convinced, I did the experiment outlined in the reference quoted below. Lawrence used ten units so I used 8 black cards and 2 red and looked for the first red card. The results of 90 trials are shown below.

Position of the first red card.	Frequency Theory	Frequency Actual
1st card	18	20
2	16	15
3	14	13
4	12	8
5	10	10
6	8	12
7	6	9
8	4	1
9	2	1

Lawrence took a poll as to where people expected that the first red card would most likely appear and the responses clustered around the fourth card. Perhaps there is a proposition bet here. With the 8 black cards and two red - you give me \$10 if the first red card comes up either first, second, or third and I'll give you \$10 if it is fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth or ninth. A 6% advantage to you.

Reference - A. E. Lawrence. The Mathematical Gazette Vol 53. December. 1969. p 347-354



## Overcoming Handicaps

On April 29, 1986, Roger Clemens struck out 20 batters to break a record which had stood for over a hundred years. In 1884 Hugh Dailey, of Chicago, had fanned 19 to establish that record. In the same year Dailey had 483 strikeouts, a record that has never been surpassed. Nolan Ryan holds the the modern record for strikeouts with 383 in 1973. Dailey also recorded a no-hit game in 1883.

There was something unusual about Hugh Dailey. He is carried in the record books by the name of One-arm Dailey. He had no right arm but he could sure throw a baseball.

## How Do They Get Men to Do It ?



December, 1944 was not a good month for the Allied armies in Europe. To begin with, it was one of the coldest and snowiest on record. The German army had started a major counter-offensive, breaking out of the Ardennes Forest in what was to be known as the Battle of the Bulge. The Allied armies were in full retreat and the combat infantryman bore the brunt of the onslaught. One can imagine that the dogface, in his wet freezing foxhole, would look up at the heavy bombers high above and envy the crewmen. The aircrews slept between sheets in warm barracks, had all the beer they could drink, got leave to London with all those women, went to war only two days a week and, best of all, got reassigned to the States after 25 missions. All this was true but there was a catch. The airmen had paid their dues. Before the 8th Air Force had learned how to give bombers fighter escort to the targets, the

the loss rate of the bombers per mission was an appalling 7 percent. While it was true that an airman got to go back to the states after 25 missions, the average number completed before going down over Europe was 15. From 15 to 25 they were on borrowed time and when an airman completed 25 missions and went home, he left behind three buddies who were never going to make 25 missions. There was a good reason that the infantryman did not know the situation because few people outside of 8th Air Force headquarters had much of an idea of the casualty rate. It was a deep dark secret which, if known, could have spelled the end of daylight bombing. While the dogface had a more difficult life, he had a better chance of going home.





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

Bob Boehlecke Saturday, December 6 at 6:00

Paul Rubin Saturday, December 13 at 7:00

Bob Raimon's game (Pot limit \$100 cap at Don's)  
Hopefully, Sat. Dec. 27 7:00  
Call before coming

Bart Deluca Saturday, December 20 at 7:00

English Dept. Wednesday, December 10, 7:30 at Tony's \*

Don Cooke (\$5 - \$10) No Game this month

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, December 4 & 18 at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, December 12, 8:00 at Geoff's \*

Tom Hunt ? Call Tom @ 756-9278



The Bartender at  
Old Nick's Place

\* Tony's address is 904 Triphammer Road

Geoff's address is 15 Beckett Way (map enclosed)

## WINNING AND LOSING STREAKS



You are sitting at the poker table drawing poor hand after poor hand. You have won a few small pots but you have been behind all night. You begin to wonder how long this can go on. Unfortunately, it can go on for a long time. Winning and losing streaks last longer than intuition would leave one to believe. In fact, a survey that tested the intuition of a group of professional statisticians ~~on~~ on the length of

streaks, found that they greatly underestimated how long streaks can go on. Let's take a simple game where a coin is to be tossed ten times at a dollar a throw. If you lose the first toss there is a fifty-fifty chance that you will never be ahead. Intuition leads one to think that in an extended game of simple coin tossing that the lead would fluctuate back and forth, something like this:



In fact, such an outcome is highly unlikely and, typically, one would find something more like this:





Regardless of the number of tosses, the most likely outcome is that the player who wins the first toss will never be behind in the game. While the probability of this happening may be low, it is still the most likely outcome compared to all others.

For another illustration, let's imagine a year - long game where a coin is tossed once a second ( about 31 million tosses ) for a \$1 a throw. In half the cases, the more fortunate player will be ahead at least 85% of the time. The probability that the more fortunate player would be ahead for at least 356 days of the year may seem highly unlikely, but this would happen once in five trials. Another example involves 10,000 tosses of a coin. It may seem absurd, but once in ten tries the more fortunate player will be ahead for at least 9930 of the 10,000 tosses. A description of the Arc Sine Law that governs these calculations and defies intuition, can be found in Probability Theory and Its Application by William Feller, 1950, Chapter III

## WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO DOUG FLUTIE, REVISITED

In the newsletter of last February there was a piece about Doug Flutie. Flutie, a quarterback from Boston College, established a new AAU record for passing with 10579 yards and won the Heisman Trophy in 1984. He did not fare well in the pro draft because, at 5-10 and 170 pounds, everyone considered him to be too small for pro football. He rode various benches and dropped out of sight in 1990 - unless one lived north of the Canadian border. He joined the Canadian League and took off like a rocket. In the February newsletter I reported that he had been named Most Valuable Player in the league for five out of six seasons. ( He was out on injuries for the other season ).

Well, he has done it again. He led the Toronto Argonauts to a 15 - 3 season. He passed for 5505 yards, had a completion rate of 64% and threw a remarkable 47 touchdown passes. He even ranked 12th in rushing with 542 yards. For the sixth time he was named the league's Most Valuable Player. Toronto won the Grey Cup 47 - 23. Flutie completed 30 of 38 passes for 352 yards and three touchdowns and rushed for another. He was named the Most Valuable player of the game.

## A LONG SHOT

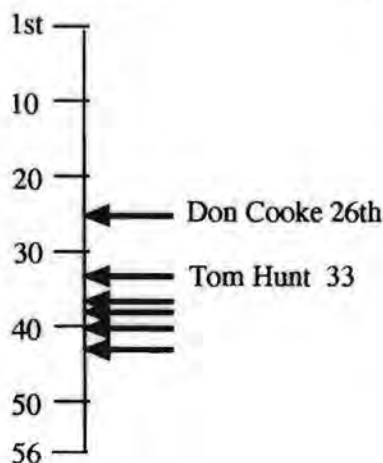
On April 14, 1993, as part of a promotional stunt, the Chicago Bulls offered a randomly selected fan a shot at the basket for a \$1 million prize. The promoters were not taking much of a chance. - the selected fan, Don Calhoun, would have to shoot from the opposite foul line, 75 feet away. Glory Be - he made it !!! Now that's a long shot in more ways than one.

## RESULTS OF THE FARGO POKER TOURNAMENT

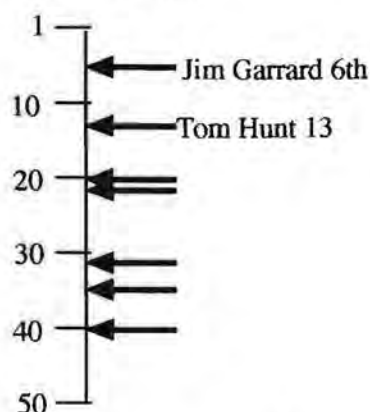
Seven members of the Cayuga Poker Society fought their way through the snow to the poker tournament at Foxwoods in Connecticut.

Jim Garrard upheld our honor by making the final table ( placed 6th ) in the seven-card stud tournament. We did not do at all well in the hold'em competition, with only one of us landing in the top half. We can argue that hold'em is not our game. In stud we held our own. Congratulations to Jim. The diagrams at the right shows how we managed against the 56 hold'em players and the 50 stud players.

Hold'em



Seven Card Stud





# POKER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Bob Boehlecke No game this month - see next item.

Paul Rubin Saturday, January 3, 7:00 \$ 5 progressive  
Also, every Sunday, 7:30, \$ 5 ante, pot limit,  
table stakes. Call to make sure.

Bob Raimon's game Pot limit, \$100 maximum at Don's  
Saturday, January 10, 7:00

Bart Deluca Saturday, January 24 at 7:00

English Dept. Wednesday, January 21, 7:30 at Lamar's

Don Cooke ( \$5 - \$10 ) Game on hold

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, January 8 & 22, at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, January 23, 8:00 at Milt's

Tom Hunt Wednesday January 7, at 7:30

John Lucente \$5 ante, pot-limit, table stakes ← Note new listing  
Saturday, January 17 at \$6:00



## A PROPOSITION BET

Clara Conn and Marty Mark are enjoying a drink at an outdoor table at Simeon's in downtown Ithaca. Clara turns to Marty and says " Funny, I have been noticing the numbers on the license plates of the cars going by and there seems to be a lot of similarities in the numbers." My dear Clara" says Marty, " you should know that its all governed by a statistical distribution". " I'm not sure ", muses Clara, " but I am willing to bet you even money that with the next fifteen cars going by, there will be two license plates that have the identical last two digits "Do you mean" replies Marty" that two of those fifteen license plates will have the same last two digits, like 79 and 79 " ? "Yep!" "Clara, you have no feeling for numbers - I will bet you \$20 that you are wrong".

As always, Mr. Mark is at a big disadvantage. The breakeven number or 50% chance, of getting a duplicate pair for the last two digits is a mere twelve. With fifteen plates the odds are two to one against the mark.

The equation for calculating the 50% chance is :

$$\sqrt[50]{1.4 n} \quad \text{Where "n" is the total number of possibilities - in the case of two digits, } n = 100.$$

$$\sqrt[50]{(1.4)(100)} = 11.8$$

This is a variation of the well-known Birthday Paradox. How many people would you have to have in a room so that there would be a 50% chance that two would have the same birthday ?

$$\sqrt{(1.4)(365)} = 22.6$$



So, in a group of 23 persons there is a 50 - 50 chance of two individuals having the same birthday. This number is lower than most people would expect. The calculation is :

$$\text{Chances of no coincidence} = \overset{2 \text{ persons}}{(364 / 365)} \times \overset{3 \text{ persons}}{(363 / 365)} \times \overset{4 \text{ persons}}{(362 / 365)} \dots \times \overset{23 \text{ persons}}{(341 / 365)} = .49$$

The chances of a coincidence of birthdays increases exponentially with the number of people. At 40, there is a 90% chance of a match. With 100 in the group, the chances of two people not sharing a birthday is 3.3 million to one.

## BEATING THE LOTTERY - BIG TIME

The last place one would expect to find a winning system is with a state lottery since the usual take is 50%. But lotteries can and have been beaten. The method requires a large amount of cash, a lot of guts, an efficient organization, some luck and it helps to be a foreigner. How is it possible? The odds favor the ticket buyer when, on occasion, the size of the prize is greater than the number of possible combinations of tickets. The situation means little to the average Joe or Jane. But what if you buy all possible combinations which would guarantee you a winning ticket? An Australian syndicate, headed by Stefan Mandel, tried to do just that. The Virginia lottery has 7,059,062 possible combinations and in February 1992 the estimated prize stood at \$27 million. The Syndicate, with \$7 million in cash on hand and using computer generated cards to purchase tickets in multiple outlets, did not quite make it. But they were able to buy 5.6 million tickets. They must have had some anxious moments with \$7 million riding on a 5.6 out of 7 shot, but they did hold the winning ticket. Then the wait as to whether there were other winners with whom they would have to share the prize. They lucked out again - they had the only ticket. The scheme became well known and there was a public outcry. The Virginia Lottery Commission stalled for three weeks while they considered not awarding the prize. Probably on the advice of counsel, the Commission decided to award the money but withheld Federal and State taxes. The Syndicate, whose membership was Australian, argued that they were not subject to the U. S. tax laws and won their case in court.

The whole affair was analyzed in an article in *Chance*, Vol. 10 #3, 1997. The authors discuss the situations where a group can make millions. The article points out that the Syndicate "only" made about \$14 million in first prize money since the prize is paid out over 20 years. It also estimates that they made an additional \$3 million on 228 second prizes and 20,000 second prizes. There was a 36% chance that there would be only one winning ticket for the top prize. The authors speculate that this \$7 million bet may have been the largest private bet ever made. But they forgot about Wall Street, the biggest game in town, where \$7 million can be a mere bagatelle.



## ADVICE ON SELECTING LOTTERY NUMBERS ?

Now don't go away - such advice can be useful. Some people use astrology to pick numbers which is probably not very helpful and gives you no useful information. But many individuals pick numbers involving specific dates in their lives such as birthdays, anniversaries etc. This is useful information to help you select the numbers to play. While such information does not increase your chances of hitting the right numbers, it does decrease the chances of sharing the prize if you do win. Since there are 12 months in the year with no more than 31 days in any month, one should pick all their numbers from 32 or above. On occasion I play PICK FIVE with the numbers 33, 34, 35, 36 and 37. With no proof whatsoever, I think that most people feel that it is less likely for consecutive numbers to be selected. If I ever win we will be able to test my theory. On the other hand, if I have to share the prize, it may be with one of you guys who followed my advice.

## THE CAYUGA POKER SOCIETY



There was a write up of the FARGO tournament at Foxwoods in *Card Player Magazine* and a paragraph was devoted to the Cayuga Poker Society. There were a few errors. They made everyone a faculty member at Cornell and had an innovative way of spelling Cayuga - CAUUJA

Incidentally, the Cayuga Poker Society sponsored over 140 games in 1997

## LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

A highly unusual poker event happened twice this year. In the Tom Reiss game on December 18, I managed to play the whole evening without winning a hand. Given nine players and 60 hands with two winners every other hand (hi / lo), the odds of such a happening is 3 in 10,000. This "accomplishment" was equalled by son Pete earlier in the year in the same game.

## SO, YOUR NEW CAR IS A LEMON ?

The word "lemon" to describe something that is below expectations may well have its origins in the old three reel slot machines in Las Vegas. A lemon appearing in any of the three positions precluded a winning combination. So, if you got a lemon you were a loser.





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

Bob Boehlecke Saturday, February 7, at 6:00

Paul Rubin Every Sunday at 6:00 Note change of time.  
Call to make sure

Bob Raimon's game Pot limit, \$100 maximum at Don's  
February 14, 7:00

Bart Deluca Saturday, February 21 at 7:00

English Dept. Wednesday, February 18, at Glenn's

Don Cooke ( \$5 - \$10 ) February 28 at 7:00

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, February 5 & 19, at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, February 13, 8:00 at Fred's.

Tom Hunt Wednesday February 4, at 7:30



## STATISTICS AND INTUITION

*The beginning dealer in a poker game is the one who is dealt the first jack. I don't know the origin of the practice, but it has been conventional in every game I ever ever played in ( and that is a lot ). The origin of the custom is probably lost in the mists of time. It takes 10.4 cards to have a 50% chance of a jack being dealt. Why not 6 or 7 since there are 13 ranks? The same pattern appears in many series.*

*With a pair of dice, which have 36 combinations, it takes 25 rolls, not 18, to have a 50% chance of having a twelve.*

*With a single die, you might think that after three rolls you would have a fifty - fifty chance of a six appearing. Not so, the chances of a six after three rolls is only 42%. This fact is the basis of the carnival scam Chuck-a-Luck.*

*At roulette, pick a number of the 38 possibilities - you will have to wait for 26 spins of the wheel to have an even bet for that number to appear.*

*Why is the required number of trials always higher than intuition dictates? The explanation has to do with duplication. It is easy to explain by the following example. You are in a room with 200 people - what are the chances of someone having the same birthday as yours ? Since there is one chance in 365 for each person you might think that 183 individuals would be the 50 - 50 number. But it takes a group of 253 to yield an even chance. The reason for this number is that in a group of 253, because of duplications, one would expect 183 different birthdays. What is important is not the number of people but the number of different birthdays. With roulette, it takes 26 spins to expect 19 different numbers, the requirement for an even chance for your number.*



The equation to calculate the probability of an event of probability 'p' in 'n' trials is :

$P_n = 1 - (1 - p)^n$  So the probability of getting a six in three rolls of a die is:

$P_n = 1 - (1 - 1/6)^3 = 0.42$  And the probability of a 12 in 24 rolls of a pair of dice is:

$P_n = 1 - (1 - 1/36)^{24} = 0.49$  This equation is a famous one because it was the first attempt at what we now know as mathematical statistics. About the year 1650 a French gambler, Chevalier de Mere, wanted to know the chances of getting a 12 in 24 rolls of two dice. He took the question to a friend, Blaise Pascal, who came up with the solution using this equation.

## YOU WIN SOME, YOU LOSE SOME



In early 1944 I was in Air Corps Headquarters in London where a great deal of our time was spent on the planning of the invasion of Normandy. I was a climatologist and a question crossed my desk as to whether snowplows should be available for Orly Air Field in Paris when we got there. The critical snow depth was set at five inches. Off I went to the British Museum and was pleased to find detailed weather records, including snowfall, for Paris going back to 1750. I soon decided that the chances of a five-inch snowfall were pretty remote and reported that there was little necessity to provide snowplows. The winter of 1944-1945 in Europe was cold and snowy and it so happened that Paris received 12 inches of snow to set a new 200 - year record. Fortunately, my colonel was also a poker player and realized that even a full house can lose once in a while. It was this sort of goof that resulted in a marvelous non-sequitur by an aide to General Eisenhower making reference to long range weather forecasting "The Commanding General is well aware that the forecasts are no good, but he needs them for planning purposes". This quotation was recalled by Kenneth Arrow, a Nobel prize winner in economics, who also worked on weather problems.

## A TALE OF PRACTICAL STATISTICS

The January schedule had a description of the Birthday Paradox. It seems counterintuitive to hear that it only takes a group of 23 people to have a fifty - fifty chance that two individuals will share the same birthday. My colleague, Roger Loring, in the Chemistry Department was duly impressed when he first heard about it. When he got home he tried it on his wife Debby, by putting the paradox in the form of a question, "How many people would you have to have in a room to have a fifty - fifty chance of two of them having the same birthday ? Debby protested, "Roger, you know I don't like mathematical puzzles". But Roger persisted, "Take a guess anyway". "Well, if had to guess, I would say 24". Roger was flabbergasted that anyone would venture such a small number. You realize Roger", explained Debby, "that I am a school teacher and we often go around the room asking the pupils to tell their birthdays. I learned from experience."



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

**Bob Boehlecke** Bob will not have a game this month but Don will host a game on March 7. See next item.

**Bob Raimon's game** Pot limit, \$100 maximum at Don's Saturday, March 7 & 21, 7:00

**Paul Rubin** Every Sunday, 7:00, \$ 5 ante, pot limit, table stakes.

**Bart Deluca** Saturday, March 14, at 7:00

**English Dept.** Thursday, March 26, 7:30 at Don's

**Don Cooke** (\$5 - \$10) Saturday, March 28 at 7:00

**Tom Reiss' Game** Thursdays, March 5 & 19, at 8:00 at Don's

**Chemistry Dept.** Friday, March 13, 8:00 at Frank's

**Tom Hunt** Wednesday, March 4, at 7:30

Chris Murison will be back for the March 7/8 weekend.

## The Sad Truth

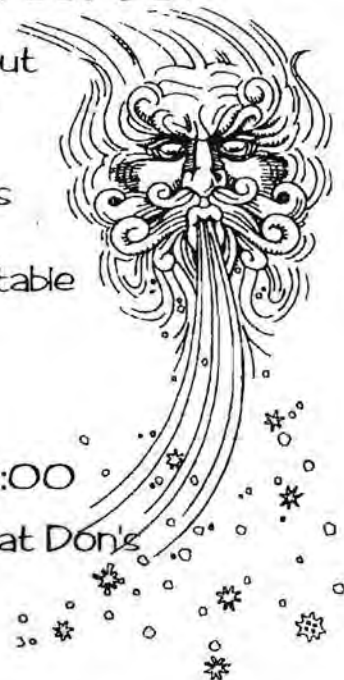
Imagine that a new casino opens with a roulette wheel that has no zero or double zero - a fair game. What are your chances in such a fair game? The answer is zilch. In a fair game, over the long haul, the chances of a player winning against the house is given by the following formula:

Your probability of winning = Dollars available to you / Dollars available to the house = zilch

Did you ever wonder how a casino can make money on a craps table with the house advantage only 1.4%? It is a labor intensive game with four guys at the table, to say nothing of the enormous overhead in running a casino. The answer is that they don't make the money on the 1.4% edge. They make it on the fact that the players go broke or decide they have had enough of losing. (The casino hates guys who quit while they are ahead - they know they will win for sure if you keep playing). The point can be illustrated by two numbers used in the gambling trade. One is the "drop", that is the amount of money you bring to the table, or, collectively, what everyone starts with. The second term is the "hold percentage". The latter term is defined as the average percentage of the drop that the house retains. In craps, at Atlantic City, the hold percentage is 15%. The house keeps one dollar for every six brought to the table. That is a real edge.

It is hard enough to beat the 1.5% house advantage in craps. For example, if you made 400 bets of \$10 each your chances of winning at least \$100 is 0.22 but your chances of losing at least \$100 is 0.44.

As mentioned in a newsletter a long time back, the best way to minimize the house advantage is to decide how much you want to gamble, place that much on a single bet and walk away, win or lose. Not much fun.





## Hard to Believe

On June 18, 1980, at Imperial College, London. Devi Shakuntala demonstrated her skill at mental arithmetic. She was asked to multiply two 13-digit numbers that had been randomly generated by the Computer Department. The two numbers were 7,686,369,774,870 and 2,465,099,745,779. It took Devi 28 seconds to come up with the correct answer, 18,947,668,177,995,426,773,730. My HP calculator can't do that.

Source : The Great Mental Calculators by Steven B. Smith, 1983

## Welcome Aboard

Pitcher Tod Burns came up from the minors to the Oakland A's during the 1987 season. Burns had been called up on short notice and after only a few hours he was called to the mound in a critical situation. Before he started his warmup the catcher, Ron Hassey, walked out to him. Ah, thought Burns, he's coming out to give me some encouragement. Hassey, however had something else in mind. "Who", asked Hassey, "are you" ?

From Baseball Anecdotes by Okrent & Wulf, 1989. Published by ( of all places ) The Oxford University Press.

## More War Stories

It was December 1943 and I was stationed in Air Corps Headquarters outside of London. I had to make a down-and-back trip to the southwest corner of England. Being in Air Corps Headquarters meant that we flew wherever we went, so I had a two-seater plane and a pilot. We started back later in the afternoon than we had hoped and it started to get dark and murky. I was sitting there marveling at how these guys knew their way in such lousy circumstances. Just at that time my confidence was shattered when the pilot turned to me and said " Do you see anything that looks familiar". We did get home OK.

In those days there were no navigational gadgets and if you could not see your way, things got tough. The worst case scenario was when fog developed at the bases when the bombers were returning from a mission. One way to help them down was something called FIDO ( Fog Investigation and Dispersal Operation ). Ditches along the runway were filled with oil and gasoline and set afire. This warmed the air for a short time and hopefully dissipated the fog as well as giving a visual marker. If this failed to bring them in there was one drastic measure left - set the automatic pilot to direct the plane over the North Sea and bail out. One awful afternoon a lot of aircraft were lost this way. Even in Headquarters the number that were lost was a deep, dark secret but the rumor was that 60 bombers went out over the North Sea that day and 600 airmen hit the silk.

## The Power of Negative Thinking

The following event occurred at the Tom Reiss game a couple of weeks ago. The game was Omaha and the last flop card had been turned and it was time for the final bet. There were four players remaining. Jim Garrard checked and one-by-one the other three players threw their hands away. An unchallenged check !



Said the spiders . . . . .



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR APRIL

Bob Boehlecke Saturday, April 4, at 6:00

Paul Rubin \$5 dealer - ante, pot limit, table stakes. Every Sunday at 7:00

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, April 11 at 7:00  
\$2 ante, pot limit \$100 cap at Don's

Bart Deluca Saturday, April 18 at 7:00. This game  
could use more players

English Dept. Thursday, April 23, 7:30 at Dan's

Don Cooke ( \$5 - \$10 ) No Game , traveling

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, April 2, 16 & 30 at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, April 17, 8:00 at Don's

Tom Hunt Wednesday April 1 at 7:30



## THE FIXED-POINT THEOREM

Peter Hoyt supplied the following interesting item.

One nice Monday in the Fall, a member of the Cayuga Poker Society decides that he will drive over to Foxwoods, in Connecticut, to try his luck at the poker table. He left in the morning at 9:00 am, following his usual route. The weather was so pleasant that he stopped to see the Fall colors, had a nice lunch and arrived at the casino at 4:00 pm, just in time for a few hands before dinner. He played all evening and all day Tuesday. By Wednesday morning he was so far ahead that he decided to head back to Ithaca, leaving at 9:00 am. Again the day was beautiful and, going back the same way, had a leisurely trip, stopping at a different restaurant and arriving back at 4:00 pm, just in time for the Wednesday night game at Tom's.

Question ? Is there some point along the route between Ithaca and Foxwoods that our traveler passed the same spot at exactly the same time of day on the trip going to Foxwoods and returning ?

- ☐ Definitely YES
- ☐ Definitely NO
- ☐ Not enough information to know



The answer is "definitely yes". To understand why, imagine that when our traveler left Ithaca for Foxwoods at 9:00 am, his virtual ego left Foxwoods for Ithaca at the same time. If they travel the same path, at some point along the road they must pass each other. Therefore they will be at the same point at exactly the same time. This fact is dictated by a fixed-point theorem. The theorem predicts other unexpected phenomena. If you gently stir a cup of coffee, when it comes to rest there must be at least one point on the surface of the liquid that is back where it was before the coffee was stirred. The theorem also specifies that there must be at least one pair of points on the surface of the earth, on opposite sides of the globe, where both the temperature and the pressure are identical.

## **A CHALLENGE TO THE CAYUGA POKER SOCIETY**

I got an E-mail from Bill Alan who organized the FARGO tournament at Foxwoods last Fall. He is again getting a tournament together for this Fall on October 9, 10 and 11.



There is interest in having a challenge match on Friday night for the four known poker organizations. We would need at least eight players. Are there eight stalwart defenders of the Cayuga Poker Society who, depending on circumstance, might be interested in upholding our honor?

## **HEY ! YOU NEVER KNOW (SALES PITCH OF THE NEW YORK LOTTERY)**

Here is a release from the Associated Press dated 10/2/96

**HAMBURG, Germany (AP)** - A spanish businessman and devout Roman Catholic who stopped to pray at a church during a trip to Stockholm ended up a millionaire.

The church was empty except for a coffin containing the remains of a man, so Eduardo Sierra knelt down and prayed for the deceased for 20 minutes.

Sierra, 35, signed a condolance book after he saw a note saying that those who prayed for the dead man should enter their name and address. He noticed he was the first to sign. He would be the only.

Several weeks later he got a call from the Swedish capital informing him he was a millionaire.

Jens Svenson, the man he prayed for, was a 73-year-old real estate dealer with no close relatives. He had specified in his will that "Whoever prays for my soul gets all my belongings".

## **BOYHOOD HEROES**

My heroes were the Philadelphia Athletics. The late twenties and early thirties were a great time for baseball. Many believe that the 1927 Athletics were the best team ever assembled. Babe Ruth hit his 60 home runs in 1927. Ty Cobb was finishing out a great career with the Athletics. ( 1927, 1928 ) and there was a wonderful rivalry between the Yankees and the Athletics. One of my particular heroes was Lefty Grove. He still holds the fifth best win percentage ( .682 ) and led the league in ERAs for nine years. He was great when the chips were down as evidenced by a 1.75 ERA for 8 world series games. Then there was a game in Yankee stadium. The Athletics were ahead 1-0 in the bottom of the ninth. The leadoff hitter for the Yankees, Mark Koenig, hit a triple. The Athletic's pitcher was facing the power part of the Yankee batting order, Ruth, Gehrig and Meusel. So Connie Mack called on Grove to finish the game. He threw nine pitches, all strikes, to retire the side.



# Poker Schedule for May

Bob Boehlecke No game this month- too many people away

Paul Rubin \$5 ante, pot limit, table stakes. Every Sunday at 7:00

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, May 9 at 7:00. ( Hopefully )  
\$2 ante, pot limit \$100 cap at Don's

Bart Deluca Saturday, May 30 at 7:00

English Dept. Wednesday, May 27 at 7:30 at Isaacs

Don Cooke ( \$5 - \$10 ) No Game this month.  
Too many people away

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, May 7 & 21, at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, May 22, 8:00 at Barry's

Tom Hunt Wednesday, May 6 at 7:30



## AN AMAZING PROPOSITION BET

Al Silverman proposed the following for your amusement.

Clara Conn has a betting proposition for Marty Mark. She sets it up. " Marty there are a million slips of paper in this covered box and each slip has a different number printed on it. The numbers are random and can be up to seven digits long ". She then challenges Marty as follows. " I will pull out one slip at a time and at some point I will stop and claim that the slip I just drew has the largest number of all the slips in the box. What odds will you offer me that I will be right " ? " Well ", says Marty. " The odds on any one pick is a million to one, and you tell me that you will stop when you have just drawn the highest number. I don't really know what to say. Give me an offer ". " Would you give me four to one " ? " Of course ", replies Marty and once again he is on the losing side of the ledger. A strategy can be devised that will lead to the selection of the highest number ( of the million numbers ) once in three tries.

The strategy is as follows : Pick out half the slips and note the highest number. Then continue picking slips. When a slip comes up which is higher than any number in the first half, choose that slip as the highest number of the million slips. The probability that you have the highest of all the numbers is  $1/3$ .

How can the odds be so low ? Here is the explanation. You will get the right slip if :

- a) the second largest number is in the first half and the largest number is in the second half. This probability is  $1/4$ .
- b) you will also get the right number if the third largest number is in the first half and the first and second are in the second half, but by chance, you pick the largest number before the second largest number. This probability is  $(1/2)(1/4)(1/2) = 1/16$



However, there are additional possibilities for getting the right number. For example, if the fourth highest number is in the first half and the three highest numbers are in the second half. You will get the right number if you happen to choose the first highest number before the other two. The chances of that happening are  $(1/2 \times 1/8 \times 1/4) = 1/64$ . The series to calculate the overall probability of the strategy working is:

$$P = (1/4 \times 1 + 1/4^2 + \dots + 1/4^n) = 1/3$$

Of course a million slips would be impractical for a proposition bet. Any number will do, a hundred slips, a thousand, whatever. The strategy is independent of the number of slips or the numbers on the slips.

## PLAY BALL



I suspect that, of all sports, baseball has the best database. Truly trivial questions can be answered. Here are some examples:

- What player hit the most home runs on his birthday?

Al Simmons with 5

- Of all players whose names begin with the letter "U", who hit the most home runs?

Willie Upshaw with 123

- Hank Aaron hit 755 home runs in his career. Which pitcher contributed the most of these?

Don Drysdale with 15.

- On only one occasion in the history of baseball, the first three batters hit home runs. Who were the batters?

The event happened on April 13, 1987, when Merrell Wynn, Tony Gynn and John Kruk of San Diego accomplished the feat.

- How many different pitchers pitched to Hank Aaron?

310

- Which pitcher hit the most home runs in his career?

Wes Farrel with 37.

- Who hit the most home runs as a pinch hitter?

Cliff Johnson with 20.

- Who hit the most inside-the-park home runs in a season?

Sam Crawford with 12 in 1901. Ty Cobb was second with 9 in 1909.

- Who hit the most home runs in extra innings?

Willie Mays with 22.

- How many players hit a home run in their first time at bat?

73, including Hoyt Wilhelm who, in a long career, never hit another.

- What day of the week had the fewest home runs recorded?

Tuesday, with 19,370 or 10.6% of the total.

Source: The Home Run Encyclopedia, Society for American Baseball Research, 1996

## MICROECONOMICS

American Airlines saved \$40,000 a year by serving one less olive in the luncheon salad of first class passengers.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JUNE

Special Game Thursday, June 11 at Paul Rubin's  
Chris will be there. Pot limit, maybe \$100 cap.

Bob Boehlecke No game this month. See next item.

Bob Raimon's game Two games. Saturday, June 6 & 27 at  
7:00 \$2 ante, pot limit \$100 cap at Don's

Paul Rubin Every Sunday at 7:00 \$5 dealer-ante,  
.pot limit, table stakes, sometimes, \$100 cap.

Bart Deluca Saturday, June 13, 7:30

English Dept. Wednesday, June 17, 7:30 at Don's

Don Cooke \$5 - \$10 Game on hold

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, June 4 & 18, at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, June 12, 8:00 at Fred's

Tom Hunt Game on hold

Hurrah for  
Father's Day



I don't like my leisure filled days to be complicated by having to do things. This month I ran short of time and am sending a shortened newsletter. As I have done in the past, I am also enclosing something I wrote for the grandchildren. I hope you find it interesting. The background of this story is that a friend sent it to me. Being cautious, I checked it out. I was able to follow the careers of all the nine Irishmen and can vouch for the accuracy of the tale.

### BALL OF FIRE

The baseball season is off to a great start with the young rookie, Kerry Wood, striking out 20 players with hundred-mile-an-hour pitches and Dave Wells pitching a perfect game, the thirteenth in history. So that brings up a question. Who threw the fastest pitch ever recorded and what team did he play for?

OK, so it was a misleading question. The pronoun is wrong it should be "she" instead of "he". The pitch was thrown by Joan Joyce of the Raybestos Brakettes in 1966 and was clocked at 116 mph. The term "soft" in softball refers to the surface of the ball not the speed of delivery. In softball, the pitcher's mound is closer to the plate so the ball will generally arrive at the plate with a higher velocity than a hardball. The fastest recorded fast-pitch by a man is 108 miles per hour by Jack Newman in 1962.

Joyce's record at fast pitch is 494 wins and 32 losses, and in 21 years she gave up only 105 earned runs, for a 0.19 earned run average. She had 123 no-hitters and 37 perfect games. You might think that the reason for such a spectacular record is that fast pitch is hard to hit - you would not know that from her life-time batting average of .325. One of the highlights of her career was striking out Ted Williams in an exposition game and, eighteen years later striking out Hank Aaron. When she retired from baseball in 1978 she played the tour in the Ladies Professional Golf Association. In college she was a three-time AAU Basketball All-America, and she was elected to the International Women's Sports Association's Hall of Fame. In 1994 she became softball coach at Florida Atlantic University. The University has a great women's softball team. It's easy to understand why.



## A Tale of Nine Irishmen

The year 1848 was a catastrophic one for Ireland. It was the time of the Great Famine. The potato crop, essentially the total diet of the poor, had failed for the third straight year. People died of starvation, a million in all, and another million emigrated. Dead bodies were commonplace along the roads and whole villages were deserted. To make matters worse, the British landlords were evicting the tenant farmers from their homes and demolishing the houses under the threatening eye of the armed British militia ( In 1849, 30,000 families were evicted. ). The problem was not a shortage of food, there was corn, wheat, cattle, pigs, eggs, flour, lard, all of which the landowners shipped to England so the English would not have to pay higher prices for food from the continent. Irish members of Parliament argued to allow some of the food to be kept in Ireland but the British government had its own " ultimate solution " to allow the people to starve and force the emigration of those who survived. It was ethnic cleansing as defined by the present-day Serbs. The Quakers did try to help and had food shipped to Ireland and distributed at their own expense. America and the Sultan of Turkey also sent shiploads of food.

The British had 50,000 troops in Ireland to maintain order but there was little necessity because the population was so debilitated that revolt was hardly possible. But it did come, not from the peasants, but from the sons of the Irish gentry, the rich and the professional class who formed a group named Young Ireland. Irish Catholics and Protestants were joined in common cause and many of the group were Protestants. They preached independence from England. But the planned revolution, or " rising ", to use the Irish term, failed because the people just did not have the strength for it. Further, the Catholic Church was opposed because it was feared that the British army, with their overwhelming power, would find a rising to be a legitimate excuse for a general massacre.

British reprisals against the Young Irelanders was swift and brutal - the charge was high treason, in most cases because of seditious speech or writing. Members of the outlawed group fled into hiding all across Ireland with the support of the peasants who spurned both the threat of retribution and the offers of rewards. Most were trying to get on ships to America, usually in disguise, because such ships were under continuous surveillance. Many were captured, but some did escape.







One of the first trials found four leaders of the Irelanders before the Court. For a century the juries had been stacked by the prosecution and this was no exception. Catholics were essentially barred from the jury and two of its members had the an unusual name, Going, the same name as the arresting sheriff. The defendants were defiant and unrepentant. They argued that justice was on their side, that they were in the right and declared that they would follow the same course of action again if they ever got the opportunity. The jury found the four to be guilty and the judge sentenced all to be executed by hanging. But one of the defendants was a well-liked member of Parliament and by action of Parliament all the sentences were commuted to "transportation" ( a euphemism for banishment ) to Australia. Few of those so banished ever returned.

Those sentenced to transportation included John Martin, Thomas Francis Meagher, John Mitchel and Kevin Izod O'Doherty, a medical student. One defendant, Charles Gavan Duffy, defied the odds and was not convicted. The Crown indicted him five different times and, even with stacked juries, could not get a guilty verdict.

Some slipped through the net and got to America. Four of those who escaped were John Blake Dillon, Thomas Darcy McGee, Richard O'Gorman, and Patrick J. Smyth.

What finally happened to these nine men is a remarkable story of the indomitable spirit of these Irish patriots.

**John Blake Dillon** After escaping to New York he was admitted to the Bar and became a prominent New York City lawyer who established a law office with Richard O'Gorman. Returned to Ireland and became a member of Parliament. His son was a leading member of Parliament for forty years.

**Charles Gavan Duffy** Emigrated to Australia in disgust over the Irish question. Was appointed Minister of Agriculture. Served twenty five years in the Victorian Parliament, four years as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and finally, as Premier Of Victoria. Knighted by Queen Victoria in 1878.

**John Martin** Pardoned in 1858 and returned to Ireland. He was again arrested for his fiery speeches but was acquitted. He became a member of Parliament.





Thomas Darcy McGee

Editor of the New York edition of the publication, *The Nation*. He went to Canada where he established a newspaper, *The New Era*. He was appointed Postmaster General and in 1857 was elected to the Canadian Parliament. In 1864 he became President of The Executive Council of the Dominion of Canada.

Thomas Francis Meagher

Member of the Bar in New York City. Established a newspaper, *The Irish News*. Distinguished service in the Civil War as a Brigadier General. He was appointed Military Secretary of the Territory of Montana and subsequently Governor of the Territory. A statue of Meagher on horseback presently stands in front of the State Capitol.

John Mitchel

Escaped from banishment to America in 1853. Became editor of the *New York Daily News*. He was sympathetic to the Southern cause and edited *The Enquirer*, the house organ of Jefferson Davis. He returned to Ireland in 1874 and was elected to Parliament. He was denied the seat because of his previous conviction. A county in Iowa is named after him, and his grandson, John Mitchel, was elected Mayor of New York City in 1913.

Kevin Izod O'Doherty

Finished his medical degree in Australia and became a surgeon and leader of the medical community. In 1865 he was elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly. In 1885 he returned to Ireland and became a member of Parliament.

Richard O'Gorman

Smuggled onto a ship sailing for Constantinople, eventually reaching the United States. Became a member of the Bar and established a law firm with John Dillon. Became a Judge of the Superior Court of the State of New York.

Patrick J. Smyth

Escaped to America by boarding a ship disguised as a priest. Became a reporter for the *New York Tribune*. Returned to Ireland and served as a member of Parliament from 1870 to 1880. In 1871 he was awarded the Legion of Merit from the government of France for his work with the Irish Ambulance Corps.

This tale supports the old adage "You can't keep a good man down". It may help to be Irish.



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR JULY

July is going to be a tough month for getting players together. Looks like no Saturday games are possible (Boelecke, DeLuca, Cooke). Rube's Sunday games are not cancelled, but call to let him know if you are available (272-1870)

Tom Hunt's game is gone because Tom is moving out of the area. He is going to Las Vegas to be a physician at the Caesar's Palace Casino.

Michael Capel is also leaving within the month. He has not decided which job offer to take.

We wish you both the best of luck.

Paul Rubin      Every Sunday at 7:00 \$5 dealer-ante,  
table stakes, pot limit, or \$100 cap.

English Dept.      Wednesday, July 22, 7:30 at Al's

Tom Reiss' Game      Thursdays, July 9 & 23, at 8:00  
Note change of sequence

Chemistry Dept.      Friday, July 17, 8:00 at Ben's

## THE TOSS OF A COIN



Clara Conn and Marty Mark were having a beer in the Palms one night. "I don't know", said Marty, "things are pretty dull around here. If it wasn't so late we could drive up to the Turning Stone Casino for a little gambling". "Well", responds Clara, "since you are in the mood, we can do some gambling right here. Do you have a quarter?" Marty supplied the quarter and Clara proposed a simple bet. "I'll flip the coin and if the coin is a head you pay me a dollar and if it's tails, I pay you a dollar".

So off they went. Marty was consistently losing and being down \$50, decided that enough was enough. "Clara", he said, "I know enough about statistics to know that I am being taken, but I can't figure out how. What gives?" "It is very simple", says Clara. A coin follows the laws of physics. For example, it is possible to build a very simple Spring-loaded device that can toss a hundred heads in a row. So if a person practices enough, it is possible to put a significant bias into the probabilities of the toss. I am not all that good at it, but there are those who can toss a coin which will land as they wish 80% of the time".

"Well, I guess that is the end of that", says Marty. "Not so", says Clara. "We can always spin the coin instead of tossing it. In fact, you can do the spinning". Again the action starts and again Marty's luck is going badly. After a while he gives up. "Clara, my dear", he says, "I know there must be a trick but I can't possibly imagine what it is. Please tell me before I go nuts". Clara replies, "Again the coin is only following the laws of physics. Coins are not symmetrical and if the process is long enough and slow enough, the asymmetry will become enough of a factor to make for a good bet. A coin that is spun is not a fair coin". "I should remember not to gamble with you", says Marty.





The inspiration and the material for the above story comes from a seminar delivered in the Chemistry Department by Persi Diaconis, a Professor of Mathematics at Cornell and a professional magician. Persi has studied the tossing of coins and the shuffling of cards, among many other things

Scientists have been intrigued by the simple process of tossing a coin and many, many papers have been published on the subject. Karl Pearson, one of the founding fathers of statistical theory, spent most of a summer about 1890 tossing a shilling 24,000 times ( with 12012 heads ). While interned during WWII, J. E. Kerrick made 10,000 throws of a coin. ( In passing, the British statistician C. V. L. Charlier shuffled a 52-card deck 10,000 times and established that the chances of drawing a red card were just about 50-50 ) There have been other such trials and all come out as expected. But is a toss of a coin under the usual chaotic circumstances a fair deal ? I think it all depends on how one defines " fair". If you mean heads will come up 50% of the times, the answer is yes. If you mean 50.0 %, the answer is still yes. How about 50.00 % - probably yes. But at some point, the asymmetry of the coin will begin to have an effect. If one were to drop a coin down a long cylinder filled with a viscous liquid, which would give the imbalance time to exert an influence, the bias might become evident. Coins are good enough to decide who kicks off.

## GERMAN EFFICIENCY

Still another war story. You may be unhappy to hear that I have a lot more left. This one is concerned with the December 1944 breakout of the German army which put the Allied forces in full retreat. As part of this offensive, the Germans used a large number of English-speaking troops in U. S. Army officer's uniforms to spread confusion behind the Allied lines. These intruders were supplied with excellent forgeries of the U. S. officers laminated IDs. I remember showing my ID everywhere I went and , at the time, I wondered why the emphasis on IDs because it was known that the Germans had good ones. Fifty years later, when reading Stephen Ambrose's book *Citizen Soldiers* I found the answer. When the Army designed these IDs they misspelled the word "identification" as "indentification". We all joked about the goof. However, when the German forgers went to work, for whatever reason, they corrected the misspelling. As a result, whenever one of the intruders showed an ID with the word "identification" spelled correctly, he immediately had a gun to his head. I wonder if the misspelling was a mistake or a clever trap.

## A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

In 1914, the Baltimore Orioles, a minor league club, had an excellent pitcher who drew in the crowds. But attendance started to slump when the Federal League brought a competing team to Baltimore. Things got so bad, financially, that Jack Dunn, the owner decided to sell his pitcher. Since many Orioles had previously moved up to the Philadelphia Athletics, he approached Connie Mack ( t h e manager owner) for an offer. Mack was not interested and the pitcher went to Boston. The pitcher's name was Babe Ruth.





# POKER SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST

Summer travel is again cutting into the poker games. The following seems to be about all there is. Hopefully September will be better.

**Paul Rubin** There are two changes in the game. At least for the summer, the games will be on Saturday night, at 7:00 instead of Sunday. Also, there will be a change in stakes - \$3 dealer-ante, table stakes with \$100 cap. However, there will be no game on the 8th - see Don Cooke's game for the 8th.



**Bob Raimon's game** Saturday, August 8, at Don's, 7:00  
\$3 dealer-ante, table stakes, \$100 cap.

**English Dept.** Wednesday, August 19, 7:30 at Arnies

**Tom Reiss' Game** Thursdays, August 5 & 12, at 8:00  
note change in the usual sequence

**Chemistry Dept.** Friday, August 14, 8:00 at Milt's



## An Ancient Paradox ~ Updated



Scheharazade tells the Sultan that the entertainment for the evening will be a paradox. She shows him three little boxes and explains that one of them contains an exquisite pearl. She invites His Royal Highness to select a box but not to open it. When he does as bidden, she opens one of the other two boxes and shows that it is empty. Now she says "Oh Worshipful One I will give you the opportunity to change your mind and select the other box." My foolish wife", says the Sultan, "how can it make any difference - there are two boxes and I have chosen one. I think that I picked the right box and you are trying to confuse me." "No, my Noble Master", says Scherharazade, "it follows

from immutable logic that, when given such an opportunity, you should always switch from your original choice." Impossible," thundered the Sultan, "how can opening one of the boxes change anything." The clever young lady replies, "The opening of the empty box gave you a great deal of information. When you made your original selection you had one chance in three of getting the pearl and there were two chances out of three that the gem was in either of the other two boxes. When I show that one of the latter two boxes is empty, by switching from your original choice, which was one in three, you now have a one in two chance for the pearl - that is why you should always switch".

The Sultan seemed perplexed so Scheharazade continued. "Let me give you another example where the principle is more obvious. Suppose there are one hundred face-down playing cards and only one of them is the ace of spades. You select one and now I will turn up 98 of the 99 other cards without showing the ace of spades. There are now two cards left of which one is the ace. Remember, when you chose a card, the chances of selecting the ace was one in a 100 and 99 times out of a 100 the ace was among the other 99 cards. Now I have turned up 98 of those other 99 cards. So if you switch from your original choice you will increase your chances from one in a hundred to ninety-nine out of a hundred".

"I am not sure, but perhaps we will postpone the execution for another day," said the Sultan.



This paradox has been around a long time and has caused disagreements, even between statisticians, mathematicians and scientists. This difference came to a head a few years ago when the paradox was used as the basis for a TV game show. The contestant was shown three doors and told that there was a fine automobile behind one of the doors and a goat behind the other two. The contestant was told to select a door but that it would not be opened until later. After the selection, the host opened one of the two other doors and it is shown to have a goat. Then the contestant was told that she can change her selection if she wished. After the contestant made a choice, the paradox was explained. The explanation brought an outpouring of disagreement. So much so that Parade Magazine decided to do a survey. Ninety percent of those surveyed believed that the opening of the door by the host made no difference and that the contestant had a 50% chance if she either stuck with her original selection or switched. H. W. Lewis, in his book, *Why Flip a Coin?*, discusses this event and explains the reason for the disagreements surrounding this paradox. He points out that when people are faced with the question of whether the open door changes anything, they unconsciously make a decision that affects the outcome and that either answer can be right depending on how they decide. The critical difference lies in the intention of the gameshow host. He knows which door has the car behind it and, for certain, he will not open the door with the car. In this situation the contestant has a better chance by changing her original choice.

But let's imagine another scenario: Suppose after the contestant makes a selection, the host forgets which door the car is behind. Now, in a panic, he considers his options. He cannot call the whole thing off, so he decides to take a chance and open a door. He figures that if he happens to open the door with the car, it might look funny, but at least the contestant will be happy. On the other hand, if he opens a door with the goat, no one will ever know. So he opens a door and is relieved to see a goat. He thinks he is right back where he is supposed to be (but he is not). He now gives the contestant a chance to change her selection. Here is the tricky part. In this scenario, the contestant has nothing to gain by switching. She has a 50 - 50 chance either way. Very subtle.

## **When Baseball Players Earned their Salary**

One likes to speculate on what sports records will never be broken. Here is one that is destined to last a while. On August 1, 1903, there was a doubleheader between the NY Giants and the Boston Braves. Joe McGinnity took the mound for the Giants in the first game, pitched all nine innings and won 4 - 1, giving up six hits. The manager thought that Joe did so well that he called upon him again for the second game of the day. He won that one 5 - 2 again with six hits. A week later, August 8th, he pitched both ends of another double header against the Brooklyn Dodgers, went nine innings in both, winning 6 - 1 and 4 - 3. To cap off the effort, on August 31st, in a doubleheader against the Phillies, he pitched two complete games winning 4 - 1 and 9 - 2. In the six games he allowed only ten runs and gave up a mere ten walks. That year he pitched 434 innings, a record that still stands.

Did this effort ruin McGinnity's arm? Hardly - the following year he pitched 408 innings, won 35 and lost 8 with nine shutouts and led the league with an earned run average of 1.61. In his nine-year career (1899 to 1908), he averaged 24 wins a year and 14 losses. They don't make them like that anymore. You might guess his nickname - right, Ironman.

Sources: NY Times 9/1/03 and *The Great All Time Baseball Record Book*, Reichler, 1993



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER

Bob Boehlecke No game this month.

Paul Rubin Saturdays, 5, 12 & 19 at 7:00 \$5 dealer - ante, pot limit, table stakes, \$100 cap.

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, September 26 at 7:00, \$2 ante, pot limit \$100 cap at Don's

Bart Deluca Friday, September 18, at 7:00 We are trying to get this game back on track. \$5-\$10 casino games (HORSE). At 11:00 there is a tournament with a \$40 buy-in

English Dept. Thursday, September 17 at 7:30 at Lamar's

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, September 3 & 17, at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, September 11, 8:00 at Fred's



Under Knave of Shields

## Beating the Casinos ~ Revisited

As noted in a previous newsletter, casinos make their money, not on the house edge, but because players go broke before the casino goes broke. In that newsletter the term "percentage hold" was defined as the average percentage of the money you start with that the house keeps. In that newsletter it was noted that for craps at Atlantic City the house kept 15% of the money you started with. Here are some typical hold percentages on other games at Atlantic City.

	House Edge	Hold
Craps	1.33%	15.8%
Blackjack	1.33	15.8
Roulette	2.63	24.5
Baccarat	1.25	14.8
Big Six	15.0	47.5

Source: The Gaming Industry, University of Nevada, 1996

No wonder there are so many casinos

For reasons I don't quite understand, the hold percentage for sports betting in Las Vegas is only about 3%. I suspect that this low figure results from a fundamental difference in the betting process which makes the house edge and the hold percentage the same number.

## Sad Fact

The "most successful" lottery in the U. S. is the one in Massachusetts. The annual amount bet for every man, woman and child in the state is \$551. I estimate that is about \$1433 per household or \$29 a week. The powers-that-be ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Source C♠rd Player July 24, 1998 p 40



## Jittery under Pressure

One baseball record that is unlikely to be equaled, to say nothing of being bettered, is the two consecutive no-hitters by Johnnie Vander Meer in 1938. ( I remember hearing the news broadcast on the radio ). To beat that record one would have to throw three consecutive no-hitters - an awesome task. But Vander Meer barely made it.

In the second game Vander Meer got to the ninth inning without a hit and with a 6-0 lead. Then things began to unravel. He threw three wild pitches to the first batter, Buddy Hassett, before getting him to ground out. Then he walked Dave Phelps. He walked Cookie Lavagetto and walked Dolf Camilli on four pitches to load the bases. Things were getting a bit tense. But then, mercifully, Ernie Koy went down on a fielder's choice and Leo Durocher made the final out.

Source: Baseball Anecdotes by Okreny & Wulf 1989

The closest anyone has come to tying Vander Meer's feat was Ewell Blackwell, of the Reds. He pitched a no-hitter against the Boston Braves on June 18, 1947, and four days later had a no-hitter going against the Dodgers into the ninth inning. Blackwell got one out then Eddie Stanky ruined his no-hitter with a single.

The chances of someone getting three no-hitters in a row is about as close to zero as one can get. What is the probability of a pitcher throwing a no-hitter? Assuming a mean batting average of .255 ( a number cobbled together from various sources ), it would be:

$$P = ( 0.745 )^{27} = 0.00035$$

This probability would predict a total of 190 no-hitters in the 538,060 major league games ever played ( through 1993). The actual number is 217 ( for the same period ), so the agreement is pretty good. For two no-hit games in a row the probability is:

$$P = ( 0.7545 )^{54} = 0.000000125$$

So that one could expect to have two consecutive no-hitters once in about eight million games. The fact that the event happened in only a half-million games is unanticipated. To talk about three consecutive no hitters, one would have to think of billions of games.

## Quotable Quotes

Rugby is a beastly game played by gentlemen ;  
soccer is a gentlemen's game played by beasts ;  
football is a beastly game played by beasts.      Henry Blaha

One of the advantages of bowling over golf, is that you seldom lose a bowling ball.  
Don Carter, bowling great

Mohammed Ali, when asked about his golf game. " I am the best - I just haven't played yet "

Going to bed with a woman never hurt a ball player. It's staying up all night looking for them that does you in.  
Casey Stengle

Dressing a pool player in a tuxedo is like putting whipped cream on a hot dog.  
Minnesota Fats

We're going to have the best basketball team money can buy. (pause) Within the rules of course.  
Orel Roberts. ( When asked about the university's commitment to woman's sports ).



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

Bob Boehlecke No game this month.

Paul Rubin Saturdays, October 3, 24 & 31 at 7:00 \$3  
dealer - ante, pot limit, table stakes, \$100 cap.  
No game on the 10th - four of us will be at the  
FARGO tournament. Game on the 17th at Don's

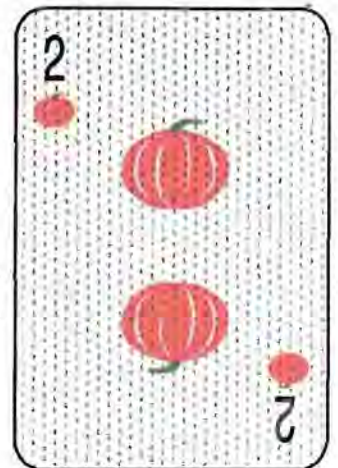
Bob Raimon's game Saturday, October 17 at 7:00, \$2  
dealer ante, pot limit \$100 cap at Don's

Bart Deluca Friday, October 16 at Bart's 7:00 \$5-\$10 casino  
games (HORSE). At 11:00 there is a tournament  
with a \$40 buy-in

English Dept. Wednesday, October 21 at 7:30 at Tony's

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, October 1, 15 & 29, at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, October 16, 8:00 at Jeff's



The Deuce of Pumpkins

## A WHALE OF A WHALE

In the parlance of casino managers, a whale is a very big fish - the high roller who might drop a million dollars or so. I doubt that there was ever a bigger whale than Akio Kashiwagi, a Japanese real estate operator who ran his business from a shabby two-story building in Tokyo. In 1990 he traveled the world playing high stakes baccarat. In February, in Atlantic City he won \$6 million from the Trump Plaza, the only casino in Atlantic City that was willing to allow him to bet \$250,000 a hand. Later in the same month, he won \$19 million from the Darwin Beach Casino in Darwin, Australia. In May, he returned to the Plaza for another turn at the tables. But this time the casino manager had hired a consultant to advise him on how to deal with Mr. Kashiwagi. As a result, a \$12 million freeze-out was arranged with a fixed bet of \$200,000 on each hand. (In such a freeze-out each side would put up \$12 million with the game continuing until one or the other had all \$24 million.)

In the beginning Kashiwagi was winning and at one point was ahead \$5.4 million. But time is the ally of the casino, and at 4 AM on the morning of the sixth day, when Kashiwagi was down \$9.4 million, he got up from the table in a huff and stormed out of the casino. The Plaza only realized \$3.4 million in cash from the encounter since Trump had accepted a marker for \$6 million. (Source: The Wall Street Journal 6/28/90)

In January 1992 Kashiwagi was found stabbed to death in his palatial home near Mt. Fuji. It is believed that he was a victim of the Yakuza, Japan's version of the Mafia. At the time Trump was holding a marker for \$4 million.

It is interesting to speculate on what the conversation might have been between the Trump Plaza manager and the consultant. It might have gone like this:



Casino manage : The reason we called you in is because of your expertise in the statistics of casino gambling, plus the fact that we need advice on how to deal with a whale by the name of Akio Kashiwagi. As you probably know, in February that SOB walked away with six million dollars of our money.

Consultant :: That happened because you allowed him the maximum flexibility. He exercised the only advantage a player has over a casino, he walked away when he was ahead. You have to get him to play long enough that the odds are in your favor.

Manager: But how can we do that ? The New Jersey Gaming Commission has a rule that players can quit any time they want.

Consultant: True, but you can appeal to his pride. As you know his nickname is the Warrior. Supposed you challenged him to a freeze-out with an amount of money like ten to fifteen million dollars. If you could persuade Donald to be here, I think he would accept the challenge. (Trump actually did come and wined and dined Kashiwagi - lavishly I presume ).

Manager: I don't see how that helps. He could still walk away with with all the money since the house edge on baccarat is only 1.25%.

Consultant: Yes, but you have to add another restriction - that each bet be for a fixed amount. I would recommend bets of one hundred thousand per hand. With these conditions, he only has one chance in twenty-three of winning the freeze-out and you are getting even money for the bet.

Manager : How do you figure that ?.

Consultant : the equation to calculate the odds is a well-known one, it is called the Gambler's Ruin. I'll put it on the blackboard for you.

$$\text{Chances of the player winning} = \left[ \frac{\text{Chances of the player winning one hand}}{\text{Chances of the house winning one hand}} \right] \left[ \frac{\text{Freeze-out total \$}}{\text{Size of each bet \$}} \right]$$

For baccarat, in a twelve-million dollar freeze-out with bets of one hundred thousand dollars

$$\text{Chances of player winning} = \left[ \frac{.4933}{.5066} \right]^{(12,000,000 / 100,000)} = .044$$

Manager : But I don't think our friend would be interested in playing for only one hundred thousand dollars a hand. What about two hundred and fifty thousand a hand?

Consultant : At that rate, the chances of Mr. Kashiwagi walking out with all your money is about one in 3.5 instead of one in 23. With that much money at stake, a 3.5-to-one bet would leave me uneasy. In your dealings with Mr. Kashiwagi try to make arrangements that would keep him at the table as long as possible. I know that if he had a statistician, he would be advised to bet the entire stake on one hand. - that would give him an almost even shot at winning (.494%). But you guys would never accept such an arrangement - you are not in the business of gambling.



## THE HOME RUN RECORD

When Maris' home run record was broken, it was noted that the record had stood for 37 years. But Babe Ruth held the record of 60 home runs until 1991 when Commissioner Fay Vincent ruled that Maris did deserve the homerun record with 61. ( New York Times 9/6/91 ). Maybe it is the only case of a record being established posthumously.

In the closing days of the 1961 season Commissioner Ford Frick made what I consider a dumb decision. He ruled that in order to break Ruth's record, Maris would have to hit 61 home runs in 154 games, the number of games in the 1927 season. He did not - he only had 59. so Ruth continued to hold the record even though Maris had 61 homers in the 161 game season. In addition to Frick's decision being dumb, it was also unfair. In his younger days, Frick was a publicity agent for Babe Ruth.

But Maris still holds a record that is almost 50 years old and may never be broken. In a high school football game, he ran back five kickoffs for touchdowns. I don't think that this feat has been equaled in any level of the sport.

## A NEW HOMERUN KING ?



While a new record for homeruns in a season has been established, to my way of thinking, Babe Ruth is still the home run king. I believe that when comparing sports records over time, one must put the accomplishments in the context of the times. In the 1920 season, Ruth hit 54 homeruns. George Sisler took second place with 19. In the major leagues there were only 630 home runs hit that season and Ruth accounted for 9% of them. When he established the record of 60 in 1927 he hit 7% of all the home runs.

To get 9% of the home runs these days, a player would have to hit 360 homers since there are now about 4000 homeruns per season. But to make a better comparison, the numbers should be corrected for the larger number of teams nowadays. Using the 1995 season, the original 16 major league teams ( or their successors ) hit 2369 homers. To hit 9% of this total, would require 213 homeruns. No one is close. The Babe is still the king.

## THE YANKEE CLIPPER

Joe Dimaggio holds one of the great records of baseball - hitting in 56 consecutive games. But a minor leaguer, playing for the San Francisco Seals, did better, hitting in 61 consecutive games. His name ? Joe Dimaggio.

## WE KNEW IT ALL ALONG

Modern science has finally discovered something that wise men knew all along. Brain researchers have established that women are much better at intuitive thinking than men. It has to do with differences in how the two hemispheres of the brain are connected.





# *Poker Schedule for November*

→ Chris hopes to be here for the games on the 6th, the 7th and 28th.

Bob Boehlecke Saturday, November 7. 6:00 NOTE TIME  
\$5, \$10, \$15 progressive

Paul Rubin Saturdays, November 14 & 28 at 7:00 \$3  
dealer - ante, pot limit, table stakes. \$100 cap.

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, November 21, at 7:00, \$2  
dealer ante, pot limit \$100 cap at Don's

Bart Deluca Friday, November 6 at 7:00 \$5-\$10 casino  
games (HORSE). If enough players, at 11:00 there  
is a tournament with a \$40 buy-in

English Dept. Wednesday, November 18, 7:30 at Dan's

Tom Reiss' Game Thursdays, November 12 & 19, at 8:00.  
Note change in schedule because of Thanksgiving.

Chemistry Dept. Friday, November 20, 8:00 at Frank's



## **Casino Comps**

Casino comps range from a free buffet lunch for 25-cent slot machine players to a Rolls Royce for a whale (it actually happened). Casino managers go all out to lure players to their establishment by generous inducements. For the big players, these inducements might be free first class transportation from anywhere in the world, unlimited charge accounts at a department store, luxury suites, etc. etc. Trump Plaza in Atlantic City has a penthouse suite for the whales. It has three bedrooms, three baths with chandeliers over each tub, and a sauna. At times, the suite comes supplied with two butlers and a pianist. If you are a big bettor, the casino may return 10% of your losses - to be given in chips at your next visit.

The amount that a casino will provide in complementaries is not arrived at by someone estimating how much you should be given. The amount is determined by a calculation. They know which games the customer plays, the amount of the bets and how long he has stayed in the past. Using these numbers, the expected loss can be calculated. (That fact is enough to discourage anyone from going into a casino). Once the estimate of your losses is available, the casino will give you up to one-third (a typical figure in the U. S.) of that figure in comps.

The reason for limiting the comments in the previous paragraph to the U. S., is that practices are different throughout the world. In Europe, for example, even a high roller would be lucky if someone picked up his parking tab and he will surely pay to get into the casino. The difference is not the result of cultural or traditional effects but on the rate of taxation of gambling income. In Europe a typical tax rate is 90%. This high rate leaves very little margin to throw around and, generally, the perks are not deductible expenses. In Germany, the tax man shows up daily to collect the tax on yesterday's winnings.

Source: Mostly, from The Gaming Industry, University of Nevada, 1996.



## **A Generous Whale**

Kerry Packer is a multimillion dollar baccarat player who won \$10 million at MGM's gala opening in 1993. It seems that Packer owns the single company that supplies electricity to all of Australia. What sets him apart from others is the size of his tips. In the course of an evening, he might make three bets "for the dealers". The size of these bets is usually \$100,000. If the bet wins he pushes the \$200,000 to the dealers. I wonder how the dealers handle the situation emotionally?

Source: *Card Player*, July 10, 1998

## **An Unusual Record ~ For Doing Nothing**

On June 29, 1937 the Chicago Cubs, who were leading the National League, played the St. Louis Cardinals. It was a wild game with the Cards leading 9 - 8 going into the ninth. Dizzy Dean got the first two Cubs out but then they rallied with three runs to win the game.

It was an exciting game but it went into the record books for an unusual reason - Ripper Collins, the Cub's first baseman, never touched the ball in nine innings of play.

Source: *The Chicago Tribune*, June 30, 1937

## **A Modern HAL**

Most major universities would give their eye teeth to have a top-of-the-line Cray mainframe computer. The upcoming Air Force fighter, the F-22 has the equivalent of two such computers with space for a third in case it might be needed in the future. Usually, the Computer lets the pilot think he is flying the aircraft, but the Computer knows that the plane is unflyable unless it is there to correct the pilot's errors. But when times get tough, as with an incoming missile, the Computer no longer trusts this dull-witted, molasses-slow humanoid to keep them alive. Therefore it takes over the defensive tactics which are already under way before the pilot hears the warning signal that a missile is incoming.

Along the same line there is a joke among aeronautical engineers that goes like this: The airliners of the future will have two seats in the cockpit, one for the pilot and the other for a dog. The dog's role is to bite the hand of the pilot in case he touches anything. The responsibility of the pilot is to feed the dog.

For you young guys, HAL is the name of the computer that took over the space ship in the 1968 movie, *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

## **Old Is Better ?**

It is not often that being old is better, especially in sports. But quarterbacking is one of them. This season, through October 24, those starting quarterbacks who are thirty-five or over ( Elway, Brister, Young, Cunningham and Flutie ) are 23 - 6. The 10 quarterbacks who are 25 or under are 20 - 36.

And then there is Nolan Ryan. It strikes me as odd that the ball player with the longest career is a pitcher. Ryan played from 1966 through 1993 ( missed 1967 ). In 1968 he had the fastest pitch in baseball. Twenty years later, the fastest arm belonged to a guy named Nolan Ryan. Of his seven no-hitters, two were 18 years apart.



## What Ever Happened to Doug Flutie ? Revisited

As most of you know, he is doing quite well. When Johnson, quarterback of the Buffalo Bills, was injured in game four, Flutie took over. He has had three spectacular victories. In one game, with a couple of minutes on the clock, he drove the team 60 yards to the goalline. On fourth down, with a few seconds left, he ran a busted play for a touchdown and the win. In his last game he was 18 for 22, 282 yards and two touchdowns. He is still the same "too light - too short" guy and may be the lowest paid player in the game.

### Quote of the Day

One of the famous quotes in sports is one of Grantland Rice's as follows:

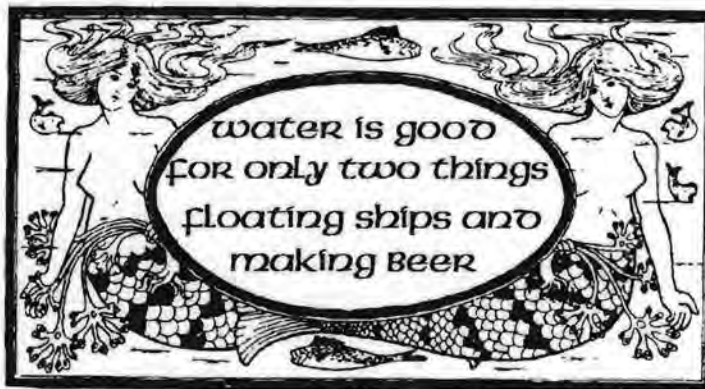
When the Great Scorer comes to write against your name,  
He marks not that you have won or lost, but how you  
played the game.

This quote has generated a multitude of other quotations, mostly by coaches, which go something like this:

When the Great Scorer marks against your name, it matters  
a hell-of-a-lot whether you win or lose.



From a sign at Rouge's Harbor Inn :



PS This month I am using a current stamp instead of old ones because I think it is one of the most beautiful stamps ever.



## Poker Schedule for December

Bob Boehlecke Saturday, December 5, 6:00  
\$5, \$10, \$15 progressive

Paul Rubin CHANGE IN TIME PATTERN  
Games will be on Sunday,  
Starting at 5:00 - ending at midnight  
\$3 dealer ante, \$100 cap  
Sundays, December 13 & 27

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, December 19, at 7:00  
\$2 dealer ante, \$100 cap

Bart Deluca Friday, December 18, at 7:00  
\$5 - \$10 casino games

Tom Reiss's game Thursday December 3 & 17 at 8:00  
Only two games this month, Christmas  
and New Year's Eves are Thursdays

Chemistry Dept. Friday, December 11, 8:00 at Fred's

English Dept. Wednesday, December 16, 7:30 at Michael's



### A Paradox

Clara Conn and Marty Mark had just finished a quiet dinner at Clara's place when Clara's aunt Lottabucks dropped in to say hello. After a pleasant chat, the aunt got up to leave. As she was putting on her coat she said, "You know, I like you two guys and for some time I have been thinking of giving you both some money. Christmas seems like a good time. But I know you like games, so I have the money in two identical envelopes with both checks made out to cash. Another bit of information is that one check is for twice as much as the other". With that she offered Marty a choice of either envelope and gave the other to Clara. Then she left with the parting statement, "Oh yes, after I leave, open your envelope and note the amount of the check without telling the other. Then, if you wish, you may exchange checks."

After aunt Lottabucks left, Marty started to scheme. The check he had selected was for \$5000, therefore, the check that Clara had must be for either for \$2500 or \$10,000. It occurred to him that it was to his advantage to trade checks. There was a 50 - 50 chance that he had the smaller check and, if he traded, he would gain \$5000. But if he had the larger check he would only lose \$2500. So, if he traded, for an even money bet, he had \$2500 to lose and \$5000 to gain. He figured that the odds were in his favor and it was to his advantage to trade. But, when he was about to suggest a trade, he suddenly realized that Clara could go through the same line of reasoning and conclude that a trade was to her advantage. He was faced with the paradox that trading seemed to be advantageous to both in a zero sum game.

While Marty was trying to unravel the paradox, Clara piped up, "I don't want to trade. I think I probably have the larger check". Clara reached her decision through a logical process. How did she reach her conclusion? What is the resolution of the Paradox? Answers, next month.



## In Defense of the Lawyers

Everyone knows that our society is too litigious and that we have too many lawyers. To note a few observations: "...the growing contentiousness of American life"; "...an adversarial morass"; "The most litigious people in the world"; "Americans in all walks of life are being buried under an avalanche of law suits". But sometimes what everyone knows isn't so. (To use Tom Gilovich's phrasing of his delightful book, *How we Know what Isn't So*).

We are too litigious and have too many lawyers compared to what? The past? Other countries? From what information exists, it appears to me that the trends are in a direction which is opposite to conventional wisdom. The growth in the number of lawyers is outstripped by the growth of other professions, the average length of a trial has decreased sharply and the number of civil trials is not high compared to other countries or to our own past.

I became interested in the issue from a short discussion in a book, *Misused Statistics* by Jaffe and Spierer, 1987. This source led me to a long article by Marc Galentner in the *UCLA Law Review* 31:4 (1983). I developed other statistics from the *Statistical Abstracts of the United States*.

To start at the beginning: In Colonial times, the pace of civil litigation was far higher than anything we have today. In one year, 1639, in Accomack County, Virginia, 24% of the population was involved in litigation. In Salem Massachusetts in 1683, eleven percent of the adult population was involved in conflicts in the courts. Unfortunately, information on trends in civil court cases is hard to come by except for those cases in Federal courts. But Galentner did find some information in county records for the period from 1870 to 1977 which shows that civil litigation, per capita, did not change much over that period (about nine cases per thousand). Information on civil actions in Federal courts is rather extensive, and shows that, from 1965 to 1995, the number of civil cases that were initiated increased by a factor of about three. However the number of these cases which went to trial only increased from 7300 to 7700 in the thirty-year period.

While the wheels of justice do grind slowly, the average length of trials is actually decreasing. In 1900, civil cases averaged 3.5 years but, by 1980, the average dropped to 1.2 years. (Galentner)

Part of the impression about the present state of legal contentiousness results from their proclivity of newspapers to focus on the unusual. One reads about civil suits being filed which appear rather silly - like suing the city for a million dollars because a policeman spoke crossly to someone. But most such cases die on the vine. In 1996, 96.6% of the cases initiated in federal courts never got to trial. And there are stories about multimillion-dollar awards that seem all out of proportion to a just settlement. But should the lawyers be blamed for the actions of runaway juries? And you rarely hear about many of these ridiculous cases being reduced to more reasonable levels by a lawyer, the appeals judge. Despite the fact that one reads about million-dollar suits, the majority of civil suits involve less than \$1000 (1983).

Is the United States the "most litigious nation"? The evidence for such a statement is not there. Galentner compared the number of civil trials, on a percapita basis, for about a dozen countries. He found that the US is in about the same range as England, Ontario, Australia, Denmark and New Zealand, somewhat higher than Germany and Sweden, and much higher than Japan, Italy and Spain. The litigation rate for Australia is fifty percent greater than the US.

Do we have too many lawyers? Between 1900 and 1981 the number of lawyers increased by a factor of 4.3. But this was a period of great growth in the professional class and the growth of the other professions outstripped the growth of the legal profession. In 1900 lawyers represented 8.8% of professional workers, while in 1981 they accounted for only 3.3%.



The United States has twice as many lawyers, percapita, as the next country. New Zealand. I can think of three reasons why this is so, perhaps, even desirable. We have an economy which is three times larger than the average of the next five countries. That fact certainly would result in more legal activity. Our country has the luxury of having long range laws that relate to the environment, discrimination, civil rights, health and safety and affirmative action that other countries cannot afford. This effort amounts to a social revolution and can be contentious. Lastly, with our system legal due process in civil matters is available to all. This situation results from the fact that anyone with a good case can find legal help through contingency agreements ( no award, no pay). Some deplore such arrangements but, although I have no data to back up my feeling, I think that in many countries legal due process is limited to the wealthy. I prefer our system.

So have a bit of sympathy for the four legal types who are on the mailing list and have to put up with what "Everybody knows".

## The Whale who became a Shark



The last poker schedule told a bit about the Australian whale, Kerry Packer, who dropped \$100,000 tips. According to the New York Times of November 15, Packer is now banned at the MGM Grand, the Las Vegas Hilton, the Mirage and Caesar's Palace. It seems that he just won too much. He took up blackjack and bet \$75,000 at each of the seven spots at a blackjack table. ( Now that is heavy betting ). I can imagine what happened. Blackjack, if played using the basic strategy and with a bit of attention to the cards that have been dealt, leaves the house with a razor-thin edge. With bets of a half-million dollars a crack, I can imagine that the casino managers got a bit nervous. It's too much like gambling and gambling is not their business. And who knows - the dealers would rather have a big tipper, like Packer, win than lose.



**And to all a good night**



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Bob Boehlecke Game on hold

Paul Rubin Games will be on Sunday, starting at 5:00 - ending at midnight \$3 dealer ante, \$100 cap Sundays, 3, 10, 17, 24 and, if Chris is here, the 31st.

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, January 30, at 7:00 \$2 dealer ante, \$100 cap

Bart Deluca Friday, January 29, at 7:00 \$5 - \$10 casino games

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays January 7 & 21 at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, January 8, 8:00 at Ben's

English Dept. Tuesday, January 26, 7:30 at Glenn's



## Last Month's Paradox

Below is from the December newsletter:

Clara Conn and Marty Mark had just finished a quiet dinner at Clara's place when Clara's aunt Lottabucks dropped in to say hello. After a pleasant chat, the aunt got up to leave. As she was putting on her coat she said, "You know, I like you two guys and for some time I have been thinking of giving you both some money. Christmas seems like a good time. But I know you like games, so I have the money in two identical envelopes with both checks made out to cash. Another bit of information is that one check is for twice as much as the other". With that she offered Marty a choice of either envelope and gave the other to Clara. Then she left with the parting statement. "Oh yes, after I leave, open your envelope and note the amount of the check without telling the other. Then, if you wish, you may exchange checks.

After aunt Lottabucks left, Marty started to scheme. The check he had selected was for \$5000, therefore, the check that Clara had must be for either for \$2500 or \$10,000. It occurred to him that it was to his advantage to trade checks. There was a 50 - 50 chance that he had the smaller check and, if he traded, he would gain \$5000. But if he had the larger check he would only lose \$2500. So, if he traded, for an even money bet, he had \$2500 to lose and \$5000 to gain. He figured that the odds were in his favor and it was to his advantage to trade. But, when he was about to suggest a trade, he suddenly realized that Clara could go through the same line of reasoning and conclude that a trade was to her advantage. He was faced with the paradox that trading seemed to be advantageous to both in a zero sum game.

While Marty was trying to unravel the paradox, Clara piped up, "I don't want to trade. I think I probably have the larger check". Clara reached her decision through a logical process. How did she reach her conclusion? What is the resolution of the Paradox? Answers, next month.

*I came across this paradox and the explanation in Why Flip a Coin by H. W. Lewis. However, most paradoxes go way back and have long histories.*

*Marty committed the cardinal sin of believing that the probability of having the larger amount is the same after the envelopes are distributed and opened than it was before. It is true that before the envelopes were opened both had a fifty-fifty chance at the larger check. But that does not mean that he can look at his envelope and conclude that there is an even chance he has the smaller share. Once done, that set of alternatives no longer exists - there is no meaning to probabilities for things that have already been decided.*

*Clara, always the smarter of the two, did not fall into the trap. She correctly surmised that the important point was to have knowledge of whether Aunt Lottabucks was more likely to give a total gift of \$7500 or \$15,000. Clara, from previous gifts, might have decided that a \$15,000 gift was a better bet and that her \$10,000 was probably the larger. Or she may have made a guess from knowledge of her aunt's total worth*



## Mathematical Sleuths

Imagine a courtroom in King's County, N. Y. The IRS is charging a business owner with falsifying an income tax return. In her opening statement the businessman's attorney states that her client is innocent and the tax return was properly filed. The prosecutor claims that the dollar values listed for various transactions are not the result of financial dealings but the product of the human mind - in other words, the numbers were faked. Seven cases have been won in New York City by the IRS by proving that numbers were made up.

The human brain is a fabulous computer - unmatched by any machine yet devised or likely to be brought forth in the long-term future. But there are some things that the brain does not do well at all. It is not able to generate lists of numbers that are anywhere near random.

A couple of years ago the poker newsletter discussed the phenomena of initial digits. It was noted that the first digits in tables of numbers such as populations, election results, areas of counties, prices of stocks, etc. do not follow an intuitive pattern. For example, the table below gives the population by state in 1990.

Alabama	④040,587	Arizona	③665,228	California	②9,760,021
Alaska	⑤50,403	Arkansas	②350,725	Connecticut	③287,111

Intuition seems to indicate that the beginning digits in such tables should be equally distributed between one and nine. Actually, lower numbers are far more frequent. The phenomena has to do with the nature of the decimal system. An equation has been developed, Bedford's Law, which gives the expected distribution of initial digits in a random situation. (The law is named after Frank Bedford, a scientist at General Electric who observed the phenomena in the Thirties. But the law had actually been observed a hundred years earlier and had been forgotten). Bedford's Equation is as follows:

Probability (first digit =  $d$ ) =  $\text{Log} (1 + 1/d)$  which gives the expected distribution.

1 - 30.1%	4 - 9.7%	7 - 5.8%
2 - 17.6%	5 - 7.9%	8 - 5.1%
3 - 12.5%	6 - 6.7%	9 - 4.6%

While it might be hard to believe, this means is that in such randomly selected tables the initial digit will be a "one" almost one-third of the time and "nine" in only one twentieth of the numbers. If the table shown above with the population of the states, was expanded to include all fifty states, 14 states have populations where the beginning digit is "one" (28%) and only one with an initial digit of "nine" (2%).

Where is all this leading us? The District Attorney's Office in Kings County was able to show that the initial digits in a list of cash disbursements deviated markedly from Bedford's Law. In fact, whoever made up the numbers had a great preference for "fours", "fives" and "sixes".

Not all sets of numbers follow Bedford's Law. If you have the idea of playing the lottery with numbers starting with "one, save your money. Numbers that run from one to a hundred (or a million) have an equal distribution of initial digits. And in a table of fielding averages all averages start with "nine".



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

Chris will be here on the 5th. There will be games on the Friday, 5th, Saturday, 6th and Sunday, 7th.

Bob Boehlecke Game on hold

Paul Rubin NOTE CHANGES Sunday, February 7 at 5:00.  
Fridays 12, 19 & 26 at 6:00  
\$3 dealer ante, \$100 cap

Bob Raimon's game Saturday, February 6, at 7:00  
\$2 dealer ante, \$100 cap

Bart Deluca Friday, February 5 at 7:00  
5 - \$10 casino games

Tom Reiss's game Thursday, February 11 & 25 at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, Friday, February 12, 8:00 at Len's  
Len's address is 801 N. Aurora Street

English Dept. Tuesday, February 23, 7:30 at Isaacs



## The National Gambling Impact Study

*The Commission was established by law in 1996 to examine the social and economic consequences of legalized gambling in the United States. To date almost nothing has appeared in the media about it's activities. The reason for the lack of news is that the Commission has little to report. Sessions have been held in various parts of the country in a fact-finding stance. Individuals have appeared before the body to express their views on the impact of gambling on the welfare of the nation.*

*The Commission has nine members, a budget of four million dollars and a mandate to report two years after it's first meeting which was held in June 1997. It is hard to see how the group can ever reach a consensus. One of the members is J. Terrance Lanni, the chairman and chief executive of MGM Grand, a casino and holding company based in Nevada. The chairwoman of the Commission is Kay Cole Jones, Dean of the Robertson School of Government at Regents University, an institution founded by Pat Robertson. As might be expected, there has been a good deal of wrangling among the membership.*

*My own prediction is that the Commission report will have little observable effect on anything. When the establishment of such a committee was being considered, the gambling industry was strongly opposed but did not own enough legislators to block the process. Since then they have poured a lot of money in the system to increase their influence. As mentioned in a previous newsletter, the industry has 74 lobbyists in the Texas state legislature - two for every state senator. They have 47 in Virginia. The industry spent 84 million dollars to influence the outcome of the November election. ( NYT 10/31/98 ). They do not intend to be caught short again.*

*Another reason for my skepticism is the sheer volume of the flow of money involved. In 1997 people bet about 600 billion dollars in casinos annually ( the casinos kept about 40 - 50 billion of that amount ) [ NYT 11/8/98 ]. Six hundred billion is a lot of dollars. That number translates into \$2400 bet in casinos for every man, woman and child in the country, or \$6100 per family. Considering the fact that many people never go near a casino, I find that amount hard to believe.*



In 1849 the U. S. Supreme Court declared, "The widespread pestilence. of lotteries infests the whole community; it enters every dwelling; it reaches every class; it preys upon the hard earnings of the poor; it plunders the ignorant and simple". There is a down side to the gambling industry and compulsive gambling is tragedy for some. There are studies that conclude that the hidden social, economic and political costs exceed the income realized. But the politicians focus on the big dollars that are easy to see.

To my mind there is a class distinction about gambling. Members of the Supreme Court from their high-and-mighty position look down upon the poor guy who buys a lottery ticket. There are those who spend thousands on entertainment. That's fine, but they should not disparage or pity the elderly widow who rides the bus to Foxwoods Casion a couple of times a month to spend \$50 of her Social Security money on the slots. Such trips can well be the highlight of her life. It's her money - let her be the judge.

## **Poor Marty**

Clara Conn and Marty Mark were setting around shooting the breeze when Clara asked Marty wheteher he knew the odds of getting a straight in five cards.( The come-on ). " Yep", replied Marty. " I have a good memory for such things. it's about one chance in 250". "How about a flush", asked Clara. "About 500 to one" was the reply. "What's the chances of a stright or better"? The answer. " about 130 to one" "I don't know", replies Clara, "those hands do not seem to be such long shots to me - I think that good hands happen more frequently than that". ( The bait). "Clara my dear, statistics are statistics and what you feel does not change things at all". "Marty, suppose we do an experiment - you deal me twenty five cards and I will bet you even money that I can arrange those cards into five poker hands where none of the hands is lower that a straight. ( The trap). "Clara, you have no feeling for statistics - let's start with \$20". After losing five times in a row. Marty realizes that he has been taken once again.

I do not know if it is feasible to calculate the odds on getting 25 cards that cannot be made into five such poker hands. But I know from experience that the chances are very small.  
[Jim Garrard brought this proposition bet to my attention]. The scam was featured on one of the Maverick TV shows.

## **The Good Old Days?**

Who are the rich? There are a lot of ways of being rich, but this discussion focuses on money. Being among the rich could be defined as those families with incomes in the top ten percent. ( I am guessing that this would include incomes of over \$150,000 ). But things change over time. The top 50 percent of today's families have the equivalent buying power of the top ten percent in 1947.

## **Whose Government is it Anyway ?**

Guess how many lobbyists are registered in congress. The answer is on the other side of this page.







In 1992, the Senate had 7700 registered lobbyists - seventy - seven for every senator. There were another 10,850 registered in the House.





My COMPUTER is BUSTED —

#60

So here is the poker schedule for MARCH

RUBEN'S Friday March 5 - 6<sup>00</sup>

Saturday MARCH 20 - 5<sup>00</sup>

Saturday MARCH 27 - 5<sup>00</sup>

5<sup>00</sup> Ante \$ 100 cap

BART'S Friday MARCH 19 - 7<sup>00</sup>

5-10 chairino games

Don's-RUNNERS GAME MARCH 13 - Saturday - 7<sup>00</sup> \$ 2 ante \$ 100 cap

Tom Reiss' Thurs MARCH 11 + 25th

Chemistry Friday MARCH 12 8<sup>00</sup> at Milts

English Monday MARCH 29 7<sup>30</sup> at Don's

For reading matter I am enclosing a piece I wrote for the grandchild  
I hope you find it interesting





Aries



Sagittarius



Gemini



Libra

## Time, Calendars and the Foibles of Man

According to the Chinese calendar, the New year, for this year, is on January 31 in the year 4693. So I thought I would wish you all a happy Chinese New Year. But you will be late getting the good wishes because I became curious about the Chinese calendar and one thing lead to another. I learned many fascinating things about calendars that you guys are stuck with hearing about.



Pisces



Leo

There are all sorts of calendars going back to antiquity but there is not, and can never be a perfect calendar. The calendar which is closest to perfection is the Mayan calendar which is actually better than our modern calendar in keeping time for the seasons.



Cancer



Scorpio

One definition of a year ( a solar year ) is the time it takes for the earth to make a complete circuit of the sun. A day is defined as the time of a full rotation of the earth about it's axis. A complete circuit of the sun takes 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 46 seconds, or 365.242199 days. The fact that the year is not divided into an equal number of days is the reason for the difficulty in devising calendars.



Virgo



Capicorn

In addition to the solar year, there are other kinds of years such as a lunar year, and a sidereal year. The most important function of the calendar for humans is to keep track of the seasons. For example, it is nice to know, from year-to-year, when spring will come. ( Wouldnt it be terrible to live in Ithaca and not know when Spring was coming ). The first day of spring is the day when the number of daytime hours and nighttime hours are the same. It is called the vernal equinox. ( Vernal is latin for Spring and equinox means equal night ). So most calendars attempt to keep a seasonal date, such as the first day of Spring



Taurus



Aquarius





I came across all sorts of interesting things in my search. It never occurred to me that the division of our day into two twelve hour periods was curious. That all started in Babylon a long time ago. The king decided to divide the day into a certain number of time periods. The court astronomers chose twelve periods. Why twelve? The Babylonian sages preferred numbers that were divisible and twelve was one of their favorite small numbers. Twelve is divisible by 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6. Their day started at sunrise and ended at sunset. They just did not worry about the night time which was for sleeping so no hours were assigned to the night. Much later when time was assigned to the night hours they were also given twelve hours so we now have a strange situation of two twelve hour periods in a day.

Why is it that the Jewish holidays begin at sunset? It is because the dates of the holidays are established by an old calendar which is based on lunar cycles. Most ancient calendars are based on the lunar year by which each month starts with the first sighting of the sliver of the new moon. So it was natural to assign the beginning of the new month, as well as the beginning of the day, as the time of sunset.

It is easy to understand why the first calendars were based on the lunar cycle. People could see the beginning of the new month by the appearance of the new moon. They also knew that it took about twelve lunar months from one Spring to another, so a year was twelve lunar months. There was a big problem with this system since twelve lunar months was only 354 days and each year would be off by eleven days. To compensate, various cultures made different adjustments. For example, the Persians added an extra month, approximately every three years. I say "approximately" because they were added cyclically after 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19 years which yields an excellent agreement with the solar year. The Islamic calendar is a lunar one but the eleven day shortfall is just ignored and the seasons cycled through the calendar in a nineteen year period.

When a day begins, officially, is variable. Sunrise is a natural time to begin a day but, of course, the time varies with the seasons. As previously mentioned, lunar calendars often began at sunset. In ancient Rome the new day began at noon. But as commerce increased, it became awkward to have the date change in the middle of a business day so it was decided to make the change from one day to another at midnight when it would not bother people. However, astronomers work throughout the night and they did not like the date changing in the middle of their observations so the astronomical calendar still begins the new day at noon. They also use the sidereal year which is 20 minutes longer than the solar year but since only astronomers and navigators use sidereal time it does not much matter.

I was aware of the signs of the zodiac ( shown on the first page ) and knew they had something to do with constellations, but that was all. The 12 constellations, about 30° apart, are aligned along the path that the sun takes through the sky in the course of a year. From March 21 to April 1, the sun was superimposed on that part of the daytime sky occupied by the constellation Aries. You might ask how the ancients knew that the sun covered the area





on a constant date ( March 21 ) from year to year. But the fact that there is not an even number of days in a year makes it virtually impossible to devise a calendar which would keep the first day of Spring on March 21, century after century. So all calendars have built in adjustments which are made periodically in an attempt to keep dates constant from year-to-year. The correction in our calendar is the leap year.

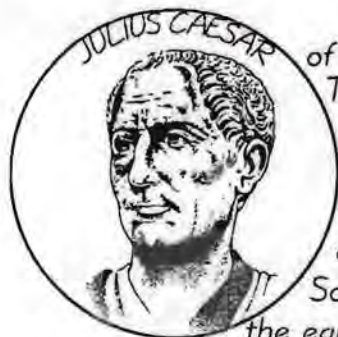
To give an example of the problem, in 46 B.C. when Julius Caesar was Emperor of Rome, he installed a new calendar system which has come down to us as the Julian Calendar. He commissioned an Alexandrian astronomer, Sosigenes, for the task. Sosigenes knew that the solar year was 365 days plus a quarter of a day. What to do about the quarter day? He had a good solution. If every fourth year was 366 days ( leap year ), the first day of Spring would remain constant. Thus, the figure he used for the number of days in a year was 356250 instead of 365242199 and the difference made the solar year 11 minutes too long. Over time, the date of the first day of Spring moved earlier and earlier in March and by the sixteenth century the first day of Spring fell on March 11.

In 1582 Pope Gregory was advised that, if things continued, the first day of Spring would be in mid-winter so he initiated another calendar reform. It was a small tune-up and was made by decreasing the number of leap years. The innovation was that for years ending in 00 only those years divisible by 400 would be leap years. Thus the years 1700, 1800 and 1900 would no longer be leap years while 1600 and 2000 would be. This made the average year 365.2425 days which is so close that it will take 3400 years to lose a single day. Not to worry – the powers that be now add leap seconds to the year as appropriate.

But there was a problem when the new calendar was introduced. What about ten days already lost. The Pope decreed that October 4, 1582 would be followed by October 15. The Gregorian Calendar is the one we now use.

However, despite the advantages of the new calendar, things are not always straightforward when people are involved. Certainly the Protestant countries were not going to adopt anything dreamed up in Rome. England stuck to the Julian calendar until September 2, 1752 when it was decreed that the following day would be September 13. The dropping of these 11 days caused problems, some of which were foreseen by Parliament. How to handle payments of rent to landlords was foreseen but not the riots by people who felt that their lives had been shortened by eleven days. Some individuals did not give up so easily and for a long while England used two calendars one with the letters O. S. ( old style ) appended. We celebrate George Washington's Birthday on February 22 but when he was born, the calendar read February 11 because we were a British colony. ( He changed his birthday to the 22nd ).





of the Aries constellation when the stars could not be seen in the daytime. This was done by observing the constellations just after sunset and just before dawn. The signs of the zodiac were established 2300 years ago and the positions of the constellations in the sky have changed a great deal since then. Our North Star establishes the direction of north but at the time of the Egyptians it was another star that established north. So the apparent positions of the stars in the sky changes over time because the earth has a slight wobble with a cycle of 28,500 years. That means that in 28,500 years the North Star will return to the same position that it occupies presently. This slow change in the position of the stars, as viewed from the earth, has another effect. The horoscope section of the newspapers notes that if you were born between March 20 and April 2 you were born under the sign of Aries. That was true 2300 years ago, but now, one born in this period is born under the sign of Pisces.

It is difficult to imagine that the concept of Standard Time came as late as 1874. Before that, each community had its own local time. It is easy to understand that the sun rises in New York City before it does in Ithaca. In fact, it takes four minutes for the sun to move one degree of longitude so when it is noon in Ithaca it is 8 minutes after noon in New York City. The fact that every city had its own local time was hard for the railroads that had to produce schedules and they pushed for a standard time which was eventually adopted. As a result, all of U. S. east of 90 degrees longitude would have the same time, Eastern Standard Time. But, as you might imagine, the adoption of this system had its human problems. The 90 degree line went down the middle of Ohio and Georgia and both states objected ( other states did not ). So the line for Eastern Standard Time has some big discontinuities in it.

I am always impressed at the intelligence and cleverness of the ancient scientists. Hipparchus, a Greek astronomer who lived about 150 B. C. measured the length of the solar year as 365242 days compared to the modern value of 365242199. He also measured the length of the lunar month as 2953058 days compared to the modern value of 2953059. That's pretty good, figuring. And then there is the Mayan astronomers whose calendar is, in some ways, superior to our present system. The Chinese astronomers were able to predict eclipses but they did not know that the moon was involved in the process. They thought that a dragon was eating the sun. The reason that they were able to make the predictions is that eclipses are cyclical and they had long records to work with.

In the history of calendars there was one disastrous revision. After the French Revolution the victors changed a lot of things. One good result was the metric system which has been adopted everywhere except in the United States. But they also imposed a new and completely different calendar in 1792. The year began on September 22 ( the day the monarchy was abolished ). The names of the days and months were changed. For example, December was called Nivose, or Snow, which did not make much sense in a great deal of the world. ( But the French thought, and still do, that France is the center of the universe ). And as you might imagine, there was a month called Vendemiaire, or Vintage. Each of the twelve months was thirty days long with five holidays that belonged to no month. The biggest change was to lengthen the week to ten days, making three weeks per month. The main thrust of the new calendar was anti-religious. In particular, an attempt to do away with the sequence of Sundays. But it was hopelessly at variance with the rest of the world and was abandoned in 1806.





The Chinese calendar, which started all this, can be traced back to the year 2953 B. C. and as early 1400 B. C. the length of the year was established as 365.25 days. Each year is given a name and 1995 is the Year of the Pig. The U. S. Post Office issues a Happy New Year stamp each year based on the Chinese calendar. In 1993 it depicted a rooster, in 1994, a dog and in 1995, a boar. I object to calling the Year of the Pig the year of the Boar. I suppose that they felt the use of the name pig would turn people off. But there is a difference. A pig is a domesticated animal while the boar is wild. There are twelve different animals in the annual sequence which is equivalent to the signs of the zodiac in the Western World. The 1993 stamp on the envelope shows the Year of the Rooster. Instead of 12 months the Chinese calendar contains 24 periods with no weekly subdivisions. Each of course has a name. For example, the period starting on September 8 ( by our calendar ) is called The White Dew. Of course China does not use their traditional calendar in commerce and in 1911 adopted the Gregorian calendar for that purpose.

Did you ever wonder why February is such a short month ? It is because the Romans were very superstitious and February was considered an unlucky month. So they kept it as short as they could.

The International Date Line has always puzzled me. Now, I sort of understand something about it. Why is it necessary ? If one were to travel east from New York, as you cross each time zone you put your clock ahead one hour. If you continue moving east until you have circled the globe and arrive back in New York your clock is 24 hours ahead of New York time and your date a day ahead. The Date Line adjusts for this discrepancy. If you cross it from west to east you turn your clock back one whole day so when you arrive back in New York you have the same date as everyone else. If you cross the line from east to west you advance your date by a day. This convention gives rise to a curious situation. If you are on a ship which crossed the line from west to east after you finished a Christmas dinner, the staff should start working on tomorrow's Christmas dinner because when you cross the line you set the calendar a day behind and the next day will also be Christmas. On the other hand if you cross the line from east to west you can forget Christmas dinner because there will be no December 25. Curious, like Alice in Wonderland. The International Date Line runs down the middle of the Pacific Ocean for an obvious reason, it does not cut through land. Imagine the problem in a country where it was Sunday on one side of a line and Monday on another. You could skip church by walking across the street.

I am afraid I have gone on and on and you may now know more about calendars than you ever cared to know. I get too wound up pursuing such things. If any of you get this far, you will understand that I think a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.



*Love from Ithaca*



# Poker Schedule for April

Paul Rubin

Bob Raimon's game

Bart Deluca

No games  
in April,  
too much travel

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays April 1, 15, & 29 at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, April 30, 8:00 at Barry's

English Dept. Not settled at the time of mailing



## THE MAGNIFICENT GARBO - NOT GRETA

If people were asked to prepare lists of individuals who had contributed significantly to the Allied victory in WWII, most lists would contain names such as Roosevelt, Churchill, Marshall, Eisenhower, MacArthur, Patton, etc. A few might mention Alan Turing, whose genius resulted in the breaking of the Enigma code which allowed the British to read most of the secret German plans and operational activities. (Most but not all - the Gestapo code remained uncracked). Even fewer lists would contain the name Juan Pujol Garcia. He deserves such recognition.

Garcia was a Spaniard and an anti-nazi who believed that an Allied victory would result in the overthrow of Franco. To that end, he volunteered his services to British Intelligence. The Brits were not interested, so he took the roundabout way of approaching the Germans. They accepted his offer and he arrived in London in 1942 with all the paraphernalia of spydom, including a radio and a contact in Madrid. He was given the code name Arabel. His second attempt to spy for the British as a double agent was enthusiastically accepted and he was given their code name, Garbo.

Early on, he conned the Germans into believing that he had established a network of 14 agents and highly placed sources of information. He also talked them into getting \$90,000 to him to pay for the paper network. The Germans were willing to come up with such a princely sum because the information Arabel sent them was accurate and exceedingly valuable. It should have been accurate because it was supplied by the British. It so happened that much of the information was received just a little too late to have much effect on the operations. Arabel's reputation grew to such a degree that he was awarded the Iron Cross (in absentia, of course). After all, he had transmitted over 400 useful messages.

Late in the evening of June 5, the day before D-Day, Arabel's handlers received a startling message. The invasion would begin on the following day, the Normandy coast would be the target and the landings would be on five designated beaches. The British gambled that, by the time the message was decoded and arrived at the German High Command, it would have little effect. For two years British Intelligence had been building German confidence in Arabel. All this was for one single, important false message, to be delivered in the future, which, it was hoped, the Germans would believe.



A most important question for the Germans was where the Allies would strike when the invasion began. Hitler believed that the invasion beaches would be in the Pas de Calais area.

( In a way, Hitler was an asset to the Allies because he made the important military decisions. In fact, he was so bad at it that, later in the war, Churchill vetoed a plan for his assassination ).

There were good reasons to choose Calais. For one thing, it resulted in the shortest water crossing. But more importantly, Patton, who the Germans thought would spearhead the invasion, had his headquarters in Kent, across from Calais, where he commanded the First U. S. Army Group. German aerial reconnaissance showed an enormous army in the area. There were miles of barracks, large numbers of trucks and tanks and soldiers with bright new First Army patches filled the pubs. But the First Army was a phantom. The barracks were shells, and the tanks and trucks were inflatable imitations. Patton was real but there were only enough specially trained soldiers to fill the pubs, produce a lot of military radio traffic, make ersatz tank tracks and keep the trucks from blowing away. This subterfuge, to lead the Germans into believing that the invasion would be at Calais was named Operation FORTITUDE.

FORTITUDE already had an effect on the German order of battle. There were eleven army and panzer divisions in the Calais area. These were battlehardened, top-of-the-line soldiers. In contrast, many of the troops handling the fortifications in Normandy were impressed soldiers from eastern Europe who did not even speak German. One of the divisions had an average age of thirty-six.

When the Allies landed in Normandy on June sixth, Rommel believed that the war would be won or lost on these beachheads. He immediately asked Hitler to release the panzer divisions at Calais for action in Normandy. With great reluctance, on June eight, Hitler finally agreed.

The messages exchanged among Hitler, Rommel and the panzer divisions were monitored by the codebreakers. At last, Garbo's ultimate moment had arrived. He sent his handlers a long detailed message which said that the Normandy landings were only part of the overall invasion and the main thrust would be made by Patton's First Army at Calais.

On the morning of June ninth, the atmosphere in Churchill's war room was somber. Already, 500 German tanks and 50,000 supporting infantry were on the move. If the panzer divisions got to Normandy, the Germans would have a numerical advantage of 16 divisions to the 10 that the Allies had managed to get ashore. There was a general silence, just waiting to hear what would happen. Then a young woman entered the room with a smile and a piece of paper. The decoded message read that Hitler had ordered the panzer divisions back to Calais. Garbo had pulled it off ! FORTITUDE was working !

Of course, one can only speculate on what the course of events might have been if the panzers had moved into the invasion area. But one thing is sure - it would have been much tougher and, perhaps, even a failure.

The British awarded Garbo the Medal of the British Empire to go with his Iron Cross. Then Garbo just disappeared. Years later he was discovered in South America. He was brought back to London so that the young intelligence officers could meet the legenday Garbo.



The term *BODYGUARD OF LIES* comes from a book of that name written by Anthony Brown and published in 1975. It deals with the role of subterfuge in WWII. This book was one of the sources for this story.

## It's Not Over 'til It's Over

The Penn-Princeton basketball game on February 9th started off in an unusual way. - Penn ran up a score of 29 to 0. It ended in an even more unusual way - Princeton won 50 to 49. Late in the game Princeton had a run of 23 - 2.

## One Way to Beat the Casino

The old-fashioned way - take the money and run. A recent N. Y. Times article noted that one Barry Washington had been sentenced to seven years in prison for conspiring to commit robbery. Washington trained individuals, often problem gamblers, to grab chips from the table and run like hell to a waiting car. They were well trained - they ran off with \$377,000 over a four year period, averaging \$1500 per grab. They made over 200 successful hits before someone got caught. And where was casino security while all this was going on?

## Foulups

Of all the police officers shot to death in the line of duty in this country, half are killed by bullets fired by fellow officers.

Source: *Danger Ahead*, by Larry Laudan, Wiley, 1997





# MAY POKER SCHEDULE

Paul Rubin Bart Deluca Bob Raimon's game

Chris will be here on the weekend of May 1 - There will be a game at Rube's on Saturday, the First and Sunday, the second at 6:00. We will decide on the schedule for May at that time.

Tom Reiss' Game NOTE CHANGE OF SEQUENCE  
Thursdays, May 6 & 27.

English Dept. Wednesday, June 2, 7:30 at Glenn's

Chemistry Dept. Friday, April 30 at Barry's at 8:00 Game  
for May, not settled at the time of mailing.



## FALSE POSITIVES

Suppose you have just returned from an extended visit to the Far East and you don't seem to be feeling quite right. Finally, you decide to see a doctor and she does not find anything wrong. Just to make sure, she orders a number of laboratory tests for diseases with which you may have come in contact during your visit. At a follow up appointment the doctor has some bad news. She tells you that you have the Himalayan-Heebie Jeebies which is a rare disease that affects only one of 10,000 travelers. She goes on to explain that it is a serious malady which will get progressively worse. That's the bad news - what's the good news? The good news is that it is unlikely that you have the Himalayan Heebie-Jeebies despite the positive laboratory test.

Medical diagnostic tests do not always give the correct answer. Errors can creep in. There are errors such as mislabeling, procedural difficulties, sampling deterioration, etc. The extent of such errors can be minimized by laboratory discipline. But there are also inherent errors that cannot be eliminated. A good test would give the correct diagnosis 99% of the time. That is pretty good except that one percent of the results are incorrect. This small percentage can loom large when considering rare diseases. If the test for the Himalayan Heebie-Jeebies gave an incorrect diagnosis one percent of the time, it might be that 0.5% of the times a positive diagnosis would result even though the patient did not have the disease. Since only one individual in 10,000 is expected to contract the disorder, if 10,000 travelers in Asia were tested, on average, 51 of the tests would indicate that the traveler had the disorder. Of these, 50 would indicate the presence of the disease, even though the person did not have the infection - a false positive. On the other hand, the fifty-first person would be correctly diagnosed. So, barring other diagnostic signals, the chances of you not actually having the Himalayan Heebie-Jeebies is very good - fifty to one in your favor.

Your doctor should not have told you that you had contracted the Himalayan Heebie-Jeebies but should have told you that the test was positive - a very different message. I think that most physicians are aware of this distinction.



The false positive phenomena is of extreme importance in the case of a rare disease. In the case of HIV the incidence of infection varies markedly with different groups of people and in some groups can be as low as one case in 100,000. The Red Cross notes that HIV testing gives an accurate diagnosis 99% of the time. This means that in 100,000 tests for such a group of individuals, there will be about 500 false positives for every real case.

## THE HUMBLE PENNY



I believe that the penny no longer serves much of a purpose and have always wondered why it is still being minted. I was of the opinion that it costs less than a cent to produce, and, in addition, the government gets the interest float on all those pennies sitting around in jars.

I now find that my analysis is incorrect. The Treasury would very much like to discontinue the Lincoln penny. But everytime they try, the citizens of Illinois and their elected representatives rise up in righteous anger and block any action. After all, Illinois is the Land of Lincoln.

## Chinese Characters

When a written language consists of ideograms, a great deal of human nature and culture comes through. For example, here are some written words from the ancient Chinese language:

人 Man

人 Man + 𠂇 Load = 女 Woman -  
(Times have not changed; the women do the work).

女 Woman + 宀 Roof = 安 Peace

𡚦 Two women under one roof - Discord

𡚨 Three women under one roof - Bawdy house

女户 Woman (waiting at the) door - Jealousy

𡚱 Woman + symbol for "thousand" - Unfaithful

Source: Native Tongues.  
Charles Berlitz, 1982





# POKER SCHEDULE FOR JUNE

**New Games**

- There seems to be enough interest to bring back Don's game \$5 - \$10 dealer's choice. At Don's, Friday, June 11, at 7:30
- Ken Heck would like to sponsor a game - \$1 - \$5; dealer's choice. Saturday, June 12, 7:30. Ken lives at 140 Snyder Hill Rd. On the left going up Snyder hill, one-half mile from the gas station. # is on mailbox.

**Paul Rubin** Sunday, June 5 at 6:00 \$5 dealer - ante, pot limit, table stakes, \$100 cap.

**Bart Deluca** Friday, June 25, 7:00 \$5 - \$10 casino games

**Bob Raimon's game** Saturday, June 26, 7:00 at Don's \$2 ante, pot limit \$100 cap.

**Tom Reiss' Game** Thursdays, June 10 & 24, at 8:00

**English Dept.** Wednesday, June 2, 7:30 at Glenn's

**Chemistry Dept.** Friday, June 4, 8:00 at Fred's



## he Cruel Sea

In July 1980, the bulk-carrier *Derbyshire*, plowing the Pacific off Okinawa, radioed that she was encountering heavy weather. Then the ship just vanished along with 47 crewmen. Six months later, a battered lifeboat from the ship was found adrift. The *Derbyshire* was no ordinary ship. She was the pride of the British merchant fleet, as large as an aircraft carrier, only four years from launching and equipped with the best navigation and communication technology that money could buy.

Several months earlier, another large bulk-carrier, the *American S. S. Poet*, had disappeared in a storm off the Jersey coast without leaving a trace. The interesting aspect of both sinkings was that not a word about them appeared in U. S. newspapers. (At least I could find no entry in the indices of four major papers). Many months later, an item appeared about the *S. S. Poet* but only because of a law suit filed on behalf of the families of the crew. I found it odd because if a commuter plane crashed in California with a dozen persons aboard, it might merit a small item in the *Ithaca Journal*. Perhaps the reason for the difference between the two types of events is that the crash of a commuter plane is unusual, while the loss of a ship, even a big one, is not. Since 1980, 180 bulk-carriers have gone to the bottom, often without a trace. That is almost one a month.

On March 16 the *New York Times* ran an article on the sudden disappearance of bulk-carriers. (These are generally large ships, as long as three football fields, which carry bulk cargoes such as coal, grain or ore). The story described how a team of experts, working with cameras two and a half miles below the surface, were able to discover the design flaw that led to the catastrophic failure of the ships' hull.

Of course bulk-carriers are not the only ships lost at sea. Lloyd's of London reports that in 1996, 179 cargo ships (500 tons or larger) went to the bottom. Since that is a sinking every other day it is easy to understand why the events don't get much play in the papers.





## JUSTICE IS BLIND

This graphic is a modern version of the picture of Themis, the Greek goddess of justice and the protector of the downtrodden. My lawyer friends believe that the blindfold as well as the phrase "Justice is blind" indicates the impartiality of the judicial process. In our society, I am not sure that Themis is protecting the rights of the downtrodden as well as she should be.

But it seems that Justice can be blind in other ways. I never cease to be amazed at the power of the human mind to be so creative, so ingenious, so clever and, at times, so downright pigheaded. Here is a clipping from the New York Times that I thought would amuse you.

### **Wounded Teacher To Be Paid at Last**

CHICAGO, Oct. 1 (AP) — The Chicago Board of Education has changed its mind and said a teacher who was shot while saving students from a gunman's bullets is entitled to workers compensation after all.

The board announced on Friday that it would drop its appeal of an arbitration ruling granting \$13,447 to the teacher, Clarence Notree. The board had originally rejected Mr. Notree's claim and argued that saving children's lives was not part of his job.

Mr. Notree was running basketball drills for about 30 children in September 1991 when the gunman burst into the gymnasium at Woodson North Elementary School and started shooting. The teacher spread his arms and was shot in the wrist while pushing the children to safety. The gunman was never caught.

Mr. Notree, 47, lost 20 percent of the use of his right wrist.

### **A PROPOSITION BET**

This one appeared in Mike Caro's column in *The Card Player*. Ask someone to deal themselves seven cards. Then bet even money that their best seven-card low hand (Razz) will be either a nine, ten or jack high. Any other hand such as queen, king, eight, any pair or higher you lose. As with all proposition bets the odds are in your favor, although in this case, not by such a wide edge - 1.2%.

### **A GEOGRAPHY LESSON**

Question: How large is the Yugoslavian province of Kosovo?

Answer: About one half the size of New Jersey - one hundred miles across, or a few minutes of flight time for an F-15.





# POKER SCHEDULE FOR JULY

**Poker News** Tom Reiss will be back in Ithaca and will play in the Tom Reiss game. Tentatively, this game will be on Thursday, July 15. Chris will be here from July 22 to August 2 - We'll work in a few games. Rube's game will be changed to Wednesday. Neither Ken Heck's (\$1 - \$5) or Don Cook's (\$5 - \$10) games had enough players for June. But there seems to be enough interest to try again.

**Ken Heck** Saturday, July 10, 7:30 \$1 - \$5, dealer's choice. Ken lives at 140 Snyder Hill Road. On left going up Snyder Hill. # on mailbox Telephone 273-8959. Everyone is invited.

**Paul Rubin** Wednesdays, July 14 (Happy Bastille Day) & 28, 6:00 \$5 dealer-ante, pot limit, table stakes, \$100 cap.

**Bart Deluca** Friday, July 23, 7:00 \$5 - \$10 Casino games.

**Bob Raimon's game** Saturday July 31, 7:00, at Don's  
\$2 ante, pot limit \$100

**Tom Reiss' Game** Thursdays, July 1, 15, & 29, at 8:00

**English Dept.** Monday, July 12 7:30 at Arnie's

**Chemistry Dept.** Friday, July 16, 8:00 at Don's



## A 'WAR IS HELL' STORY



Even after 50+ years, there are documents from WWII that have never been declassified. I would guess that they are still classified, not because of technical or security aspects, but because they would be embarrassing if they became public. I believe that Operation Huguenot would fall into that category. Huguenot is one of those

dirty little secrets that rarely get much space in the history books. The general purpose of the operation is well known, but little of the details. However, some of those involved have bared their souls and, in the last few years details have surfaced.

One of the major concerns of the D-Day planners was the vulnerability of the troops on the beaches to German fighter aircraft. Operation Huguenot was devised to reduce the number of these aircraft, hopefully to zero. The most efficient method of destroying enemy fighters was to engage them in aerial combat. But how to get the Germans to come up and fight? It was decided to bait the trap with U.S. and RAF heavy bombers. So bombing missions were purposely directed over areas where it was known that would be heavy concentrations of German fighters. While this strategy brought down many German planes, the effort was not great enough to please the D-Day planners. So someone had an even more draconian idea. If German intelligence knew the targets of the missions, surely the fighters would be out in force. Double-agents in England could, and apparently did, supply such target information. (As an added bonus, British intelligence felt that when the Germans received such reliable information, the future value of the agents would be enhanced). Huguenot was successful and the Luftwaffe was conspicuous by its absence on D-Day.

The aircrews never knew they were sacrificial lambs and losses by the Air Corps increased significantly in the three months before D-Day, with 10,000 U.S. airmen being lost. Those who survived could read about Operation Huguenot in a recent issue of the 8th Air Force Magazine.



## GOLFERS - EAT YOUR HEART OUT

Jack Nicklaus, playing the tenth hole at Sinnicoch Hills in the 1986 Open, hit a ball into the woods. It could not be found and he took a stroke and distance penalty. It probably came as a surprise to Jack. Why a surprise? In his 25 years as a professional golfer, this was his first lost ball penalty.



## THE KING OF COINS

It is a well-known fact that Gutenberg printed the first Bible in the year 1440. What is not so well known is that he also ran off a few decks of cards. The deck had four suits, representing the four major divisions of medieval society. The suit Swords represented the nobility, Coins for the merchant class; Cups for the Church and Clubs for the peasants. To this day these suits can be found on some decks in Italy and Spain.

## AN UPDATE ON THE DERBYSHIRE

I had a question from a number of people concerning just what was the design flaw that caused the sudden sinking of the bulk carrier, Derbyshire. Sorry about that. The problem was a small hatch cover in the bow of the ship which failed, slowly flooding one of the bow storage areas and lowering the bow in the water. In a raging sea, the lowered bow would not be noticeable. - in fact, the bow could not be even seen from the bridge. But the situation made the ship vulnerable to a big wave. When the bow went under such a wave, the added weight allowed the wave to wash over the first of eight hatch covers, each as big as a basketball court. The first hatch imploded ataking on 10,000 tons of water in less than a minute. The bow never came back up and the Derbyshire was doomed. The ship went deeper and the second hatch cover imploded, then the third etc.. It was all over in minutes. No one survived.

## SEEING IS BELIEVING ?



Imagine a beautiful clear, moonless, winter night, far enough from the lights of Ithaca to see the stars in all their brilliance - an awesome sight which has inspired generations of poets. There is a line from Milton which goes, "As innumerable as the stars of night". Just how many stars are out there ? Imagine, on this moonless night, a patch of the sky equal in area to the size of a full moon. On average, how many stars would you expect to see in this patch of sky the size of the full moon ? Take a rough guess, then check your guess against the answer on the other side of this page.

*The Rongovian Embassy  
To the U. S.*



*Trumansberg, N. Y*



If you estimated that you would find one star in an area the size of a full moon, you missed by a lot - far too many. On average, one would find a single star in a patch of sky equivalent to the combined area of about thirty-three full moons. This may seem so counterintuitive to some, that an explanation might be in order.

First, the number of stars which can be seen on a good night with the unaided eye is not innumerable. In fact, the number, including the dimmest ones, is about 3000. The mind tends to focus on, and remember, those portions of the sky which have the highest density of stars and overlook those areas with few stars. Secondly, the mind greatly exaggerates the size of the full moon. A full moon covers only a tiny patch of the night sky. It would take the areas of 100,000 full moons to cover the entire visible sky.

So dividing 3000 stars by 100,000 full moon areas, one gets a density of 0.03 stars per full moon area.

Source: Mostly Discover Magazine, December 1994

There is a related phenomena known by the name of The Moon Illusion. We all have a mental image of the full moon rising at twilight. It is a beautiful orange disk, so large that it seems to stretch across the horizon. But the size is an illusion. The rising moon is no larger than the same moon high in the sky. But it surely looks larger. A large number of papers have been written about the illusion but they do not seem very satisfactory to me. The common conclusion is that the rising moon seems larger because it is superimposed on objects such as trees and houses.

To emphasize the extent of the illusion, imagine a full moon rising. Then imagine a pea at arms length, superimposed on the moon. Which is larger? The pea by far.





# POKER SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST

**Poker News** 1- Poker is soon coming to Turning Stone casino. 2 - it seems that both pot limit games are history. We suddenly realized something that the casinos have known for a long time - pot limit poker is not a good vehicle for stud games. It works OK for draw, hold'em and Omaha but in stud, a hand with low cards showing can bet the pot and it makes no sense to call. We could go to limit games, but \$10/\$20 is too high for some, and \$5/\$10 too low for others. A \$7/\$15 game might work. Don will introduce a \$5/\$10 game to take up the slack. 3 - Ken Heck's game ( \$1 - \$5 ) got off to a good start with six players and others possible.

**AUGUST  
TOO HOT ?**

Ken Heck      Saturday, August 21, 7:30 \$1 - \$5, dealer's choice.

Bart Deluca      Friday, August 27, 7:00 \$5 - \$10 Casino games.

Don Cooke      Friday, August 20, 7:00 \$5/\$10

Tom Reiss' Game      Thursdays, August 12 & 26, at 8:00

English Dept.      Wednesday, September 1, 7:30 at Don's

Chemistry Dept.      **FRIDAY, THE 13, 8:00 at Jeff's.**



## THE STRANGE ART OF INVESTING MONEY

**REMEMBER ?**



Our local Tom Gilovich has a new book coauthored with Gary Belsky, entitled *Why Smart People Make Big Money Mistakes*. If you manage any money, whether your household accounts or equity in the stock market, the book is an excellent investment. The following items are taken directly from the book.

From page 178:

**Fact #1** From 1984 to 1995, the average stock mutual fund posted an annual return of 12.3% while the average bond mutual fund returned 9.7%.

**Fact #2** From 1984 to 1995, the average investor in a stock market mutual fund earned 6.3% while the average investor in a bond mutual fund earned 8%.

How can that be? How can funds earn more than the people who own them? The reason is that most people think that they more astute investors than they actually are, and flit in and out of a whole passel of funds in order to maximize their returns. But, more often than not, they make the wrong decisions and, in addition, pay a hefty price in transaction fees.



On page 181, there is reference to a study by Jason Zweig that analyzed total returns reported by more than a thousand stock funds for 1996 and more than 800 other funds for the three year period ending December 31, 1996. It was found that the average shareholder of more than a dozen profitable stock funds actually lost money on the stock in 1996.

You might ask how a fund can make big gains and the average shareholder loses money. A good question which is explained on page 181. The basic reason is that people buy and sell at the wrong time. An example is given of a fund, PBHG Core Growth, which, in 1996, returned a whopping 32.8% - yet the average investor lost 3%. How can it be? In March the fund had \$31 million in assets but a great first quarter. Investors rushed in and by June the assets were over \$200 million. But the latecomers missed the good stuff and the fund lost 3.8% in the last half of the year.

On page 62 of the book there is a summary of a study by Terrance Odean of U. C. Davis which found a persistent pattern in the actions of thousands of investors. According to this research, the stocks that investors sold outperformed the stocks they held by 3.4% over an ensuing twelve month period. In other words, on average, they sold the stocks they should have held, and held the stocks they should have sold.

If you find all this hard to believe you will have to read Tom's book which describes in detail how such strange things can happen and how the human psyche causes these unusual decisions. It is a marvelous book.

For all you young guys the device in the drawing is a an ancient stock ticker which kept the brokers of the day up to date on prices.

## **BACK WHEN WHEN PITCHERS PITCHED**

In 1933, Carl Hubble of the NY Giants, pitched an 18 inning shutout against the Cardinals to win 1 - 0. You can't imagine that happening today. It was a good year for Hubble. He pitched 46 consecutive scoreless innings, won 23 games, ten of them shutouts, had a 1.66 ERA and won two World Series games with zero earned runs.

## **GOING OUT IN STYLE**

Joe Montana was a great pro quarterback, probably best known for pulling games out of the fire. In his last game for Notre Dame, in the Cotton Bowl against Houston, he was down 34 - 12 with the clock clicking the final minutes of the third quarter. Notre Dame won 35 - 34 with the last play a touchdown pass with no time left on the clock.

## **IT'S NOT OVER TIL IT'S OVER**

On June 15, 1925, my heroes, the Philadelphia Athletics, were playing Cleveland. The outlook wasn't brilliant with the Indians up by 15 to 4 in the middle of the eighth. At the top of the ninth the score was 17 - 15. The Athletics had a 13 - run inning. To top it off, my special hero, Al Simmons had two hits in the inning, one a three-run homer. The Indians, perhaps too shocked to recover, went down swinging in the ninth.





# POKER SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER

**Poker News** Don's \$5/\$10 game got off to a good start with seven players. As a result, Rube's game will change to the \$5/\$10 format. Turning Stone is having trouble getting its poker act together, but it looks like it will begin sometime in September.

**Paul Ruben** Saturday, September 11, 7:00 and perhaps.

Saturday, 4th, if there are enough players around.

**Ken Heck** Saturday, September 25, 7:30 \$1 - \$5, dealer's choice

**Bart Deluca** Friday, September 17, 7:00 \$5 - \$10 Casino games

**Don Cooke** Saturday, September 18, 7:00 \$5/\$10

**Tom Reiss' Game** Thursdays, September 9 & 23, at 8:00

**English Dept.** Wednesday, September 1, 7:30 at Don's

**Chemistry Dept.** Friday, September 3, 8:00 at Frank's



## WHEN THINGS WERE SIMPLER



Before World War II, the entire central administration of Cornell University occupied a few rooms in Morrill Hall. Today, it occupies Day Hall, a building much larger than all of Morrill, and is spread across campus, in fact, across Ithaca. It is easy to understand why the administration was so small back in the old days - the Trustees made all the decisions. If the President's stablehands felt that the horses needed more hay they did not just go out and buy it. The President would take the matter to the Trustees who would pass a motion with the proper authorization to have someone go ahead and purchase the hay. When a dormitory needed new linens, a request went to the Board for authorization to purchase three pillow cases, eight curtains

and five tablecloths. Or, if Professor Teefy Crane wanted a telephone installed in his office, he went to the chairman who went to the dean who went to the vice-president (there was only one) who would bring the request to the next meeting of the Board of Trustees.

You might think that I am making up these examples. No, when I had an office in Day Hall, there was a complete set of the Minutes of the Board of Trustees in the bookshelf. Often, when I had a free moment, I would amuse myself by looking through these old documents. (At times, they were handwritten - in elegant script). But the three examples are actual cases. I note them to emphasize how different the times were. Can you imagine that, these days, important national leaders would travel all the way to Ithaca to discuss, among other things, whether or not the President's horses needed more hay?



## THE WARDEN



One of Cornell's most influential benefactors was Henry W. Sage, who strongly supported the education of women. In 1870, he contributed funds for the construction of a dormitory and the establishment of the Sage College for Women. The overseer of this group of young women was a maiden lady (they were always maiden ladies) who had the forbidding, although official, title, The Warden of Sage College. When Sage first proposed the idea of educating women, there was considerable opposition. The Faculty (all male) was opposed. Some members of the board worried that Sage College would be a breeding-ground for "strong-willed women". How right they were. The young ladies of Sage were a hundred years ahead of their time and raised hell about all sorts of things. More about these young ladies at a later time.

## FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET



A lot faster. The SR-71 Blackbird flew four times the muzzle velocity of a bullet from a U. S. Army M10, 38 caliber pistol. It was the fastest aircraft ever built, with a sustained velocity of 3.3 Mach at 90,000 feet. It was originally built for the CIA to overfly hostile territory with impunity. It worked. In thirty years, from 1961 until its retirement in 1991, blackbirds logged 63 million miles without ever taking a hit. The hostiles knew

it was there (when it flew in the United States there were certain paths that it flew to keep the sonic boom problems to a minimum). And try they did, shooting everything they had at it and even developing new things in an attempt to bring it down. But the Blackbirds survived over 1000 missile attacks. It flew at 90,000 feet, far higher than any other aircraft, and was fast enough to outrace a missile. It flew coast-to-coast (San Diego, California, to Savannah Beach, Georgia) in 59 minutes.

Everything about the SR-71 is awesome. It had two engines each of which generated more power than the combined output of the four huge turbines of the 80,000 ton ocean liner the Queen Mary. It was a flying tank car, taking off with 40 tons of fuel. All that fuel did not last long because it was a gas guzzler - more than two gallons per second. To consume fuel at that rate required a lot of air - the compressors supplied it at 200,000 cubic feet per second. Such speed generated an enormous amount of heat on the titanium surfaces. Despite the ambient temperature being about minus 100°F, the temperature at the windshield was 640°F, which is above the melting point of lead. If the air conditioner failed, the pilot would have to eject - in a space suit.

The Blackbird holds many records for altitude and speed. They won't be broken for some time since a successor plane has not been built nor is one even on the drawing board

Source: The Skunk Works by Ben Rich and Leo Janos, 1994. The Skunk Works is a small division of Lockheed which works on advanced projects.



This wily skunk is the registered trade mark of Lockheed ADP (Lockheed ADP)



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

Paul Rubin Saturday, October 16 at 7:00 \$5 - \$10

Bart DeLuca Friday, October 15 at 7:00 \$5 - \$10 Casino

Ken Heck Saturday, October 23, 7:30 \$1-\$5

Don Cooke Saturday, October 30, 7:00 \$5-\$10

Tom Reiss Thursdays, October 9 & 21 at 8:00

English Dept. Thursday, October 14, 7:30 at Mike's

Chemistry Dept. Friday, October 29, 8:00 at Milt's

Octoberfest



### WITH STATISTICS, THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS AS THEY SEEM

- The year was 1973 and a fellow graduate dean at Berkeley had a big problem. It had been discovered that the acceptance rate for male graduate school applicants was 44% while the acceptance rate for women was only 35%. With many thousands of applicants the difference was significant. Obviously, he could not claim that the female applicants were inferior so it looked like a clear case of sex discrimination. Further analysis of the data indicated that, indeed, there appeared to be discrimination. However, the problem was easier to deal with because the discrimination seemed to be against men. When acceptances were broken down by department, every department had accepted a higher percentage of women than men.

How can that be? The explanation is that women applicants had disproportionately applied to departments that had large numbers of applicants, and because of the large numbers, had lower than usual acceptance rates. (Perhaps a more subtle form of discrimination). Believe it or not, it really is possible for women to have a higher acceptance rate in every department but yet have a lower overall acceptance rate. In fact, the phenomena has a name, Simpson's Paradox - when databases are combined to give a misleading result.

- All levels of government are taking credit for the decline in the murder rate in the country, and there are all sorts of theories postulating why the phenomena has occurred. These range from more or better policing, to cracking down on lesser crimes. The fact is that one of the more important factors has nothing to do with sociology but with medical science. With better methods of treating trauma patients, more are kept alive, saving many miscreants from a murder rap - and lowering the murder rate.

- The Love Canal incident in Buffalo, N. Y. is thought to be one of the greatest environmental disasters in the country. It began in 1976 when residents living near a former dump site for chemical waste, started reporting a series of horrible maladies. The situation soon became a media circus with networks holding weekly interviews with hysterical residents who reported catalogues of diseases from which they were suffering. There were reports of all sorts of medical problems including numerous cancers, birth defects, and aborted pregnancies. In 1978 as a result of a national outcry, 500 residents were permanently moved out of their homes.

POISON



Eventually the epidemiologists filed their report. It turned out that the incidence of serious diseases in the Love Canal area was no different than a typical U. S. suburb. In 1981, The New York Times summarized the findings of the scientists as follows. "From what is now known, Love Canal, perhaps the most prominent symbol of chemical assaults on the environment, had no detectable effect on the incidence of cancer."

Source: *Danger Ahead*, Larry Laudan, John Wiley, 1997.

## STATISTICS AND INTUITION

It was a beautiful day in Ithaca and Clara Conn and Marty Mark decided that a picnic in Stewart Park was just the thing. After the hot dogs were finished, Clara pulled out a deck of cards and told Marty that she had just learned a new gambling game. Marty was not much interested, observing that whenever they bet he seemed to come out on the short end. But Clara persisted and proceeded to divide the deck into two piles, one with all the red cards and the other with the black cards. "What I am going to do", explained Clara "is to deal five cards from the red pile and two from the black and shuffle them. You turn over two cards and I am willing to bet, even money, that one of them will be black". Clara could sense Marty's thinking about the odds. "For the first card turned the odds of a red card are clearly in my favor - 5/7. Then for the second card, the chances of a red card are 2/3" "Clara you are on - five bucks a throw". The game proceeded pretty much back and forth but as time went on, Marty's bankroll slowly decreased in size and, eventually, was all gone. He muttered "I don't see how I lost - it still looks like a good bet to me"

Yet another example of intuition at variance with statistical calculations. The total number of two card combinations for seven cards is  $(7 \times 6) / (1 \times 2) = 21$ . The total number of combinations of the two cards being red is  $(5 \times 4) / (1 \times 2) = 10$ . So, on average, a black card will appear 11 times in 21 tries - a 5% edge for Clara. Not great, but enough to provide a tidy profit.

## THEY KNOW WHAT THEY KNOW

A common strategy in baseball is to sacrifice bunt when there is a man on first with no outs. Another is to intentionally walk a strong batter when there is a man on second and no outs or one out. As a matter of fact, both ploys have effects which are opposite to what the manager expects. Apparently, baseball managers "know" that these strategies increase their chances of winning. Most clubs have statisticians, but it seems they don't listen to them. There is a book, unfortunately out of print, which is entitled, *Percentage Baseball*, by Earnshaw Cooke which was published in 1966. Cooke applied operations research methods to baseball by taking advantage of the vast database available. He was able to show, from many similar situations, that the intentional walk in the above case produced more runs than pitching to the batter. But baseball managers know what they know, and are not to be confused with scientific "mumbo jumbo".

Source: *Why Flip A Coin*, H. W. Lewis 1997

He uses statistics like a  
drunken man uses lampposts -  
more for support than for  
illumination.

Andrew Lang





## *Poker Schedule for November*

Paul Rubin Saturday, November 27, 7:00

Bart DeLuca Friday, November 19, 7:00

Ken Heck Saturday, November 20, 7:30

Don Cooke Saturday, November 13, 7:00

Tom Reiss NOTE CHANGE Thursdays, 8:00 November 11 & 18

English Dept. Wednesday, November 17, 7:30 at Isaacs

Chemistry Dept. To be decided

### **LES VIOLONS D'AUTOMNE**

In England, in WWII, it was a family ritual to listen to the 9:00 pm BBC News. In London, I was billeted with an English family and we would sit in the living room waiting to hear what happened that day. At the end of the news, there were a series of nonsense statements, most often in French. These were messages to the resistance forces and allied agents in France. Some of the actual messages were: "The tomatoes should be picked"; "Is it hot in Suez?"; "The crocodile is thirsty". These messages were also used to verify the genuineness of allied agents. If, for example, an allied agent turned up in the French resistance, there would be a natural suspicion that the person might, in reality, be a German. A bona-fide agent could say "Listen to the BBC tomorrow night and the message 'The camel is wet', will be broadcast".

There were usually three or four messages a night. But on June 5th, 1944, the evening before D-Day, there were 325 messages. A decision was made to send so many because it was thought that the Germans would already know the invasion was on its way. Incredibly, they did not. There were 6000 ships, up to battleship size, in the English Channel for over 24 hours and they went undiscovered. One of the reasons for the lack of discovery, was that all German radar stations had been destroyed as part of the invasion plan.

The most famous of these messages, the one announcing the invasion, consisted of two lines from a poem by Verlaine:

Les sanglots longs des violons d'automne  
( The long sobs of autumn violins )  
Becent mon cœur d'une langueur languor  
( Sooth my heart with dull languor )

The first line, when broadcast, indicated that the invasion was imminent. The second line would signal that the invasion would begin within 48 hours. The first line was broadcast in late May and the second line was one of the 325 messages sent on June 5. But the message had been compromised. The Germans discovered the code words when they captured an allied agent and used his radio to communicate with London. The message was picked up by German intelligence and von Runstead was warned. He decided it was another ploy. He knew that the weather was far too unfavorable for the launching of the invasion. Von Runstead was pretty close to being right. -It was a very dicey time for my group, which was involved with the weather forecast. I use the word "involved" because to make matters even more complicated, there were actually three forecasts, by British Met, the Admiralty and the US Air Force - all different.





## PERFECT GAMES AND NO-HITTER TRIVIA



There have been thirteen "perfect games" (downing 27 batters in a row) in the regular season plus Don Larson's World Series victory. But what is a "perfect game"? On June 13, 1952 Ron Neccai, pitching for Bristol, a Pittsburgh farm club, struck out 27 batters. That is a "more perfect" game than Don Larson's. But maybe the REALLY, REALLY PERFECT GAME should be 81 pitches - all strikes.

- Two no hitters in one game? On May 17, 1917, Fred Toney of the Reds and Hippo Vaughn of the Cubs both pitched no-hitters for the regulation nine innings. The Cubs won 1-0 in the tenth when Jim Thorpe drove in the winning run.
- Then there is the sad case of Harvey Haddix of the Pirates who, on May 26 1959, pitched a perfect game for 12 innings and lost 1-0 in the thirteenth. There had not been a perfect game in the National League since 1880 - and Haddix lost it.
- There have been five games where the pitcher had a "perfect game" for 26 batters, only to lose it at the last out.
- In the history of the major leagues there have been 11 games where a pitcher took a no-hitter into extra innings. In 10 of these cases the pitcher lost the game. Strange. Is there something here I am missing?
- One of the oddest no-hitters occurred in the Oakland A's last game of the season in 1975. The A's were headed for the playoffs and the manager, Alvin Dark, wanted to give his pitchers, Vida Blue, Glenn Abbott, Paul Lindblad and Rollie Fingers, some practice. The four came together for a no-hitter.
- Is it possible to lose a nine-inning no-hitter? Yes, on April 24, Ken Johnson of the Houston Colts had a no-hitter going against Cleveland in the ninth with the score 0-0. He lost 1-0 in the ninth as a result of two errors and a stolen base by Pete Rose. A no-hit loss.
- Then, another sad case. In the modern era of baseball only one pitcher threw a no-hitter in his first game. Bill Holloman of the Saint Louis Browns holds that distinction, keeping the A's hitless on May 6, 1953. He would never completed another game and was dropped at the end of the season with an ERA of 7.3.

## ITHACA INTERNATIONAL

The people at Tompkins County Trust Company knew that a lot of their customers were worldwide travelers. So they decided to pick a random day and see how much business came from depositors who were overseas. The day chosen was May 15, 1999 and individuals accessed their accounts in the following 18 countries: Australia, Canada, Lithuania, New Zealand, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Denmark, France, Hungary, England, Netherlands, Mexico, Spain, Ireland, Venezuela, Guatemala and Switzerland. What might it have been if they had picked a summer day with a lot of vacation travel?

## FELICITAS



You are playing Texas hold'em and you are the big blind. One player calls and everyone else folds. You have not looked at your cards because, being the big blind, you are going to stay anyway. Just as you are about to pick up your hand you hear a little voice in your ear. "I am Felicitas, the Goddess of Good Luck. I have taken a dislike to that pompous ass across from you and you seem like a nice guy, so I am going to help you. That SOB has two red aces. I'll give you any two cards you want, except the black aces - that is too obvious - you will have to think for this privilege. So you start to think. It does not seem that a pair of anything would be much good - they would be overwhelmed by the aces in most situations. Given that, perhaps it would be best to go for the straights and flushes. What would you choose? The answer is on the next page.





The question is adapted from a column by Lawrence Hill in *Card Player* 8/12/94. Hill's analysis chooses a black-suited five and six. While the chances of beating the aces is not great at 3.3 to one, these cards have the best chance of winning. Why they are better than an eight and nine of spades, was not discussed.

## BASEBALL FANTASY

Tom Gilovich sent me a note about Simpson's Paradox which was discussed in the last newsletter. If you remember, the paradox illustrated the fact that databases can be combined to give misleading results. In one of his classes he described an example of the paradox which is quite fascinating. The following fantasy is based on his example.

The year is 2007 and baseball has come back into its own. It seems that the livelier ball accounted for some of the increased popularity. The surging interest had resulted in a third league, the Federal League, being organized. The new league was lucky. The eyes of the nation were fixed on two young hitters who were in a class by themselves and a neck - and - neck contest for the batting title. At the time of the mid-season All Star game, Roger Hornsby III of the Memphis Blues and Ty Cobb III of the Buffalo Blizzards were both hitting over .400. Hornsby did better in the first half the season, outhitting Cobb .409 to .404. After the All Star game, Hornsby sprained an ankle and was out three weeks while Cobb went on to accumulate spectacular averages. But Hornsby came roaring back and outhit Cobb for the second half of the season .448 to .446. The .448 allowed Hornsby to tie his greatgrandfather's record of .424, set 103 years ago. But, alas, despite the fact that he had outhit Cobb in both the first and second half of the season, he lost the batting title to Cobb's .427. How can it be that a batter can have a higher average in both halves of a season but not the better average of the season? The phenomena depends on the number of games and the batting averages in both halves. Below is a mythical account of how such a thing could happen :

	<u>First Half</u>			<u>Second Half</u>			<u>Season</u>		
	<u>ab</u>	<u>hits</u>	<u>ave.</u>	<u>ab</u>	<u>hits</u>	<u>ave.</u>	<u>ab</u>	<u>hits</u>	<u>ave.</u>
Cobb	275	111	.404	325	145	.446	600	256	.427
Hornsby	325	133	.409	210	94	.448	535	227	.424



# Poker Schedule for December

Paul Rubin Saturday, December 4, 7:00

Bart DeLuca Friday, December 17, 7:00

Ken Heck Saturday, December 11, 7:30

Don Cooke Saturday, December 18, 7:00

Tom Reiss Thursdays, December 2, 16 & maybe the 30th.

English Dept. Tuesday, December 14, 7:30 at Al's

Chemistry Dept. Friday, December 3, 8:00 at Barry's



## HIDDEN LOGIC

You are walking through the Ithaca Commons when you come across a friend that you have not seen in a coon's age. After catching up a bit, you ask, "As I recall you have two children?" "Yes, that is right." And I remember one of them is a boy? "Right".

What are the chances that the other child is a boy?

One might reason that the sex of the one child is independent of the sex of the other and, therefore, the chance of the other child being a boy is 50 - 50. While the first premise is correct, the conclusion is not. (But you already know that if that if the odds were 50 - 50, the item would not be in this poker newsletter). The probability of the other child being a boy is only one in three.

Let's look at all possible combinations for two children (excluding twins).

First Child	Second Child
Boy	Boy
Boy	Girl
Girl	Boy
<del>Girl</del>	<del>Girl</del>

Eliminated

The fact that one of the children is a boy eliminates the girl - girl combination and leaves three remaining possibilities. Of the three, one is boy - boy. In the noted circumstances, the odds of boy - boy is one in three. However, if the statement had been, "And I remember the eldest is a boy?", the odds of the other being a boy would now be 50 - 50.

First Child	Second Child
Boy	Boy
Boy	Girl
<del>Girl</del>	<del>Boy</del>
<del>Girl</del>	<del>Girl</del>

Eliminated  
Eliminated

## SURPRISE

I am with a friend at Pyramid Mall in the middle of the Christmas shoppers. We come across Matilda, the daughter of a mutual friend who, it turns out is home from college for the holidays. "And where do you go to college?", I ask. "California University", she replies. My friend then remarks, "It must have been hard to leave that sunny clime to come back to the harsh Ithaca winter. Matilda gives my friend a funny look. Why the funny look?



The reason for the funny look is that the weather at California University is not unlike that of Ithaca. The institution is located in California, Pennsylvania, Zip Code 15419. It is part of the state university system and enrolls about 6,000 students.

## PEOPLE ARE HARD TO FIGGER

Once in a while I'll buy a lottery ticket. I always select consecutive numbers on the assumption that other people will not do so and, on the lucky chance I do hit, I would be less likely to share the prize. This line of thought presumes that people believe that consecutive numbers are less likely to occur.

It frequently happens that a lottery prize is shared among those who have selected the same combination. If shared, the number of ticket holders is usually small - two or three, maybe five. But it is possible that 25,000 people might share the prize. The British lottery system keeps track of the number of individuals who have selected each possible combination. While the results of these compilations is never published, some information does get out. Of all the draws through September, 1998, the biggest potential win was 42 million pounds which was shared by three winners. But, if the combination which had been drawn was 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, the prize would have been shared by 30,000 winning ticket holders. This means that 30,000 ticket holders chose that combination of six consecutive numbers. ( So much for my theory about people's aversion to consecutive numbers ). In fact, it was noted that the combination 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 is selected by at least 10,000 ticket holders every week. This was true before the information was made public. It is unlikely to be much of a favorite anymore.

The Canadian lottery is more open and has published the most popular individual numbers. They are as follows:

Those selected most often - 7, 11, 3, 9, 5

Those selected least often - 20, 41, 48, 39, 40.

Of course, releasing such information probably puts a major perturbation in the system.

The Swiss lottery ticket is shown below:

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48

In one drawing the diagonals (1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 36 and 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31) were selected by over 24,000 ticket holders. Every full row was selected by at least 2500 players. It appears that many people like orderly patterns.



In one drawing of the Swiss lottery there were 16 million tickets sold or about two tickets for each combination. A study showed that there were 5000 combinations which were chosen by a least 50 players. It is impossible to explain such a concentration as a statistical fluke. People must have bunched up on particular combinations as a result of some driving force. What force is anyone's guess.

So how does one select combinations to minimize the likelihood of sharing the prize? It seems like the best thing to do is let the computer make a random selection for you. In fact, in the New Zealand lottery, 60% of the players allow the computer to pick a random combination.

Source: *Taking Chances*, John Haigh, Oxford Press, 1999

## THE DEPARTMENT OF USELESS INFORMATION

Everyone knows about sardines in cans. But did you ever see fresh sardines for sale? No, you did not. The reason I can be so sure is that there is no such fish as a sardine. A can of sardines can contain almost any small fish. What the fish happens to be can vary from country to country and time to time. Currently, what you happen to get in the U. S. is herring.

The April 17, 1912 issue of *Popular Mechanics* carried a fictional account of the maiden voyage of the largest ocean liner ever built. On this voyage, from England to New York, the liner hit an iceberg off Newfoundland and sank. A week later, the *Titanic*, the largest ocean liner ever built, on its maiden voyage from England to New York, hit an iceberg off Newfoundland and sank. Source: *The Jungles of Randomness*, (p 188), Ivars Peterson, 1998





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

### Poker News

Ken Heck will be leaving until the summer. He is on sabbatic in NYC. So his game is on hold. However, we have a new game. Rich Scheiman will host a \$1 - \$5 game on the second Wednesday of each month at 8:00. It is held in the offices of Clarity Consulting located in the Babcock Building on South Hill. Starting at State & Aurora go up South Hill and take the first right turn. Go through the yield sign and there is a driveway about 30 feet on the right. The large building is Babcock Hall. Rich's offices are on the second floor. He is looking for more players. His telephone # is 272-1830 X 74

Paul Rubin Saturday, January 8, 7:00

Bert DeLuca Friday, January 28, 7:00

Rick Scheiman Wednesday, January 12, at 8:00

Don Cooke Saturday, January 29, 7:00

Tom Reiss Thursdays, January 6 & 20 at 8:00

English Dept. Wednesday, January 26 at 7:30 at Lamar's

Chemistry Dept. Friday, January 21, 8:00 at Fred's



## THE YEARS 1900 AND 2000, A FEW COMPARISONS

- In 1900 a nickel had the same purchasing power of today's dollar and the average annual wage was about \$350. B. Altman's was selling lady's coats for \$6.75, women's shoes for \$1.50 and men's shirts for 45 cents. Translating these items to today's prices, the cost of the coat would be \$135, the shoes \$30, and the shirt \$9.00. Things were cheaper then by a factor of about two or three. But the real difference is in affordability. In real dollars, incomes have increased by a factor of five during the century.

- Life expectancy was 47 years compared to today's 74 years. In 1900, one of twenty-five persons was over 65, now one in six is over 65.

- The government intrudes much more in our lives. In 1900 total government revenues were 567 million. This sum would be equivalent to 11,340 million in 1999 dollars. But revenues are now 1,742,736 million - 153 times greater than inflation.

- Only 6% of seventeen-year-olds had finished high school. Ten percent never went to school.

- There were 8000 automobiles registered in the country. If you wanted to travel to another town you would be lucky to find a paved road - there were only 147 miles of hard surface road in the nation. If you wanted to go further, it was hard to know how to get there. There were no road numbers and no road maps. But you could buy books containing photographs of towns with indications as to where to turn to get to the next town.

- We were still a pioneer nation. About 75% of the land west of the Mississippi had a population density of two or fewer persons per square mile.

- The Standard & Poor's 500 index had a value of 6.2 Today (12/13/99) it is 1417, a factor of eleven over inflation. It is unlikely that many of the companies that made up that list are still in business. With the Dow-Jones index (1889) only one of the original companies still exists - General Electric.

- One thing has not changed. The lead stories in the January 1, 1900 issue of the New York Times concerned war. The Boer War and the "insurrection" in the Philippines. General Arthur MacArthur (Douglas' father) was in charge. I put "insurrection" in quotes because they were only trying to get their country back. We had just taken it from them.

- One of the popular songs was A Bird a Gilded Cage



- The outlook for inventors was dismal. The previous year, the head of the Patent Office proclaimed that all the useful inventions had already been discovered and patented.

- Those who refer to the "good old days" must go by names like Rockefeller, Mellon or Astor. Wage earners in the first decades of the century had a work week that was as long as the boss said it was, usually 10 to 12 hours a day, six days a week. If the boss wanted you to work on Sunday, you worked on Sunday. As the saying went - "If you don't come in on Sunday, don't bother to come in on Monday". The concept of overtime pay was a dream in the eyes of labor leaders and the idea of sick days never occurred to anyone. There were no vacations, no health insurance, no retirement benefits, no unemployment insurance and no safety standards. The concept of "fringe benefits" surfaced for the first time after WWII, as a radical suggestion of John L. Lewis, head of the miner's union.

- In 1900, Chicago's exclusive, upscale Everleigh Club opened its doors, at 2131 Dearborn Street, to the accompaniment of its own string quartet. Unknown visitors were required to produce letters of recommendation. The club offered superb dining, a splendid wine list and elegant women, especially the latter. Just another of Chicago's many legal bordellos.

## THE TWO BROTHER QUESTION REVISITED

The question posed in the December newsletter about a two-children has raised considerable comment. To refresh your memory, the question asked was this : In a two child family, given the fact that one of the children is a boy, what is the probability of the other being a boy ? Some refuse to accept the answer that the probability is one in three. They believe that the answer cannot be anything other than the obvious 50-50.

In such cases, it is useful to do an experiment. I simulated a family of two children with a deck of cards - black for boys and red for girls. Then I drew 260 random pairs of cards representing the two children. Of the 260 families, 184 had at least one boy. Of these 184, only 70 had two boys, or 27%. This is in reasonable agreement with the stated 33% chance. In those cases where the first child was a boy, 55% had two boys and 45% had a boy and a girl. (The expected value is 50%). The experiment indicates that, given the fact that one child is a boy, the chances of the other child being a boy is one in three, not one in two.

Now I venture into an area that I know nothing about - how the mind works. I believe that what is happening is that many people think as follows: The first child is a boy so that there is a 50-50 chance that the second child is a boy. This line of reasoning leads to a correct answer - but it is an answer to a different question. The concept that either of the two children is a boy is much harder to deal with and the mind takes the easy way out by making the boy the first child. Then you have an obvious, albeit incorrect, answer. There are those on the mailing list who have far greater knowledge in this area than I. Any comments ?

## INVESTING

Suppose you had ten billion dollars. Would you invest it in VA Linux Systems Inc. ? The company sells computers using the Linux operating system and is challenging IBM, Dell and Hewlett Packard. They were losing money so, in December, they decided to go public. The value of the stock was set at just over a billion dollars. In the first day the stock appreciated over 700% as investors poured 10 billion dollars into the company. Am I a conservative wimp, or has the investment capital market gone mad ?

Have A Good Century



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

Poker News: We failed to get a quorum at the last two sessions of Bart's game. It is a \$5/\$10 game casino rules. Could use players.

Paul Rubin Saturday, February 26, 7:00

Bart DeLuca Friday, February 25, 7:00

Don Cooke Saturday, February 12, 7:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, February 11, 8:00 at Ben's

Rick Scheiman Wednesday, February 9, at 9:00 note time

English Dept. Thursday, February 3 at 7:30 at Lamar's

Tom Reiss Thursdays, February 10 & 24 at 8:00 Note Date Change

Tales of  
WWII



### A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL - AND EXPERIENCE HELPS

In February 1945, Obergruppenfuhrer Karl Wolff, commanding general of the German Forces in Italy, was convinced that the war was lost. Through intermediates in Switzerland, he initiated discussions with Allen Dulles, head of the American OSS, to discuss surrender terms. But the general had a problem - one of his high ranking generals refused to go along. The British decided to meet the problem head on - assassination. Two English experienced "specialists", fluent in German and Italian, were recruited for the task and were parachuted into Italy, near the town of Matova, where the reluctant general had his headquarters. With the help of Italian partisans, the two studied the general's routine. One dark night, on a sharp turn on a mountain road, the major roadblock to the surrender was eliminated, and the process went forward.

Luckily, the two assassins were able to steal their way back to the Allied lines through German held territory, and were flown back to London. Back in England the two were not exactly given a heroes welcome. They were returned to Dartmoor prison where they had been serving terms for the crime of murder. In due course, their sentences were commuted to the time they had served.

### WHAT PRICE GLORY?



In November 1942 the Third Infantry Division went ashore in Casablanca. For the next thirty months they fought through Tunisia, Sicily, Southern France, Alsace and Germany. One of those who landed was an 18 year old private named Audi Murphy. He was to become the most decorated American serviceman in World War II with 24 U. S. decorations, including the Congressional Medal of Honor, and, in addition, three French and one Belgian award. After spending over 200 days on the front lines and being wounded three times, he lasted to VE Day. Of the 254 men in his company in Casablanca, he and a supply sergeant were the only two survivors. Murphy was different - when he won the Congressional Medal, President Truman wanted the lieutenant sent home so he could personally make the award. Murphy declined, and his commanding general presented the medal in the presence of his infantry comrades and Murphy went back to battle.

The Third Infantry Division had one of the highest casualty rates in the European campaign, just over 200 %. There were 28,400 casualties for a division with an average manpower of 14,000 men. ( The Fourth Infantry Division, which went ashore on D-Day, had the highest rate, with 36,000 casualties ). Such numbers are possible because casualties are replaced with fresh troops.

Murphy first tried to enlist in the Marines, but was rejected because he was too small. Then he tried to volunteer for airborne service. He never got past the recruiting sergeant.



## THUNDERSTRUCK



The time was early morning, May 6, 1945. The place was Eisenhower's headquarters in Rheims, France. I was walking along the street leading up to the main entrance to give the weather briefing at the war room conference. On my left, an army staff car pulled up and stopped about 10 yards ahead of me. The door opened and to my astonishment, out stepped a German officer in full dress uniform. While I knew from the war maps that the war was ending, I did not have a inkling that surrender talks were beginning.

I learned later that the man was General Jodl who was representing the Third Reich in the talks. The first, and only time I came face to face with the enemy, it happened to be the highest ranking officer in the German military.

## PROPAGANDA BATTLE

Most of you probably remember hearing something about the Japanese sending balloons across the Pacific in WWII to start forest fires in the U. S. You probably also remember it as a useless effort of a few balloons that bordered on the ludicrous. That is not the way it was. First, it



was not a few balloons, it was over 9000. Secondly, the incendiary devices were highly effective and thousands of acres were being consumed daily.

The fires overwhelmed the available fire-fighting forces to such a degree, that the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion ( The Triple Nickel ) was retrained to fight forest fires from the air. The exploits of these "smoke jumpers" never appeared in the newspapers. In fact, the effort was highly classified. Roosevelt, fearing a propaganda coup by the Japanese, urged the utmost secrecy. The Office of Censorship persuaded the news media to ignore the heavy smoke clouds that covered vast areas of the Northwest. The secrecy was so tight that the Japanese, hearing nothing of the effort, finally concluded that the balloons were not even reaching the mainland of the U. S. and discontinued the project. [Source: Undercover Tales Of WWII by William Breuer]

## BLOOD AND GUTS

Early in WWII women reporters were not readily accepted by field commanders. When Ruth Gowan, of the Associated Press, went to meet General Patton in North Africa, she was naturally apprehensive. His first question was, " What is the first rule of war " ? She replied, " You kill him before he kills you ". "She stays" said Patton.

## WHAT PRICE VICTORY ?

Of all the males born in Russia in 1923, ( they would have been 18 when Germany attacked ) nearly 80% did not survive WWII. This fact led to a legacy of masses of widows and women who would never find husbands. The Russian Army suffered seven million battlefield deaths. It was not easy being a soldier in the Red Army. At the Yalta Conference, Admiral King commented on the courage of the Russian soldier. Stalin replied, " It takes a brave man not to be a hero in the Red Army ".

**Before wwii, the German language was usually printed in Germanic script. Hitler was proud of the strong, Nordic character of the lettering. Then someone happened to mention to him that the script had a lot in common with the Hebrew script.**

Before long, the German language was being printed in Roman script.

[Source: The late Peter Kahn]



## INFANTRYMEN -THE BLOOD, THE SWEAT, THE TEARS, BUT NOT THE GLORY



Most of you remember that dramatic picture taken during the Liberation of Paris of American G.I's marching down the Champs Elysees. The date was August 26, 1944, a day after the Allies entered the city. The soldiers were from the 28th Infantry Division which had stormed the Normandy beaches on D-Day. The men were not in parade uniforms but dressed for combat carrying weapons and ammunition. They had been awakened at \*

3 am that morning, rolled out of their foxholes and loaded on to trucks for a trip to Paris. In midmorning they were deposited at one end of the Champs Elysees for a march through the center of Paris through enthusiastic, cheering crowds to the other end of that magnificent boulevard. There they were loaded back on the trucks before the swarms of appreciative French women could get near them. That afternoon, they were back in battle against German positions east of the city. I would venture a guess that there must have been at least a hint of mutiny in the air that afternoon.

## Castaways

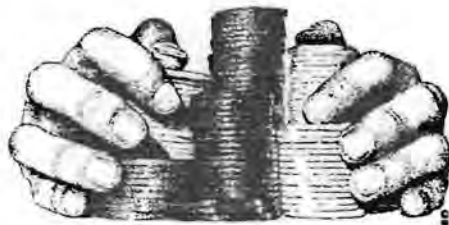


Bill Gerrard, a member of the Cayuga Poker Society, presided over the Grand Opening of the Castaways bar on January 29th. The Castaway is at 413 Old Tugannock Boulevard, just before Johnson's Boat Yard. Recently, it was the Key West - a long time back, it was the Salty Dog.

Castaways will host live national, regional and local bands each week. Top local talent will be showcased every Tuesday night as part of Foundation for Local Music's weekly FLM Sessions.

There will also be a band on Friday and Saturday nights. Hours are 2 pm until closing. For now, Bill is keeping the menu simple - a chicken barbeque dinner for \$5 and chili dogs for a buck.

Come one, come all, enjoy the fun. Who knows, maybe someday Bill will host a poker game.





## poker schedule for march

Paul Rubin Game on hold

Bert DeLuca Friday, March 24, 7:00 \$5/\$10 casino games

Don Cooke Saturday, March 18, 7:00 \$5/\$10 unstructured

Chemistry Dept. Friday, March 31, 8:00 at Len's

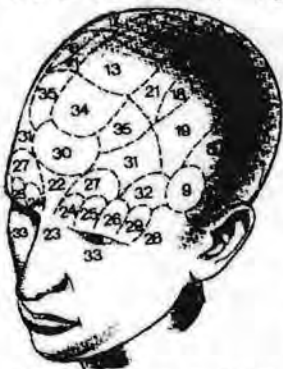
Len's is the first house on the left after crossing the rte 13 bridge going north on Cayuga Heights Road ( 804 )

Rick Scheiman Wednesday, March 8, at 9:00

English Dept. March 1 at 7:30 at Dan's

Tom Reiss Thursdays, March 9 & 23 at 8:00

### ITS ALL IN THE HEAD



It is surprising that ideas with absolutely no basis in fact can become entrenched in the scheme of things. In the nineteenth century the use of phrenology ( Greek - study of the mind ) became widespread. It was used to indicate an individual's character from a mental and psychological profile. The profile was obtained by studying the bumps and contours of one's head. The technique could have been an amusing aberration except that it was taken seriously in many quarters. Many corporations required prospective employees to submit to phrenological screening and engaged couples often sought advice from the practitioners of the art to determine their compatibility. There were journals devoted to the practice and many articles appeared in the media. Many well known individuals, who should have known better, endorsed the practice.

The whole business had its origins in the work of a German physician, Franz Joseph Gall who carried a good idea too far. Gall theorized that different parts of the brain controlled different human functions. He was way ahead of his time since it has only been in recent years that PET scans found the concept to be true. But Gall went overboard with the idea. From working with patients, he assigned various areas of the skull to different emotions. Elaborate maps, like the one shown above, were constructed which identified certain areas with specified faculties such as language, optimism, conjugality, humor, maternal instinct, shiftlessness, etc. Somehow, the contours of the skull in these areas indicated something to the practitioner.

Phrenology persisted for almost a century. However, astrology has been with us since the dawn of man and still occupies space in many of today's newspapers. Perhaps the reason that phrenology disappeared and astrology has not, is the fact that phrenology cost money while astrology is free.

### IT IS NOT FAIR

There is a good deal of excitement in golf circles these days about Tiger Woods tying Ben Hogan's record of six straight tournament wins. The New York Times speculates that Byron Nelson's record of eleven straight wins is probably unbeatable. Bosh - it has already been beaten, by a lot. Babe Didrickson recorded eighteen consecutive tournament wins. But, of course, women don't count.

erín



go BRagh



## I STAND CORRECTED

There are a lot of good stories out there - it turns out that some of them are not true. This newsletter is sent to more than sixty people - so there are a lot of knowledgeable people to keep me straight. A friend of sixty-eight years, George Beichl, wrote me about the change from Fraktur to Roman type during WW II, as described in the last letter. Hitler, and the Hebrew script had nothing to do with it. The change was made in 1940 by Goebbels, who expected that Germany would control all of Europe. He believed that the change was necessary if the people were to understand the German notices. He ordered the type change in his journal, *Das Reich*. It soon became universal.

## SUPER WOMAN

In sports where women go head-to-head with men, not many women hold the record. I know of only two instances, although there are probably many more. One of the two I know about, the record for the lowest number of putts in a round of tournament golf, (17) is held by a woman, Joan Joyce. The other record is for the fastest pitch ever clocked (116 mph in fast pitch), is also held by the same woman, Joan Joyce.

## THE MARK

The origin of the term "mark" to designate the victim of a scam goes back to the carnival days. When one of the sharpies found a sucker, he would pat him on the back after putting chalk on his hand. The chalk mark would alert the other carnies so they could get whatever money the poor guy had left. You must remember that back in those days all men wore suits.

## A CLASS ACT

The year was 1941 and Ted Williams was having a great season with the Boston Red Sox. His batting average was being followed very closely because there was a chance that he would hit .400. It would be the first time anyone had done so since Rodger Hornsby did it in 1924. On the last day of the season a double header was scheduled with the Philadelphia Athletics. Williams average was .39955 and the manager gave him the option of sitting out the games so his average would go in the record book as .400. He distained the offer - "I don't want to be a .400 hitter with a lousy .399 average". He went four for five the first game and two for three in the second to end with .406.

## MISCELLANIA

- The catapults used to launch aircraft from carriers are awesome devices. They have the power to throw a Cadillac a distance of a half-mile.
- If Manhattan had the same population density as Alaska, there would be only 20 people living there.
- Left turning highways experience 60% more accidents than right turning highways. I wonder if this is true in Britain?





## Poker Schedule for April

### Poker News

Tom Reiss' game, one of long standing, is struggling for players. Three regulars left Ithaca and we are down to only four regulars. The game is \$0.50, \$1, \$2. We are looking for players.

Paul Rubin On hold

Bart DeLuca Friday, April 21, 7:00 ( \$ 5 - \$ 10 casino games )

Rick Scheiman Wednesday, April 12, at 9:00

Don Cooke Saturday, April 29, 7:00 ( \$ 5 - \$ 10 )

Tom Reiss Thursdays, April 13 & 27 at 8:00

Note change in sequence. Herb will be here

English Dept. Wednesday, April 5, 7:30 at Steve's\*.

Chemistry Dept. To be decided

\* Steve's address is 320 Center Ithaca. ( State & Tioga, Ithaca commons ). Take the elevator on the first floor in Center Ithaca to the third floor.



### KEEPING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

A few weeks ago there was a story in the NY Times about a transfer of \$700,000 destined for the account of the UN that went astray. It somehow wound up in someone's private bank account ( the recipient of this largess spent as much as she could as fast as she could). The wonder of it all is that it does not happen more frequently. The error rate in routine, one-pass inputting of numbers is about 5 %. That means that, on average, for twenty digits entered, one will be incorrect. Such an error rate would cause chaos in the credit card industry since credit cards usually have 16 digit numbers. There are multipass programs that can reduce the inputting error rate to about one percent. But this is also an unacceptable rate because out of 16 credit card billings, one would be in error. However, through the application of ingenious systems the day is saved.

Suppose you are making a long distance call using an AT&T calling card. You dial 1 followed by the 10 digit telephone number and the 12 digit card number. A few seconds later voice tells you that you have entered an invalid card number. You try again and the call goes through. How was it known that you made an error in entering the card number? Or why was the call not charged to the person holding the card with the number you had accidentally dialed? Certainly the number was not checked by searching through the millions of 12-digit numbers to see if it is a valid number. There are a variety of methods for checking numbers with a check digit being a common one.

A typical airline ticket may have a number 17000459570 3. The three at the end is a check digit. When this number is used, a computer adds the first 11 digits and divides by 7, leaving a remainder of 3. This remainder must equal the check digit 3, or the computer says the number is invalid. If a digit was incorrectly entered, the remainder would not be three.



Bar code readers are subject to errors, so a complicated check system is in place. There are 12 digits to be read. The computer adds the digits in positions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11, triples the result and adds this number to the remaining digits. If the result does not end in zero, a beep is sounded and the checkout person tries again. But no method is infallible, so check your credit card bills

Source: The Jungles of Randomness by Ivars Peterson.

## A STUNNING UPSET



The term "stunning upset" is a overworked phrase. But then there is the mother of all "stunning upsets". On February 22, 1980, the US hockey team beat the Russians 4 - 3 in the Olympics. The chance of such a victory was, at best, remote. Two weeks earlier the Russians had toyed with the Americans in an exhibition game at Madison Square Garden, with the score 10 to 3. The US team was seeded seventh and the Russians had been undefeated in the

three previous Olympiads. The Americans were mostly college players with a few knock-about minor leaguers who had played together for a couple of months. The Russians were a group of professionals who had been together for years. It was not that the Russians did not try - they outshot the Americans 39 to 16. After the game, as the Russians left the ice, they looked as though they were headed for Siberia.

## A SAD TALE

In 1968, Mets pitcher, Jim McAndrew was in rare form. In four games he allowed a total of only six hits. He lost all four games.

## CALENDAR ODDITIES

● In a recent English Department game, Isaac Kramnick pointed out that the past February 2 (2/2/2000) was an unusual date. The last time a date had all even numbers was a long time ago - like 1200 years ago - August 28, 888 (8/28/888). The date November 31, 1999 had all negative integers. The next time this will happen is 1100 years in the future. January 1, 3111 (1/1/3111).

● Along the same lines, Easter this year is on April 23 - the last time Easter was on that date was in 1916. The date for Easter was originally set by the lunar calendar so it changes from year - to - year in a very complicated way. It is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after March 21st (the vernal equinox). The complication is that this is not a real full moon that you can see in the sky. It is an imaginary full moon called the Pascal full moon. (In the early days, astronomers calculated the day of the full moon for the church). The calculation as to when this occurs is indeed complicated involving giving each year a Golden Number and a Dominical Letter. Easter can fall as early as March 22 and as late as April 25. The last time Easter was on March 22 was in 1913 and this will happen again in the year 2285. As for Easter being on April 25, it happened in 1943 and will happen again in 2038.

In 1928, the British Parliament tried to reduce the fluctuation in the date of Easter by tying the date to the solar calendar. It set Easter as "the first Sunday after the second Saturday in April". As you might expect, the churches ignored Parliament and the lunar calendar still prevails.

● If you lived in Bhutan you would never have to worry about forgetting your spouse's birthday. Everyone shares the same birthday - the first day of the lunar calendar in February.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MAY

I have a new computer - The problem is that both my printers need an update to be compatible. Enclosed find another letter I wrote to my grandchildren - I hope it amuses you. Sorry it's without the garish colors

Bart De Luca Friday, May 19, 7<sup>00</sup>

Rick Scheiman Wednesday May 10, 9<sup>00</sup>

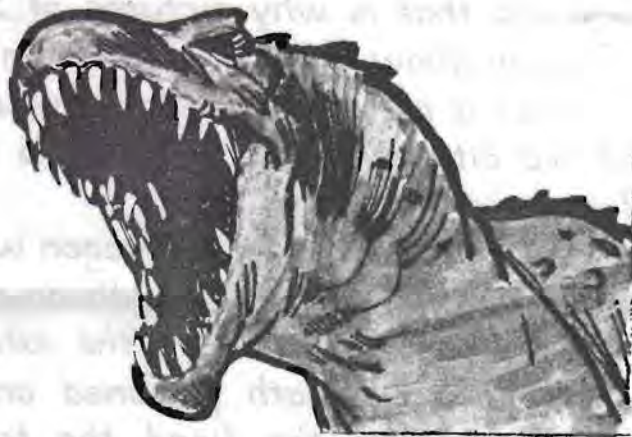
Don COOKE Saturday MAY 27 7<sup>00</sup> 85/10

Tom Reiss Thursdays MAY 11 & 25 8<sup>00</sup>

English Dept Wednesday MAY 17, 7<sup>30</sup> at Glenn's

Chemistry Dept Friday MAY 26, 8<sup>00</sup> at Don's





Dear Thea and Chloe:

March 9, 1994

I was able to find another Calvin and Hobbs book to add to the collection. Enjoy.

The last letter was about the kind and gentle unicorn. This one is about dragons who are fire-breathing fearsome beasts. It seems that human nature requires monsters of one sort or another. The dragon is a common form of monster and seems to have appeared independently in many cultures. Dragons are a figment of one's imagination since no animal on earth is like a dragon except perhaps the komodo dragon, a nasty ten-foot lizard from the island of Komodo in Indonesia. Of course dinosaurs could be classified as dragons or monsters, but the last of the dinosaurs disappeared millions of years before man first appeared on earth. The physical appearances of dragons from different cultures are very similar except that the dragons of the Western World have wings while those of the Far East do not.



A common theme shows the brave hero slaying a fierce dragon usually to save the beautiful princess from the dragon's evil clutches.





Legends and myths about dragons and fair maidens go back into ancient times. The Egyptians and Persians had their stories as well as the ancient Greeks. The most celebrated tale is about St. George and the Dragon.

British think that the event happened in Canterbury and that is why pictures of St. George and the Dragon show St. George clad in a knight's armor. But that is not the true story. Instead, it was in the old, old city of Silene in Lybia, a country in North Africa.

It seems that there was a Dragon who lived in a nearby lake. When this loathsome monster approached the walls of the city, the exhalations of its firey, sulphurous breath poisoned anyone who came near. To placate the fiend, the townspeople would give it two sheep every day. But some epidemic, or evil spell, killed off all the sheep and the Town Council decided that they would have to give up their sons and daughters to the ravenous beast. Lots were drawn, and the lovely princess had the misfortune to be the first selected. Those who tell the story describe the heart-rending struggle of the royal father to submit to the decree, but how, in the end, he chose his duty to the people over his love for his daughter.

So off went the princess, with her nerves steeled and her head held high to meet her horrible fate. When she was walking through the wood to get to the lake she let out a deep sob.



Fifteenth Century Woodcut



It just so happened that there was another person passing through the wood at the same time who heard this melancholy sound. It was a tribune in the Roman Army, by name, George. ( He was not then St. George because he had not yet slain the Dragon -- you know of course, that he did rescue the princess. Otherwise, there would be no story, his bones would have been bleached on the North African Desert and no one would have ever heard of St. George ).





### European Dragon

ire, said the princess in a trembling voice, begone, you should not be here --- flee for your life --- the Dragon is coming for me. At that moment the ground began to shake, the sky glowed a firey red, the wind blew in frightening gusts, thunder roared and the overwhelming stench of the Dragon's breath permeated the air. The princess swooned, but George, undaunted, turned to face the awful apparition. But there was more to George than met the eye. He raised his sword and invoked a spell upon the beast which transfixed it in mid-breath. Then, moving with lightning speed, his swift sword found its mark as the Dragon's head fell to the ground in a whoosh of green blood. With a tiny flick of the tail the Dragon expired, never again to hold the people of Silene in thrall. When the princess awoke she was gazing into the handsome face of St. George. There is an old English ditty which goes as follows:

*I am King George, the noble champion bold.*

*And with my trusty sword I won ten thousand pounds in gold.*

*It was I who fought the firey dragon and brought him to the slaughter, ---*

*And by these means I won the king of Egypt's daughter.*

After this remarkable happening, Saint George became very famous, indeed, the patron saint of the valorous and the model of devotion to the ideal of duty. Saint George became the patron saint of many armies, including the soldiers of the Third Crusade under Richard the Lion-Hearted. In 1222 the Council at Oxford ordained that the feast day of Saint George ( April 23rd ) should be observed as a holyday in the English Church and in 1348 the royal chapel at Windsor was dedicated to his memory.

### Tibetan Dragon







Bhutan  
Dragon

There is a much more fundamental difference between dragons of the Western World and the Far East, other than the fact that one group have wings and the other does not. While the dragons of the West are evil, dangerous monsters, those of the Far East are joyous happy-go-lucky friends who bring good luck and felicitations. That's why the Chinese always have dragons in their parades. I much prefer the Eastern type of dragon but, then again, what about all the heroes who rescued all the princesses?

Other things one should know about dragons. It is said by those who should know that:

Dragons live ninety years in the ground, ninety years in a lime tree and ninety years in the desert.

A venom-spitting dragon can blow its poison through seven church-walls but not through one silk stocking.

Dragons are born from eggs that look like beautiful pebbles along the bottom of streams. They remain unhatched until the stone is split open by a lightning bolt.



Chinese Dragon



Love from  
ithaca



# Poker Schedule for June

Ken will be here for the June 2 game and Herb, June 8

Don Cooke Friday, June 2, 7:00 ( \$ 5 - \$ 10 unstructured)

Bart DeLuca Friday, June 16, 7:00 ( \$ 5 - \$ 10 casino games )

Rick Scheiman Wednesday, June 14, at 9:00

Tom Reiss Thursdays, June 8 & 22, at 8:00

English Dept. Thursday, June 29, 7:30 at Arnie's

Chemistry Dept. Friday, June 23, 8:00 at Mike's ↓

Mike lives at 306 Fairmount which is off Dryden Rd. Fourth street east of College Ave, 2nd street west of Rt 366. 2nd house on right, yellow. Park in driveway, if room.

## HAIL TO THE GRADUATES



## THE LORD HIGH EXECUTIONER



## CONGRATULATIONS

For those of you who played poker with Romy Mancini, I am happy to report that she received her degree in law from Yale last month. She will be moving to Vermont to clerk for a Federal District judge. Romy, good luck from your old friends of the Cayuga Poker Society

Doesn't anyone know a women who plays poker? Or is willing to learn?

## POOR MARTY NEVER LEARNS

Marty Mark and Clara Conn had just finished dinner when Clara brought out some dice. The Ithaca weather was so bad, she said, that we might spend the time gambling. She explained to Marty that he could pick a number from one through six and she would bet even money that the selected number would not appear in three throws of a single die. Obviously, an even money bet - three tries at a six-to-one shot. "I can see that", replied Marty but I just don't feel like gambling". Clara said that she really wanted to try her luck tonight, so she would add an inducement - if the selected number came up twice in the three rolls she would pay him double his stake and if three times would pay him three-to-one. Clara explained that he had an even money bet to begin with, and now had an extra bonus. Marty succumbed and got out his wallet which was soon empty.

Of course it is not an even money bet to start with: The chance of there being no match and Marty losing is:

$$(5/6)^3 = 125/216 = 0.58 - \text{a } 16\% \text{ edge}$$

Taking the "bonus" into account lowers the advantage to ~ 8%.

Marty made the mistake of thinking that three tries at a six-to-one bet is an even money bet. Sometimes it is, and sometimes it is not. Suppose you have a bag in which there are six balls numbered one through six. If you pick out three balls, one at a time, the chances of hitting the selected number is exactly 50 - 50. However, if you pick out three balls, one at a time, and replace the ball before picking the next one, the chance of a hit is now 42%. Putting a ball back decreases the chance of a selected number being drawn. Rolling a die is equivalent to putting the ball back. For those of you who have been reading this newsletter for the past five or six years, you already know Cooke's First Law of Statistics - Never, never trust your intuition.



## LEGAL LOOPHOLES



In south Carolina, video poker machines are a 2 billion - dollar business. The gambling industry bought the election which made them possible, by expending vast sums of money. But the legislature was cautious because they did not want big casinos all over the state. So the law stipulated that no one corporation could have more than five slot machines. The purpose of the stipulation was to limit gambling to bars, stores, bowling alleys, etc. But, if you drive through South Carolina, you see big casinos with gigantic signs all over the place. If you go in one, there are rows and rows of slot machines. Is the law being ignored? Not at all. The high-priced lawyers for the gambling industry were a lot smarter than the legislators. Every five machines comprise a separate corporation. They just happen to be in the same place.

## LONG SHOTS

The Chemistry game seems to have more than its share of unusual hands. In the March 31 game Fred McLafferty had his first royal flush in a game of Omaha. Later, Len Nissensen had an aces boat in five card draw - only to lose to Ben Widom's four kings. In the next hand Ben, also five-card draw, Ben made an aces boat.

## ANAGRAMS

There are people who have a hobby of devising clever anagrams. Here are a few from the Anagram Hall of Fame that Mike Pinnisi sent along to me.

Dormitory - Dirty Room

Clint Eastwood - Old West Action

Astronomer - No More Stars

Elvis - Lives

Mother-in-law - Woman Hitler

Desperation - A Rope Ends It

Funeral - Real Fun

Morse Code - Here Comes Dots

Western Union - No Wire Unsent

Eleven plus two = Twelve plus one

## IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHO DOES THE ACCOUNTING

A group of New York hospitals are suing the tobacco industry on the basis of their cost for providing health care for uninsured tobacco-related illnesses. It is nothing more than a gut feeling, but I think that, in the long run, the tobacco industry reduces the cost of medical care in the country. How? Smokers, on average, die younger and the cost of subsequent medical care is eliminated. The longer one lives the greater the cost. In particular, many smokers never become "elderly" when the heavy financial burden begins.

It is hardly likely that the tobacco industry is going to use this argument. Can you imagine a spokesperson for the industry making the argument that they save the country money by killing people off at an earlier age.?





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JULY

Bart DeLuca Friday, July 28, 7:00 \$5/\$10 casino rules.

Rick Scheiman Wednesday July 12, 9:00

Don Cooke Friday, July 7, 7:00. \$5/\$10 unstructured

Tom Reiss Thursday, July 27 8:00 Only one game this month.

Too few for a quorum on the 6th, and I'll be away on the 13th and 20th.

English Dept. Wednesday, August 2, 7:30 at Don's

Chemistry Dept. Friday, July 21, 8:00 at Frank's



## AMERICA AND LA BELLE FRANCE. VIVA LA DIFFERENCE



The U.S. rockets go by such names as Thor, Titan and Jupiter. On the other hand French rockets go by such names as Arienne and Veronica. The symbol of the U.S. is Uncle Sam, a rather stern old man, while France has Marianne, a young woman. With Uncle Sam, anyone can draw whatever they like since there is no official rendition.



Not so with Marianne. Back over time there have been a number of Mariannes and every so often a new one is added. In my opinion, over time, Marianne has evolved from a heroic woman to a sexy female. Brigitte Bardot and Catherine Deneuve were the two most recent models for Marianne.

Every town hall in France has a bust of Marianne and the mayor is given the opportunity to choose which Marianne to have on display in his/her establishment. Most mayors choose classic models, but, it is felt by many, that they would really want to have the one for which Brigitte Bardot posed.

In the Fall of 1999 France went through the momentous and tumultuous decision to choose new version of Marianne. A committee of the Association of French Mayors selected five women as finalists, and all 36,000 members of the Association voted to select 21 year old Laetitia Casta, an actress and model, best known for her lingerie ads, to be the model for the new Marianne. When asked how she felt about being the symbol of France, she replied "Neat".



Laetitia Casta

But I believe that France does not do well by its women. To me, they have a frivolous attitude toward women as sex objects. It is hard to believe that the nation with the stirring battlecry - *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* - would be so late in allowing women to vote - 1944. And in 1997, France ranked 72nd in the world for the percentage of women in its highest legislative body. I would venture a guess that there will be another French Revolution, one that Jacques is not going to understand.

Now a new crisis is brewing in France. It is believed that Laetitia is considering moving to London. *Sacre Bleu!*



## TO THE BRINK OF CATASTROPHE

In mid-August, 1944 Patton's army broke out of Normandy and the Germans were in full retreat eastward. But the 813 Pionierkompanie was opposing the tide driving toward, rather than away, from Paris. They brought with them a strange cargo - over 500 submarine torpedoes. They were a team of demolition experts following Hitler's orders to leave Paris a "field of ruins". Once in the city, it did not take them long to set things up. The Palais de Luxembourg, with its priceless treasures, was mined with seven tons of explosives. At the Place de la Concord, tons of Teller mines were distributed to Gabriel's Palace, the Chambre de Deputies and the Quai d'Orsay. The Palais-Bourbon, the Invalides, forty-five bridges over the Seine and all the railroad stations were wired and ready. Only the Eiffel Tower was left. The engineers were still trying to decide on the best way to bring it down. Captain Werner Ebernach, commander of the Pionierkompanie was impatient to get on with the demolition. He had contacted the office of the commander of the Paris region to set a time to begin. The only answer he could get was "Wait for further orders".



The salvation of Paris came from a totally unexpected source. In early August, General Dietrich von Choltitz had been appointed by Hitler to be in charge of the destruction of the city. The Fuhrer placed so much emphasis on the task that he personally interviewed the candidate before making the appointment. Choltitz was ideally suited for the job. He had destroyed the Black Sea port of Sebastopol. When the Dutch refused to yield at Rotterdam he leveled the center of the city. In the retreat on the eastern front he left a swath of scorched earth and destroyed cities. His loyalty was unquestioned. Hitler thought that he was just the man and was enthused about his choice. But not so with Choltitz. He had gone to Hitler hoping to be reassured about the course of the war. He came away with the conviction that the war was lost and Hitler was mad.

When it came to giving the order for the demolition, Choltitz hesitated. He saw nothing to be gained by the destruction of Paris. But he was faced with a barrage of messages questioning why the job was not underway. He was running out of time with his only solution being the arrival of the Allied armies in the city. Finally, he made a fateful decision. He commissioned Rolf Nordling, a Swedish diplomat, to get through the war zone and inform the Allied commanders that his position was precarious and speed was of the essence. Nordling did get to General Bradley who immediately understood the situation and decided to redouble the effort to get to Paris. Choltitz held off long enough for General Leclerc's divisions to reach the center of the city.



A few days later Choltitz was charged by Hitler with dereliction of duty. But friends in high places were able to keep the court martial postponed until the war ended. Later, it became known that a number of other German generals agreed with Choltitz's decision but were fearful of showing support. A new edict by Hitler, who did not trust his generals, made a general's family responsible for his military failings. The beautiful city still stands, but how close it all was.

Source: Mostly, *Is Paris Burning* by Collins & Lapierre, 1965



## Poker Schedule for August

**Rich Scheiman** Tom Hunt will be back in Ithaca, August 11 - 15.

Rich will have a game to welcome him back on Monday, August 14, 9:00 at his office (Telephone 800-613-1925 x 74). Rich is going to change his game to \$2 - \$4 HORSE, casino rules. Feel free to come to see Tom.

**Bart DeLuca** Given the recent improved turnout we are going to try two games a month at Bart's \$5-\$10 casino rules. Friday's August 11 & 25, 7:00

**Tom Reiss** Thursdays, August 10 & 24, 8:00

**Don Cooke** Saturday, August 19, 7:00 \$5 - \$10 unstructured

**English Dept.** The July game will be held on Wednesday, August 2, 7:30 at Don's

**Chemistry Dept.** Friday, August 18, 8:00 at Milt's.



## INVESTING - CRAPSHOOTING OR POOLSHOOTING?

Suppose you are running an investment company and have ten individuals managing the portfolio. Technological advances dictate that you now only need nine. How do you decide on which nine to keep? Of course, the most important aspect of your business is how well your portfolio performs. You have a record of the performances of your managers over the past three years and there are significant differences. Joe Highflyer, at the top, has an 26% annual percentage return and Bob Klutz, at the bottom, has only a 13% gain. Is the answer an obvious one - Klutz goes? Not necessarily - there is a defensible position that, to improve performance, Highflyer should be the one out on the street.

There is a concept in statistics called Regression toward the Mean. It was first proposed by Sir Frances Galton (1822 - 1911) who studied the relationship between the heights of fathers and sons. He found that the 1,078 fathers averaged 5' 8" while the sons, at maturity, averaged 5' 9", a gain of one inch. But those fathers who were 6' had sons who averaged 5' 11", one inch shorter, while fathers who were 5' 4" had sons who averaged 5' 7", three inches taller. In addition, only 13% of the sons of the six foot fathers were taller than their sires, while 72% of the 5' 4" dads had sons who were taller than they were. Galton labeled the phenomena Regression toward the Mean.

Another example. Suppose you play poker at Turning Stone a few times a month and, averaged over time, you win about \$200 per session. One day you try your hand and you can't do anything wrong. You walk out with a \$1200 win. The chances are very high that the next time you play you won't come close to win anything to a \$1200 win. Most likely you will win something close to \$200 - a regression to the mean.

The concept applies to many things. From 1949 to 1987, the Rookies of the Year had a combined batting average of 0.285, far above the league average of 0.257. However, in their second year, the same players had an average performance of 0.257. Sports writers have given the phenomena a name, "the sophomore slump" and have proposed a variety of explanations. The truth is that their first year was so good that they are not likely to repeat the performance and revert to the mean.

With that as background, suppose that, instead of managing an investment house, you have a stable of guys who shoot craps for you, under strict money management rules. ( Obviously not a very sound business venture). Joe Highflyer has a much better record than anyone else and Bob Klutz has done very poorly. Do you drop Klutz? Since the enterprise is pure luck, how well they have done should not be a factor in your decision. Highflyer's performance will likely decrease and Klutz's increase so that, over time, their performances will approach each others.

Now suppose you have a stable of poolshooters. Skill is now the overriding factor and Klutz should certainly be the one to go.



Where does investing lie between crapshooting and poolshooting? The concept of regression to the mean has been shown to apply to the stock market. Richard Thaler and Werner de Bondt studied the return on stocks over a three-year period in the time span from 1926 to 1982. In each three year period, they separated groups of "winners" and "losers", stocks that did very well and those which did poorly. They then looked at how these stocks performed in the subsequent three years. They found that the "loser" group outperformed the market by 19% and the "winners" lagged the market by 5%. It seems that today's winners are tomorrow's losers and vice-versa.

Source: *Against the Gods* by Peter Bernstein.

In 1994 the *Morning Star*, a financial publication, published the following table showing how various types of funds performed over two consecutive five-year periods.

Objective	Annual Income	
	Five years 3/84 to 3/89	Five years 3/89 to 3/94
International stocks	20.6 %	9.4 %
Income	14.3	11.2
Growth & Income	14.2	11.9
Small Company	10.3	15.5
Agressive Growth	8.9	16.1
Average	13.6	13.1

On average all stocks performed about the same in the two periods. However, The ones that performed better in the first five years tended to lose ground, while the poorer performers gained. Another example of Regression toward the Mean

The conclusion of all this is that things are not always as they appear. It may seem logical that, in selecting stocks or mutual funds, to assume that, all things being equal, one should to go with those with the best track records. Considering that these are likely to revert to the mean, it is just the wrong strategy. The trick is to know when this will happen - but happen it will.

## PISTOL PETE



In 1968 the coach of the LSU basketball team, Press Maravich, had a bit of a problem. His son, Pete, was one of the aspirants for a position on the team and was chosen as a starter. In such situations there is always a hint of favoritism. But, not to worry, Pete finished the year with a game average of 43.8 points, a new AAU record. Since then the record has been bettered only twice, by Pete in his junior year (44.2) and in his senior year with 44.5%. His career scoring average of 44.2 points is almost ten points ahead of the next person on the list, Austin Carr of Notre Dame. No one is even close to his total of 3667 points. Maravich went on to the pros and, although he made the Basketball Hall of Fame, he never reached the heights that he had scaled in college.

In 1988, at the age of forty, Pete joined a half-court pickup game in Pasadena, California. He died of a heart attack on the court. An autopsy revealed a startling fact. He had been born with a rare genetic defect that had gone undiscovered - a single coronary artery, instead of two. Few of those so afflicted live to the age of twenty.



## THE POKER SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER

Bart DeLuca Fridays, September 1 & 22, 7:00 \$5/\$10 Casino

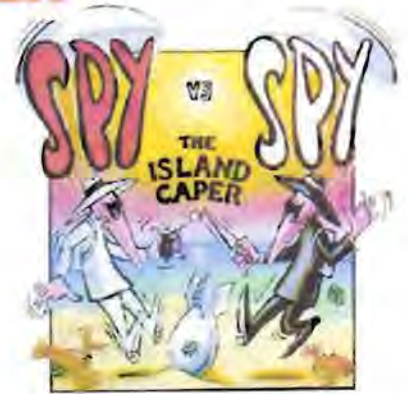
Don Cooke Fridays, 15 & 29, 7:00 \$5/\$10 Unstructured

Tom Reiss Thursdays, September 7 & 21, 8:00

Rich Scheiman Wednesday, September 13, 9:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, September 8, 8:00 at Barry's

English Dept. Wednesday, September 27, 7:30 at Isaac's



## THE SHADOWY WORLD OF CRYPTOGRAPHY

Peter Hoyt recommended *The Code Book* by Simon Singh, 1999. I found it to be a fascinating book. Much of the following is from this book.

The battle between the codemakers and the codebreakers has been going on since the dawn of recorded history. At times, the code makers have devised cryptographic systems that defied the codebreakers - but, eventually, the codebreakers would again prevail. The only exception is a one time pad where the key is used only once. It is unbreakable, but also impractical. It can be used for very special and limited circumstances - e. g. the hot line between Russia and the United States is believed by many to be a one-time pad.

The Enigma Code, used by the Germans during WW II, was an example of the classic battle that the codebreakers finally won after an enormous effort and the help of a disgruntled German in the Enigma headquarters who needed money. At the present time, the codemakers are in the ascendancy with an "unbreakable" code - RSA, named for the three who devised it, Rivest, Shamir and Alderman of MIT.

Among cryptographers there is a convention which involves Alice sending a message to Bob with Eva trying to break the code.

In recent years, the Holy Grail of cryptographers has been to eliminate the need for transmitting the key to decipher the coded message. In fact, this concept never even occurred to anyone until Whitfield Diffie, of Stanford, made the proposal in 1974. The idea was fine in theory, but no one could devise a workable system. The recipient of the coded message always needed to have the key to decode the message. Therein lies a basic vulnerability. First, Alice had to get the key to Bob. But Eva might tap Alice's telephone or bribe the postman to get the key. The best way to transmit the key would be a face-to-face meeting between Alice and Bob. In fact, in the 1970's, when large amounts of money started to be transferred around the world by coded messages, the keys were delivered by couriers, who traveled the world continuously. Eventually, with the expansion of financial transactions, the system broke down and all codes became vulnerable. In a military situation, every base receiving coded messages has to be supplied with a key, sometimes changing on a daily basis. No wonder there was such an effort to do away with the necessity of delivering the key. Probably every agency in the world which dealt with such matters was searching for such a system.

Rivest, Shamir and Alderman had spent a year working on the problem to no avail. One April Day in 1977, they celebrated Passover with significant amounts of Manischewitz wine. When the party broke up, Rivest was unable to sleep and his mind turned to Alice, Bob and Eva. He suddenly saw the solution to the problem and, by dawn, the scientific paper was written.





The solution to the problem was based on the inherent difficulty in finding the prime factors of a large number. ( A prime number is a number that can be divided evenly only by itself and one. For example, seven is a prime number) Alice could take two large prime numbers (  $p$  and  $q$  ), each comprised of say, one hundred digits, and multiply them together. Alice gives the resulting number to Bob to use in encoding a message. This number does not have to be secret. In fact, Alice can publish this number - it is called the public key. But to decode the message one has to know the values of the two prime numbers,  $p$  and  $q$ . Alice is the only one who knows these two numbers (the private key ) and thus is the only one who can decode the message. In fact, if Bob had forgotten what he had encoded, he would not be able to decode the message he had encoded using the public key.

Why could not one factor the public number and find the two primes ? The procedure for doing this is well-known and an easy mathematical exercise - but it might take years using all the computing power in the world. So for all practical purposes, the RSA code is unbreakable, because of the time required to find the key. If the speed of computers were to increase by a factor of a billion, the RSA code would be vulnerable. Another weakness is that Eva might find an easier way to factor primes - but mathematicians have been hard at work on this problem since the dawn of mathematics with little success.

Does all this affect you ? If you purchase a book from Amazon.com, the information you supply is encoded using an RSA system - and since it is a patented system, the inventors get a royalty payment. ( The patent expires in 2001 ).

But Eva does not give up easily : every time you hit a key on your computer, a bit of electromagnetic radiation is emitted, Eva ( or the National Security Agency ) can have a truck parked nearby which can monitor this radiation, she knows the message before it is even encoded. Another vulnerability is that you purchase the software for their RSA program that you are to use. How do you know what you are buying ? In the early 1990s, a Swiss cryptographic company, Crypto AG, sold an encoding systems that had a "backdoor". The system was used worldwide and NAS who knew about the backdoor was privy to encoded diplomatic messages. The trapdoor was discovered and closed in 1998. To my mind, it is likely that NAS paid Cryto AG to put the backdoor there in the first place.

Or Eva might design a virus that sits in the bank's computer system and reads  $p$  and  $q$  ( the private key ) and sends it on to Eva who can now read everything in the bank's computer. Or she might incorporate a Trojan Horse in Alice's computer system. The system works fine - except that it sends clear text copies of all of Alice's messages to Eva. So the battle goes on.

It turns out that the RSA system was not first discovered by the MIT scientists for whom it is named. The British Post Office Research Station came up with the idea of public - private key away back in 1960. But years went by and no one came up with a way to capitalize on the concept.

In 1972 a new employee, a mathematician, Clifford Cocks, was being indoctrinated in the research that was being done at the station. Although he was not a cryptographer, one of the items presented was the idea of a public - private key and the lack of success in finding a way to make it work. After the briefing he went back to his new office. Twenty five minutes later he came to his boss with a suggestion for the public - private key problem - the use of large prime numbers because they were so hard to factor. He was totally unaware that he had found the holy grail. In 1972 the idea of patenting software was uncertain, so the idea was never pursued.





What is over the horizon? First, there are quantum computers which would make the breaking of a RSA code child's play and the codebreakers would be back in control. But the actuality of such computers is in the dim future. What is already poking a nose around the horizon is quantum cryptography. The basic concepts of such a system were outlined by a graduate student at Columbia, Stephen Weisner, in the late 1960s. But, to his misfortune, he was so far ahead of his time that no one, including his professor, understood what he was proposing. He submitted a paper to a journal and it was rejected - followed by three more rejections. But eventually, a few began to understand. Working machines for coding and decoding messages have been successfully operated. Quantum cryptography, by its very nature, and the laws of physics, is unbreakable. It looks as though the codemakers will be in control. Then again, the codebreakers have always won.

## AN EMBARRASSING SITUATION

Thirty-five years ago, I had a friend Bryce Crawford, who was a fellow graduate dean at the University of Minnesota. At a dean's meeting, over a few beers, he told this amusing story. One day the graduate school got a notice from the library that a PhD thesis which had been requested was missing. The graduate school checked its records and found that the thesis in question had been transferred to the library a couple of months ago. The library checked its records and discovered that none of the two hundred or so theses that had been sent over were on the shelves. Further investigation came up with naught and the matter sat unresolved.

One morning Bryce was at his desk in the graduate school trying to figure out what happened to the missing theses. In the back of his mind he heard the university trash truck backing up to the loading dock. A light went on - could it be that the dump truck had picked up the theses destined for the library? He got into his car and headed for the dump. To his horror, he found a moldy, soggy mass that represented the pride and joy of a couple of hundred bright young scholars.

What to do to replace these scared documents? It seemed hardly politic to write and say "Dear Madam: Inadvertently your thesis was carted off to the university dump. . . .". So Bryce settled for a noncommittal request, "Dear Sir: It seems that the graduate school has need of another copy of your thesis. I hope you can supply us with one". He got most of them back.

I am not sure that the march of civilization would have been appreciably slowed by the loss of a couple of hundred contributions of young scholars. But you never know - at least one PhD thesis won a Nobel Prize. In June 1952 a fourteen-page paper was published in the Journal of Finance. The author was Harry Markowitz, a twenty-five year old graduate student at the University of Chicago. Markowitz had applied sophisticated mathematical concepts to the management of investment portfolios. The work was so original, so innovative and so seminal that it was eventually awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics.

## SIMPLE QUESTIONS

- 1 - How many outs in an inning?
- 2 - How many animals of each species did Moses take into the ark?
- 3 - How many times can you subtract five from twenty?
- 4 - Clara was born on Christmas Day, 1936, in New York City, but always celebrates her birthday in the summer. Why?

Answers on the other side of this page.



The Deuce  
of Flowers  
16th Century



## Answers



- 1 - Six, three for each team
- 2 - None, it was Noah that did the ark thing
- 3 - Once, then you are subtracting from fifteen
- 4 - Clara lives in the southern hemisphere



The Design  
of Flowers  
by E. C. Smith



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

**Don's Game, scheduled for Friday, September 29 is cancelled**

Poker news: Tom Reiss' game, which was running rather feebly, is showing renewed vigor. There were ten players the other night, including Dave Carash, who returns to the game after being away 15 years. Welcome back.

Bart DeLuca Friday, October 6 & Saturday 28, 7:00 \$5/\$10 Casino

Don Cooke Friday, October 20, 7:00 \$5/\$10 Unstructured

Tom Reiss Thursdays, October 12 & 26, 8:00 NOTE SEQUENCE  
CHANGE

Rich Scheiman Wednesday, October 11, 9:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, October 27, 8:00 at Ben's

English Dept. To be decided

### THE TAINTED TRUTH

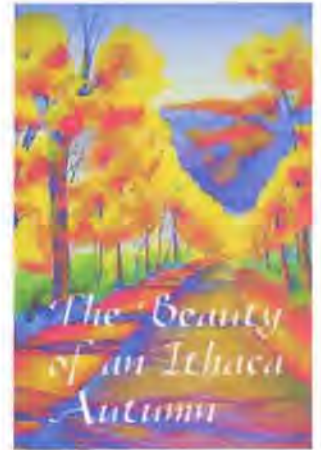
There is an old adage which says, "You can't believe everything you read". In the light of recent developments, the words might be changed to, "You can't believe anything you read". A 1994 book by Cynthia Crossen, entitled *The Tainted Truth*, describes just how much the truth is distorted, manipulated and violated. Here are some examples from the book:

- Lorillo Tobacco Company produced a cigarette called Triumph which was in close competition with another named Merit. Lorillo decided to sponsor a taste taste comparing the two brands. To their chagrin, Merit was the preferred choice with the following results. 40% favored Merit, 36% favored Triumph and 24% thought that there was no difference. To pull victory out of defeat, Lorillard brazenly ran the following ad campaign.

**An amazing 60% of those tested said that Triumph was as good or better than Merit.**

Of course, if the Merit company had access to the data, they could have claimed 64% of the people.

- After the mining of the North Vietnam ports in May 1972, President Nixon went on television to justify his action. He reported that the American people supported his action. Calls to the White House were running four to one in favor of his decision. Here is how it worked. If the call supported the president, the operator tabulated the result. If the caller opposed the action, the caller was put on hold for someone to tabulate the vote. There were so few people tabulating the negative votes that a caller could be on hold for up to twenty minutes.
- US Air bragged, in a 1991 advertisement, that it had the best on-time record of the seven largest airlines. A true statement - but why seven airlines? Because the eighth largest airline, Pan Am, had the best on-time record.
- In 1990, Volvo ran a TV commercial which showed a monster truck driving over several cars, one of which was a Volvo. Only the Volvo escaped relatively intact. No wonder; the Volvo's roof supports had been reinforced with welded steel while the roof supports of all the other cars had been cut through. It so happened that an onlooker at the demonstration site videotaped the whole procedure and sent the tape to the Texas attorney general's office. Volvo suffered a storm of adverse publicity.
- In the late seventies the American Cancer Society predicted that 8.5 million Americans would die of cancer in the decade of the eighties. The actual number was 4.5 million.
- According to a survey, sixty-two percent of Americans want to keep the penny. The survey was sponsored by the zinc industry which has a lot to lose with the demise of the coin.





- Richard Davidson, a professor at the University of Florida, examined 107 published papers comparing new drugs with traditional therapy. In each case, the research was supported by the company marketing the new drug. In all 107 studies, the sponsoring company's product was found to be superior. Not surprising. Some contracts with pharmaceutical companies contain a clause that allows termination of support of the project if the results do not conform to their expectations.
- Snow Country, a skiing magazine, publishes an annual survey of its readership which rates their preferences for various ski resorts. Snow Country runs the survey by mailing a questionnaire to its subscribers. In 1992, Vail lost its previous number-one ranking. They decided to fight back for the 1993 survey by counterfeiting the questionnaire and giving copies to their customers to mail to Snow Country. The plot fell through when a newspaper reporter got wind of the plan.
- The Chrysler Corporation ran a series of TV ads showing the Chairman, Lee Iacocca lecturing his board of trustees on the importance of seat belts as a safety measure in automobiles. This happened after their use became mandatory. This was the same Iacocca who had vehemently argued against airbags as being too dangerous. Not to be outdone, General Motors, in their ads claimed that they had "pioneered the airbag". In fact, GM had lobbied strongly against the airbag regulation and had the lowest usage of airbags in the industry.
- In 1993, the Pfizer Pharmaceutical Company was able to find a consultant to do a study that showed that the price of drugs was headed down.
- Do we have too many polls? The Gallup organization, in a poll conducted for Newsweek, reported that thirty-four percent of the people disapproved of what President Clinton had accomplished in his first nine days in office.

## THE TERRIBLE YEARS



With the booming stock market, it may be hard to believe that one third of the past century was dominated by an awful market. On October 11, 1929, the Dow Jones Average peaked at 359, up 20% for the year. Then came Black Thursday when the market faltered and began a three-year decline which ended with the Dow at 42 down 88%. It would be a long time until the 1929 high returned. On September 22, 1954, twenty-five years later, the market struggled back to its 1929 peak of 359. But the 1954 value does not account for inflation. Stocks would not recover their 1929 value until 1960 - a 31 year drought.

## A LONG SHOT

At the August 20 game at my house, the deal was Texas Hold'em. The flop turned up three sevens. The next card up was another seven. Bart won the small pot by default with an ace. Four of a kind in four cards! The odds (for any rank)?  $3/51 \times 2/50 \times 1/49$  = about 20,000 to one.

## RECORDS WHICH WILL NEVER BE BROKEN

There is a pitcher in the Baseball Hall of Fame by the name of Old Hoss Radburn who played from 1881 to 1891. You probably never heard of him, but he holds records which will never be broken. Playing for Providence in 1884 he won 60 games, (lost 12) with an ERA of 1.38. He pitched 72 complete games in a 112 game schedule. That season Providence had a short pitching staff - one other hurler, so Radbourn pitched 27 consecutive games winning 26 in a row.



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER

Barb DeLuca Saturdays 18 & 25, 7:00 \$5/\$10

Don Cooke Saturdays 4 & 11, 7:00 \$5/\$10

Tom Reiss Thursdays, November 9 & 30, 8:00  
Note: The 23rd is Thanksgiving

Rich Scheiman Game scheduled for the 8th, cancelled..  
Expecting their baby on the 7th.

Chemistry Dept. Friday, November 10, 8:00 at Don's

English Dept. Thursday, November 16, 7:30  
at Lamar's



*Just think ! The  
circus will  
soon be over.*

## STATISTICS AND INTUITION

Clara Conn and her friend Marty Mark were enjoying a few beers at Bill Garrard's Castaways. When Marty asked Clara if she had any new betting propositions up her sleeve. "As a matter of fact", she replied, "it so happens that I do." With that, she pulled out a deck of cards and gave them to Marty. "Shuffle the deck and put out three cards, face down". When Marty complied she offered to bet even money that one of the three cards would be an ace. She could see the wheels going around in Marty's head. There are twelve face cards in the deck, so, on average, there is one face card for every four cards with a bit of an edge to help out. With only three cards, an even money bet must be in my favor. "Okay", said Marty, "here's a five-spot. It took a while, but Marty finally lost his last five-spot. In disgust, he mutters, "Even when the game is in my favor, I can't win". Of course, the game was not in his favor - with Clara, it never is - it just looks that way.

For Marty to win, none of the three cards can be a face card. The chance of there being no face card is:

$$40/52 \times 39/51 \times 38/50 = 0.45$$

So, Clara has a 10% edge and Marty can't last long with such odds. If you have been reading this newsletter for very long, you must know that intuition and quick and dirty calculations can get you into real trouble.

## LONG SHOTS

Last month, I recorded that, in a Texas hold'em game, the first four cards turned up were four sevens. The odds on a four card four-of-a-kind were calculated as about 20,000 to one. In the Tom Reiss game on October 12, the first four cards dealt to Don King in a seven card stud game were four sevens. About ten years ago, also in a Tom Reiss game, I was dealt four-of-a-kind in the first four cards - strangely, they were also sevens. Is there something magical about sevens?



## THE INCOPARABLE TIGER WOODS



For a while, there were some who felt that Tiger Woods was a product of overblown hype. But, after his recent performances, there are not many still thinking that way. While he has been in the public eye for only a couple of years, he has been pushing credibility since he was two years old. Many beginning golfers set their first goal to break 50 for nine holes. Woods got over that hurdle rather early - in fact almost before he could talk - three years old. But he was already on his way even before that. When he was two, he putted against Bob Hope on Mike Douglas' TV Show. At the age of five he hit golf balls on the television show *That's Incredible*. At eleven, he was breaking par. The same year he played in thirty three tournaments and won every one. He won the

United States Junior Amateur Championship at fifteen, the youngest player to ever do so. He then set another record by winning it three years in a row. He was the youngest player to win the United States Amateur Championship and, again, set the record by winning it three years in a row. Since joining the pro circuit, Tiger has broken all sorts of records, some of very long standing. He seems headed to having them all.

Whether Tiger becomes the greatest golfer ever, remains to be seen. How long he reigns will be an important factor. He has a long way to go. For one thing, he does not have a lean and hungry look. I think that he may be the richest athlete ever. His contract with Nike is rumored to be \$100 million and that is one of many. He also won \$8 million on the tour this year. That sort of thing can get in the head of a twenty-four year old. And, of course, being single, there are the shoals of romantic entanglements which can get a person all mixed up.

## THE FEMALE PROFESSORATE

The percentage of female professors has been increasing in recent years but when I came to Cornell in 1951, outside of the College of Home Economics, the number of professors who were women was not much above zero. Going a bit further back, the situation was even worse. In 1898, Anna Comstock, for whom a Cornell building is named, was appointed an assistant professor. The trustees would have none of that - they voided the appointment. Even further back, things were better. In ancient Greece, female professors were not unusual. One of the better known was Hypatia who was the principal professor of philosophy and mathematics at the Museum (University) of Alexandria. Her beauty was so striking that one of the conditions imposed upon her was that she was required to lecture from behind a screen so her charm would not distract the young male students. In the year 415, she was stoned to death by a Christian mob because of her atheistic beliefs.

## MISTAKES WHICH WILL NEVER BE CORRECTED



Did you ever wonder why a book of maps is called an "Atlas"? In 1595 Rumold Mercator, a Flemish cartographer, thought that a drawing of Atlas would be a nice design for the title page of his book of maps. When an English addition was printed in 1636, it was entitled *ATLAS: A Geographical Description of the World*. The name Atlas stuck and became the common name for books of maps. However, Mercator made an error. He depicted Atlas as holding up the world. But from mythology, Atlas, one of the Titans, was the one who held up the sky. But the error has persisted to this day.

It seems that another cartographer made a mistake which will never be rectified. Columbus discovered an island in the Carribean on November 19, 1493, which was the feast of St. John. In honor of the saint, he named the island, San Juan. The island had a fine port which he named Pueeto Rico (beautiful port). It seems that sometime later the names got interchanged and instead of the original Puert Rico, San Juan, it is now San Juan (the city), Puerto Rico.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

Bart DeLuca Saturdays, December 2 & 16, 7:00

Don Cooke Saturday, December 30, 7:00 \$5/\$10

Paul Rubin Saturday, December 9, 7:00 \$5/\$10  
unstructured. Paul's address is 113 Crescent Pl.  
Across from South Hill School, Hudson St.

Tom Reiss Thursdays, December 14 & 28, 8:00

Rich Scheiman To be decided  
A girl! Emma Nadine

Chemistry Dept. Friday, December 8, 8:00 at Geoff's

English Dept. To be decided



### THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

It may be hard for the citizenry to accept, but we just do not have the ability to determine the will of the people in a close election. As far as I know, the percentage error in an election system is unknown. Manufacturers of voting machines claim that they have an accuracy of 99.99 %. But then they add the weasel words, "if properly used and maintained". A 1975 study of punch card ballots reported an accuracy of 99.9 % In the Florida election, this would mean an error of 6000 votes - an unacceptable number. The quoted accuracies are for the equipment only. It does not include such things as voter errors, lost ballots, faulty registration records, malfunctioning equipment and a host of other things that can go wrong.

Scientifically, the reporting of a vote could be expressed as follows, " Joe Blunderbuss won the election by 300 votes,  $\pm 500$  votes. While technically acceptable, such a clarification would be counterproductive. How often does the problem arise? In this election there were five states where the vote for the two main candidates was within one percent. In the past eleven presidential elections, there have been four cases where the popular vote for the two major candidates has been within one percent. There is no doubt that the present procedures can be improved, but there can never be a system that will be able to express the will of the people in all close elections. Obviously a serious problem, and one for which there is no solution. Tom Gilovich has been helpful in keeping me straight on some aspects of this analysis. Geoff Coates tells me of a New Mexico election law which decides ties by lot. In practice, this is often one five-card poker hand. Geoff also points to an error in the November newsletter. I said that the election would soon be over.

### THE PRICE OF LIBERTY



Most of you are too young to remember another national crisis which was much more important than the issue of who is going to be our next president. In fact, to my mind, it was a struggle for the soul of the nation. At issue was the question of who controls the military. It all began during the Korean War when General Douglas MacArthur advocated the extension of the war to Chinese territory in defiance of President Truman's policy. Truman dismissed MacArthur for insubordination. When the general returned home, it was not in disgrace, but in the adulation of many. There was a ticker tape parade down Fifth Avenue and a Republican controlled congress invited him to address them in a joint session.



Governor Thomas Dewey talked of "the disastrous leadership". Senator William Jenner thundered, "Our only choice is to impeach the president". Senator Richard Nixon blamed Truman for giving the Communists McArthur's scalp.

Two months later, there was a celebration marking the 150th anniversary of the Boston Naval Yard. One of the principle speakers for the occasion was Francis P. Matthews, Secretary of the Navy. His speech started off as expected: he said nice things about the Navy, the shipyard and Boston. But the last few paragraphs were something else. He made a proposal. "..... reversing the traditional attitude of democracy, we should boldly proclaim our undeniable objective to be a world of peace. To have peace we should be willing, and declare our intention to pay any price, even the price of instituting a war to compel cooperation for peace. We should become the first Aggressor for Peace. The speech was followed by fireworks, literally and figuratively.

Support for Matthew's proposal for a first strike came from many quarters. The following day the Commander of the American Legion, George Craig, gave a speech in which he said " America must now take a resolute stand for peace through compulsion. We now have the preventative might. We have the atomic bomb and the industrial might. We can and must put our manpower behind both". (Craig did not mention that the Russians also had atomic weapons). Support came from some quarters of congress. Senator Russell, of Georgia, came out with " It was high time for someone in high position to make a statement of that kind and wake up the American people and get them thinking in broader terms".

The proposal for a first strike brought an emotional outpouring from the citizenry, both pro and con. It would be comforting to think that the debate was short-lived but it went on throughout the early fifties. It mattered not that the feasibility of such a strike was severely limited - even President Truman was not told how few atomic weapons we had and the country was oversold on our ability to deliver them. There were some frightening statements ( ala Dr. Strangelove ) from various military leaders. Those who made such statements did not go unpunished. ( Truman was vigilant ).

As late as 1957, two representatives of President Eisenhower had a discussion with General Curtis La May, commander of the atomic strike force. After an outburst by La May, they warned him that the first use of atomic weapons was not national policy. He gave this chilling response, "No, it is not national policy, but it is my policy".

The statement " Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty" came from an Irish jurist, John Philpot Curran.

## THE LITTLE SATELLITE THAT COULD



On March 2, 1972 the scientific satellite Pioneer 10 was lifted off at Cape Kennedy. Its purpose was to get close-up photographs of Jupiter and explore the nature of the planet. After a 21 month trip, the satellite reached Jupiter and carried out its mission with great success. When the craft rounded the planet it was flung into deep space at 25,000 miles per hour. It was not expected that Pioneer 10 would last much beyond the completion of the mission. But, twenty-eight years later, and at a distance of 8 billion mile, far beyond Pluto, scientific data is still being received from this dauntless explorer. ( Perhaps the longevity might be explained by the fact that it was one of the last satellites which was built without a computer). One might guess that there would be a powerful transmitter aboard to span such a great distance. That is not the case, the signal has 8 watts of energy - sufficient to power a night light. It is the exquisite sensitivity of the Deep Space Monitors that allow the

faint signals to be picked out of the sky. Most of you have heard of the Arecibo telescope in Puerto Rico which is operated by Cornell. It is 1000 feet across and has two acres of surface. At the twenty-fifth anniversary of the dedication of the instrument, Frank Drake, then director of the facility, gave a talk to the Board of Trustees. He noted that the total energy of all the signals received by the dish in the whole 25 years, was equivalent to the energy of a snowflake hitting the ground.

Millions of years in the future, when earth is swallowed up by the explosion of the sun, Pioneer 10, its radioactive battery long since dead, will probably still be on its journey to infinity.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Bart DeLuca Saturday, January 27, 7:00

Don Cooke Saturday, January 13, 7:00

Paul Rubin Saturday, January 6 and 20, 7:00

Tom Reiss Thursdays, January 11 and 25, 8:00  
We have been having trouble getting a quorum for this game - the holidays were probably a factor.

Rich Scheiman Wednesday, January 10, 9:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, January 19, 8:00 at Len's

English Dept. Tuesday, January 23, 7:30 at Steve's



Paris, New Years Day, 1/1/2000

### ONE WOMAN, ONE VOTE ?

Certainly not for presidential elections. There is a more basic flaw in the Electoral College system. A voter in a small state gets two votes for the single vote of the voter in a large state. The explanation lies in the way that the number of electors is determined. For each state, an elector is appointed for each representative in the house. Fair enough, but there is more. Each state also gets two additional electors for its senators and therein lies the rub. The number of electors in South Dakota is increased from one to three because of the two senate seats. But the electors in New York increase from 31 to 33, a gain of 6%, compared to the 300% for South Dakota. Another way to look at the discrepancy is the fact that Gore got 22 votes for winning Massachusetts, which has a population of 10.4 million people, while Bush got 24 by winning six small states with a combined population of only 6.1 million.

Given its obvious unfairness, will the Electoral College be discontinued? Such a change has about as much chance as a snowball in hell. A change would require a two-thirds vote in the House and the Senate. While the House could conceivably muster such a vote, it would be impossible in the Senate where the majority of small states would hold on to their advantage. But even if the House and Senate did vote for the change, there is an even higher hurdle - ratification by three-quarters of the states. Since there are many more small states than large states, giving up their two to one advantage would be an act of inconceivable magnanimity. The Founding Fathers did not get everything right (Source: Analysis by Alex Keyssar, Professor of History at Duke University).

In the Supreme Court ruling that ended the election battle, the Court put great importance on the concept of equal protection under the law in the voting process. But it seems to me that the Electoral College, which is imbedded in the constitution, does not give provide such equal protection.

### GRACIOUS LOSERS

The Catholic Church has an informal list of patron saints. St. Elmo is the patron saint of sailors. St. Anne of young unmarried women and St. Jude of lost causes. There is also a patron saint for gracious losers. It seems that in medieval Britain a certain archbishop traveled to the continent. He was gone so long that it was presumed he had died, and another archbishop was appointed. But one day archbishop number one returned, making two individuals in the same post. Archbishop number two graciously stepped aside declaring that he was not worthy of the post in any event. Eventually, he was appointed to another position and canonized a saint. And what is the name



of this noble individual, the patron saint of gracious losers? St. Chad!  
(Story from the NY Daily News)

## A POTENTIAL ECHO

What happens to the disputed ballots now that the Florida election is over? While the Republicans, and the Supreme Court, would prefer to see them hauled off to the incinerator, that will not happen. Under the Florida Sunshine Law, the ballots are open, under certain conditions, to inspection by the citizenry. When I first wrote this I speculated that these votes would probably be counted - in fact, they are already being examined.

Another important factor in the Supreme Court decision was the sanctity of the federal date of December 12 to submit the electors to the College. It can't be that important - when dawn broke on December 13, twenty-three states had ignored the deadline.

## HIGH TECH - LOW TECH



At the height of the Cold War, submarines were used extensively for spying on Russia. A Navy captain, James F. Bradley, who was in charge of submarine espionage, dreamed of the possibility of somehow monitoring messages transmitted through undersea cables. Such information would be priceless because hard-wire transmissions were frequently uncoded and the most secret material went over these lines. Bradley approached Bell Labs with the problem. Yes, such a device could be made to record such messages without affecting the integrity of the cable. A contract was let and a submarine, the Halibut, was modified to allow divers to exit the ship and attach the monitors to the cables. But a big problem remained;

no one knew the locations of the undersea cables and current technology for searching the seabottom for a five-inch wire, was not up to the task.

Now for the low tech side of the story. Bradley was raised in St. Louis and the family would take excursions on the Mississippi river boats. As a boy he remembered seeing signs along the shore with the warning, "Do not anchor, cable crossing". Could it be that the Russians had similar signs? To find out, the Halibut cruised, periscope up, along the coast of the Soviet Union, well within the three-mile limit (and in violation of International Law). **BINGO**, a sign in Russian, "Do not anchor, cable crossing". Further offshore, at a depth of 300 feet, the device was attached to the cable. It worked, and the submariners could hear the Russian traffic. Eventually, they would have to make the dangerous return trip to recover the recordings and replace the batteries. Project "Ivy Bells" provided information of extreme importance for years. It ended when Ronald W. Pelton, a cryptographer for NAS, sold the secret to the Soviets for \$35,000.

## QUICK WITTED

Dorothy Parker, a writer for the New Yorker in the 1950s, was known for her sharp tongue and quick wit. She was involved in a word game that required her to use the word "horticulture" in an ingenious way. She came up with this gem, "You can lead a whore to culture but you can't make her think".

Ogden Nash, a friend of Parker, had some gems of his own, like this ten word ( nine of one syllable ) poem.

I like eels  
Except as meals  
And how they feels.



## Poker Schedule for February



Don Cooke Friday, February 2, 7:00 Come and see Chris

Bart Deluca Saturday, February 10, 7:00

Paul Rubin Saturdays, 17 & 24 7:00

Rich Sheinman Thursday, February 8, 9:00 7:00  
Note change to second Thursday

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays February 8 & 22 at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, February 16, 8:00 at Frank's

English Dept. Thursday, February 15, 7:30 at Glenn's



KUBLAI KHAN

### THE PALACE OF KUBLAI KHAN

In 1797 Samuel Coleridge wrote the poem *Kubla Khan*. Here is the first verse:

*In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man,  
Down to a sunless sea,  
So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and towers were girdled round.*

The poem vastly understates the splendor of Xanadu. If not the most opulent location which ever existed, it must be close. The name Xanadu was coined by Coleridge to describe Shang-tu, the capital of the Mongol empire, which was located in eastern China, near the present day Peking. Kublai Khan (1214 - 1294) was a grandson of Genghis Khan.

Shang-tu was a large city, surrounded by a wall which had a perimeter of 24 miles (almost twice the area of Manhattan and three times the area of Rome at the time). There was a river, but Alph was not its name. There were artificial lakes, game preserves, floral gardens and trees brought from all corners of the vast empire. (At times, full grown trees, roots and all, were transported over thousands of miles). The city had broad avenues. They had to be broad, because the Khan toiled around in the equivalent of a modern super Rolls Royce, a lavishly furnished room borne on the backs of four elephants.



The Khan scoured the empire for artisans, musicians, scientists, mathematicians, administrators, engineers, astronomers, entertainers, linguists, etc. He was so enchanted with Marco Polo that he kept him ten years before allowing him to return to Italy. When Polo did return, no one believed the descriptions of what he saw. It is easy to understand the skepticism. The Mongol capital was on so great a scale and so much grander than anything Europe had ever seen.



The Khan had four wives, each having separate quarters with a retinue of 10,000 individuals. He also had concubines - one hundred new ones every year.

Despite the ferocity of the Mongols in their conquests, Kublai Khan was a benevolent ruler. He worried about the poor and the farmers and made a great effort to alleviate their plight throughout the empire. The Mongol empire reached its zenith in this period. Perhaps Kublai did not have the same fire as his predecessors. He only led one campaign personally, and that was against a rebellious member of the royal family. (Such a life of luxury might soften one up). While the influence of the Mongols lasted for centuries, the beginning of the end was in the reign of Kublai Khan whose subjects became more like the Chinese. The armies in the Middle East edged toward Islam and the Mongols in the homeland retained their old ways. Some historians believe that the most significant effect of the invasions of the Khans was the arresting of the expansion of Islam. Before the Mongols invasions, one-half of the scholars of the world spoke Arabic.



## EUROPE AT THE PRECIPICE - THE YEAR, 1241



Kublai Khan's grandfather Genghis Khan (1162 - 1227) conquered an empire the like of which has never been experienced. It extended from Siberia in the northeast down through China and Korea to the Malay peninsula. Westward, it included Tibet and northern India, Afghanistan, and the Middle East. Then it went north through the Balkans and beyond Moscow to the Baltic Sea. Central Europe had been spared the scourge. In 1241, Ogotai Khan, who came to the throne at the death of his father Genghis, decided to bring the rest of Europe under his domination. With an army of perhaps 150,000 they began with Poland and Hungary. The army of King Wenceslas of Bohemia was annihilated. An army of Germans and Poles, 30,000 strong, died to the last man. King Bela IV, King of Hungary, attempted to stem the advance with an army of 100,000 men. To no avail - they were routed in half a day.

The Mongol army then crossed into Austria and advanced to the outskirts of Vienna. When reconnaissance scouts from the city discovered the camped armies, there was a general feeling of doom. Armored knights would be child's play for the Mongol horsemen. Day by day, the scouts followed the preparations for the attack on the city. One day they rode out to find that the invaders had disappeared. They were never to return. According to Mongol law, when the Khan died, everyone had to return to the homeland to decide who would be the new Khan. Ogotai had died, and the army withdrew for the long trek back to Mongolia. The new Khan, Kublai, had much less interest in Europe. Perhaps no single death had such an effect on the course of European history.

## LONG SHOTS

Last month, in the Tom Reiss game, Matt Stratton was dealt four queens in his first four cards. This is the fourth time in our games that I remember someone getting quads in four cards. Since the odds of such a hand are 21,000 to one, we have had more than our share. Matt's hand was doubly unusual, he threw the hand away - the game was Omaha. Another strange thing, of the four different occasions, the four of a kind won only twice.



## BLOWOUTS

While the 41 - 0 blowout of the favorite Vikings by the Giants was impressive, it has a long way to go to match another blowout that I remember. The year was 1940 and on December 8, the Chicago Bears and the Washington Redskins were playing for the "World Championship".



The Redskins were favored because they had a better record, but, more importantly, they had beaten the Bears 7 - 3 only three weeks earlier. The Bears received the kickoff and scored a touchdown on the second play of the game. They quickly scored another, and the rout was on - the final score was 73 - 0.



To illustrate how much the game has changed since 1940, eleven touchdowns were scored - by ten different players and only seven of eleven extra points were good. Another big difference - the game set a new record with the largest gate ever - and each member of the Bear team took home \$873.99

## A BUSY SCHEDULE



I saw a schedule for the Harlem Globetrotters and it is awesome. They have 86 games (exhibitions?) scheduled in the month of January, 86 in February, and 69 in March. Most days have three different games. Sometimes, the games are doubleheaders at the same location, but they are usually in three different cities, albeit in the same geographical area of the country. They also play 150 games a year outside the United States. A roster of 25 players helps to spread the effort, but the logistics of playing three games a day, day after day, defies my imagination. Do they have more than one team? I can't find out from their web-site. Does anyone know?

## THE GOLDEN MEAN

We all know about the golden mean - the ratio of the sides of a rectangle that so many, from the time of the ancient Greeks to the UN Assembly Building, have selected as the most pleasing ratio. The ratio is 1.618 which is related to a mathematical series, the Fibonacci series. The discovery of the "Golden Rectangle" goes back to a German physicist, Gustav Fechner, in the mid nineteenth century. In a recent book, *Against the Gods*, author Peter Bernstein writes, "The Greeks knew this proportion and called it the 'golden mean'. The golden mean defines the proportions of the Parthenon, the shape of playing cards and credit cards and the proportions of the Assembly Building at the UN". The trouble with the concept is that it is pure rubbish. There is no evidence that the Greeks ever thought of the golden rectangle. These days, we would describe Fechner as a fruitcake, and an reexamination of his own data disproves the concept. I do not know about the Assembly building, but I can measure a playing card, ratio, 1.57 and a credit card, 1.42 and according to an encyclopedia, the Parthenon was 101 feet wide and 60 feet high for a ratio of 1.68. Is this close enough? A number of studies, in which subjects choose the rectangle which is most pleasing to them, show a wide variety of selections which do not center on 1.6. We will probably continue to hear about the golden rectangle as long as people copy ideas from other sources without questioning them.

Source: Martin Gardner, a columnist for Scientific American who wrote an article extolling the concept of the golden rectangle and was brought up short by a flood of critics, whom he joined.



Contemporary  
Russian Queen  
of Spades



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

Note: Some games have been changed to Friday instead of Saturday

Don Cooke Friday, March 2, 7:00

Barb Deluca Saturdays, March 10 & 24, 7:00

Paul Rubin Friday, March 16 & Saturday, 31, 7:00

Rich Sheinman Wednesday, March 14, 8:30

Note Rich has changed the game to his house,

5 Knoll Tree Rd. off Genung Rd. between

Ellis Hollow and Ellis Hollow Creek Rd. 256-7014

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays March 8 & 22 at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, March 30, 8:00 at Milt's

English Dept. Thursday, March 15, 7:30 at Mike's

TIBETAN NEW YEAR 2128  
FEBRUARY 24



THE YEAR OF THE IRON SNAKE

### REAL DOLLARS

In 1935, a gallon of gasoline cost 13 cents. Before you believe that the price is a bargain, you can consult the handy-dandy inflation calculator which is enclosed. To calculate the effect of inflation on prices from 1935, the card shows that the 1935 price must be multiplied by a factor of 13 to inflate it to the year 2000. Doing so, considering inflation, the cost of the 1935 gallon of gas would now be \$1.69 ( $.13 \times 13$ ). Therefore, the current price of gasoline at \$1.58 is somewhat cheaper than the 1935 price. Another example, in 1946, coming home on a troopship, I won \$1,500 playing poker. In today's dollars, that would be equivalent to about \$15,000 ( $\$1,500 \times 10$ ). That was pretty heavy-duty poker.

Some things, in real dollars, have become more expensive and others cheaper. Things connected with the service industry are much more expensive, primarily because of increased salaries. In 1951, the average cost of a hotel room in New York City was \$4.00. If the cost of an average room kept pace with inflation, the current price would be \$28 ( $\$4 \times 7$ ). It would now be hard to find a room at ten times that price. In 1951, it cost \$600 to go to Cornell (endowed). That would be \$4200 in today's dollars, but the cost is now \$33,000. The sports business has far surpassed inflation. In 1932, Babe Ruth made the then astounding salary of \$60,000, which translates to \$600,000 in today's market—the starting salary for a rookie. When Ben Hogan won the U. S. Open in 1950, the purse (total prize money) was \$15,000 or \$105,00 in current dollars. But when Tiger Woods won last year, the purse was \$4.5 million. On the other hand, manufactured goods are generally much cheaper because of improved efficiency in manufacturing techniques. Here are some 1950 prices inflated to the year 2000: A 12-inch black and white television set would cost \$1750, a record player, \$763, and a refrigerator, \$2100. Now, these items can be purchased for far less than those prices. But the real decrease in costs is in communications, travel and computing power. In 1927, a telephone call between New York and London cost \$250 per minute in today's dollars. A round-trip flight from Port Washington, New York to Marseilles, France, in 1939, in the Yankee Clipper would cost \$9,000 and took 27 hours (each of the 22 passengers had their own cabin, but the bridal suite was extra). In 1950, a Sony tape recorder weighed 40 pounds and would cost \$5,000 today. In 1946, ENIAC, the first real electronic computer, cost three million dollars and occupied three large rooms. The same computer power can be found in a hand-held calculator which can be bought in a super market for \$19.95.

### ABOUT JOCKS AND SHUTTLECOCKS

There is a recently published book entitled, *The Game of Life*, by James Shuman and William Bowen, which deals with the effect of athletics on educational institutions. Much of the background for the following presentation is from this source.

Question? Which institution has the largest number of students playing varsity intercollegiate athletics, The University of Michigan at Ann Harbor, or Williams College? Of course you know the answer. It must be Williams College, otherwise, it would be a stupid question.



In 1997-98, at Michigan 3% of the students, or 666, were engaged in intercollegiate athletics while at Williams, the corresponding numbers were 36% and 715. Comparing Michigan (enrollment 23,000) to Princeton (enrollment 4,600), the latter has far more varsity athletes with 942.



In recent years, elite colleges and universities have gotten themselves tangled up with athletics in their search for diversity. How can parents increase their child's chances of getting into one of these highly selective institutions? While studying always helps, here is some advice that you won't get from a guidance counselor. Pick an obscure sport, fencing might be a good choice. Almost all such institutions have fencing teams and bodies are needed to send to the meets. The fencing coach, desperate for anyone interested in the sport, will vouch for your son or daughter. And of course, fencing does have a nice upper-class ring to it. If fencing seems a bit too much, badminton is another possibility. If your offspring really is a good athlete, especially for daughters, work on an unusual position like catcher in softball. And by all means, have your son or daughter take music or dance lessons. Admissions committees love that sort of thing.

What is the evidence for the advice? The book notes that, at one highly competitive institution, which is unnamed, a black applicant has an 18% better chance of being admitted than a white applicant with the same SAT score. Legacies, children of alumni, have a 25% better chance, but athletes have a 48% advantage, and women athletes a 53% advantage. On average, at such institutions, being an athlete is equivalent to adding 143 points to an SAT score - and that is a big edge.

Consider Swathmore, a very small college with highly competitive admission standards. Last December, the college decided to drop intercollegiate football. The alumni were very unhappy, especially after the first "successful" season in a while. What was a successful season? The team won a game to end its 28 game losing streak. The team could not have been all that good - there were 55 players on the team from a coed student body of 1370. The faculty just got tired of allocating 32% of its admissions to athletes with lower academic credentials. But the alumni have a powerful voice and the Trustees are reconsidering the decision to drop football.

So the next time you think of the Big Ten as the Mecca for jocks, think again. At least the institutions in the Big Ten have a valid reason for supporting athletic programs. The state legislators love to watch football from their luxurious box seats and they get turned off by losing teams.

## MISCELLANY

On January 20th, George W. Bush was sworn in as the 43rd President of the United States. He is President all right - but is he the forty third? It depends on how one counts. The uncertainty goes back to whether Zachary Taylor was the 12th or 13th in line. His Inaugural Day was March 4, 1849. But the date fell on a Sunday and Taylor refused to take the oath of office on the Sabbath and was sworn in on Monday, March 5. The terms of Polk and his vice president Dallas had expired at noon on March 4th, so, according to the Constitution, the President of the Senate, David Rich Atkinson automatically became President and served for 24 hours. He claims to have had a quiet day. While he is not included in the count of presidents, his monument in Missouri notes that he was President for a day.



Waltzing Matilda is one of three national anthems of Australia. When the song was played at the Olympics in Atlanta, the Australian government had to pay royalties because someone had copyrighted the song in the United States.

I now know the answer to last month's question about the Harlem Globetrotters intensive schedule. They do have three teams. But I also learned that they can play serious basketball. They lost to the defending national NCAA champion, Michigan State, by only four points.



## The Inflation Calculator

Cost one dollar in 1920	Multiplier for cost in year 2000
	X 9 (\$)
1925	10
1930	10
1935	13
1940	12
1945	10
1950	7
1960	6
1970	4
1980	3
1990	1.3





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR APRIL

Don Cooke Saturdays, April 7 & 21, 7:00

Bart Deluca No game this month Bart is in Las Vegas

Paul Rubin Saturdays, April 14 & 28, 7:00

Rich Sheinman Wednesday, April 11, 8:30

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays, April 5 & 19, at Don's at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, April 27, 8:00 at Barry's

English Dept. Tuesday, April 17, 7:30 at Don's

Poker News Brian Cook won a stud tournament (and \$750) at Turning Stone against 40 players

Thanks to Chris Murison for the great picture on the envelope.



Cezanne, The card players.

### DOING BUSINESS ON WALL STREET

The New York Times Magazine of February 25 had an article, written by Michael Lewis, about a 14 year-old boy, who, starting with allowance money, made \$800,000 in the stock market. He had a simple plan - buy some stock and go on the Internet extolling the potential of the company. It seemed that people listened to the advice of this fourteen year old and drove up the price of the stock. When the Security Exchange Commission (SEC) discovered what was going on, they declared that he was "artificially" influencing the market and therefore, the practice was illegal. They wanted the \$800,000 back, with interest. The boy's lawyer offered \$300,000 with the observation that "artificially" influencing the market was common practice. The SEC backed off, took the \$300,000 and ran. The author of the article believes that the SEC was afraid of going to trial and losing - thus demonstrating that there is a lot of thin air supporting the SEC regulations.

A study of broker's recommendations to clients made in January 2001 found that of thousands of recommendations, only 29 advised selling. Somehow, this sort of thing avoids the definition of artificially inflating the market.

When it comes to manipulating the market, Alan Greenspan has no peer. I presume that his actions are not to be defined as "artificial manipulation".

Last year, Henry Blodget, an analyst for Merrill Lynch, was awarded the highest possible accolade, as money marketers voted him the industry's top analyst. How good is the best analyst? In February of this year, Blodget's top recommendations were down 79 %. When the market began to fall, he recommended "buy".

Was it not a small boy who blurted out, "The emperor has no clothes".

This piece was written before the recent sell-off, but Merrill Lynch is sticking with its analysts. They had a full page ad in the March 21st Times, advising that the market has bottomed out and it was the time to buy. I can't think of any reason that Merrill Lynch would spend \$40,000, on such an ad except to influence the market - but that seems to be OK with the SEC.

### MADNESS



A single Ohio-class, Trident submarine can deliver 192 separate atomic warheads to 192 different targets. Each is 6 to 30 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. What kind of thinking leads to such a situation?



## FLUSHES IN OMAHA AND HOLD 'EM



The game is Omaha and the common cards are:

The best possible high hand is an ace-high heart flush. You have a queen-high flush - how good is it? As always in poker the answer depends on a lot of things; such as the number of players, the number of hands still active, the betting action, the order the cards were flopped, the particular common cards and the looseness of the game.

First the easy part, the statistics. Before the flop, was there a hand out there that had an ace or king-high flush? This factor can be readily calculated and is shown in the following table. The more difficult question to answer is, whether that potentially winning hand is still in play at the end?

Chances of the queen (or king) flush being the best flush hand before the flop.

	Queen High	King High
4 handed game	70 %	80 %
6 handed game	60 %	70%
9 handed game	40 %	60 %

So, if you hold the queen-high flush against four starting players, there is a 70 % chance that you had the highest flush. With a king-high flush, in a nine-handed game, there is a 60 % chance it was the best holding. But your chances are usually better than these percentages because hands that would have beaten your flush may have folded before the end of the hand. This is where judgment comes into play.

Suppose the flop came up with only one heart. The chances that a better flush holding would have folded are increased, so your queen-flush looks better. The chances are even better if there was a raise. If the flop yields only one low card, an ace associated with a potential low is more likely to fold at that point. And, if a deuce and a trey show on the flop, an ace with a two or a three might be gone. On the other hand, if an ace (or a king) appears early, a ace or a king which might beat your flush are more likely to hang in.

The tighter the game, the more likely it is that a flush which could have beaten your queen is gone. Also, any extra heart you see increases the value of your queen-flush.

And there are still further factors. Is a low possible? If not, and someone raises, your flush is probably doomed. Whether you call depends on the size of the pot, the amount of the bet and the person making it.

Poker is a demanding game. These are only some of the factors to consider in the few seconds you have to make a move.

If the game is hold'em, and you have a flush with three hearts among the common cards, you have a much more certain hand. Even in a ten-handed game, there will be a another flush against you only one time in four.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MAY

Don Cooke Saturdays, May 5 & 12, 7:00

Bart Deluca Not decided, Bart is still off somewhere playing poker

Paul Rubin No game this month

Rich Sheinman No game in May, Wed. June 13, 8:30 at Rich's home

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays May 3 & 31, at Don's at 8:00

Note change in schedule

Chemistry Dept. Friday,

English Dept. No game in May, Wednesday June 13, 7:30 at Dan's



Ah! Spring in Ithaca

## THE CONVENIENT MEMORY OF HISTORY



During the Nazi control over Germany, great emphasis was placed on the superiority of the Aryan genes and the development of a Master Race. To this end, in 1933, Germany enacted a Sterilization Law by which individuals could be involuntarily sterilized if their potential progeny would be considered "undesirable". Among the first to be subjected to the laws were 200 teenagers who were the children of black American soldiers in World War I. This program was proposed years earlier in Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*. (I read portions of this book for background. It is unfortunate that the book was not more widely read. It is the ultimate in racism and crackpot ideas).

Many of us are aware of the Nazi aim to develop a Master Race. But, far fewer are aware that the German Sterilization Act of 1933 was modeled after laws in the United States. This nation was twenty-five years ahead of the rest of the world in legislating enforced sterilization to improve the race. In 1933, thirty-two states had enacted such statutes. (As of 1984, twenty-seven were still on the books). You can bet that there is not much about that activity in our children's history books.

The purpose of the laws was to prevent procreation by "undesirables". The undesirables varied from state to state but they usually included, criminals, disabled persons, the "feeble-minded" and members of "lower races". As always, the poor, minorities, immigrants and women bore the burden. Women were disproportionately subject to the law. Why? For the same reason there are "loose women" but never "loose men". It is hard to imagine, given our present day attitudes, that the concept could have had such widespread support. It is not unexpected that the strongest support came from the rich, the intellectuals and academicians.

● In 1927, the constitutionality of the sterilization laws came before the Supreme Court. The case involved a seventeen-year-old woman, Carrie Buck, who had an illegitimate daughter as a result of being raped by a relative. Her mother was "feeble-minded" and her seven-month daughter was declared to be "feeble minded" because she, "Didn't look quite right". The court declared her to be "feeble-minded" and ordered sterilization. Her lawyer argued, in vain, that her good school record belied the fact that she was "feeble-minded". The Supreme Court upheld the Virginia law and the revered Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote for the 8-1 majority opinion. "It is better for all the world, if, instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or let them starve for imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind". Carrie Buck's sister was also sterilized.

● In 1934, Morris Fishbein, Editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine* wrote in an editorial, "Germany is, perhaps, the most progressive nation in restricting the fecundity of the unfit"

● In 1935, a special committee of The Neurological Association praised the German law but had a positive aspect to their findings. "The feeble-minded breed servile, useful people who do the dirty work of the race".

● In 1924, fears that the Anglo-Saxon stock was being diluted led to very restrictive laws that severely limited the immigration of "lower races" from Eastern and Southern Europe. President Coolidge defended the law with the statement, "Biological laws showed (sic) that the Nordics deteriorate when mixed with other races".



●Konrad Lorenz, a Nobelist in medicine, likened "a nation's subpopulations" to a cancer in the human body which must be cut out.

●In 1937, Charles Stockard, President of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, predicted that, "the human race faced ultimate extermination unless propagation of low and defective stocks could be absolutely prevented.

●Prior to the passage of the Vermont Sterilization Law in 1931, the State established a team of social scientists to develop a plan to "eliminate the degenerate bloodlines and replenish old pioneer stock". The team was charged with studying "good" and "bad" families and determine those who should be eliminated. After the law was passed, several hundred, poor, rural Vermonters and Abenaki Indians were deemed unfit to procreate and were involuntarily sterilized.

It was often the disabled who were sterilized under the law. Why the disabled? To answer the question one has to get a feeling for how the powers-that-be felt toward the handicapped. Here are a few official positions to illustrate the attitudes that prevailed at the time. In Pennsylvania, the disabled were defined as, "anti-social beings". In Vermont, "a blight on mankind". In Wisconsin, "a danger to the race". In South Dakota, "the disabled do not have the rights and liberties of normal people". Mind you these statements do not come from medieval history but from America when I was a young man.

As to the number of individuals who were subjected to involuntary sterilization, there is a fairly consistent estimate for Germany, 350,000 in the period 1933 to 1939. For the United States the figures are much more difficult to establish. One group came up with an estimate of 40,000 up until 1944 and 20,000 between 1944 and 1963. There are those who believe that these figures are much too low and that the practice continued long after 1963.

What strikes me as unusual about the whole sordid business is that I have been unable, despite a substantial effort, to find a single quotation protesting such programs. The Catholic Church was on record as opposing the practice on moral grounds, but I cannot find a voice of opposition. I suppose the minorities, the poor, the "white trash" and the "low class" immigrants were unable to speak for themselves and no spokesman arose.

There is actually an up side to all of this. In today's climate, it would be inconceivable to hear any prominent person make such outrageous statements. Can you imagine a President, these days, saying, as Coolidge did, "Biological laws show that the Nordics deteriorate when mixed with other races". That would be enough for his party to lose the next election And too the are other safeguards. The American Civil Liberties Union and civil rights organizations would be in full cry.

While the memory of these events may have been essentially erased from our collective memory, that is not the case with Germany. In present day Germany, genetic research is not very popular. There are no genetically engineered products and in-vitro fertilization procedures are not available.

## AN ADDENDUM

After I wrote the above, I got caught up in my own rhetoric, and began to wonder why there was no opposition to such an assault on human rights. Both the ACLU and NAACP were in existence, but, as far as I can discover, mute on the issue. The New York Times reported on the Carrie Buck case without comment. The only organized opposition I could find involved a voter drive in Alabama by a group of Catholics which defeated a vote to allow sterilization. I was in high school at the time, but have no memory of the issue. ( But news coverage was different then ). Eventually, there was an outpouring of disgust - fifty years too late.



For a long while I used names of frontier saloons to decorate the envelopes for the newsletters. But, eventually, I ran out of names of saloons. Now I am off on a different tack, British pubs. There are a large number and they often have amusing and whimsical names, such as the name on the current envelope, The Startled Saint. Others are: The Drunken Monk, The Freudian Slip, The Gold Diggers Arms, The Honest Lawyer, The Barking Shark and The Jolly Taxpayer. In rare cases, I can get the actual pub sign, but usually they will be the product of my imagination. I hope you enjoy them.



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR JUNE

Don Cooke Saturdays, June 9 & 30, 7:00

Bart Deluca Saturdays, 2 & 23, 7:00 (No game Saturday, the 16th)

Paul Rubin Game on hold

Rich Sheinman Wednesday, June 13, 8:30 at 5 Knoll Tree Rd.

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays, June 14 & 28, at Don's 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, June 29, 8:00 at Ben's

English Dept. Wednesday, June 13, 7:30 at Dan's

School's Out



## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WALL STREET TRADER

There is an article in the April 23 issue of the New Yorker, written by Scott Lasser, which describes the hectic life of a Wall Street trader. Lasser, a former trader at Lehman Brothers, specialized in Treasury bills. From this long article I have put together how a day in his life may have gone.

This day began early, in fact at 1:30 am, when he was awakened by a call from a customer in Japan who wanted to buy Treasury bills. He sold him two hundred dollars worth. Before he left for work at 5:45, he got another call from Amsterdam and sold another two hundred and fifty dollars worth of short term bills. In the casinos, a ten-dollar bet is referred to as a "dime". In the parlance of these traders "a hundred dollars" refers to one hundred million dollars. So before he had even left for work, Lasser had made two deals which totaled four hundred and fifty million dollars.



At work, Scott sat all day in front of a bank of computer monitors. He had eight open speaker phones on his desk and wore a set of head phones. He ate lunch at his desk- if he could find the time.

On that day there seemed to be something funny going on with the July 22 bills. He saw five hundred million dollars sold at quite low prices. While traders never know the identities of buyers or sellers, with experience, one can pick up hints which help identify the individuals involved. He sensed that the person who sold these bonds was a friend at another brokerage house named Josh. So he called Josh. Yep, Josh had just bought a billion and a half of the July 22 issue from a hedge fund and was trying to get rid of them.

Lasser was a short-term trader. He would hold the bills for a minute or two, sometimes as little as a few seconds. The difference in price at which he would buy or sell was small, usually no more than twenty-five dollar in a million dollars. That means that if the price was \$999.988 he would buy. If it went up to \$1,000.012 he would sell. Time is of the essence - a five hundred million dollar deal would only consume a few minutes.

At one point in the day, Scott had to go to the bathroom and his boss took over his desk. When he returned, he found that the boss had bought a hundred and seventeen million dollars worth of bills at a price that Scott thought was too high. He tried to get rid of them and eventually had to take a loss of one hundred and seventy thousand dollars. He was furious at his boss.

Every trader has his "number" - the amount of money in the bank which would allow them to leave the trading business forever. Lasser's number was two million. He made it and quit. There is a high turnover in the business. Some quit, but most get fired. In such a high tension atmosphere disagreement with a boss could result in your being gone - total elapsed time to "out the door" - twenty minutes. I estimate that Lasser made about \$500,000 a year. For his final year, he received a bonus of \$300,000 which is usually higher than the salary.



## ANOTHER WAR STORY - A MYSTERIOUS ADVENTURE



Paris was liberated in late August, 1944 and the occasion generated the mother of all celebrations. I and a couple of Air Corps types that I did not know, found a friendly bar. (The guys who deserved the celebration were already back to fighting the Germans.) The champagne and cognac flowed freely and free. For me too freely. The next thing I remember, I felt a breeze on my cheek. I opened my eyes to discover that I was alone in the back seat of a Jeep traveling in the countryside. There were two guys in front - then, I noticed they had helmets on. Curious - I did not even own a helmet. Then I spotted the two rifles next to me. My foggy brain tried to sort things out and I had some awful thoughts - had I volunteered to fight the Germans? I mulled things over for a while and finally came up with a sensible question,

"Where are we headed". The reply was unexpected and very comforting, "Paris". Wonderful, but that left me with a big question - where had I been? I could not think of a sensible question, so we rode on in silence. In due time they dropped me off at Place Etoile, and I made my way back to my quarters. To this day, I have been unable to imagine a reasonable scenario that would get me from a bar with a couple of Air Corps types to a Jeep with a couple of combat infantry men returning from a place where I did not know I had been.

## FOREIGN AID AND PUBLIC OPINION - CONFUSION REIGNS

A public opinion poll (University of Maryland) came up with the following information about public attitudes toward foreign aid.

- 75% of the respondents feel that the United States spends too much on foreign aid.
- When asked what was their best hunch as to the percentage of the federal budget goes to foreign aid, the response averaged 18%.
- When asked what they thought was an appropriate percentage of the federal budget which should be devoted to foreign aid, the response averaged 8%.

It seems that people vastly overestimate the actual amount of foreign aid. The estimate of 18% is far more than the actual 0.8% which is committed to foreign aid. While 75% of the respondents feel that the nation spends too much on foreign aid, they also suggest that an appropriate amount should be ten times more than is currently being spent.

Americans are not mean-spirited about helping others. Eighty percent of those queried agree that the United States should be willing to share at least a small portion of its wealth with those in the world in great need. Of our 14.9 billion currently committed to foreign aid, 6.4 billion, or 43% is military aid.

How does the United States compare with other countries in helping less fortunate nations? Terribly! Of the twenty-one countries in The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, America ranks twenty-first - by far. Here is how the best and the worst rank in the percentage of humanitarian (less military) aid to less fortunate nations as a percentage of their Gross National Product in 1995.

Top five: Denmark, 0.96%, Norway, 0.87%, Netherlands, 0.81%, Sweden 0.77% France, 0.55%  
Bottom five: Portugal, 0.27%, Spain, 0.24%, New Zealand, 0.23%, Italy 0.15%, United States, 0.10%

## PRACTICAL JOKE

Passengers flying into the municipal airport were greeted by the rooftop sign WELCOME TO CLEVELAND. A nice touch by a civil-minded factory owner. But there was a catch - the plane was landing at the Buffalo airport. The city fathers had to ask the owner to remove the sign. It was causing too much confusion among arriving passengers.



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR JULY

Don Cooke Saturdays, July 7 & 21, 7:00. Ken Heck is leaving Ithaca for NYC. Come on the 7th to wish him well.  
Bart Deluca Saturday, July 14, 7:00 \$5/\$10 HORSE, casino rules  
Paul Rubin Saturday, July 28, 7:00 \$5/\$10 HOSE, casino rules  
Rich Sheinman Next game, Wednesday, August 1, 8:30  
Tom Reiss's game Thursdays July 12 & 26, at Don's at 8:00  
Chemistry Dept. Friday, July 20, 8:00 at Frank's  
English Dept. Wednesday, July 18, 7:30 at Arnie's



## AH! YOUTH

America lucked out in the Revolutionary War. While there were some Members of Parliament who believed that England was headed for disaster, most just did not understand what all the fuss in the colonies was about. On the other hand, on our side, we had a confluence of remarkably able individuals. And how young they were. We all know that Marquis de Lafayette played a vital role in the war. In 1777, he accepted an appointment as a Major General in the Continental Army, serving without salary. What is less known is that he was only 20 years old at the time. (He did, however, have six years of experience in the French Army).

In 1776, George Washington was 42; Thomas Jefferson, 33; John Hancock, 39; Alexander Hamilton, 21; John Adams, 41. Benjamin Franklin was the greybeard at 70.

As to the Continental Army, General "Mad Anthony" Wayne was 32; Captain John Paul Jones, 29; General Nathanael Greene, 36; General Thaddeus Kosciuszko, 30. Lieutenant Colonel John Mercer, who led the troops in the Battle of Princeton, was 18. Lieutenant Colonel Aaron Burr was 21.

Young they were - at least by the standards of our day. But in colonial days being "young" was probably very different. Life expectancy was lower so there were fewer old guys around. But this fact can't explain it all. Excluding the high rate of child mortality, males died at an average age of 65. Of the 56 individuals who signed the Declaration of Independence, only 12 were over 50. If such an important document were to be signed today, it is unlikely that any one of the 56 would be less than 50. It may just be that revolution is a young person's game. Also, in those days real life began at a younger age. And you do not have to go that far back. My father-in-law, at age 14, moved away from his family to another city to apprentice as a printer's devil.

About a century later, in the Civil War period, the ages of the leaders had substantially increased. In 1863, Lincoln was 54 and his Vice President, Andrew Johnson, was 55. There were two generals who were quite young, Jeb Stuart at 30 and Phillip Sheridan at 32. As for the others, Grant was 41; Lee 56; Hooker, 49; McClelland 49. Meade, 48; Early, 47 and Admiral Farragut, 62.

One war later, the leaders were still older. Roosevelt was 60; Truman, 58; Patton, 57; Marshall, 62; Arnold, 56; MacArthur, 62; Admiral Leahy, 67. Eisenhower was the youngest at 52.

I do not know how to interpret the above information. In the Revolution, older people were probably more likely to opt for the status quo. Is it that the world has become more complicated, so that more experience is required? Or perhaps, we do not credit young people with the ability they actually have. One thing is certain - we have far less confidence in our youth than was previously true. Makes me wonder, is it that we have so little confidence in them because we treat our young men and women as boys and girls and, as a result, they never get the opportunity to show their ability?



## RESTLESS

Right after victory in the War of Independence, America had a hard time settling down. In a time span of a little more than a year, 1784 - 1785, Congress met in five different cities, Philadelphia, Princeton, Annapolis, Trenton and New York.

## ONE SMART BOOKIE

There was an article in the May issue of the Atlantic Monthly, written by Jack El-Hai, which tells the story about a St. Paul bookie named Max Weisberg. On the morning of February 5, 1999, the St. Paul police, armed with a search warrant, invaded Max's home. They found \$126,989, in cash, all over the place, from garbage bags to pockets of jackets. ( On a previous visit they had seized \$437,000 in cash ). They also hauled away notebooks recording gambling transactions, betting slips and betting line information. When asked where he got the money he admitted that it came from sports betting. An open and shut case? Not quite. Weisberg, caught red-handed would never be charged. The prosecutor had tried it twice before and had failed to convince a jury that Max was guilty. The defense had been able to prove that Weisberg, with an IQ of between 55 and 70 was unable to distinguish between right and wrong. Further, the public had taken an interest in the case and did not like the idea of a mean old DA beating up on a harmless old man.

Max did not do well in school and at the age of 15 was committed to the Fairbault School for the Feeble-minded. After a year there he escaped and eked out a living selling flowers on a downtown street corner. He became widely known and loved by many. It was there that he discovered his only ability - sportsbetting. Eventually, he would be diagnosed as having a savant syndrome which is defined as having a highly developed unique ability which stands out in sharp contrast to an overall mental handicap. It seems that Weisberg had an uncommon ability to look at a Las Vegas line and decide, usually correctly, that it was " four points off". It was not long before the St. Paul bookies decided that he won too often and refused to take his bets. As a result he went into business for himself. While he made scads of money he still lived as he did before. He had a hard time remembering the names of friends but he knew every Vegas line there was to know. In one of his early trials he was described as " probably the greatest gambling mind in the world".

Max is still in business, and his winning clients have learned to wait patiently for their payoff whenever the police clean him out.

## PREDICTING WINNERS

How good are the Las Vegas oddsmakers at predicting the outcome of sports events ? A lot depends on the sport. They do very well at college football and basketball with an average of 75% correct. Pro football and basketball are somewhat less predictable at 67% and 71% respectively. But pro baseball is devilishly hard to forecast. The best they can do is 55%, only a bit better than a random choice. Source: *Chance*, Vol. 10, 1997.

## ON AND ON AND ON

Goldsmith Maid was a trotter who broke the world record for the mile seven times between 1871 and 1874 and was undefeated for these four years. In her lifetime, she raced an astounding 426 races winning 350. But even more unusual was the fact that she ran all these races beyond the age at which most harness racers are retired. She had a strange career. To begin with she was a farm animal until the age of six. Her owner felt that she had the look of a champion and tried, unsuccessfully, for the next two years to break her to harness but she was so unruly that she would generally kick the sulky apart. At age eight, she was sold to another owner who finally got her into a race which she won. But it would be another four years, when she was twelve, until she ran another race. For harness horses, age twelve was generally the end of the line, but Goldsmith Maid was just beginning a remarkable career. At age fourteen she set her first world record and ran her best time, another world record, at age nineteen. At age twenty, she was the undisputed champion, losing a single race in the year. She was retired to pasture that year and died, at age 28, in 1893.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST



Don Cooke Saturday, August 18, 7:00. \$5/\$10

Bart Deluca Saturday, August 4 \$5/\$10 HORSE, casino rules

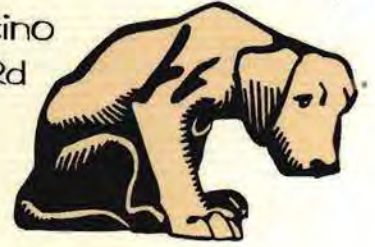
Paul Rubin Saturdays, August 11 & 25, 7:00 \$5/\$10 HORSE, casino

Rich Sheinman Wednesdays, August 1 & 15 8:30 - 5 Knoll Tree Rd  
Tom Hunt will be there on the 1st.

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays August 16 & 30, at Don's at 8:00  
Note change in sequence

Chemistry Dept. Friday, August 24, 8:00 at Don's

English Dept. Monday, August 27, 7:30 at Isaac's



### Dog Days

### THE NINE OF DIAMONDS

In the recent World Series of Poker competition, the last two remaining players were Dewey Tomko and Carlos Mortensen, both professional poker players. At the beginning of the last hand Mortensen had \$4.1 million in chips and Tomko \$2 million. Tomko had A - A, pocket aces, and Mortensen was dealt K - Q.

The flop came 10 - J - 3 and Mortensen went all-in and Tomko called. The next card up was a 3, giving Tomko two pair. Mortensen now had K - Q - J - 10, his only hope was the long-shot straight. Up came the nine of diamonds for the \$1.5 million dollar win. -

Those of you who have been receiving the newsletter over the years, may remember another gambler who was on the edge of an abyss and was saved by the nine of diamonds. Nico Zographos, the point man of the Greek Syndicate, was one of the very few gamblers who died (in 1953) a rich man. He left \$20 million dollars that he had won playing Baccarat before WWII. The games were private games with the wealthiest people in the world, and millions of dollars could change hands in an evening. At one point, Zographos was down to his last \$250,000 and decided risk it all on one hand against a group of gamblers. At the last turn of the cards he needed an eight or a nine to win. The nine of diamond came up and he never looked back. He made the nine of diamonds his personal logo and christened his yacht with the name.

The nine of diamonds seems to turn up in many ways. The singer, Phoebe Snow, has a song All Over  
The first two lines are:

Nine of Diamonds, Nine of Diamonds,  
Lord, that's a lucky card.

When cards are used to tell fortunes, the nine of diamonds is the card signifying money.

In an old Scottish card game, Pope Joan (the name is based on the story that one of the early Popes was a woman), the most important card, the Pope, is the nine of diamonds.



The nine of diamonds is sometimes known as the "Curse of Scotland". The origin of the term is thought to go back to an infamous event in Scottish history, the treacherous Massacre at Glencoe on the night February 13, 1692. The massacre of all male members of a MacDonald clan was orchestrated by John Dalrymple, son of the First Earl Of Stair, who was loyal to the English King William. Dalrymple sent a group of loyalist soldiers to the rebellious MacDonalds under a pretext of negotiation and the MacDonalds extended them hospitality. But in the middle of the night, the soldiers fell upon them as they slept and killed every male member. Even the English were shocked by such treachery and the name John Dalrymple lived in infamy. The Dalrymple crest displays a field of nine diamonds.

### THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

The hottest days of the summer are known as the Dog Days. It is actually a definite period, from July 3 to August 11. The name goes back to ancient Rome. They believed (erroneously) that it was so hot because the star Sirius, the brightest star in the sky, rose with the Sun during this period and added to the heat from the Sun. Sirius is the major star in the constellation Canes Major, and sometimes known as the Dog Star. The Romans named the period The Canicular Days.





## THE DOLLAR FOLLIES



Congressman Merrill, of the House Finance Committee, made the following statement. "The coinage was originally a mistake, and that being so nearly the size and weight of the twenty-five cent piece, the two are often confused".

The congressman was not complaining about the Susan B. Anthony Dollar, but about the new twenty-cent coin introduced in 1878. One would think that Congress and the U. S. Mint would have learned something from the experience - but no. In the late 1970s, the government seriously tried to phase out the paper dollar with a coin. The reason for the action was to save money with a long lasting coin. Another factor was that other countries make a successful transition. But the effort was doomed from the start. The vending machine industry had bought off enough congressmen that the ground rules which were established for the coin, made success most unlikely. For example, the coin had to be round.

The resulting Susan B. Anthony Dollar, being only slightly larger than a quarter, was a resounding failure in trying to convert people to substituting a coin for the paper dollar. Further, for the most part, the vending machine industry did not even bother to modify their machines. The Post Office did make their stamp machines compatible - mainly as a way to get rid of the dollar coins that had accumulated. Some urban transit systems also complied. Underlying all this is a Gallup poll which recorded 77% of the respondents objected to replacing the dollar bill with a coin.

Undaunted, congress and the mint tried again in the late 1990s. Again the vending machine industry precluded success. Congress decreed that the new coin had to be the same size and weight of the failed Susan B. Anthony Dollar. This action incorporated into the new coin the greatest problem of its successor.

Other countries which had successfully converted from paper to coins, had gradually phased out the paper species, forcing the use of a coin. I do not believe that this will happen in this country. In such a case the vending machine industry, which seems to be in control of the situation, would then really have to modify all their machines.

One may wonder why the mint embarked on an effort to produce a second dollar after the failure of the first attempt. My belief is that the mint must be aware that there is little chance of replacing the paper dollar with a coin in the near future. But the mint is a money-making machine in more ways than one. In the year 2000, the mint made a profit of 2.3 billion dollars. Eight hundred million of this came from the Sacagwea Dollar. The coin costs 12 cents to make, lasts for decades and few will ever be redeemed. Another billion dollars came from the sale of 4.4 billion state-series quarter which cost 4 cents to make and sell for twenty-five.

There were about one billion Susan B. Anthony Dollars produced. That's four for every person in the United States. The mint has none left, nor do the banks and there are none in circulation. Where are your four? No wonder the mint loves to put out new dollars. The mint claims that the Sacagwea dollar is "wildly successful". I wonder how they define success?

### A FLUKE

In 1905, in Seattle Washington, James Blackstone was having a good night at the bowling alley. He needed one more strike to score 300, a perfect game. A 300 game in those days was much rarer than today and a crowd gathered around to watch. Blackstone threw the ball right in the slot. But one of the pins split in half, and to his consternation, one of the halves came up standing. The American Bowling Congress was asked for a ruling and decided to credit him with a score of 299 1/2. While he may have been disappointed, he had the consolation of getting a score which is much more difficult to obtain.

After I wrote this, I became curious about the word "fluke". It did not seem to have the usual roots. I was only partially successful in tracking down its origin. The term comes from billiards - A lucky and unusual shot with a favorable outcome. Maybe the term comes from that lucky guy, Joe Fluke.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER

Don Cooke Saturday, September 8, 7:00. \$5/\$10  
Bart DeLuca Saturday, Sept. 22. \$5/\$10 HORSE, casino rules  
Paul Rubin Saturdays, Sept 1, 15 & 29, 7:00 \$5/\$10 HOSE, casino  
Rich Sheinman Wednesday, September 12, 8:30 - 5 Knoll Tree Rd  
Tom Reiss's game Thursdays September 13 & 27, at Don's at 8:00  
Chemistry Dept. Friday, September 21, 8:00 at Len's  
English Dept. Wednesday 19, 7:30 at Lamar's



### THE WONDERS OF NATURE, SURVIVAL



It is noon in the Mojave Desert in Southern California. The surface temperature is 160 degrees and there is not a sign of life. But every so often, for periods spaced twenty years or so apart, after an unusually heavy rain, the surface is teeming with life. What kind of life? Strange to say, aquatic life, such as shrimp and frogs. Many millions of years ago, what is now the Mojave Desert was the bottom of a sea. Over eons and eons the creatures which inhabited that sea have managed to survive in a truly alien environment.

The species have developed remarkable survival mechanisms. Take the spade-foot frog for example. They lay low for decades awaiting a heavy rainfall. (The technical name for this state is estivation, or summer hibernation). The tricky part is that they must await true downpour. In order for the species to survive, the rain water must last long enough for a new generation of tadpoles to develop into frogs which takes about ten days. So the dormant frogs must be able to predict that a rainstorm will keep the desert floor wet for ten days. Such storms are rare indeed. How does the frog know the rainfall is sufficient to yield the essential ten days? The last act of a new generation of frogs is to burrow deeply into the sand using a foot which is shaped like a spade. They bury themselves two feet below the surface. Only a rainfall of sufficient depth to keep the surface wet for ten days will seep down the two feet to awaken the dormant frog. Once awakened, the frog digs his way to the surface to begin the dance of life. So this frog is active only ten days in a life span of decades.



The shrimp of the desert have a life span of about two weeks. They live, in teeming millions, in pools of water resulting from unusually heavy rain. The last act of their short life is to burrow into the sand to deposit the eggs of the next generation. These eggs, indistinguishable from grains of sand, will remain there for decades awaiting a rainstorm with sufficient water to leave pools that will last for the fifteen day which are required for the eggs to hatch, for the shrimp

to grow, spawn and leave a supply of eggs for the next generation. The eggs are covered with a thick hard coating that prevents them from hatching prematurely. Only a rainstorm of sufficient intensity will initiate the process.

And then there is the larch tree. This tree produces an overabundance of seeds, of which only a tiny percentage germinate because of a thick, waxy coating that is impervious to water. One might wonder why so much energy is wasted on producing so many useless seeds. The answer is evident after a forest fire. The fire melts the waxy surface of the seeds and larch seedlings are in profusion on the burned out forest floor.



## Poker Schedule for October



Don Cooke Saturday, October 20, 7:00. \$5/\$10

Bart Deluca Saturday, Oct 6, \$5/\$10 HORSE, casino rules

Paul Rubin Saturdays, Oct. 13 & 27, 7:00 \$5/\$10 HOSE, casino rules

Rich Sheinman Wednesday, October 10, 8:30 - 5 Knoll Tree Rd

Tom Reiss's game Thursday Oct. 18, at Don s at 8:00 **NOTE CHANGE**

Chemistry Dept. Friday, October 19, 8:00 at Geoff s

English Dept. Monday October 29, 7:30 at Glenn s

Tom Dilliplane New listing. Game is \$2 anytime, every Monday, 8:30. Tom lives at 145 Yapple Road. To get there south on Rt 96, right on Comfort Rd. right on Yapple Rd. first house on left. 257-0275

The following item was prepared for the October newsletter and was finished two days prior to the events of September 11. Here it is, as then written.

### STAR WARS AND THE BEDOUIN

There is a basic point about the planned missile defense system that I don't understand. What might it be used for? It is supposed to defend against missiles from rogue nations. But is this how rogue nations would choose to deliver a nuclear device? Let's imagine that we are listening in on a meeting of Saddam Hussein and his technical advisors. His chief scientist opens the discussion.

"Your Highness, I am happy to report that we have been successful in constructing a nuclear device. We have not tested it, but we are convinced that it will work. It is quite a dirty bomb, but all the better to punish the infidel. We must immediately speed our work on a delivery system, but I am afraid that it will take a lot of money". Saddam interrupts, "More importantly, it will also take a lot of time and I'll be in Paradise before you finish. Further, we do not have the technical expertise to build a reliable system and, even if we did, the Americans would bomb any missile site as soon as it appears on their satellite pictures. But, fortunately, we already have a delivery system". "I don't understand", says the advisor, "how we have such a system". "My friend, you are a brilliant scientist, but you have spent too much time in American universities. You think like them - not like a bedouin.

Why build a missile? There are dozens of ships entering New York Harbor every day. Can't one of those be ours? Can it be that with our millions of dollars and an unending supply of martyrs willing to die to inflict a blow to the Great Satan, that we are unable to explode a device in New York City? Tons of drugs are shipped into the Evil Empire. I have read that one drug lord is accused of shipping 30 tons of drugs a month into the country. We need only a couple of hundred pounds. Do you mean that we could not buy some cooperation? Don't forget that we have money that would make even the drug lords take notice. Or a cargo plane - there are hundreds of such flights entering that cursed country every day, to say nothing of tens of thousands of trucks. Or could we not have a low-flying missile launched from a spot one hundred miles off New York City? The city is a big target and it does not matter if we miss by a mile.

My friends, these are only a few ideas that come to mind in a few minutes. There must be many more possibilities. But the last thing I want to do is to use a missile delivery system - it seems to me to be much less reliable than simpler methods.. Now, go off and come back in two weeks with some imaginative ways to deal a devastating blow to the Great Satan". As his aides leave, Saddam thinks to himself about what will happen to Iraq if he is successful.

PS I hope that our borders are not as porous as Saddam believes they are.



## THE WONDERS OF NATURE - HIGH TECH STUFF



● In the Gulf War, the United States Army had an overwhelming advantage. They could fight at night, thanks to infrared vision devices. The technique, first widely used in this conflict, is by no means new. For millions of years some species of snake, including the python and rattlesnake, have had two sets of eyes. One set is sensitive to a range of wavelengths not unlike the range of human vision. The other is in the infrared region allowing the snake to hunt at night. The sensitivity of the infrared vision peaks at ten microns and it is not a coincidence that radiation from warm-blooded animals also peaks at ten microns. At the time that this research was done (1972) the snake reacted about a thousand times faster than man-made sensors and with much greater sensitivity. For the scientifically minded, the rattlesnake can detect a radiation intensity of 0.00002 calories per square centimeter. Ten microns is in the rotational range of molecular spectra so the detector must be an energy detector. With all that thermal noise!



● Radar and sonar, invented in WWII, were important factors in the Allied victory. But, here again, nature was there first. Bats hunt insects by echolocation, emitting a sound wave and measuring the time it takes for the reflected sound to return and the direction of the signal. To get the range of an object, the returning signal is timed. To distinguish between two targets, is necessary to measure the time between the two returning signals. In man-made sonar, the devices can measure two returning signals twelve millionths of a second apart - bats only need two millionths of a second.

It is not that modern radar is clumsy. A radar station on the east coast can track a target the size of a basketball moving across the Pacific Ocean 5000 miles away.



● The newly heralded global positioning devices are remarkable. You can buy one for a couple of hundred dollars which, by using satellite positioning, gives your location to 100 meters or so. Accuracies of 20 meters are possible but the government limits the accuracy of devices that you can buy. But this is old hat for many animals and it is hard to beat the hummingbird which has an accuracy measured in inches. When they leave Ithaca they fly to Costa Rica, a trip of 2000 miles. Next spring they will return to your back yard, to the same tree and the same branch and, at times, renovate their old nest. One other remarkable ability of this little fluff, weighing only one-seventh of an ounce, is that they fly to southern Florida when they leave in the fall. Then in one nonstop flight of more than 500 miles they cross the Gulf of Mexico. It can also do something a helicopter cannot do, fly upside down.



I Do not believe you can ever really appreciate inflation unless, at one time in your life you bought a glass of beer for a nickel and enjoyed the free lunch that went with it.



## Poker Schedule for November

Paul Rubin Saturdays, Nov. 3 & 24, 7:00 \$5/\$10 HOSE.

Bart Deluca Saturday, Nov. 10 \$5/\$10 HORSE, casino rules

Don Cooke Saturday, November 17, 7:00. \$5/\$10

Rich Sheinman Wednesday, November 14, 8:30 - 5 Knoll Tree Rd

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays Nov. 8 & 29, at Don's at 8:00  
Note changes - the 22nd is Thanksgiving.

Chemistry Dept. Friday, November 16, 8:00 at Milt's

English Dept. To be decided

Tom Dilliplane Game is \$1/\$2/\$3. Every Monday, 7:30. Tom lives at 145 Yapple Road.  
257-0275

### A LITTLE PROBLEM

A dealer bought an article for \$7 and sold it for \$8. He then bought it back for \$9 and sold it for \$10. What is his overall profit on the transactions? The answer is at the bottom of page 2

### ENOUGH ALREADY, OR, THE BATTLE OVER THE PENNY

There is a move in Congress to deemphasize the penny. The proposal would round up or down the charge to the nearest nickel after taxes had been added. A charge of \$27.72 would be rounded down to \$27.70 while a charge of \$27.73 would be rounded up to \$27.75. Individual items would still be priced to the penny and credit card charges and checks would still retain the penny. If history is any indication, the proposal will fail. The struggle over the use of the coin is a good illustration of how vested interest operates.

This year the mint will produce about 13 billion pennies which will be added to the 130 billion already in circulation. The word "billion" easily rolls off the tongue - but it is not so easy for the mind to comprehend just what a billion is. One hundred and thirty billion pennies divides up up about 500 coins, or three pounds for every man, woman and child in the country. The weight of pennies in circulation is 360,000 tons or the equivalent weight of four aircraft carriers. End-to-end the coins would circle the globe 62 times.

Why does the mint continue to add to this immense hoard? The answer is that people do not use the coins. They get them in change and accumulate them. So the stores need a continuous supply of new pennies. The penny uses 80% of the production capacity of the mint and 50% of its budget. The mint claims they make money on the coin because it costs only eight-tenths of a cent to produce one. However, the General Accounting Office claims that, if shipping costs are included, the mint loses millions of dollars a year on the coin. There is some evidence to support the GAO position. In 1980, the armed services adopted a rounding system in overseas bases because of the cost of shipping pennies.

There is a battle of special interests over the penny. There is an organization, Americans for Common Sense, which protects the penny by wrapping it in the American flag. The name is selected to indicate the grass-roots support of the "American People". Actually, it is a lobbying group for the zinc industry. Pennies are 98% zinc and the industry sells about 40,000 tons of the metal to the Mint each year.

Newspaper articles appear from time-to-time extolling the penny. In 1990, there was a Gallup poll that showed that an overwhelming majority of those surveyed were against any attempt to eliminate the penny. The poll was financed by the Dudek Company. I tracked down the Dudek Company and found that they make stamping machines for the production of coins. (Examining the questions in the poll, I am convinced that the Gallup organization would lend its name to such a highly biased line of questioning.)



Wishing you a  
Happy Thanksgiving



A Penn State Professor of Economics testified before Congress that the elimination of the penny would cost the economy 600 million dollars a year. Not noted in his testimony was the fact that the financial support for the study came from the zinc industry. Americans for Common Sense periodically issues news releases about "the shortage of pennies" or the "rampant inflation" which would result from it's elimination.

There is another side to the coin, so to speak. It is The Coin Coalition. This is another lobbying group backed by organizations of merchants which want to deemphasize the penny. They produce studies to illustrate the cost of handling the penny. They claim that the use of the penny costs every store in the nation an average of \$2000 annually. They also note that they must purchase a continuing supply of the coin. "Purchase" is the correct word, because banks, in bulk sales, add a surcharge of six to ten percent to cover their cost of handling the penny. The zinc industry puts up more money for the effort to protect the penny than the merchants are willing to provide to eliminate it, so the penny will probably remain.

## FAMINE



A Horrible Picture of Famine  
The photo won a Pulitzer Prize

The worldwide production of food is about four pounds per day for every man, woman and child - enough for an adequate diet of over 2000 calories. Yet, there are tens of millions starving and a vast number with diets below the survival level. How can it be? While there are many reasons, the overwhelming one is that the starving people cannot afford to buy the food which could be available if they had the money. The Great Famine of Ireland, in the mid nineteenth century, is a perfect example of the phenomena. During the years of the famine, out of a

population of 8 million, one million starved to death and one and a half million emigrated, mostly to America. In a sense, "famine" is the wrong word. Only the potato crop, the staple of the farmer, failed. But Ireland still produced more than enough other food to feed everyone. But the English landlords could get more money by shipping the food to England than the tenant farmers were able to pay. The Irish members of Parliament pleaded with their colleagues to allow the food to remain in Ireland, but they voted for a free marketplace. The suffering of the Irish became an international scandal and nations tried to help. The Sultan of Turkey sent shiploads of food and the U. S. Navy allowed it's ships to be use to transport food from American charitable organizations. But for every ship entering an Irish harbor with help from abroad, three were leaving, carrying Irish grown food to England.

## THE ANSWER TO 'A LITTLE PROBLEM'

Frequently, the answer comes up with a profit of one dollar. The reasoning goes like this: The dealer gained a dollar when he sold the object for \$8. He lost a dollar when he bought it back for \$9, and gained a dollar when he sold it for \$10. Profit \$1 ( +\$1 -\$1 +\$1 = \$1 ).

But the correct answer is that the dealer made \$2. Now I have to convince some of you that the dealer did not lose a dollar when he bought the object back for \$9. What if the dealer, instead of buying the original item back for \$9, bought an entirely different article for \$9 - would you say he lost a dollar? Suppose the dealer started the day with \$100. He bought the object for \$7 - so he now has \$93. He sells it for \$8 making his total \$101. Now he buys the article back for \$9 - he now has \$92. Then he sells it for \$10 leaving him, at the end, with \$102. He started with \$100 and now has \$102 - a profit of \$2.

Source: The Lady or the Tiger by Raymond Smullyan

## RAPID FIRE

A well-trained howitzer crew can be loading a sixth shell while the first five shells are still in the air.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

Paul Rubin Saturdays, Dec. 1, 15 & 29, 7:00 \$5/\$10 HOSE.

Bart Deluca Saturday, Dec. 8 \$5/\$10 HORSE, casino rules

Don Cooke Saturday, December 22, 7:00. \$5/\$10

Rich Sheinman Wednesday, December 12, 8:30 - 5 Knoll Tree Rd

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays Dec. 13 & 27, at Don's at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, December 7, 8:00 at Mike Lakin's.  
Mike lives at 306 Fairmount. From Dryden Rd.  
& Cornell St. west on Dryden Rd toward Colegetown.  
2nd left, 2nd house on right. 256-9308

English Dept. Monday, December 19, 7:30 at Mike's

Tom Dilliplane Game is \$1/\$2/\$3. Every Monday, 7:30 (not Christmas Eve.) Tom  
lives at 145 Yapple Road. 275-0275

### ANOTHER LITTLE PROBLEM

A bottle of wine cost \$10. The wine alone cost \$9 more than the bottle. How much did the bottle cost? The answer is at the bottom of the next page.

### ODDITIES OF THE CALENDAR



JANUS

Did you ever wonder about the names of the months. September. October. November and December? They have the Latin prefixes for seven, eight, nine and ten, even though they are the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth months. The answer lies in the fact that when these months were named, the Roman calendar had only ten months. The new year began in the Spring with the month of Martius (the god of Agriculture), followed by Aprilis (origin unknown), Maius (named for Maia, the most beautiful daughter of Atlas), Junius (for Juno, protectress of women), Quintillis (fifth, but later changed to July in honor of Julius Caesar), Sextillis (sixth, but changed to August in

honor of Augustus Caesar), then September, October, November and December (seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth). Later, two months were added to the front end of the calendar. Januarius and Februarius. Januarius was named for the god Janus, who looks forward and backwards. The origin of Februarius is not certain.

### TALES OF AFGHANISTAN

In 1838 Britain invaded Afghanistan in the belief that Russia had aspirations in that direction. The war (known as the First Afghan War - of three the British were to fight) went well for the British. They occupied Kabul, established a puppet ruler, Shah Soojay, and established a government bureaucracy in the city. But things were seething underneath, and, in 1841, the Afghans revolted. The British garrison was overwhelmed and sued for peace. A treaty was negotiated by which the British would leave Afghanistan and return to India. In return, a group of 18 Afghan tribal chiefs agreed to provide an escort group to assure safe passage to Jalalabad, a British garrison fort, ninety miles away. On January 6, 1842, with the temperature near zero and snow on the ground, the British left Kabul. They left alone because the promised escort failed to materialize. There were 4500 British and Indian soldiers, 12,000 noncombatants (including many women and children), and 2000 camels in the line of march which stretched over five miles. But the 18 tribal chiefs did not control all the tribes and the attacks began before the rear guard even cleared Kabul. On January 13, a single British survivor, Surgeon William Brydon of the medical corps, riding a staggering, wounded pony arrived at the gate of the fort in Jalalabad. Over the next few days, a half dozen natives, the only ones of the 16,500 to make it, struggled in.

Later that summer, the British formed an "Army of Retribution", an overwhelming force which marched on Kabul. They rescued the British women and children which the Afghans had spared in the hope of ransom (the non-British were either killed or left to perish). They sacked a number of cities and the Grand Bazaar in Kabul, then promptly, and wisely, returned to India.

Peace  
On Earth

At least,  
we can hope



I learned of this event when I decided to study up on Afghanistan. It is a desolate, tragic country. One reads that they have been at war for twenty years. But, as I see it, they have always been at war. If there was not an external threat, there was civil war or they were invading another country. They are a warrior people. Their history seems to be one of rebellion, assassination, treachery, betrayal, revenge, internicine warfare and savagery, taught at a young age, which is beyond our comprehension. Woe betide the Ranger who falls into their hands. As Kipling wrote:

When you are wounded and left on Afghanistan plains,  
And the women come out to cut up what remains,  
Just roll to your rifle and blow out your brains,  
An go to your Gawd like a soldier.



In the present context, history repeats itself. In 1834, in the reign of Shah Dost Mahomed, Afghanistan was invaded by Sikh tribes from India. The Shah's brother, the Sirdar of Peshawar, entered into a treasonous plot with the Sikhs to surrender the city. ( Family and tribal loyalty are important in Afganistan - but, also, business is business ). In turn, the Sikhs double-crossed the brother, who had to flee for his life. "Dost Mahomed declared himself to be the "Commander of the Faithful" and declared

Dost Mahomed a holy war against the Sikhs. Thousands streamed to his banner. From Turkistan and the hills beyond, from the grim country of the Hindu Kush, Ghilzyes, Kuzzilbashis and rugged Uzbegs on horse and foot, who could lift a matchlock or wield a sword in the name of the Prophet "... They were described, at the time, as "Savages from the remotest recesses of the mountainous districts, who were dignified with the profession of the Mohammedan faith --- concentrated themselves around the standard of religion, and were prepared to slay, plunder and destroy, for the sake of God and the Prophet, the unenlightened infidels of the Punjab". The Sikhs were repulsed, but Peshawar was never recovered by Afghanistan and is now part of Pakistan.

Source: Mostly, *The Fierce Pawns* by Patrick Macrory, 1966

## THE SMELL OF MONEY

This is a term which is sometimes used to describe an anticipation of a windfall financial deal. However, in reality, money does have a distinctive odor. An article in the New York Times 11/12/01 tells how different government agencies are now training dogs to track down ordinary, hidden cash. They are extremely efficient at the task.

## THE COLD WAR IS OVER ???

The United States and Russian still have a total of 13,000 "operationally deployed", nuclear, warheads aimed at each other. To my mind, it was madness even when the cold war was on. In today's paper (11/12/01) I read that the situation is recognized as a problem.

## ANSWER TO A "SIMPLE PROBLEM"

The cost of the bottle is not one dollar. If it were, the wine, being nine dollars more than the bottle, would be \$10, which can't be. The bottle costs \$. 0 50, making the wine \$9 50 for a total of \$10. The problem has to be carefully read. "Nine dollars more" is not "Nine times more".



I hope that you are amused by the series of whimsical British pub signs. The pubs are actual places but the signs are a product of my imagination.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Paul Rubin Saturday, January 5, 7:00 \$5/\$10 HOSE  
Saturday, January 26, noon, Poker Tournament and party.  
Bart Deluca Saturday, January 12, \$5/\$10 HORSE, casino rules  
Don Cooke Saturday, January 19, 7:00. \$5/\$10  
Rich Sheinman Wednesday, January 9, 8:30 - 5 Knoll Tree Rd  
Tom Reiss's game Thursdays Jan. 10 & 24, at Don's at 8:00  
Chemistry Dept. Friday, January 25, 8:00 at Fred's  
English Dept. Monday, January 28, 7:30 at Steve's  
Tom Dilliplane Game is \$1/\$2/\$3. Every Monday, 7:30 275-0275



### THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE



Death and the Physician  
A woodcut by Hans  
Holbein (1497-1534)

George Washington retired from public life in 1797 and went back to his estate in Mount Vernon in Virginia. Hale and hardy at 66, one snowy December morning in 1799 he decided to go horseback riding. That afternoon he developed a cold and a fever and his physicians were summoned. The usual treatment for fever in those days was blood letting. They drew blood and Washington got weaker, so they drew more blood. Eventually he became so weak that he asked them to let him die. The cause of death? Most likely loss of blood.

Bleeding of those who were ill went back to before Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, who lived in 400 BC. Some ancient physician thought it was a good idea and the procedure appeared in all medical texts, even one published in 1920. There was not an iota of evidence as to the efficacy of the method but it had the authority of tradition. At the turn of the Eighteenth Century, medicine relied "heroic" treatments, such as blood letting, purging, treatment with mercury salts (enough to bring the patient to death's door), and the use of ground-up insects. The attitude was that strong measures had to be taken. The treatments were terrible ordeals for the patients. Few of the procedures had any rational basis and usually did more harm than good.

From the vantage point of hindsight, one can wonder how such misguided efforts went on so long with no evidence that they did any good. My guess is that the physicians did think they had evidence. They tried some awful, useless treatment and the patient got better. Encouraged, they went on to ten more patients and they also recovered. The error lay in the assumption that the treatment was the cause of the patients' recovery. In reality, the patient survived in spite of the physician. Recovery resulted from the wondrous ability of the human body to protect itself from the slings and arrows to which it is subjected. The concept of using a control group to verify efficacy was to come later.

It was not until about 1830 that the light began to dawn. There was a discovery that would change the basic character of medical treatment. The discovery was considered to be heretical by most the profession and was only slowly accepted over a number of decades. What was this "remarkable discovery"? Only that a large majority of those who are ill will recover on their own with no medical intervention at all. It is hard to imagine that such a widespread phenomena went unnoticed for so long. Of course, the physicians never saw those who recovered without medical treatment.



As a result of the recognition that illnesses could just go away, the practice of medicine entered a nihilistic, or do-nothing phase. The primary role of the physician was to provide sympathy and consolation to the patient and the family for the pure and simple reason that, except for a few illnesses, they did not know what measures to take or even what disease they were dealing with. The usual treatment involved rest, diet, country air and a prescription of doubtful value.

Medicine, as we know it now, began in the 1930s, when the number of specific chemical compounds which could be identified as treatment for specific diseases greatly increased. Sulfa drugs and penicillin gave the doctor some confidence in providing advice.

Let me illustrate the profound change in medicine in one lifetime by the following : I was born in 1918 - at home. To the best of my knowledge, the first doctor to put a stethoscope to my chest was when I joined the army in 1942. Things such as annual physicals and visits to pediatricians were to come later. Those who were well never went to a doctor. In fact, sick people never went to a doctor - it was only those who were very sick. Of course, the time was the Depression, there was no health insurance and one did not spend money frivolously.

But maybe the medical profession is not yet out of the woods. There is a growing movement, called Evidence Based Medicine, that is subjecting many medical recommendations to scientific scrutiny. ( New York Times 12/9/01). "Some experts estimate that only 20% of medical practices are based on rigorous research evidence. The rest is based on what has been published in books repeatedly without independent testing, or, what doctors have always said will work. In other words, it is kind of a folklore". One example used is the recommendation of "bed rest", first proposed by Hippocrates and promulgated by eons of physicians. On examination it was found that "bed rest" is just the wrong thing to prescribe for most ailments. Activity in such cases is better for the stricken.

## THE BUSINESS OF FARMING



Farming can be a hard business. The large majority of the nations farmers do not generate an income which is commensurate with the labor and risk involved. But then there are others. One percent of the farmers own 30% of the farmland and ranchland. This one percent generates 66% of the total national farm profits and each receives, on average, \$600,000 in federal subsidies. Eleven Fortune 500 Companies receive subsidies. At the other end, the bottom 80% of the farmers average a subsidy of \$1,080 and 66% get nothing at all. The government pours about 20 billion dollars a year into support for the farmers. But the smaller farmer sees little of this largesse. The farmers have a powerful lobby which, I suspect, represents only the millionaire farmers. Source: Official Lies. Bennet & Dilovento, 1992 and current information.

## SCARY AND REALLY SCARY

The authorities are beginning to believe that the anthrax which has caused so much trouble lately, came from batches which had been produced for the U. S. Army. That is scary. But even scarier is the fact that Russia, during the Eighties, employed 60,000 scientists working on biological warfare. During this time they produced thousands of tons of anthrax and hundreds of tons of smallpox. Source: New York Times

## INGENUITY

A great deal of ingenuity goes into the development of military weapons. The Air Force has what is called a Penetrator Bomb. It can be set to explode after penetrating to a specified depth through various materials - like 100 feet of earth or twenty-five feet of concrete. I wonder what kind of explosive can survive the shock of the G forces that must be generated when such a bomb meets concrete.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

Paul Rubin No games in February

Rart DeLuca Saturdays, February 16 & 23. \$5/\$10 HORSE, casino

Don Cooke Saturday, February 2 & 9. 7:00. \$5/\$10

Rich Sheinman Wednesday, February 13. 8:30 - 5 Knoll Tree Rd

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays Feb. 7 & 21. at Don's at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, February 15. 8:00 at Ben's

English Dept. Tuesday, February 26. 7:30 at Dan's

Tom Dilliplane Game is \$1 - \$4. Every Monday. 7:30 275-0275



### POOR MARTY

After dinner Clara Conn tries to get Marty Mark interested in some gambling. He is reluctant, saying that he had to be up early and had better get home. "OK" says Clara, "how about one \$50 even-money bet"? She then describes the bet. Here are three cards, one is red on both sides, one is black on both sides and the third is black on one side and red on the other. Put the three cards in a paper bag and pull out one card so that only one side shows. Marty does so and the face showing is red. "Now", says Clara, "I'll bet you \$50 even money that the other side of the card is red". Marty hesitates, expressing uncertainty about the odds. "It is really very simple, there are three cards and obviously it is not the black-black card. Of the other two cards, one is red-black and the other is red-red. It must be an even money bet. Right?" Marty is convinced and comes up with \$50. The card is turned over and the other side is red. "Well", says Marty as he goes off, "at least I got a fair shot on that one". Poor Marty - the chances of the other side of that card being red is two to one. When Clara correctly stated that there were only two cards, she did not go further and not that there were three combinations, red-black, red-red and red-red. So two out of three times, the back side of the card will be the same as the front side. There is another way to look at it. The cards are red-red, black-black and red black. Randomly pick a card. The chances of picking a card with the same color on both sides is two out of three.

### A HOUSE OF CARDS

The collapse of Enron brought a number of things to the light of day - at least for me. The company paid no federal income tax for four out of the five most recent years. Surprised? You should not be, it is common practice. A rapidly increasing number of corporations pay no tax at all. In 1998, of the Fortune 500 companies, ten percent did not pay a dime to the federal government. This was double the percentage of 1997. How is it possible for a company to avoid paying any tax? The basic technique is to transfer all the profit to a partner which is located somewhere that is not subject to American tax laws. There are many tax haven countries, such as the Cayman Islands, which changed its laws for this very purpose. The partner, after deducting a fee, returns the billions of dollars to the parent company in a form which is not subject to federal taxes. Voilà no taxable income - legal, but is it ethical? (Enron had 692 partners in the Cayman Islands).

I find it a bit difficult to distinguish this procedure from the laundering of money, which is illegal. But then, as Thomas Goldsmith said in 1746, "Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law". There is still more - in 1997 Enron paid \$17 million in taxes. But somehow, in 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2000 they collected \$382 million in tax refunds, having paid no taxes. Now that is a trick. In 1999 and 2000, Enron spent \$35 million on lobbying. While the public might be crying "REFORM", the accounting industry is now pouring massive amounts of new money into campaigns and lobbying. (In the year 2000 it gave \$14 million to legislators). To my mind, the lines are drawn - it is the integrity of our political system which is on trial. I am worried it won't meet the test.



## LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT

*The ingenuity of man, and woman, is without limit in devising ways to cheat a fellow man.*

*When banks calculate the interest to pay on your deposited money, the computer rounds the amount to be paid to the nearest penny. In this way \$27.658 becomes \$27.66 and \$27.653 becomes \$27.65. A computer programmer at a large bank made a tiny modification in the program. Instead of rounding up and down, the computer always rounded to the lower figure. With this program both of the above dollar amounts would be \$27.65. One of these two depositors lost a penny which was transferred to a secret account. A penny is not much, but with a bank with 100,000 customers, 50,000 depositors each lost one cent. This amounted to \$500 a month. The beauty of the method is that the books will always balance.*

*Source: Gotcha, Paradoxes to Puzzle and Delight. Martin Gardner*

*The above story reminds me of a case at the Cornell Medical School in New York. It is customary for patients undergoing cosmetic surgery to pay before the procedure is undertaken, for the obvious reason that persons who do not like the result, may be reluctant to pay. At Cornell the money was put into a holding account and transferred to the physicians on a monthly basis. The person in charge of the account decided (correctly) that the doctors would never know if he skimmed a bit off the top. The money was laundered through a travel agency where he had a girlfriend. The scheme worked fine but then he was terminated for reasons unrelated to the skimming. How did he get caught? Carelessness. The person replacing him sat down at his desk and opened the desk drawer. He saw all these bank deposit slips. Having some idea of how much his predecessor must have made, it seemed like a lot of money being deposited. He mentioned the fact to his boss and the crook wound up in jail.*

## THE FUTURE OF AFGANISTAN



*I read a depressing article in the New York Times describing how Afghanistan is reverting to its old ways - corruption, control by warlords, instability and the rule of the gun. I worried about the future of the country and its long-suffering people. Then I came across this picture on the front page of the Times of January 5. It shows a group of smiling, ebullent, enthusiastic young women waiting to register at the university. It gave me the feeling that perhaps there is some hope for the future of Afghanistan. If only they could get rid of the old men.*

## THE RICH GET RICHER

*The Congressional Budget Office recently completed a study on national income distribution. It found that the income of families in the middle income distribution rose from \$41,000 in 1979 to \$45,100 in 1997, corrected for inflation. This was an increase of 9%. Over the same period, the income of the top one percent rose from \$420,000 to \$1.016 billion, a gain of 140%. In 1979, the top one percent had an income 10 times that of typical families. In 1997, they had 23 times as much money.*



*The First Annual Don Cooke Poker Tournament was a roaring success, at least from my vantage point. Over forty people attended, of which 24 entered the hold'em tournament. Another six or eight players played in the subsequent games which lasted until 5 AM. The final table, of the tournament, in order of finish, was Brian Cook, Peter Cooke, Bart Deluca, Bob Boehecke, Burt Shapiro, Chris Murison, Peter Hoyt and Milt Zaitlin. In the final hand Brian Cook's two-pair beat Peter Cooke's pair of aces.*

*I appreciate all the effort of so many, especially the Gang of Five who made all the arrangement for this happy occasion.*



## Poker Schedule for March

Bart Deluca Saturdays, March 9 & 23

Don Cooke Saturdays, March 2, 30, 7:00. \$5/\$10

**NEW** - Saturday, March 16, 7:00 \$5, \$10, \$15, \$25

It was decided to try one game a month with progressive betting. In order to accommodate to a variety of preferences, the format will be RSE, Razz, Stud, and Eight or Better

Rich Sheinman Wednesday, March 13, 8:30 - 5 Knoll Tree Rd

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays March 7 & 21, at Don's at 8:00

This game has been losing players, so it was decided to increase the stakes to \$2/\$4 in the hope of attracting other players. Come join the game if you are so inclined.



Chemistry Dept. Friday, March 22, 8:00 at Frank's

English Dept. Thursday, March 28, 7:30 at Isaac's

Tom Dilliplane Game is \$4 anytime. Every Monday, 8:00 275-0275

### AND THE POOR GET POORER

The table below shows the savings that accrue to individuals in various income brackets as a result of the new tax reduction program. Thirty seven percent of the tax reductions go to the one percent with the highest incomes. Less than one percent of the reduction goes to the twenty percent with the lowest income. Those with incomes over a million dollars get a reduction of \$53,123 or two percent. Those with average incomes of \$9,300 get a reduction of \$66 or 0.7 percent. Makes one wonder about the soul of the nation.

TAX BRACKET	INCOME RANGE	AVERAGE INCOME	AVERAGE TOTAL TAX CUT	PERCENT OF TOTAL TAX CUT
Top 1%	More than \$373,000	\$1,117,000	\$53,123	37.6%
Next 4%	\$147,000 to \$373,000	210,000	3,345	9.5
Next 15%	\$72,000 to \$147,000	97,400	2,234	23.7
Next 20%	\$44,000 to \$72,000	56,400	1,026	14.5
Middle 20%	\$27,000 to \$44,000	34,400	600	8.5
Fourth 20%	\$15,000 to \$27,000	20,600	375	5.3
Bottom 20%	Less than \$15,000	9,300	66	0.9

Note: Figures are given at 2001 income levels, with the tax plan fully in place. Totals include both the income tax reductions and the repeal of the estate tax.

### STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

There was a nice little article in the 2/3/02 New York Times about home poker games. In it there was an important quote from Barbara Thompson, a spokesperson for the Manhattan District Attorney's office. "Games of poker are legal as long as anyone playing is just a player - that is, no one is taking a cut".



## JUST TOUCHING ALL POSSIBLE BASES

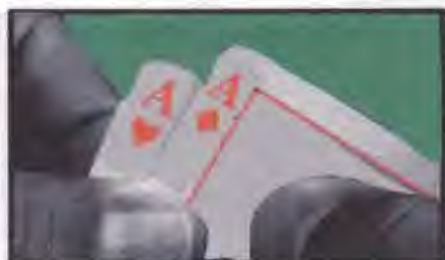
Chico, California has a city ordinance barring nuclear weapons. Anyone detonating one in the city limits is subject to a fine of \$500.

## HOURLY RATES



How about \$10,500 a minute or \$625,000 an hour? That was the hourly rate for the Trail Blazer's forward Shawn Kemp before he was suspended for drug violations. Kemp signed an eight year contract for 98 million dollars. That comes down to \$142,000 a game. This year, in 52 games, he has averaged 13.6 minutes a game.

## POCKET ROCKETS



One sometimes hears a comment to the effect that a pair of aces as a hold'em starting hand wins only one third of the pots in a ten-handed game. The source of this statement probably goes back to an article in a May 6, 1994 issue of *Card Player* by W. Lawrence Hill. Hill used a computer program to rank hold'em starting hands. He found that the Aces won more than any other hand, winning 31 % of the time.

The problem with this analysis is that the game being played by the computer is not really poker. The aces play against a randomly selected set of nine hands, all of which are played to the very end and the winner then determined. This means that hands which would certainly fold in a real game play all the way, and sometimes wind up with a full house.

I tried to simulate something closer to a real poker game by folding those hands that should not be played, before the flop. For this purpose I used the criteria for starting hands found in a book by Edwin Silberstang, *Winning Poker for the Serious Player*. These criteria are somewhat looser than those proposed by Slansky.

I dealt 200 rounds and, under these circumstances, the aces won 87 % of the pots. While 200 hands are not many it was comforting that the results of the first hundred runs was 87 %, the same as the second hundred. I do not think it is important whether the true answer is 85 % or 90 %. But it is surely higher than the 31 % obtained by playing all hands to the end.

Of course, this model does not simulate a real poker game either, but it comes closer than the model playing all hands to the river. In a real game the aces probably win more than 87 %, since the aces would probably raise before the flop and winnow out some potential winners.





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR APRIL

Bart Deluca Off playing poker all of April

Don Cooke No game April 6 (away). Saturdays, April 13 & 27, 7:00. \$5/90  
April 20 Progressive betting, HORSE

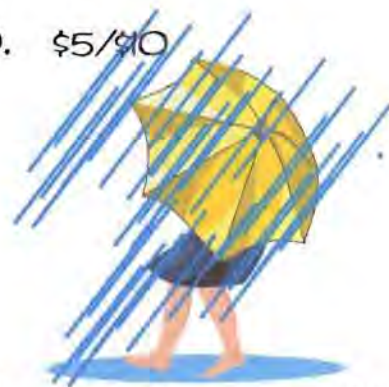
Rich Sheinman Wednesday, April 10, 8:30 - 5 Knoll Tree Rd

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays April 11 & 25, at Don's at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, April 12, 8:00 at Milt's

English Dept. Wednesday, April 24, 7:30 at Glenn's

Tom Dilliplane Every Monday, 8:00 \$4 anytime, 275-0275



### JUSTICE IS BLIND, OR IS SHE?

We sure could use some of this



It is said that Justice is blind. But she does seem to be able to distinguish between the color of one's collar - blue or white.

Case 1: A guy with a drug problem robs a liquor store of \$500 brandishing a screwdriver as a weapon. He is caught in the act, and despite the best effort of his public defender he will most likely serve time - probably hard time. In NY, if he is convicted as charged, the mandatory sentence is 5 to 25 years, but he will probably plea bargain a lesser sentence. And it is not over when he has served his time. The felony conviction will dog him for the rest of his life - it will come up every time he applies for a job. And, depending on the state, he cannot vote and he is ineligible for public assistance (even a mother with a child). When released, he will be on parole which means a curfew,

probably 10 pm, and surprise visits by his parole officer, anytime, day or night. If the parole officer finds a beer in the fridge - back to prison.

Case 2: Another guy steals \$500 million from the stockholders of a corporation by using inside information. If he is indicted, which is unlikely to begin with, he will be represented by a team of lawyers from the best law firm money can buy. It is unlikely that he will serve any time, much less hard time. In the rare case of someone actually going to jail it will be minimum security, with tennis court. And what does a felony conviction mean to a guy with \$500 million dollars? Let's follow Michael Milken, who stole a \$500 million dollars. He was sentenced to ten years in 1990 but only served two years - soft time. There is now a Milken Foundation which provides annual awards for teachers. There is a Milken Institute funded with Milken money and he owns a \$1.5 billion dollar company. And what happened to the guy who robbed the liquor store? After his experiences in jail, there is a good chance he will be back a second time. Justice is blind? Yeh, as a bat! Thanks to Alan Hays for his help on this one. Alan is a criminal defense lawyer.

### DIRTY POOL - EVEN FOR POLITICS

In 1950, Senator Millard Tydings, a democrat of Maryland was a target for the McCarthy hearings, where he was branded as a Communist sympathizer. In the senatorial campaign of that year he was challenged by Republican John Butler. In the final days of the campaign, the Butler organization released a picture showing Senator Tydings in deep conversation with the American Communist leader, Earl Browder. In those days any association with Communism was fraught with political peril and Butler won the election. But the picture was a fake, a composite of two separate pictures of the two individuals as shown below:



Tydings brought charges against Butler for unethical campaign practices to a Senate committee. The committee allowed the election results stand. What really amazes me is that Butler was reelected to a second term.



## COMPLACENCY



There are great and well- founded concerns about global warming. But, in a way, we are living in a fool's paradise. Recent information resulting from drilling into the Greenland ice cap is quite startling. Scientists, by studying the cores of ice, have been able to track surface temperatures back through time. ( for the scientists among us, the Oxygen16 - Oxygen18 ratio is temperature dependent). The data indicate that the planet has undergone remarkable temperature changes in the past. About 15,000 years ago the average annual temperature of Greenland warmed by 16 degrees in fifty years. About 12,000 years ago, the average annual temperature went up 15 degrees in a ten-year period. And, of course, 10,000 years ago Ithaca was covered by a mile thick sheet of ice.

Considering the fact that a global temperature change of a couple of degrees can wreak havoc with our climate, such large fluctuations would be momentous. During the Ice Age, so much water was tied up as ice that the ocean surface was 400 feet below the present level. The Atlantic shore was sixty miles to the east. Conversely, if the temperature rose enough to melt all the fresh water ice in the world, the levels of the oceans would rise by 275 feet. ( US Geological Paper 1386A).

Great cities of the world like New York, London, Rome, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sydney, Hong Kong, Singapore and a host of others would be covered by the sea. Whole islands would disappear, leaving perhaps a scattering of smaller islands. The Atlantic coast would move westward, beyond Philadelphia and Washington. Ithaca would be dry, but you would not have a long drive to the beach.

There does not seem to be a thing we could do to grapple with such impending doom. The current theory, first put forth by a Russian, Milutin Milanovitch in 1920, proposes that such drastic changes result from periodic aberrations in the orbit of the earth.

Our civilization developed in an unusually benign and stable period in the geological history of the earth. It is unlikely to remain that way.

(There is a nice description of the Greenland Ice Cap project in The New Yorker 1/7/02)

## INFLATION PLUS

I am the sort that keeps things such as old poker hands going back more than fifty years. I also have the stub of my first pay check. I earned it in 1941 as a chemist in Philadelphia and it is for an amount of \$60.93 which covered a two week period. But the interesting thing is that the deduction for Social Security was a quaint 63 cents. Converting the 63 cents to today's dollars makes for a grand sum of \$7 . 50. Take a look at the amount of the Social Security deduction from your paycheck. -far more than \$7 . 50.

## TINDERBOX

If I were a mullah in Iran, I would have one big worry. Forty-five percent of the population is fourteen or under. Dating is forbidden and TV is beginning to seep in. How long can they keep them down on the farm ?



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MAY

Bart Deluca Saturday, May 25, at 7:00

Don Cooke Saturday, May 4, 11, 18 at 7:00  
Progressive betting on the 18th.

Rich Sheinman Wednesday, May 8, 8:30 - 5 Knoll Tree Rd

Tom Reiss's game Thursdays May 9 & 23, at Don's at 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, May 31, at Frank's 8:00

English Dept. Tuesday May 28, 7:30 at Lamar's

Tom Dilliplane Every Monday, 8:00 \$4 anytime, 275-0275



*Beautiful Spring*

### HEADLINES

Here is a funny one from a recent issue of the Ithaca Journal: **Russia Accuses the CIA of Spying**

Another one: **Tiger Woods gets a Bogey**

How good is Tiger Woods? If it is headline news when a golfer gets a bogey, that is a good golfer. The reason for the headline was that Woods went 76 holes without a bogey.

The latter headline reminds me of one of my favorites from years back **Willy Mays Drops a Fly Ball**

The first line of the story went like this: "Nine years ago Mays dropped a fly ball. Last night he dropped another one".

### A POKER HAND TO REMEMBER

It was 1945, the war was over, and we were waiting in Germany to go home. An ideal situation to generate lot of poker. As I remember, we played only five card stud and draw. The wide panoply of games that we now play were sometime in the future. We were paid early in the month and there were quite a few tables operating. Toward the end of the month, it was usually down to one table and serious poker. We did not play with "funny money" but with unsigned US Postal Orders. The fact that they were unsigned, made them negotiable. I came home with some pretty dog-eared money orders.

I do not remember all the fine details of the hand, but I remember enough to get pretty close. We decided to go for a big game that night and raised the ante to \$5 each, instead of the usual dollar. This hand was five card draw. There were six players and each anted \$5 for a \$30 starting pot. But now we have to roll the 1945 dollar to the present day and the \$30 becomes \$300. In this hand I was dealt two pair eights up. I was under the gun and, opened for \$300. Two players called but the third raised \$300. I called as well as one other player. I drew an eight for a full house. The player to my left drew one and the last player (the raiser) drew two. I came out with a bet of \$1500 on my full house and the next player raised \$1500. The third player called the \$3000 and raised the entire pot with an \$8000 bet. I was pretty sure he had a full house, the eights-high had a fifty-fifty chance of winning and I was getting two-to-one for the money. Or could he be bluffing - \$8000 to win \$8000? No, he was not the type. Further, he was too enthusiastic - I folded. The other player also folded. The big raiser showed his hand - as I recall it was a queens full house. I remember the hand because it is the biggest hand in which I ever played. But we did generally play pretty big poker. On the ten-day trip home, by ship, I won \$15,000. Then, I was young (27), single and could remember every card dealt.



## THE ANCIENTS

I am inclined to believe that modern man has far greater knowledge than the ancients, but is no more intelligent. Thales of Miletus, a teacher in Crete, predicted the total eclipse of the sun for May 28, 585 B.C.. In 196 B.C., Eratosthenes, a Greek astronomer, measured the circumference of the earth with surprising accuracy. Hipparchus, another Greek astronomer, measured the distance to the moon to within 2 % of its presently known distance (which can now be measured within inches). He also calculated the length of the solar year within six minutes. How many of the members of the Cayuga Poker Society, a highly educated group, could do any of these things?

The Mayans, who ruled Central America at the time of the Middle Ages in Europe, devised a calendar which was superior to the Julian calendar that was used in the Western World at the time. One cycle in the Mayan calendar was over five thousand years. The first day of the cycle, in our terms, was August 13, 3114 B.C. and the cycle will be completed on the date 7 LAMAT 6 CEH, or December 23, 2012, the day the world is to end.

Speaking of calendars, has it ever seemed curious to you that the day is divided into two twelve hour periods. And why twelve? And why does the hour get divided into sixty minutes instead of, say, 100? It all goes back to the ancient Babylonians. Their sages liked numbers that were divisible by other numbers. Twelve was one of their favorites because it is divisible by one, two, three, four, six and twelve. So when they first decided to divide the day into periods, twelve was a natural choice. So there were twelve hours (our term) for the day light hours. No one worried about the night hours which were for sleeping. Later, when it was decided to divide the night hours, for whatever reason, a second set of twelve periods was added rather than going from twelve to twenty-four. Custom dies hard and we still have AM and PM. Why sixty minutes in an hour? Early on, there was no need for divisions of an hour because there was no way to make such measurements. Then came pendulum clocks which made minutes feasible. One of the requirements of a clock is that once an hour the hour hand and the minute hand coincide. This requires simple gear ratios making minutes some multiple of twelve. For some reason, of which I am unaware, sixty was chosen.

## EARNING \$2000 A DAY - THE HARD WAY



When Iraqi troops pulled out of Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf War, they left behind a trail of destruction and sabotage. They set fire to 647 oil wells and booby trapped many of them. It took eight months and 10,000 firefighters to extinguish the flames at a cost of 5 billion dollars. Some of the firefighters earned as much as \$2000 a day. The remarkable thing about the project is that of the 10,000 involved in this highly dangerous effort, there was not a single fatality, although two guys died in off-the-job accidents. This is not much of a story, but I have always been fascinated by this photograph of workers capping an oil well.



In 1961, the New York Stock Exchange established a new record. For the first time, one billion shares of stock were exchanged during the year. Now, a day with only a billion shares would be a slow day.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JUNE

Bart Deluca Saturday, June 8, at 7:00 \$5/\$10 Casino rules

Don Cooke Saturday, June 1, 15 & 29 7:00 \$5/\$10 Uns

Progressive Betting Saturday June 22 Location to be announced

Rich Sheinman Wednesday, June 12, 8:30 - 5 Knoll Tree Rd

Chemistry Dept. To be announced

English Dept. To be announced

Tom Dilliplane Every Monday, 8:00 \$4 anytime, 275-0275  
**EXCEPTION NO GAME JUNE 3**



*Flag Day, June 14*

### BODY PIERCING

Many people have a sense of some involving "nuclear" or "radioactive" exacerbated by the knowledge their bodies every second. These product of the nuclear reactions as "ghostly", "elusive" or "wispy" without interacting with anything. That is not quite true because once in a great while, a neutrino will interact with the nucleus of an atom and give up its energy in a tiny burst of light.



unease when confronted with anything materials. This sense of unease would be that three billion neutrinos pass through sub-atomic particles are spawned as a by that occur in the sun. They are described because they can pass through the earth

### SCARED TO DEATH

Thanks to Barry Carpenter for bring the following article from Science, Vol. 295, January, 2002, p. 267 to my attention. In Chinese and Japanese the number "four" is pronounced just like "death". Epidemiological studies have shown that stressful events can summon the Grim Reaper. Cardiac death rates blipped after the 1994 Northridge earthquake in California and the 1991 Persian Gulf War Scud attack on Tel Aviv. But skeptics say that such disasters also cause environmental and medical service disruptions that contribute to mortality jumps.

Sociologist David Phillips at the University of San Diego realized that perhaps the fourth of the month presents a case in which a repeated harmless event might cause harmful stress in those who are conditioned to fear the day. To see if death rates increased on the fourth of the month, he analyzed mortality figures for 100,000 Chinese and Japanese-Americans who died between 1989 and 1998. The data showed that there was a significant increased chance of dying on the fourth, compared to controls, with the death rate up 7% on that fateful day.

### DEDUCTIVE REASONING

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went on a camping trip. After a good meal and a bottle of wine they lay down for the night and went to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes awoke and nudged his faithful friend. "Watson look up at the sky and tell me what you see." Watson replied, "I see millions and millions of stars." "What does that tell you?" Holmes asked his friend. Watson pondered for a minute. "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Herologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is all-powerful and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you?"





Holmes was silent for a moment, then spoke. "Watson, you idiot, someone has stolen our tent."

From the journal *Chance*, 12, #4, 1999

## WHY SIXTY MINUTES IN AN HOUR?



In the last newsletter, I speculated that the number of minutes in a hour would likely be some multiple of twelve without knowing why sixty was chosen. Alan Hays wrote me noting that the term minutes and seconds must be related to those used as divisors of circles, degrees, minutes and seconds of an arc with sixty minutes in a degree and sixty seconds in a minute. I think he has it right. When it became feasible to divide the hour into divisions because of the invention of the pendulum clock in 1652, the concept of minutes and seconds of an arc were already in use. In fact that also goes back to the ancient Babylonians who were the first to divide the circle and they chose 360 divisions. Why 360? To begin with, they used a sexagesimal number system based on the number 60. So instead of our 10, 100, 1000, theirs would be 60, 3600, 216,000. While such a system would be bewildering to us, a Babylonian businessman would be equally baffled by our 10, 100, 1000. It all depends on what you are used to.

But why was the circle divided into 360 parts. The reason is that the Babylonian year had 360 days. It is likely that they knew that the year was 365 days because the contemporary Egyptians were aware of the fact. While knowing that the year had 365 days, they chose a 360 day year which fit their system so much better. Hence, 360 degrees with its minutes and seconds of an arc. Therefore, 60 minutes in an hour and sixty seconds in a minute.

## HOMERS

There have been a spate of homers lately with the thirteenth and fourteenth players getting four home runs in a game. But is that really the record? If one looks at organized baseball, including the minors, things get a bit wilder. In the Texas League, in a game between Corsicana and Texacana on June 15, 1902, Nig Clarke had a good day. He went eight for eight - all home runs.



In researching the above, I came across an interesting fact. Suppose two airplanes, one in Seattle, Washington, and the other in Charleston, South Carolina, simultaneously take off, heading east, toward Moscow. Which will arrive first?

They will both arrive about the same time because both cities are equidistant from Moscow. When we were children and first exposed to maps, they were almost certainly Mercator-projection maps. It is difficult to represent the three dimensions of a sphere in two dimensions and distortions creep in. To get a true projection, one needs a globe.





I have been asked a number of times about the possibility of reissuing some of the older newsletters. Such a concept gives me a weary brain. On the other hand, this happens to be the hundredth newsletter. So I thought it would be nice to reproduce a selection of older items for the newcomers to the Society. So here they are. I hope the couple of dozen of the charter members will enjoy them again. These represent five percent of the total.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JULY

Bart Deluca Saturday, July 20, at 7:00 \$5/\$10 Casino rules

Don Cooke Saturday, July 6 & 13 7:00 \$5/\$10 Unstructured  
No game on the 27, I will be out of town

Rich Sheinman Wednesday, July 10, 8:30 - 5 Knoll Tree Rd

Chemistry Dept. Friday, July 12 at Milt's 8:00

English Dept. Tuesday, July 30 at Don's 7:30

Tom Dilliplane Every Monday, 8:00 \$5, anytime, 275-0275



### THE BEAUTIFUL MOON



One of nature's spectacular sights is that of the full moon rising on the eastern horizon, dominating the sky. It seems to cover a great expanse of the firmament. But, alas, it is an illusion. Just exactly how big is that beautiful orb? If you hold a pea at arm's length it will easily cover the moon. You don't believe it? Try it, as I did. The phenomena is known as the Moon Illusion, and illusion it is. Reams have been written in explanation but, to me, they never seem, to quite explain it.

**Aunt Samantha**

### PROPOSITION BETS

Proposition bets always seem like sure winners. But there is an old adage which takes many forms, such as the following:

You are walking down the street in New York City and a shifty-eyed character sidles up beside you with a proposition. He says, "See that policeman across the street? I'll bet you \$500 that in two minutes he will take off his cap and there will be a canary on the top of his head. That canary will fly over here, perch on your finger and sing Yankee Doodle." Don't bet - somehow or other you will be out \$500.

On the other hand you never know. Scenario number two. You are walking down a street in downtown Manhattan and you come across this shifty-eyed character behind a card table selling jewelry. He has a homemade sign - **TIFFANY JEWELS** - \$200. Of course you walk by --- big mistake; you just passed up the buy of a lifetime. There was a long article in the NY Times a few weeks back about a big heist in Tiffany's where thieves made off with a large quantity of choice merchandise. The police believed it was an inside job, but had no proof. The perpetrators were real amateurs and did not know how to fence the hot ice. So they had a brilliant idea - why not sell it on the street? So they bought a card table and went into business. It did not work out - they did not make a single sale. Worse for them, it led to their downfall. A jeweler passed by and recognized that the stuff really was from Tiffany's and that items worth \$20,000 to \$50,000 were being offered for \$200. He blew the whistle, and the case was solved. Anyway, what kind of a rube would buy Tiffany jewelry from a card table on the sidewalks of New York?

### IT'S NOT OVER 'TIL IT'S OVER

The Penn-Princeton basketball game on February 9th, 1999, started off in an unusual way - Penn ran up a score of 29 to 0. It ended in an even more unusual way - Princeton won 50 to 49.

### FOULUPS

Of all the police officers shot to death in the line of duty in the country, half are killed by bullets fired by fellow officers.

Source: **Danger Ahead**, by Larry Laudan, Wiley, 1997





We all know about the golden mean - the ratio of the sides of a rectangle that so many, from the time of the ancient Greeks to the UN Assembly Building, have selected as the most pleasing ratio. The ratio is 1.618 which is related to a mathematical series, the Fibonacci series. The discovery of the "Golden Rectangle" goes back to a German physicist, Gustav Fechner, in the mid nineteenth century. In a recent book, *Against the Gods*, author Peter Bernstein writes, "The Greeks knew this proportion and called

it the 'golden mean'. The golden mean defines the proportions of the Parthenon, the shape of playing cards and credit cards and the proportions of the Assembly Building at the UN". The trouble with the concept is that it is pure rubbish. There is no evidence that the Greeks ever thought of the golden rectangle. These days, we would describe Fechner as a fruitcake, and an reexamination of his own data disproves the concept. I do not know about the Assembly building, but I can measure a playing card, ratio, 1.57 and a credit card, 1.42 and according to an encyclopedia, the Parthenon was 101 feet wide and 60 feet high for a ratio of 1.68. Is this close enough? A number of studies, in which subjects choose the rectangle which is most pleasing to them, show a wide variety of selections which do not center on 1.6. We will probably continue to hear about the golden rectangle as long as people copy ideas from other sources without questioning them.

Source: Martin Gardner, a columnist for *Scientific American* who wrote an article extolling the concept of the golden rectangle and was brought up short by a flood of critics, whom he joined.

## BASEBALL FANTASY

The year is 2007 and baseball has come back into its own. It seems that the livelier ball accounted for some of the increased popularity. The surging interest had resulted in a third league, the Federal League, being organized. The new league was lucky. The eyes of the nation were fixed on two young hitters who were in a class by themselves and a neck - and - neck contest for the batting title. At the time of the mid-season All Star game, Roger Hornsby III of the Memphis Blues and Ty Cobb III of the Buffalo Blizzards were both hitting over .400. Hornsby did better in the first half the season, outhitting Cobb .409 to .404. After the All Star game, Hornsby sprained an ankle and was out three weeks while Cobb went on to accumulate spectacular averages. But Hornsby came roaring back and outhit Cobb for the second half of the season .448 to .446. The .448 allowed Hornsby to tie his greatgrandfather's record of .424, set 103 years ago. But, alas, despite the fact that he had outhit Cobb in both the first and second half of the season, he lost the batting title to Cobb's .427. How can it be that a batter can have a higher average in both halves of a season but not the better average of the season? The phenomena depends on the number of games and the batting averages in both halves. Below is a mythical account of how such a thing could happen :

	First Half			Second Half			Season		
	<u>ab</u>	<u>hits</u>	<u>ave.</u>	<u>ab</u>	<u>hits</u>	<u>ave.</u>	<u>ab</u>	<u>hits</u>	<u>ave.</u>
Cobb	275	111	.404	325	145	.446	600	256	.427
Hornsby	325	133	.409	210	94	.448	535	227	.424

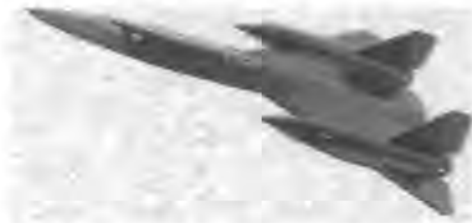
This illustrates a potential problem that, in combining databases, one may get strange results. The phenomena is known as Simpson's Paradox.

## A SAD TALE

In 1968, Mets pitcher, Jim McAndrew, was in rare form. In four games he allowed a total of only six hits. He lost all four games.



## FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET



A lot faster. The SR-71 Blackbird flew four times the muzzle velocity of a bullet from a U. S. Army M10, 38 caliber pistol. It was the fastest aircraft ever built, with a sustained velocity of 3.3 Mach at 90,000 feet. It was originally built for the CIA to overfly hostile territory with impunity. It worked. In thirty years, from 1961 until its retirement in 1991, blackbirds logged 63 million miles without ever taking a hit even though the hostiles knew it was there. And try they did, shooting everything

they had at it, and even developing new things in an attempt to bring it down. But the Blackbirds survived over 1000 missile attacks. It flew at 90,000 feet, far higher than any other aircraft, and was fast enough to outrace a missile. It flew coast-to-coast (San Diego, California, to Savannah Beach, Georgia) in 59 minutes.

Everything about the SR-71 is awesome. It had two engines each of which generated more power than the combined output of the four huge turbines of the 80,000 ton ocean liner the Queen Mary. It was a flying tank car, taking off with 40 tons of fuel. All that fuel did not last long because it was a gas guzzler - more than two gallons per second. To consume fuel at that rate required a lot of air - the compressors supplied it at 200,000 cubic feet per second. Such speed generated an enormous amount of heat on the titanium surfaces. Despite the ambient temperature being about minus 100 F, the temperature at the windshield was 640 F, which is above the melting point of lead. If the air conditioner failed, the pilot would have to eject - in a space suit.

The Blackbird holds many records for altitude and speed. They won't be broken for some time since a successor plane has not been built nor is one even on the drawing board

Source: *The Skunk Works* by Ben Rich and Leo Janos, 1994. The Skunk Works is a small division of Lockheed

## WHAT PRICE VICTORY?

Of all the males born in Russia in 1923 (they would have been eighteen when Germany attacked), nearly 80% did not survive WWII. This fact resulted in a legacy of masses of widows and women who would never find husbands. The Russian Army suffered seven million battlefield deaths. It was not easy being a soldier in the Red Army. At the Yalta Conference, Admiral King commented on the courage of the Russian soldier. Stalin replied, "It takes a brave man not to be a hero in the Red Army".

## THE STATISTICS ARE OKAY, THE PROBLEM IS THE INFERENCES

All levels of government are taking credit for the decline in the numbers of murders in the country. There are all sorts of theories postulating why the decline has occurred. These range from more or better policing, to cracking down on lesser crimes. But you never hear about one of the more important reasons. It has nothing to do with sociology but has a lot to do with medical science. With better methods for treating trauma patients, more are kept alive, saving many miscreants from a murder rap - and lowering the murder rate.

## THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Those who refer to the "good old days" must go by names like Rockefeller, Mellon or Astor. Wage earners in the first decades of the century had a work week that was as long as the boss said it was, usually 10 to 12 hours a day, six days a week. If the boss wanted you to work on Sunday, you worked on Sunday. As the saying went - "If you don't come in on Sunday, don't bother to come in on Monday". The concept of overtime pay was a dream in the eyes of labor leaders and the idea of sick days never occurred to anyone. There were no vacations, no health insurance, no retirement benefits, no unemployment insurance and no safety standards. The concept of "fringe benefits" surfaced for the first time after WWII, as a radical suggestion of John L. Lewis, head of the miner's union.



If Manhattan had the same population density as Alaska there would be only twenty people living there.



In a previous issue of the poker schedule, I noted the incident of a poker player who had back-to-back royal flushes in seven card stud. A truly long shot. But how many billions of hands of poker are dealt in a year? Billions of events happen every day so some of them are bound to be spectacular coincidences. Here is one that happened to me.

About twenty years ago there was a scientific conference at Cornell and I hosted three of the visitors. We wound up at the bar of the Statler and things went on. We had a very pleasant bartender who joined us in the conversation. In the wee hours he told us he was off to a new job, so the drinks would be "on the house"

Early the next morning I was on a plane to another conference, this time in Cincinnati. Following the afternoon session, I was walking down the main drag and decided to have a drink before dinner. So I walked into a promising hotel bar. Who is behind the bar? You guessed it -- the same young man who had served me much earlier the same day in Ithaca. After a couple of startled expressions of recognition, he came up with this quick-witted remark, "It is my first day on the job, you have to pay for the drinks".

## EXPORTS

If you were to look a table of the dollar value of goods exported from the United States, one of the largest items will not even be listed. You will find that, in 1994, we exported \$4 billion worth of corn, and \$3 billion of wheat. The big ones are \$18 billion in airplanes, and \$16 billion in telecommunications equipment. But what is not mentioned is that we also exported \$ 18 billion in another commodity --- \$100 dollars bills. It might be argued that this item has essentially no inherent value and therefore should not be listed.

The New York Times ( 2/24/96 ) reports that the total amount of U. S. money in circulation is almost \$400 billion. The surprising fact is that two-thirds of this amount is circulating outside of the country, mostly in \$100 bills. In many countries, the \$100 bill is the *de facto* coin of the realm. For example, in Russia, while the ruble is the official currency, the real currency is the American dollar. Will Safire, a columnist for the Times, note that the U. S. accrues \$24 billion ( \$18 billion from overseas ) a year from the "float" on the money in circulation. Here is how he reasons - The mint prints a \$100 bill for relatively zero cost. A bank will buy the bill for \$100 in true worth. The government has this money available until that \$100 bill is returned, worn out, to be redeemed. In the meantime, the feds have loaned that money out at 6% interest. What a deal ! The U. S. Mint is a money making machine in more than one way.

## FINANCIAL EUPHEMISMS



In May of 1901, and again in October 1907, the stock market took a tumble and the newspaper headlines screamed, **Panic on Wall Street**. In fact, the periods became known as the Panic of 1901 and the Panic of 1907. Naturally, neither the stock brokers nor the politicians liked the use of the word "panic" because of the impression that the word conveyed about the state of the market and the economy. In 1929 the stock market debacle was headlined **Wall Street Crashes** and the following economic disaster was called a "depression". ( For those who were there, "despair" would have been a better word ). But the word "depression" was still too gloomy, and evolved into "recession". But the work of cleaning up the economy was not finished. There had to be a more positive spin. So now, when the market goes down we have a "correction".

It's as though it is good for the market to "correct" itself and gain strength by going down. An ever more imaginative expression is "profit taking" which implies that you can make money when your stocks go down. The financial world and the politicians have come a long way from "panic" to "profit taking" to describe a declining stock market. And you think that the spin doctors on Madison Avenue don't earn their money ?





During the Nazi control over Germany, great emphasis was placed on the superiority of the Aryan genes and the development of a Master Race. To this end, in 1933, Germany enacted a Sterilization Law by which individuals could be involuntarily sterilized if their potential progeny would be considered "undesirable". Among the first to be subjected to the laws were 200 teenagers who were the children of black American soldiers in World War I. This program was proposed years earlier in Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*. (I read portions of this book for background. It is unfortunate that the book was not more widely read. It is the ultimate in racism and crackpot ideas).

Many of us are aware of the Nazi aim to develop a Master Race. But, far fewer are aware that the German Sterilization Act of 1933 was modeled after laws in the United States. This nation was twenty five years ahead of the rest of the world in legislating enforced sterilization to improve the race. In 1933, thirty-two states had enacted such statutes. (As of 1984, twenty-seven were still on the books). You can bet that there is not much about that activity in our children's history books.

The purpose of the laws was to prevent procreation by "undesirables". The undesirables varied from state to state but they usually included, criminals, disabled persons, the "feeble-minded" and members of "lower races". As always, the poor, minorities, immigrants and women bore the burden. Women were disproportionately subject to the law. Why? For the same reason there are "loose women" but never "loose men". It is hard to imagine, given our present day attitudes, that the concept could have had such widespread support. It is not unexpected that the strongest support came from the rich, the intellectuals and academicians.

## A POLICEMAN'S LOT IS NOT A HAPPY ONE



The poker game had been going on for 28 years and it convened every weekday about 5 o'clock. The only odd thing was the location - on the Metro-North Hudson Commuter Line to Westchester County leaving Grand Central at 5:35. The game on September 30, 1994 got an early start and was well under way before the train left the station. A young lady stopped by to watch the action. One hand started off well and the pot was building (it was \$141 in greenbacks as it turned out) when the young lady flashed a badge, identified herself as a Metro-North police officer (she was in plain clothes), told them that they were under arrest and they would have to leave the train. It turned out that one of the four arrested was a lawyer (not a long shot for a commuter train leaving New York City) who advised his friends to cooperate. The men were handcuffed, marched through Grand Central Station to a paddy wagon, put in holding cells, fingerprinted and photographed. They were charged with "possessing a gambling device, otherwise known as a deck of cards". They were released in time to catch the 7:20 for home.

On October 5, the District Attorney's Office announced they were dropping the charges. A spokeswoman for Metro-North speculated that the arresting officer had been struck by the impressive pile of greenbacks in front of the men. She assured riders that the arrest did not signal a crackdown on a form of recreation enjoyed by thousands of riders. She further stated that "It's a relaxing and enjoyable thing to do on a ride home", noting that Metro-North's own commercials mention card playing as a diversion on the train. "We have no prohibitions against friendly card games", she said.

As you might easily imagine, that was not the end of the affair. The four poker players brought a civil suit against Metro-North for \$4 million. In May, 1995, Metro-North announced that an out-of-court settlement had been reached for an undisclosed sum. WCBS Radio reported that each man received between \$30,000 and \$40,000. (Source: NY Times 10/6/94 & 5/13/95)



In 1992 the Senate had 7,700 registered lobbyists, seventy-seven for each senator. An update. In 2001, corporations paid over 20,000 congressional lobbyists a total of 1.4 billion dollars.





America lucked out in the Revolutionary War. While there were some Members of Parliament who believed that England was headed for disaster, most just did not understand what all the fuss in the colonies was about. On the other hand, on our side, we had a confluence of remarkably able individuals. And how young they were. We all know that Marquis de Lafayette played a vital role in the war. In 1777, he accepted an appointment as a Major General in the Continental Army, serving without salary. What is less known is that he was only 20 years old at the time. (He did, however, have six years of experience in the French Army).

In 1776, George Washington was 42; Thomas Jefferson, 33; John Hancock, 39; Alexander Hamilton, 21; John Adams, 41. Benjamin Franklin was the greybeard at 70.

As to the Continental Army, General "Mad Anthony" Wayne was 32; Captain John Paul Jones, 29; General Nathanael Greene, 36; General Thaddeus Kosciuszko, 30. Lieutenant Colonel John Mercer, who led the troops in the Battle of Princeton, was 18. Lieutenant Colonel Aaron Burr was 21.

Young they were - at least by the standards of our day. But in colonial days being "young" was probably very different. Life expectancy was lower so there were fewer old guys around. But this fact can't explain it all. Excluding the high rate of child mortality, males died at an average age of 65. Of the 56 individuals who signed the Declaration of Independence, only 12 were over 50. If such an important document were to be signed today, it is unlikely that any one of the 56 would be less than 50. It may just be that revolution is a young person's game. Also, in those days, real life began at a younger age. And you do not have to go that far back. My father-in-law, at age 14, moved away from his family to another city to apprentice as a printer's devil.

## QUICK CASH

When you withdraw money from an ATM it all seems so simple. But in the few seconds between the time you punch in your PIN number and you get your money, here is what happens. The information is transmitted from the ATM to the bank that owns the machine. From there it goes to a central processing facility, most likely in Secaucus New Jersey (regardless of the location of the ATM in the U. S.) which queries your bank as to whether you have sufficient money in your account. The message as to sufficient funds goes back to Secaucus which sends it on to the bank which owns the ATM then to the ATM which either gives you the money or says - Go Away.

There are a number of these central facilities in Secaucus and they handle many types of electronic transfers of money. With upcoming changes, these operations will be processing, about one trillion dollars a day. A trillion dollars a day is a lot of money - for comparison, the annual federal budget for 1995 was 1.3 trillion. You won't find the addresses of these places in the phonebook. Even though there is no cash involved, security is intense. While the money is evanescent, the smell of a trillion dollars does bring out the worst in some people.

## A PROPOSITION BET

Clara Conn and Marty Mark are enjoying a drink at an outdoor table at Simeon's in downtown Ithaca. Clara turns to Marty and says "Funny, I have been noticing the numbers on the license plates of the cars going by and there seems to be a lot of similarities in the numbers." My dear Clara" says Marty, "you should know that its all governed by a statistical distribution". "I'm not sure", muses Clara, "but I am willing to bet you even money that with the next fifteen cars going by, there will be two license plates that have the identical last two digits" "Do you mean" replies Marty "that two of those fifteen license plates will have the same last two digits, like 79 and 79"? "Yep!" Clara, you have no feeling for numbers - I will bet you \$20 that you are wrong".

As always, Mr. Mark is at a big disadvantage. The breakeven number or 50% chance, of getting a duplicate pair for the last two digits is a mere twelve. With fifteen plates the odds are two to one against the mark. This is similar to the well known birthday paradox.



The world record for the 100 yard dash in snoeshoes was set by Jeramy Badeau, in 1991. His time was 14.07 seconds.(McGuinniss Book of Records). I would love to see a movie of the effort.





You have just returned from the Far East and you don't seem to be feeling just right. Finally you decide to see a doctor and she does not find anything wrong. Just to make sure, she orders a number of laboratory tests for diseases with which you may have come in contact with during your visit. At a follow-up appointment, the doctor has some bad news. She tells you that you have the Burmese Heebie Jeebies, which is a rare disease that affects only one in 10,000 travelers. She goes on to explain that it is a serious malady which gets progressively worse. That's the bad news. What's the good news. The good news is that it is unlikely that you have the Burmese Heebie Jeebies despite the positive laboratory test.

Medical diagnostic tests do not always give the correct answer. Errors can creep in. There are errors such as mislabeling, procedural mistakes, sample deterioration, etc. The extent of such errors can be minimized by laboratory discipline. But there are also inherent errors. A good test would give the correct answer 99% of the time. That is pretty good except for the fact that one percent of the answers are wrong. This small percentage can loom large when testing for rare diseases. If the test for the Burmese Heebie Jeebies gave an incorrect diagnosis one percent of the time, it might be that 0.5% of the times an incorrect positive diagnosis would result even though the person did not have the disease. Since only one individual in 10,000 is expected to contract the disorder, if 10,000 travelers were tested, 51 would indicate the presence of the Burmese Heebie Jeebies. Of these 50 would indicate the presence of the disease, even though the person did not have the infection - the false positives. On the other hand, the fifty first person would be correctly diagnosed. So barring other diagnostic signals, the chances of you not having the Burmese Heebie Jeebies is very good - fifty to one in your favor.

## HEY ! YOU NEVER KNOW

This is the sales pitch of the NY lottery. There is some truth to this as illustrated by the following release from the Associated Press dated 10/2/96.

HAMBURG, Germany (AP) - A Spanish businessman and devout Roman Catholic who stopped to pray at a church during a trip to Stockholm ended up a millionaire.

The church was empty except for a coffin containing the remains of a man, so Eduardo Sierra knelt down and prayed for the deceased for 20 minutes.

Sierra, 35, signed a condolence book after he saw a note saying that those who prayed for the dead man should enter their name and address. He noticed he was the first to sign. He would be the only one.

Several weeks later, he got a call from the Swedish capital informing him he was a millionaire.

Jens Svenson, the man he prayed for, was a 73-year-old real estate dealer with no close relatives. He had specified in his will that "Whoever prays for my soul, gets all my belongings."

## GOLFERS, EAT YOUR HEARTS OUT

Jack Nicklaus, playing the tenth hole at Sinnicoock Hills in the 1986 Open, drove a ball into the woods. It was not to be found, and he took a stroke and distance penalty. Why was it newsworthy? In his 25-year professional career, it was his first lost-ball penalty.



A funny to brighten  
your day



## A VERY BUSY AFTERNOON



In 1935, Jesse Owens was a member of the Ohio State track team. A week before the Big Ten Championships on May 25th, Owens was horsing around with a friend and fell down a flight of stairs injuring his back. He did not work out all week and had to be helped out of the car that drove him to Ann Arbor for the meet. His coach suggested that he should not compete, but he decided to go ahead, on an event-by-event basis, to see how it would go. Here is how it went.

In a forty-five minute period, 3:15 to 4:00, he equaled the world record for the 100-yard dash, broke the world record for the long jump, broke the world record for the 220-yard dash (which also bettered the world record for the 200-meter), set a new world record for the 220-yard low hurdles (as well as the 200-meter world mark). Six world records in an afternoon - not bad. He was so busy that he had time for only one attempt at the long jump and set a record that lasted 25 years. A good day. (Source: New York Times Book of Sports Legends).

## OVERCOMING HANDICAPS

On April 29, 1986, Roger Clemens struck out 20 batters to break a record which had stood for over a hundred years. In 1884 Hugh Dailey, of Chicago, had fanned 19 to establish that record. In the same year Dailey had 483 strikeouts, a record that has never been surpassed. Nolan Ryan holds the modern record for strikeouts with 383 in 1973. Dailey also recorded a no-hit game in 1883. There was something unusual about Hugh Dailey. He is carried in the record books by the name of One-arm Dailey. He had no right arm but he could sure throw a baseball.

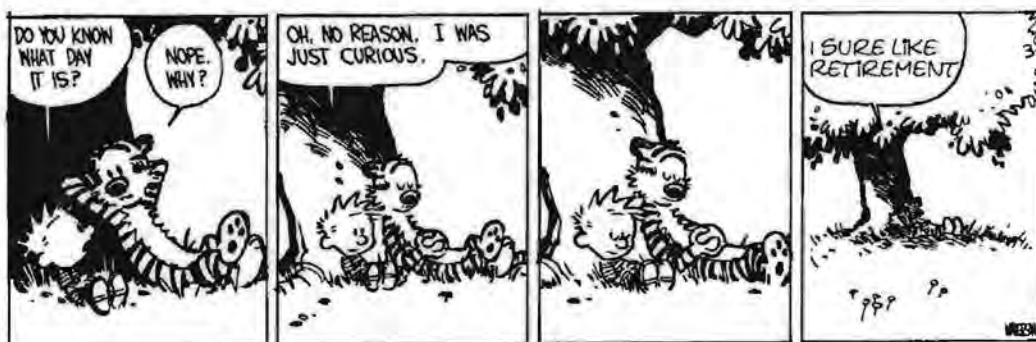
## HARD TO BELIEVE

On June 18, 1980, at Imperial College, London. Devi Shakuntala demonstrated her skill at mental arithmetic. She was asked to multiply two 13-digit numbers that had been randomly generated by the Computer Department. The two numbers were 7,686,369,774,870 and 2465,099,745,779. It took Devi 28 seconds to come up with the correct answer, 18,947,668,177,995,426,773,730. Even my HP calculator can't do that.

Source: The Great Mental Calculators by Steven B. Smith, 1983

## THE STATE OF THE NATION

At an auction in New York City, a photo of three ex-presidents together, Ford, Carter and Nixon, autographed by each went for \$275. At the same auction, an autographed photo of the Three Stooges, Larry, Moe and Curley went for \$1870.





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST

NOTE: SOME GAMES CHANGED FROM 7 TO 8 O'CLOCK

Bart Deluca Saturday, August 10, at 8:00 \$5/\$10 Casino rules

Paul Rubin Saturday, August 24, at 8:00 \$5/\$10 HORSE

Don Cooke Saturday, August 3 & 17, 8:00 \$5/\$10 Unstructured.  
Because of uncertain travel plans, August 31 is up  
in the air

Rich Sheinman Game on hold. It's a girl - Ivy

Chemistry Dept. Friday, August 16 at Don's 8:00

English Dept. To be decided

Tom Dilliplane Every Monday, 8:00 \$5, anytime, 275-0275



Emperor Augustus  
(27BC - 14AD)

### THE GALL OF THE MAN

Recently, Stanley Works, a company in Connecticut, has received a great deal of negative publicity because of their plan to change the address of the company's headquarters (not the headquarters but the address) in order to save money on federal income tax. In the May 20 issue of the New York Times, there was a letter to the editor from Mr. John M. Trani, CEO of the company, explaining why the action was so good for the nation, the stockholders and the workers. There was no mention of another who would gain a great deal from the action. In the same issue of the Times there is a story explaining the fine print of the Stanley Works deal. The company would save \$240 million in taxes. Of this \$240 million, \$139 million would go directly to Mr. Trani. Further, if he were to exercise the options he currently holds, he would receive \$385 million or \$145 million more than the company would save in taxes. In effect, the federal government would give up \$240 million in revenue and the stockholders would lose \$145 in equity. All of this would go to Mr. Trani. How can he write such a letter, knowing that the nation, the stockholders and the workers would all be worse off by donating hundreds of millions to his already swollen coffers?

Mr. Trani is not alone. In 1980 chief executives of large companies earned 45 times as much as non-supervisory workers. By 1995, the ratio had risen to 160. By 1997, it had reached 305. Although profits leveled between 1997 and 2000, the income of CEOs increased to 458 times as much as ordinary workers. (NYT). On the other hand, General James L. Jones, Commandant of the Marine Corps, who oversees a 13 billion dollar operation, makes \$163,000 or 13 times the pay of a rookie in basic training.

In 1981 the ten most highly paid executives earned an average of \$3.5 million. By 1988 the average had soared to \$19.3 million and in 2000, the average was \$154 million. The captains of industry should remember the fable about killing the golden goose. My guess is that the stockholders are either going to revolt, or walk away.



### ONE OF THE REASONS BRITAIN LOST THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Lord North, the British Prime Minister in 1772, did not think much of the troubles in the colonies. He ventured the opinion that the troubles would be settled by dispatching five or six frigates. He believed that, "There would be no need for a military force".

### ONE OF THE MANY ANOMALIES OF POKER

What is the easiest flush hand to get? It is an Ace high, which represents forty percent of all flushes. The hardest flush to get is the lowest ranking one, the seven high. (One is twenty times more likely to be dealt four of a kind than a seven high flush). The median ranking flush is King high, and ninety percent of the flushes are Jack or better.



## MONKEY'S EYEBROW, KENTUCKY

Monkey's Eyebrow really is the name of a town in Kentucky. It is one of a marvelous and intriguing collection of place names in the United States. Some of the names are whimsical while others represent a wide range of emotions, from joy to despair, braggadocio, wonder, reverence, tongue-in-cheek and just plain silly. We are unique in our whimsey. The town names in the British Isles are staid and unimaginative. While some of the British names are odd, they seem more a result of circumstances than design. I thought that Canada might have some interesting names but I could only find a few such as Medicine Hat, Yellow Knife and Cut Knife. Australia follows the British tradition of dull names.

Here are some of the names of towns (cities, or whatever), that appealed to me:

Two Egg Fl	Hot Coffee Ms	Tightwad Mo	Left Hand WV	Truth and Consequences NN
Why Az	Fear Not Pa	Rabbit Hash Ky	Zigzag Or	South of the Border SC
Why Not NC	Cut Shin Ky	Smackover Az	Hard Cash Ga	Hallelujah Junction Ca
Nowhere Ok	Dog Walk NY	Idiotville Or	Hardup Ut	Beer Bottle Crossing Id
NamelessTn	Good Thunder Mn	Whisky Dick Or	Holy Trinity Al	Hell's Half Acre SC
None Such Ky	Bird-in-Hand Pa	Hungry Horse Mt	Fiddlesticks Fl	Knockemstiff Oh
No Name Co	Sleepy Eye NM	Imalone Wi	Bug Tussle Ky	Heavenly Place Ca
Cute Tn	Embarrass Wi	Intercourse Pa	Plain Dealing La	Cheesequake NJ
Sweet Lips Tn	Hygiene Co	Do Stop Ky	Cannon Ball ND	Tight Squeeze Va
Odd WV	Red Hot Ky	Ninety Times SC	Pull Tight Al	Hoop and Holler Tx
Hellhole Id	Hard Labor Va	Cripple Creek Co	Ten Degree Me	Tenth Legion Va
Worry NC	U Bet Wi	Yellow Dirt Ga	Cut-n-Shoot Tx	Constant Friendship Va
Useful Mo	Big Ugly WV	Big Ugly WV	Yeehaw Fl	Rough and Ready Ca
8 Va	Accident Md	Dry Run Oh	Last Chance Co	Summer Shade Ky

I have a lot more, some of which are on the other side of this page for those who might be interested. Let me add a couple that particularly amused me: Okay, OK, and George, Washington. There are a number of towns that go by the name of "Hardscrabble". But can you imagine one in Suffolk County, New York?

In a book by Russell Ash entitled *The Top Ten of Everything*, the ten most frequent names for towns in the U. S. are listed. They are Fairview, Midway, Oak Grove, Franklin, Riverside, Centerville, Mt. Pleasant, Georgetown, Salem and Greenwood.

I found 207 towns named Fairview (not counting such names as the many Fairview Heights). You might say "but there are only fifty states". Yes, but there are duplicate town names in most states. For example, Alabama has twenty-three towns named Fairview. One wonders what they did before ZIP Codes.

Town names are in a continuous state of flux. For example, in Texas there were a dozen towns once named Fairview which no longer exist. And names are constantly changing. For example, here are some changes in New York. Buffalo, was at one time, Black Rock. Then, here are a couple of understandable changes. Butt End became Bovina and Puppie's Nest became Cayutaville. But one wonders why Gerryville became Alabama and Orange was changed to Half Moon. Then there was Unity, which seemed to have lost it's unifying theme and broke up into two towns, Norway and Russia.

In looking through the lists, I came across other popular names. There is a town called Princeton in thirty states (This beats Columbia with 18, Yale 13, Harvard 10, Cornell 9, Brown 8, Dartmouth 6 and Pennsylvania one. Pennsylvania, Alabama, unless you count four towns named Penn). Another popular name is Oxford with 29 states. Egypt, as the name of a town is harder to understand, but there are 26 of them.

A curious thing. There is a town called Pink in Georgia. That strikes me as an unusual name but there are another half dozen Pinks scattered around the country. Also, I thought that Lost Nation would be an unique name, but no, there are four others.



One might think that New York, New York would preempt that name, but, not so. There is a New York, Iowa, along with ten others. There are fifteen Philadelphias, including three in Tennessee. But there are only three other towns named Los Angeles. Boston takes the cake with twenty-nine.

Almost every major city in the world is represented by a town in this country. Paris takes the lead with twenty-six, followed by Moscow twenty-five. And then again, the Egypt connection, with twenty-three towns named Cairo. The more exotic cities are also represented with eleven Baghdads, plus Casablanca, Algiers, Singapore and Rangoon.

I could find only three towns with "Poker" in the name - Poker Flats, and Pokerville in California and Poker Brown NY. And yes, there is another Ithaca, in Michigan.

One piece of information that I have not been able to obtain is the number of towns (or whatever) in the United States. However, I have established that there are over a million place names in the country. These names include towns, rivers, creeks, etc.

This compilation illustrates the encyclopedic power of the web. To accumulate this information without this resource would be impossible from the viewpoint of practicability.

#### Hagar the Horrible





## MORE QUAINT NAMES OF TOWNS

Zap ND	Nothing Az	Toad Hop In	Kickapoo Il	Panic Pa
War WV	Ty Ty Fl	Loco Ok	Uncertain Tx	Winner SD
Weed Ca	Poison Mt	Happy Ar	Possum Trot Ky	Dry Tavern Pa
Lost Village NY	Love Ladies NJ	Dead Horse Ar	Secret Town NY	Big Sky Mt
Doctor Phillips Fl	Difficult Tn	Good Friend Ms	Sugartit Ky	Experiment Ar
Peculiar Mo	Veri Best Tx	Hard Luck Mi	Confidence Ca	Temperence Mi
Hog Eye WV	Two Guns Az	Snow Shoe Pa	Bad Axe Mt	Goose Pimple Junction Fl
Ogle Pa	Dingy WV	Hell Mi	Paradise Mi	Between Ga
Wait Ky	Dull Oh	Blowout Tx	Frying Pan Ca	Iron Gate Va
Blue Eyes Ak	Lover Pa	Breakneck Pa	Hurry Md	Featherbed Md
Foot of Ten Pa	Tally Ho Pa	Burro John Az	Burden Ks	Broken Arrow Ok
French Lick In	Red Jacket WV	Roulette Pa	Jack Pot Nv	Ten Degree Me
Two Dot Mt	Broken Sword Oh	Beauty Ky	Two Dot Mt	Three Legs Town Oh



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER

Bart Deluca Saturday, September 14, at 8:00 \$5/\$10 Casino rules

Paul Rubin Saturday Sept 28, 8:00, \$5/10 HORSE. Last Hand at 1:00 AM

Don Cooke Saturdays, September 7 & 21, 8:00 \$5/\$10, unstructured

Chemistry Dept. Friday, the Thirteenth of September, at Ben's 8:00

English Dept. Tuesday, September 3 at Mike's 7:30

Tom Dilliplane Every Monday, 8:30. \$5, anytime, 275-0275

Sat. August 31  
Game at  
Don's  
8:00



### THE GREAT DEPRESSION



Not long ago, one of you guys brought up the topic of the depression and asked whether or not the dire reports were overblown. Here is a response to the question.

First, some economic indicators for the period 1929 and 1933:

- Unemployment increased from 3.2% to 25%
- The Dow dropped from 381 in 1929 to 41 in 1932, a decline of 89%
- Construction declined by 78%
- Investment capital dropped by 98%
- The consumer price index fell 18%. Farm prices were harder hit.

The price of a bushel of wheat went from \$3 to thirty cents

- There were almost a million foreclosures on nonfarm homes. There would be another 800,000 before the depression ran its course.
- Over a million farmers either lost their farms, or just gave up.
- 9700 banks failed, 4000 of them in 1933. Back then, if a bank went broke, the money was gone. Not surprisingly, people started withdrawing money and the system was on the verge of collapse. In 1935, to save the system, the government insured deposits.

**The Face of the Depression**  
This picture, entitled *Migrant Worker*, was taken by Dorthea Lange, a photographer for the Farm Security Administration. The woman, lived in a car with two children, and had just sold the tires to buy food. It is the most frequently requested photo from the Library of Congress files.

Beyond the cold figures, to my mind, the attitude of a large number of people can best be described by the word, "despair". President Hoover, even though he strove mightily, made matters worse. His optimism about the future was at variance with what seemed obvious to most. People were on their own because there was no support system to help. The total amount of welfare money was less than \$2 per person, per year.

Desperate men, and a few women, called hoboes, roamed the country (by freight train) looking for work. It is hard to know their numbers but we lived near a railroad junction and every train would disgorge a dozen, or so, of them. One estimate puts their numbers at 700,000, one third of them teenagers.

Revolution was just below the surface. San Francisco had a general strike which shut down the city until the army intervened. There were hunger marches which drew thousands of participants. Twenty thousand veterans marched on Washington from around the nation. Their encampment was put to the torch and the men dispersed by troops led by General Douglas MacArthur and his deputy, Major Dwight D. Eisenhower. Incidentally, MacArthur not only broke the law against using the army against civilians, but also acted in defiance of the direct orders of President Hoover. Twenty years later, he would defy another president.





Hunger March, 1933 Washington, DC

The War Department was advised to station troops near urban areas in case of unrest. Labor confrontations were violent. Companies would hire strikebreakers, swear them in as deputy sheriffs, arm them with guns and clubs and turn them loose on the strikers. The National Guard was often called in to provide added support. In 1937, at the Republic Steel Company in Chicago, workers tried to set up a picket line. They were met by a large force of police. One thing led to another and the police opened fire. The strikers fled but the shooting continued. At the end, ten strikers lay dead, thirty-seven received gunshot wounds and another thirty wound up in the hospital.

I believe that an organized revolution never happened for two reasons. The first reason is that there was no obvious leader. Senator Huey Long may have been that person. He had already converted Louisiana into a nearly fascist state and he had a large national following. But he was assassinated by a young physician, Carl Weiss, who viewed him as a dangerous tyrant. The second reason is that there was an election in 1932. At least President Roosevelt admitted that there was a serious problem and that gave the nation some survival time.

Here is how it went with me and mine. I was in high school and college for most of the period. My father owned a pharmacy which, after a long struggle, finally went out of business. We were nine. Mother, father and five children. Plus two others, my mother's sister and a friend of my mother's father. One day he showed up at the door with no place to go. We took him in and he stayed until he died. What did we do when Father closed the shop? There was one wage earner, my sister who was a waitress. Every day we waited until she came home so we could buy food for dinner. I usually did the shopping. We bought sugar in one pound bags. (Five cents). We ate a lot of salmon - it was eight cents for a large can. June's family was in a similar situation. Her father was a printer, and the family moved around the country as he sought work. As a result, June went to nine different grammar schools in eight years.

I think it would be difficult for most of you to understand just how bad race relations were in those days. The unemployment rate for Blacks was 50%. There was widespread resentment that the Blacks who were working, were taking jobs from white men. In 1925, the Klu Klux Klan marched down Pennsylvania avenue, in full regalia, 40,000 strong. In the 1932 presidential elections, the Black vote went solidly for Hoover. Why? The Democratic Party was beholden to the Southern politicians. In 1927, Franklin D. Roosevelt felt compelled to issue a public denial of a story that he had lunch with a group of Blacks. Prior to the 1932 Democratic Convention, the Democrats had never seated a Black delegate. In 1932 there were a few Black alternate delegates - separated by a chicken wire barrier from the white delegates. Did you ever wonder why farmers are excluded from Social Security? It was a concession to southern politicians who just could not stomach benefits going to negro farm hands. In 1934, these farm hands made \$200 per year.

You might wonder how I ever got to college under such circumstances. A funny thing happened. One day, in the summer of 1936, a representative of St. Joseph's College came to the house. He had a deal. I could attend college if I promised to pay after I graduated. (As a sign of the times, I never signed anything promising to pay). They would also give me a job (under a federal program) at fifty cents an hour, which, of course, went directly into the family coffers. The reason for the offer of deferred tuition is that the colleges were running on empty and a promise to pay was probably better than nothing at all. It was not easy. For example, I could not afford to buy text books. I graduated in 1940 and it was a year before I found a job. The unemployment rate in 1938 was still high at 17%. In the intervening year I worked at St. Joe's to pay off my debt.





*By the end of the Thirties things were gradually improving. But it was the rumbling of war in Europe and, finally, the attack on Pearl Harbor that got things back on track. It was a massive investment in the machinery of war that brought this difficult period in our history to an end.*

The government had many programs to provide people with some income. One of the more pathetic ones was selling apples on street corners for five cents.

## **ALAN GREENSPAN AND CORPORATE GREED**

*Thirty years ago, Alan Greenspan wrote a small book entitled, *The Assault on Integrity*. In it, he deplored government regulation of corporations as unnecessary. His thesis was that it was in the best interest of corporate officers to be honest and they should be trusted because honesty lead to a successful operation. Here is an excerpt from the book:*

*What collectivists refuse to recognize is that it is in the self-interest of every businessman to have a reputation for honest dealings and a quality product . . . . Thus the incentive to scrupulous performance operates at all levels of a given field of production. It is a built-in safeguard of a free enterprise system and the only real protection of consumers against business dishonesty.*

*It is a sad commentary on today's situation. Greenspan may well be right - but that does not seem to be how the game is played in many quarters.*

## **GOVERNMENT GOOBLEDEGOOK**

*The Immigration and Naturalization Service recently announced the appointment of an "Assistant Deputy Executive Associate Commissioner for Immigration Services". No wonder the agency is in trouble.*



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

Because of heavy travel schedules, there will be only two \$5/\$10 games this month. We will try going back to a 7:00 starting time.

Paul Rubin Saturday, October 12, 7:00 last hand, 1:00

Don Cooke Saturday, October 19, 7:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, October 18, 8:00 at Mike's

English Dept. Tuesday, October 8, 7:00 at Dan's

Tom Dilliplane Every Monday, 8:30, \$5, anytime, 275-0275



## THE MYSTERIOUS DEPTHS OF THE HUMAN MIND

Dr. Oliver Sacks, a clinical neurologist, wrote a book entitled, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat*. It is about the strange things that can happen to the human brain. One of the chapters is devoted to a case, in 1966, which dealt with a pair of 26 year-old severely retarded, identical twins, who had been in a mental institution since they were seven years old. With an estimated IQ of 60, addition, and subtraction, much less multiplication and division was beyond them. But they were mental calculators. They could remember strings of numbers 300 digits long. They could instantly tell you that February 20, in the year 20523 would fall on a certain day of the week. Or for that matter, any day forty thousand years into the future or the past, including the calendar discontinuity which occurred in the year 1582. One day Dr. Sacks overheard the twins throwing six-digit (always six digits) numbers at each other with great amusement. He wrote down some of the numbers and established that they were prime numbers. (Prime numbers are mystical numbers that cannot be divided by any number other than one and itself). The next day he joined in with their chatter and contributed an eight digit prime number. He describes their reaction. "They suddenly became very still with a look of intense concentration, perhaps astonishment on their faces. There was a long pause, broken suddenly by bright smiles". After about five minutes one of them came up with a nine digit number which turned out to be a prime. Soon they were tossing out twelve digit numbers and eventually got up to twenty digitis. It was not known if these were prime numbers, because the computers of the time could only handle ten-digit primes.

Mental calculators can do astonishing things as described in a book entitled, *The Great Mental Calculators*, published in 1983 by Steven B. Smith, himself a mental calculator. One of the individuals included in the book was George Bidder who was born in England in 1805. When he was twelve years old he was giving demonstrations of his calculating ability. In one of them he was given the following problem: If the pendulum of a clock travels  $9 \frac{3}{4}$  inches in a second of time, how many inches will it travel in 7 years, 14 days, 2 hours, one minute and 56 seconds, with each year being 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 55 seconds? In less than a minute he came up with the correct answer, 2,165,625,744 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

Shyam Marathe was born in India in 1931. In an appearance at the Rand Corporation in 1978, he was asked 15 prepared questions. One of them was as follows: Give a year between 1776 and 1970 in which Friday the thirteenth occurs in both January and July. After pondering a bit, he came up with 1928.

We have met Davi Skakuntala in the previous newsletter, which described how, at Imperial College, she multiplied two thirteen digit numbers in 28 seconds. She gave another demonstration at the Computer Department of SMU in 1977. A problem had been prepared for her by using the Univac 1101 at the Bureau of Standards. It was a doozy. She was given a number with 201 digits and asked to calculate the 28th root. In other words, what number, multiplied by itself 28 times gives that 201 digit number. She came up with the answer, 546,372,891 in 50 seconds.



Salo Finkenstein had a remarkable memory for numbers. He was shown the thirty digit number 763, 542, 197, 638, 297, 428, 058, 631, 789, 920 for only three seconds. He could repeat the number forward or backwards. This ability is not unlike another. Individuals can establish how many objects there are in a group without actually counting them if there are four or fewer. Say one sees three objects. You "know" there are three without counting. Beyond four objects, one begins to count. But some individuals can look at a group of objects, and "know" that there are, say, 107 items in the group. While an ordinary person can establish that there are three objects without counting, these individuals can handle over a hundred items.

Here are some interesting aspects of mental calculations. The individuals actually calculate, the numbers do not pop into their minds. Some multiply from left to right, others right to left and some cross multiply. There are aural calculators who hear the numbers and visual calculators that see numbers. The overriding ability is to be able to retain the numbers in their memory. All of them are fascinated with numbers. At times, it can be distracting. One person reports that he has to consciously avoid looking at numbers. If he does, he starts to search for factors. To most people the number 2401 is little more than a 2, a 4, a zero and a one. But a calculator immediately sees it as the square of 49.

While some mental calculators are mentally retarded, the majority are not. Most lead normal, sometimes famous lives. Some well-known scientists had the ability, including Gauss, Euler and Ampere. George Bidder, noted above, became a famous engineer. Von Neuman was so endowed as was Aitkin, a well known mathematician who died in 1967. Aitkin was once asked by a colleague for the 301st digit in the number Pi. He answered, (correctly), "seven" and went on to record the next 150 digits in the value.

Mental calculators are not always rapid. Jededia Buxton, an Englishman (1702 - 1772), took ten weeks to work out the square of a 39 digit number. He came up with the answer 527, 015, 363, 459, 577, 385, 673, 773, 542, 638, 591, 721, 213, 298, 066, 079, 307, 524, 904, 381, 389, 499, 251, 637, 423, 236. It is known that he kept the whole process in his memory because he could neither read or write numbers and had to dictate them. It would be two hundred years before it was possible to verify his result. It turned out that his number was wrong. His 22nd number from the end is a "4", it should have been a "5".

There are some who believe that the brains of mental calculators are not wired any differently than ordinary people and everyone has much greater potential than they generally realize. They think that learning numbers is the same as learning a language which has to be done early or not at all. The young are constantly immersed in language but not in numbers, so the potential is never realized. There is some support for the theory from the fact that in one culture almost everyone was a mental calculator. When missionaries first arrived in Polynesia they were frustrated by the fact that whenever they got the young people together, all they did was exchange numbers. When they tried to teach them arithmetic, they were astounded by the fact that the students could multiply two four digit numbers - this meant that they already knew the multiplication tables up to 10,000. In fact, in the language of old Tonga, all the numbers up to about 100,000 had individual names.

## **METAMORPHOSIS**

In reading about neurology, I came across many wondrous things. For example, the most unfortunate mental patients are those with IQs of the order of 20. Their motor coordination is extremely limited and putting one foot before another is barely possible with clunky, erratic steps. But with some, bring on the music, and they go into a graceful dance. There are many byways in the human mind and no wonder. In 1986, Manfred Kage a professor at Manneheim, made an estimate of the computing power of the 3-pound human brain. He then calculated the size of a computer which could handle an equivalent number of bits of information with the technology of the day. It came out to be rather large - an area the size of Texas to a height of one hundred stories.

## **A LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

The August newsletter castigated John Trani, CEO of Stanley Works, for his unbridled greed. I received a letter from a Philadelphia member of the Cayuga Society, George Beichl (a friend of seventy years). He noted that all CEOs are not like that, and cited the case of Aaron Feurstein, CEO of Malden Mills in Lawrence, Massachusetts. With 3000 employees the mill was the largest employer in Lawrence. During the night of December 11, 1995, the factory burned to the ground. Feurstein could have walked away with the insurance money, but that is not what he did. The following day he met with all the employees and told them that their salaries would be continued for three months, their health benefits for nine and promised that the factory would be rebuilt. He then took out a personal loan of 15 million dollars to rebuild the plant. It is still in business.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER

Note: As of now, no games scheduled for Oct 26 & Nov 2

Bart DeLuca Saturday, November 16, 7:00

Don Cooke Saturdays, November 9, 23 & 30, 7:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, November 22, 8:00 at Fred's

English Dept. Tuesday, November 12, 7:30 at Isaac's

Tom Dilliplane Every Monday, 8:30. \$5. anytime. 275-0275



Bill Gates, the Fattest Cat

### THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH IN AMERICA

{ An article similar to this one, by Paul Krugman, appeared in today's ( Oct. 20 ) issue of the New York Times Sunday Magazine. It used income instead of wealth as a measure.

To say that there is an uneven distribution of wealth in this country does nothing to indicate the enormity of the imbalance. Much of the material presented here is a result of the work of Edward N. Wolff, a professor of Economics at NYU, particularly his publication, *Recent Trends in Wealth Ownership 1983 to 1998*. April 2000 Wealth is defined as financial assets such as cash, retirement savings, stock, etc. and physical assets, such as a home, less debts. Perhaps the information is best presented by a series of short statements.

- It was estimated that Bill Gates, America's richest person, owned 50 billion dollars in 1999. This is more than the combined wealth of the 120 million people in the bottom 40% of the population who have only 40 billion dollars.
- The average wealth of the top one percent of the households is about 10 million dollars and they control 40% of the wealth of the nation. The combined wealth of this select group is equal to the combined wealth of the bottom 95%.
- The top 60% of the households control 99.8% of the nation's total wealth and is 500 times the combined wealth of the bottom 40% who have the remaining 0.2%.
- America's total wealth is 27 trillion dollars, which if divided equally among all households, would give each \$270,000. Yet, 40% of the population have a total worth of a \$1000 or less.
- The gap between the rich and the poor is growing. Between 1983 and 1998, the wealth of the top one percent increased by 41%, while the wealth of the bottom 40% declined by 76%.
- Between 1979 and 1992, 98% of the increase in income went to the wealthiest 20% of all families while the remaining 2% was divided among the other 80%. Source: Americans for Democratic Action, Paper #304.

### MORE ON THE GREAT DEPRESSION

After the last newsletter, I received another letter from George Beichl. George and I went to St. Joe's at the same time. In fact, we went to high school, college and graduate school together. After a stint as an infantryman in WWII, when he was reported missing in action ( he was a POW ), he spent his life as a Professor of Chemistry at St. Joseph's University.

George writes about his experiences in those dreadful years. The income for his family ( he was the only child ), came from his mother, a widow, who took in washing. To go to college he needed a job. There were jobs to be had - which few wanted. His was as an orderly in a hospital, from 7 PM to 7 AM, six days a week, catching sleep as best he could. He was paid 35 dollars a month for a 72 hour week. That comes to about eleven cents an hour. Now, that is going to college the hard way !!!

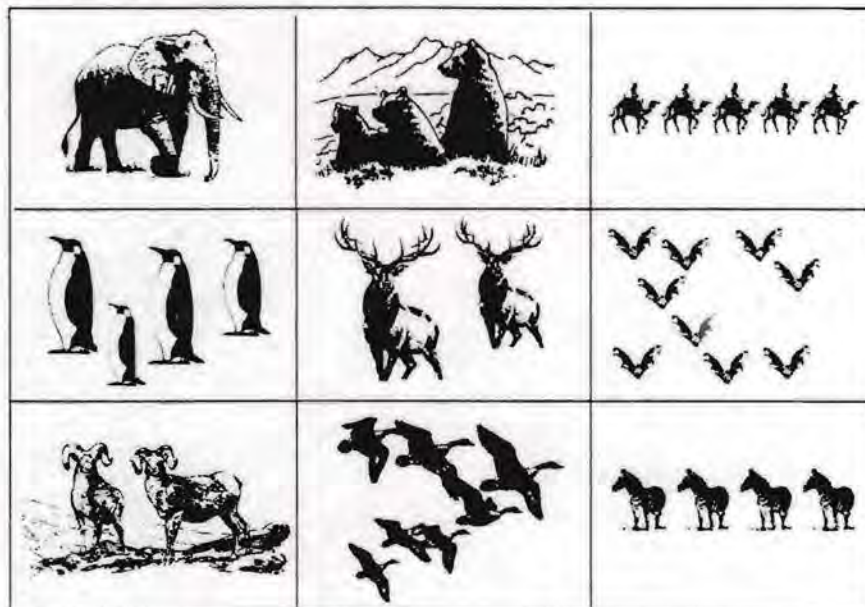


## ONE, TWO, THREE

In last month's newsletter, I mentioned the ability of the brain to determine how many objects it is seeing without counting them. For most people, this number is four, although for some they can look at a group of say, 107 and "know", without counting, that there are 107 things in the group.

In primitive societies that have not reached the stage of being able to count, there is a rudimentary system of keeping track. The system usually goes up to four, such as: one, two, three, four, then "many". All such cultures have the same range. None go, one, two, three, four, five, many. Why is it almost always four, not three or five?

The explanation lies in the following test. Without counting, establish the number of items in each of the boxes shown below.



The answer lies in a limitation within the eye-brain coordination. Just by visualizing, it is possible to readily identify one, two, three and four items. With five objects, one begins to count. So for one who cannot count, anything more than four is "many". It seems that the brain of a primitive man is not much different than that of a modern man. Source: *The Universal History of Numbers*, by Georges Ifrah.

## RAMPANT INNOVATION

In each September issue of *Fortune Magazine*, the editors select an American company which is, in their opinion, the most innovative. In September 2000, they did something unusual. They selected the same company that they had chosen the four previous years. And what is the name of that stellar company that garnered such acclaim? You probably guessed it - **Enron**. Certainly no one can deny that they were innovative.

## CHAOS IN ACADEMIA

Last spring, the top ranking student in the Business School at the University of Mississippi, was a guy by the name of Joseph Meridith. With some of you older guys, the name may ring a bell. Joseph is the son of James Meridith, the first black to enroll in the University on September 30, 1962. It did not go easily. There was a riot which took fourteen hours to bring under control. Meridith was accompanied by three hundred federal marshals when all hell broke loose. With one hundred of the marshals down (27 by gunshot wounds), first, the National Guard, then airborne troops, making a force of 30,000 soldiers were called in. Two people died and 300 were injured.



## Poker Schedule for December

**Two changes in the \$5/\$10 game. Half the games will be on Friday and half on Saturday. The start time will be changed to 8:00.**

**Bart DeLuca FRIDAY, THE THIRTEENTH, 8:00**

**Don Cooke Saturday, Dec. 7, Friday, 20, perhaps Saturday 28, 8:00**

**Chemistry Dept. Friday, December 6, 2, 8:00 at Geoff's**

**English Dept. Wednesday, December 18, 7:30 at Glenn's**

**Tom Dilliplane Every Monday, 8:30. \$5, anytime, 275-0275**



### ETHICS, CIA STYLE - OPERATION MKULTRA



In 1953, Frank Olson, a biochemist, worked on a project named MKULTRA in one of the "dirty tricks" sections of the CIA. On November 19, the project leader, Sidney Gottlieb, invited some members of the team to a working dinner at the Deep Creek Lodge in rural Maryland. After dinner, a round of cointreau was shared by all. Unknown to Olson, his drink was spiked with the hallucinogen LSD, one of the drugs the group had been working with. Gottlieb wanted to see what would happen. Olson had a bad trip which went from bad to worse and did not go away.

A decision was made to take him to New York City to see a Dr. Harold Abramson whose work on LSD had been supported by the Agency. He was accompanied by a minder, Robert Lashbrook. They both shared a room on the tenth floor of the Statler Hotel. In the early morning hours of November 28, Olson's body was found on the sidewalk beneath a broken window on the tenth floor. The coroner ruled the death a suicide (there are those who dispute this finding). Condolences were extended to the widow, but no information about the circumstances surrounding the death was forthcoming. So the matter remained for twenty-two years.

In 1975, President Ford established The Rockefeller Committee to examine the extent of illegal domestic activities of the CIA. The details of the Olson affair came to light and Mrs. Olson brought suit for the wrongful death of her husband. The last thing the Agency wanted was a trial so the government settled for \$750,000. Mrs. Olson and her family were invited to meet with the president who apologized for the death of her husband. It was the political thing to do because of the national uproar generated by the disclosures.

The worst was yet to come. In 1977, congress decided to explore the question of illegal activities on the part of the Agency. Hearings were held with Director Turner representing the CIA. Some of the findings were startling. The Agency had paid for a wing in the Georgetown Hospital which was used for terminally ill patients. What the patient, or their families, did not know, is that they were being used as human guinea pigs for the testing of drugs of interest to MKULTRA. The CIA also ran two bordellos, one on the east coast, and one on the west. The rooms were furnished with two-way mirrors and movies and recordings were made of the activities. The drinks of the customers were spiked with drugs of interest to the program. (The CIA charged the girl's customers \$100, \$700 in current dollars, which made for a fancy operation).

There was also a "volunteer" program which was, perhaps, the most ruthless and diabolical of them all. It involved prisoners who had addictions to drugs. For their cooperation in volunteering to undergo testing, they were given supplies of the drug of their addiction.

These exploits may sound too bizarre to believe, but they come from official transcripts of congressional committees. One might think that heads would have rolled after all this came out. Not so. No one even received an official reprimand, and Gottlieb retired honorably with twenty years of service.



KULTRA went on for eleven years. It ended in 1964 after being discovered by the Office of Inspector General of the CIA. On the web, I found a copy of the letter written by the Inspector General to the Director ( eyes only) about the program. He was not shocked by what was being done. he was concerned about the potential for "serious adverse reaction in public opinion" and legal liabilities. In 1978, the Director ordered the destruction of all material related to MKULTRA

None of this really surprised me. A Cornell professor had been involved with MKULTRA and I had access to censored copies of a large number of documents which had been obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. I was appalled at the tone of the reports. To me, they read as though they had been written by a group of juvenile cowboys rather than professionals.

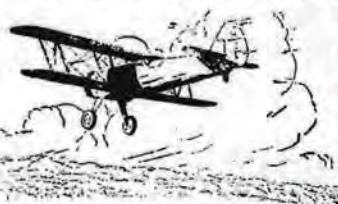
The Army took a more cautious approach to their program, titled **Third Chance**, for testing of drugs on unwitting subjects. The experiments were mostly carried out overseas and usually, but not always, on foreign nationals, such as prisoners-of-war ( so much for the Geneva Convention ) and ex-Nazis and in a least one case, an American GI in prison for theft. The program experienced at least one death. In 1959, the Army became concerned about the ethical, moral and legal ramifications of **Third Chance**. A committee was established to consider such questions. They reported back, essentially that it is all justified on the basis of national security. "In intelligence, the stakes involved and the interest of national security may permit a more tolerant interpretation of moral - ethical values but not legal limits. ....". But then there was a warning -don't get caught. "Any claim against the U. S. Government for alleged injury must be legally shown to have been due to the material. Proper security and appropriate operational techniques can protect the fact of employment of EA 1729". (Note: EA 1729 was LSD).

I wonder what is going on these days in the name of national security that the public might be squeamish about ? And how it will look when it comes out twenty-five years from now ? I would venture a guess that the Army is back in the drug business at Guantanamo Bay.

A sign of the times -much of this comes from the web. As I entered "CIA", I had the definite feeling my name went on a list somewhere.

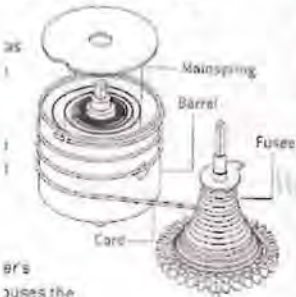
Sources: Minutes of Congressional Committees, 1977; An article by Michael Ignatieff in the New York Times Sunday Magazine, April 1, 2001; The Wizards of Langley, Jeffrey T. Richelson, 2001

## THE DARING YOUNG MEN IN THEIR FLYING MACHINES

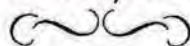


In 1941, with 80 U-boats on patrol in the North Atlantic at any one time, the situation was desperate for British convoys. The ships were relatively safe under the eyes of land-based aircraft. But there was a long haul across the middle of the ocean. Desperate situations call for desperate measures. Ships could carry airplanes which could be catapulted into the air. The only problem was that there was no way to recover them. But, still they flew. After the mission, the pilot would search for a friendly ship, parachute into the sea and hope. ( The planes were too flimsy for a crash landing ).

## INGENUITY



When springs were first tried as the driving force for clocks, they proved to be impracticable. As the spring ran down, its strength declined and the clock slowed down. The problem was solved by a device called a fusee as shown in the illustration. With the fusee, as the spring runs down, what is in essence, a gear ratio, changes. The shape of the fusee has the same function as the decline in the strength of the spring. As the strength of the spring declines, its power is maintained at a constant level by an gradually increasing gear ratio. So why is the device featured in the newsletter ? Because I find it fascinating that it was invented by some very clever person about the year 1450.



We keep hearing about costs of billions of dollars. The concept of a billion boggles the human mind. Steve Cole has a suggestion to get some feeling for the number, Counting from now, at what date will a billion seconds have elapsed? The answer is on the other side of this page.



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...An article by Michael Ignatieff in the New York Times Magazine, April 1, 2001: *The Wizards of Langley*, Jeffrey T. Richardson, 2001.

### CRASHING YOUNG MEN IN THEIR FLYING MACHINES

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Starting at midnight on December 1, 2002, one billion seconds will have elapsed on June 8, 2034.

...about costs of billions of dollars. The concept of a billion boggles the human mind. It is a suggestion to get some feeling for the number. Counting from now, at what date would one billion seconds have elapsed? The answer is on the other side of this page.



# Poker Schedule for January

Bart DeLuca Friday, January 3, 8:00

Don Cooke Saturday, January 11, Friday 17, Saturday 25, 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, January 10, 8:00 at Barry's

English Dept. Thursday, January 23, 7:30 at Steve's

Tom Dilliplane Every Monday, 8:30. \$5, anytime, 275-0275

## HOW TO STACK THE DECK

About a year ago there was an article published in the house organ of the American Enterprise Institute which studied the political affiliations of university faculty members. The study claimed documentary evidence that our universities were dominated by left-wing faculty members. The evidence was compiled by student volunteers at twenty-one large universities. They visited boards of elections to determine how individuals were registered. In the compilations, Democrats and Greens were considered parties of the left. There were a total of 1,843 faculty members in the study and when the data were compiled, it showed that eleven out of twelve faculty members were "leftists".

The study received a great deal of publicity with many newspaper articles, radio reports and the authors appearing on television talk shows. It is easy to understand the wide publicity because it



But in due time, others began to look at the study more closely, particularly the research methodology. Statisticians are familiar with a quote by Andrew Lang, "He uses statistics like a drunk uses a lamppost, more for support than enlightenment." How does one set up a statistical study to insure that the results will come out as you want them to? You carefully select the sample to be studied. In this particular case, the faculty members in the data base were not selected randomly. It appears that they were selected to get the desired result. Cornell faculty members represented almost ten percent of the entire data base, with 172 individuals. Of these, the compilation indicated that 166 were "leftists".

But, who were these 166? Not one faculty member in the Cornell sample was from the Business School, Engineering, Agriculture, Law, Vet or Medicine. And not one was a scientist. Almost half the sample came from two departments, Women's Studies and English. (Presumably most of the participants in the English poker game were included). I would not consider either of these units to be hotbeds of right wing activism. Harvard was represented in the study with 52 faculty members, all from the Social Sciences. With UCLA, half the sample came from Women's Studies and History. The University of Texas had 94 professors in the study, of which 28 were from Women's Studies. These "researchers" really (and in my opinion, purposely), stacked the deck.

Source: Martin Plissner, The American Prospect Magazine, December, 2002.

## FROM THE FILES OF THE ITHACA JOURNAL

November 7, 1950. The Hospital Board of Managers raised the fee for a hospital room to \$8.50 a day - twelve dollars for a private room. A cost of \$8.50 a day would be \$59.50 at today's prices.

January 30, 1924 The Klu Klux Klan burned a giant cross on a nearby hilltop to celebrate the formation of a new chapter with headquarters at 209 East State street.



## ANOTHER HOLY GRAIL FOUND - IN AN UNEXPECTED WAY

Manindra Agrawal, a mathematician at the Indian Institute of Technology, has developed a method to establish whether a particular number is a prime number (divisible by no other number than one). The search for such a method has been on since the early 1600s when Fermat tried his hand at it. Recently, the search for a procedure for identifying prime numbers has fallen to the number theorists, of whom about one hundred specialize in prime numbers.

Up until Agarwal's discovery, the only way to identify a prime was to throw massive amounts at the number to see if a divisor could be found.

The surprising aspects of the discovery were that Agarwal was not a number theorist, that the solution involved only high school mathematics and his two coauthors were undergraduates. The reaction of the mathematical world was, Amazing! It is so simple that I cannot believe that I did not think of it.

## MORE ABOUT THE CIA

For 25 years, between 1970 and 1995, the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency had programs involving "remote viewing" which dealt with paranormal phenomena. So called "psychics" were given a latitude and longitude of a particular location and were asked what they saw there. In 1989 they were asked to focus on a specific training camp in Libya and describe what they "saw" there. In 1994 they were used to ascertain the presence of Plutonium in North Korea as well as the presence of tunnels in the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea. Even after an evaluation of the program in the late 1980s, by the National Research Council which concluded that the program was a waste of taxpayer's money, it still went on. The CIA was not entirely to blame because some influential members of congress exerted pressure on the Agency to continue the psychic programs

Source: The Wizards of Langley, by Jeffrey T. Rickelson, 2001

Richard Helms, Director of the CIA, in a speech to the National Press Club, made the following statement, "You just have to trust us, we are honorable men".

President Truman, who established the Agency had this to say about his decision. "I think that it was a mistake. If I knew what was going to happen, I never would have done it - it's become a government of it's own - the people have a right to know what those birds are up to".





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

THE YEAR OF THE GOAT. 4 TO 1

**Mike Lakin** Saturday, February 1, 8:00. Mike lives at 41 Muzzy Rd. 3 mi. S. of Ithaca College 96B. Left on Muzzy, 1/4 mi. large house on right - 256-9308

**Bart DeLuca** Friday, February 21 8:00

**Don Cooke** Saturdays, February 8 & 15, Friday 28, 8:00

**Chemistry Dept.** Friday, February 14 ♥, 8:00 at Milt's

**English Dept.** At Steve's. Date to be determined

**Tom Dilliplane** Every Monday, 8:30. \$5, anytime, 275-0275



FEB 1, 2003

### HOW TO LIE WITH STATISTICS

President Bush, trying to deflect criticism that his tax cuts favored the rich, came up with this statement. "Ninety-two million Americans will keep an average of \$1,083 more of their own money". Technically, not a lie. But it implies that ninety two million Americans will get \$1,083 - nothing could be further from the truth. Hendick Hertzberg, commenting in the January 29 issue of the New Yorker Magazine, agrees that the statement is true, but "in the same sense that if Bill Gates happened to drop by a homeless shelter where a couple of nuns were serving soup to sixty down-and-outers dressed in rags, the average person in the room would have a net worth of a billion dollars".

As a result of the tax cut, the median taxpayer, the one in the middle will realize a tax cut of a couple of hundred dollars. But, for someone with an income like George Bush, the reduction will amount to \$44,500. This is peanuts to the amount that Dick Cheney will save - \$327,000. And what will the bottom twenty percent gain from the cuts? Enough to buy a couple of bags of peanuts, about \$7.50

### THE CIVIL WAR GOES ON AND ON

It seems as though there is no end to the Civil War - it goes on and on in infamy. But, at least, one part of it is over. Last week, the Veterans Administration made it's last monthly payment (\$70) to a widow of a Civil War veteran. Gertrude Janeway died at the age of 93, in the log cabin in which she had lived most of her life. In 1927, Gertrude, age 18, married John Janeway, age 81.

While this may seem like an odd marriage, it was not uncommon at the time. Young women married aging veterans to assure themselves a lifetime pension.

### OLD WIVES TALES NEVER DIE



The derivation of the word, "lunatic" goes back to the Roman word for moon, luna. The Romans believe that the full moon caused mental instability. Fast forward to 1987. A study in the Journal of Emergency Medicine reported that 64% of emergency room physicians and 84% of the nurses believed that a full moon affects the mental health of patients.

They claim that they are swamped with cases when the moon is full. However, there is no evidence that the full moon produces an increase in births, deaths or emergency room admissions. Studies published The Annals of Emergency Medicine and the Journal of Emergency Nursing have found no correlation between these events and lunar cycles. Calls to crisis hot lines have been plotted against the phases of the moon. So have murders and other crimes. None of the studies show any correlation with the full moon. Old wives tales die hard.

Source: Howard Fienberg, Sacramento Bee, 9/13/2002 - [www.stats.org](http://www.stats.org)



## **THE INSCRUTABLE ORIENTAL**

*There is an aspect of our dealings with the Chinese and the North Koreans in the current crisis that I worry about. The image I have is that the American negotiating team will be a group of bright young men with Summa Cum Laude degrees from Yale or the Princeton School of International Affairs. On the other side, there is a group of men of indeterminate age, some of who have never seen the inside of a schoolroom.*

*My worry is based on a quote from that sage of the Far East, Rudyard Kipling. It goes like this:*

*The end of the fight is a tombstone white.  
With the name of the late deceased,  
With the epitaph, drear.  
"Here lies a fool, who tried to hustle the  
East".*

## **RENT -A -POLL**

*It seems that the results of polls and surveys are constantly before our eyes. How trustworthy are the results ? We have recently been shocked by the rotten apples in corporate American. It now seems that our faith in polls are about to take a similar hit. It seems that the companies which do such surveys have their own bad apples. What can you do to have a survey done to prove that the public agrees with your position. Just hire the right company and tell them what the answer should be. They can phrase the questions and interpret the results to get any answer you want. All done "scientifically" with an error of, "two to three percent".*

*There is an Association for Public Opinion Research which promulgates a code of professional ethics. But not all organizations, even some of the larger ones, subscribe to such restrictions. The second largest survey company, run by John Zogby, will allow a customer to remain anonymous, a position which is in violation of the code. Zogby's customers include organizations of the radical right and left which will generally, not allow their name to be associated with the poll.*

*And then, there is another question even with those pollsters who strive to be honest (which many do). The results of surveys usually contain a statement such as, "The margin of error is two to three percent", or something equivalent. This term refers to internal reproducibility for the question asked. It does not mean that the result reflects the opinion of the nation to that degree of accuracy. The largest variable is the phrasing of the question. Fourteen polling organizations follow the popularity of President Bush. Each of these report a small possible error. But how do they agree with each other ? Twelve of the fourteen have taken a poll on the question in this month, January 1903. They report the percentage of respondees who approve Bush's performance in percentages as follows: 53, 53, 54, 56, 57, 57, 59, 61, 63, 63, 63, and 64% (a range of 18%).*

*Source: Chris Moody, The American Prospect, February, 2003, and [www.dailykos.com](http://www.dailykos.com).*

## **FROM THE FILES OF THE ITHACA JOURNAL**

*July 21, 1924 The Board of Public Works removed the ban on dancing at Stewert Part. Dancing had been previously banned as a degrading activity.*

*Oct. 1, 1915 Morse Chain workers end strike after management agrees to reduce the work week to 55 hours.*



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

Tom Reiss's game is back. We will start out with Wednesday night, alternating with Tom Dilliplane's game on Monday night = stakes \$2/\$5.

Bart DeLuca Fridays, March 14 & 21, 8:00

Don Cooke Saturdays, March 8 & 29, 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, March 7, 8:00 at Don's

English Dept. Thursday, April 3, 7:30 at Don's

Tom Dilliplane Mondays, 3, 17 & 31, 8:30, \$5, anytime

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, 12 & 26, 8:00 at Don's



**MARCH WINDS**

### A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM

October 12, 2000, was the date of the second presidential debate between Vice president Al Gore and Governor George W. Bush. Here is an excerpt from the transcript.

Mr. Lehrer

Should the people of the world look at the United States, governor, and say should they fear us, should they welcome our involvement, should they see us as a friend, everybody in the world? How do you ----how would you project us around the world as president?

Mr. Bush

Well, I think they ought to look at us as a country that understands freedom, where it doesn't matter who you are or how you're raised or where you are from that you can succeed. I don't think they should look at us with envy. It really depends on how our nation conducts itself in foreign policy. If we're an arrogant nation, they'll resent us. If we are a humble nation, but strong, they'll welcome us. And our nation stands alone now in the world in terms of power. And that's why we have to be humble and yet project strength in a way that promotes freedom. So I don't think they ought to look at us in any way other than what we are. We're a freedom-loving nation. And, if we're an arrogant nation, they will view us that way, but if we're a humble nation, they will respect us.



I agree with the arrogant, humble part - he got it just right - but somewhere he lost his way. But the statement has a sentence which makes me furious. "--- it doesn't matter who you are or how you are raised, or where you are from, that you can succeed". Balderdash!. That from a man born to privilege. It didn't matter that his father was an alumnus or that he went to the exclusive Phillips Academy when he got into Yale? It did not matter that he had a Yale degree when he got into the Harvard Business School? It did not matter that he was born in New Haven, Connecticut and not Blue Mountain Mississippi (population 667). In this country, as in all countries, it matters one hell of a lot who you are, how you are raised, and where you are from. Some can conceive of the daughter of a single mother living in the mean streets of Harlem, getting into Princeton, then the Yale Law School, becoming a corporate lawyer and living in Trump Tower. Anyone putting odds on it happening? She will be lucky to finish high school.

(When I used the word "balderdash", I got interested in the origin of the word. I did not find much. But I have a theory. Perhaps it came from the old word "balderdash" which is a word for an unappetizing mixture of drinks such as beer and milk, or beer and wine).



## AGAIN., WAR IS HELL



The story is told that, during WWII, the British Secret Service came up with a viable plan to assassinate Hitler. Churchill vetoed the operation on the basis that Hitler was such a poor military tactician, that he was more valuable to the Allies alive than dead. Here is one of many examples that prove that Churchill was right. The German campaign in North Africa was going badly because British warships wrecked havoc on the convoys supplying Rommel's forces. Hitler decided to transfer a large number of submarines from the North Atlantic to the Mediterranean. Admiral Donitz,

commander of the submarine forces, was strongly opposed. He believed that the Mediterranean would be a graveyard for his ships. He was overruled, and 64 boats were transferred. Not one returned

In the final days of the WWII, only one of every ten German U-boats that left on patrol, ever returned. (There was never a shortage of young men willing to go). Why did the German high command continue such a fruitless effort which was so costly in lives? They reasoned that the submarines tied up so many of the Allied naval forces that continuing the campaign was preferable to releasing these forces for other duties.

Source: *The Battle of the North Atlantic*, Barrie Pitt, 1977

## FROM THE FILES OF THE ITHACA JOURNAL



Would you believe that, 200 years ago, there was a bridge over Cayuga Lake? The September 4, 1800 issue of the Ithaca paper congratulated the owners of the Cayuga Bridge on its opening day. The bridge spanned the lake, between the villages of Cayuga and Bridgeport. It was over a mile long, 22 feet wide and was supported by trestles every 25 feet. The lake was not deep at that point, averaging six to ten feet.

The toll for a four wheel pleasure carriage was one dollar, a horse and sleigh, fifty cents and an ox cart, seventy-five cents. A man and horse was twenty-five cents and a walker twelve and a half cents.

In 1807 the bridge succumbed to ice and a second bridge was built, then a third. In 1857, ice brought down the third and last bridge.

The last time Cayuga Lake was completely frozen was 1963. When I first came to Ithaca in 1951, a machinist in the Chemistry Department, Harry Bush used to tell me stories about ice-boat racing on the lake.

August 9, 1901 - The residents of Meadow Street successfully petitioned the City to abandon the plans for paving their street. They thought that it would lead to too much traffic. They were right. Meadow Street is now a six lane highway.

## WHY ENGLISH CAN BE A DIFFICULT LANGUAGE

The bandage was wound around the wound

In the wake of the all night party, he did not wake up in time for the wake.

The girl with the light brown hair gave him a light.

When shot, the dove dove into the bushes.

Can can-can dancers open a can?

The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.

The insurance was invalid for the invalid.

He was too close to the door to close it.



## Poker Schedule for April



Don Cooke Saturdays, April 12 & 19 - Friday April 26  
No game scheduled for April 4th and 5th

Chemistry Dept. Friday, April 11, 8:00 at Don's

English Dept. To be announced

Tom Dilliplane Mondays, 14 & 28, 8:30, \$5, anytime

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, 9 & 23, 8:00, at Don's

Only a short newsletter this month. March was very busy and I was distracted by the war. Don



### SOME THOUGHTS ON WAR

#### Incongruities of War

"We should not march into Baghdad. To occupy Iraq would instantly shatter our coalition, turning the whole Arab world against us, and make a broken tyrant into a latter day Arab hero. Assigning young soldiers to a fruitless hunt for a securely entrenched dictator would be condemning them to fight in what would be an unwinnable urban guerilla war. It would only plunge that part of the world into even greater instability". George H. W. Bush *A World Transformed*, 1998.

"Occupying Baghdad comes at an unpardonable expense in terms of money, lives lost and ruined regional relationships". Colin Powell, 1992

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. The world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from an iron cross". Dwight D. Eisenhower. In a speech, 1953.

Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than about living. We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. General Omar N. Bradley

The first casualty of war is truth. Boake Carter

Before a war, military science seems like a real science, like astronomy. After the war it seems like astrology. Rebecca West



Let me end on a less somber note. As a follow up to the section in the last newsletter about difficulties with the English language, Alan Hays sent me this clever addendum:

Time flies like an arrow,  
Fruit flies like a bannana.



# Poker Schedule for May

Saturday May 17 Open

Don Cooke Saturdays, May 3 & 31, Friday, May 9 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, May 16, at Len s. 8:00

English Dept. Thursday, May 15 at Glenn s 7:30

Tom Dilliplane Mondays, May 12 & 26. 8:30, \$5, anytime

A. J. Zahn Mondays, May 5 & 19, 8:30 \$5 anytime, 227 -0509

Bart Deluca Friday, May 23. 8:00

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, May 7 & 21, 8:00, at Don s



## ALL HOPE ABANDON, ALL YE WHO ENTER OUR PRISON SYSTEM

America has just established a new record. Two million of us are now behind bars. This fact gives our country the dubious distinction of having the highest rate of incarceration of all developed countries. It was not always so. Until 1973, we had a modest rate of imprisonment, 110 for every 100,000 people. Then came the "tough on crime" push for politicians striving with each other to look tougher than the opponent. Being described as "soft on crime" was a sure way to lose votes. In the next thirty years, imprisonment almost quintupled to 702/100,000, surpassing Russia with 664/100,000. Much further behind, comes Portugal with 131, Britain 126, Canada, 102, Germany 97, Italy 93, France 75 and Japan 48.

At the moment, the 2 million represent one of every 125 persons. But that does not include the 4.5 million on probation or parole and 3.5 million ex-convicts, which if included, means that one out of twenty six is touched by our prison system. The number for Afro-American men is more like one in five.

There is always talk of rehabilitation in the system, but given the circumstances, it can only be a feeble effort. Individuals live in a violent, fearful atmosphere where viciousness rules. And rehabilitation stops at the prison gate on the way out. The discharged inmate is given a prison suit, a bus ticket to an approved location and a ten dollar bill. - not even a ride to the bus station. What a way to start a new life! Of course, one could go into the nearest bank with the pitch that I just got out of jail and need a thousand dollars to get on my feet. It probably wouldn't fly.

One sometimes hears that a completion of a prison term means that the individual has "paid his debt to society". Nothing could be further from the truth - he will continuously pay the debt for the rest of his life. The majority of employers will not hire a person with the stigma of criminal record. Such individuals are barred from many federal programs such as public housing and student loans. If an ex-con visits his, or her, mother in a public housing unit, the mother is liable to eviction - it is a crime for them to put a foot in a public housing area.



Senator Graham of Texas triumphantly hailed his bill barring drug offenders from food stamps and welfare money for life - "welfare money should not be used for drugs". I doubt that it even crossed his mind that there might be a woman with a couple of kids out there who wants to straighten out her life. In fact, she has little, or no, hope of doing so. Most women leaving jail lose their children.

There are numerous other problems - in 13 states, a felony conviction results in a lifetime loss of voting rights. As a result 25% of Afro-American men in Florida are disenfranchised.

Individual states have laws barring ex-felons from certain classes of jobs. New York has a hundred such jobs, including plumbing, real estate, barbering, health care, etc. In Jersey, any government job, at any level is closed to one who has served time. Or one might not be able to work in an establishment that sells liquor - even as a dishwasher. Getting back on track is tough.

But there are penal and judicial systems that are so different than ours that they would confound many Americans as unworkable. In Finland, no one below the age of 15 can be charged with any crime. Those in the age group 15 to 21 can be convicted of a crime but it would be an extraordinary case if they served time.

The prison population in the country is 2700 ( 52/100,000), of which 40% are in "open prisons" which are labor camps where the inmates are paid a regular salary. The other 1600 are in "closed prisons". These are places that we would not recognize as prisons. The guards are unarmed, wear casual clothes rather than uniforms and guards and inmates are often on a first name basis. There are cells, but they are more like dormitory rooms with linoleum rather than clanging steel doors and passageways. Most inmates get a six-day pass every four months. Women with children under two years old are allowed to keep the baby with them. Men and women are housed in the same prison and see one another often enough that there are weddings in the prison chapel. There are provisions for hard core criminals who are segregated from the others. At the moment, the country has 80 such individuals and it is unlikely that any of them will ever be released.

There is an interesting story as to how this gentle system came into being. Thirty years ago, Finland had the highest rate of incarceration in Europe, and a grinding, brutal prison system, a relic of their Russian heritage. They took a good, long, look and decided that the system was producing results that were the exact opposite of what was intended. They took the next logical step and they now have the system described above.

How is the crime rate in Finland? Crime statistics are hard to compare across countries, but in most categories of crime, the rate for Finland is usually one fifth to one tenth that of the United States. They also have the smallest police force, per capita, in Europe.

An interesting question arises. Could the Finnish system work in America? I am afraid my answer is "no", not even after thirty years. Why would a gentle system work in Finland but not America? I think that the difference lies in the fact that Finland is a welfare state with an almost classless society and there is no poverty. Our country has a millstone of class divisiveness and poverty, both breeding grounds for all kinds of social difficulties.

Alan Hays helped me find my way with this.



I hope that you will bear with me for one more quote: "Once you got Bagdad, it's not clear what you do with it. It is not clear what kind of government you put in place. Is it going to be a Shiite regime, a Sunni regime or a Kurdish regime? How much credibility is that government going to have if it's set up by U. S. military when it's there? Dick Cheney. 1991





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JUNE

Don Cooke Saturdays, June 7 & 28, 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, June 20, at Len s, 8:00

English Dept. Tuesday, June 17 at Lamar s 7:30

Tom Dilliplane Mondays, June 9 & 23, 8:30

A. J. Zahn Mondays, June 2, 16 & 30, 8:30

Bart Deluca Friday, the 13th of June, 8:00

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, June 4 & 18, 8:00, at Don s

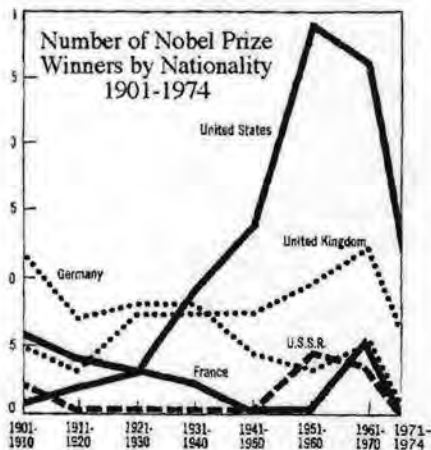


**D-Day**

**The Sixth of June**

### HOW TO LIE SCIENTIFICALLY

The charter of the National Science Foundation (NSF) specifies that the agency reports annually to Congress on the condition of the nation's scientific effort. It is easy to understand that the Foundation may have a hidden agenda in the preparation of the report - to increase funding for science. The graph shown below appeared in the 1974 report.



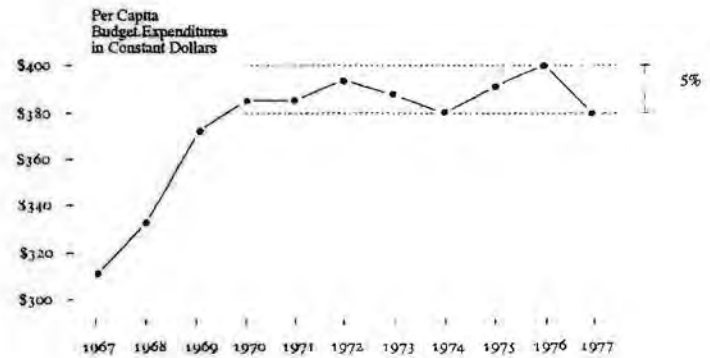
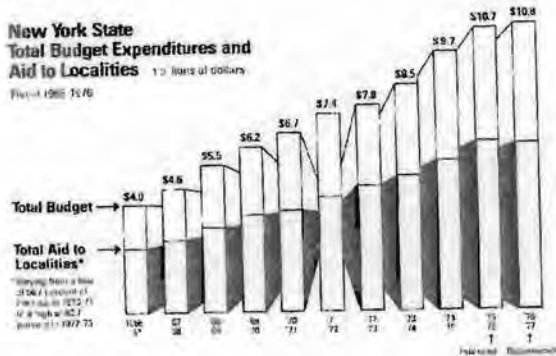
A quick look at the graph gives the impression that there is a recent, sharp decline in the number of Nobel Prizes won by Americans - the sky is falling! But a sharp observer may notice that all countries experienced a decline, which does not seem possible. The dilemma is answered in the fine print. The graph shows the number of prizes awarded in ten-year periods - except for the most recent period which is for the four-year period 1971 to 1974. It is not unexpected that the number of prizes won in a four-year period would be less than in a ten-year period. When data was available for the period 1971 to 1980, they showed that the U.S. actually made great gains in the competition for Nobel prizes, winning an unprecedented 39 of the 58 prizes.

A trick often used to mislead is to plot a one dimensional entity, such as an amount of money, in two dimensions as shown on the plot on the left below. The plot on the left uses two dimensions while the one on the right uses one dimension. The dollar bill at the bottom on the left is less than half as big as the one on the right.



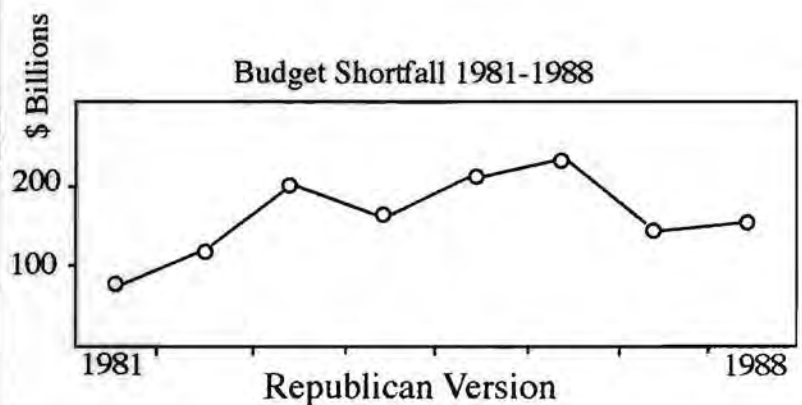
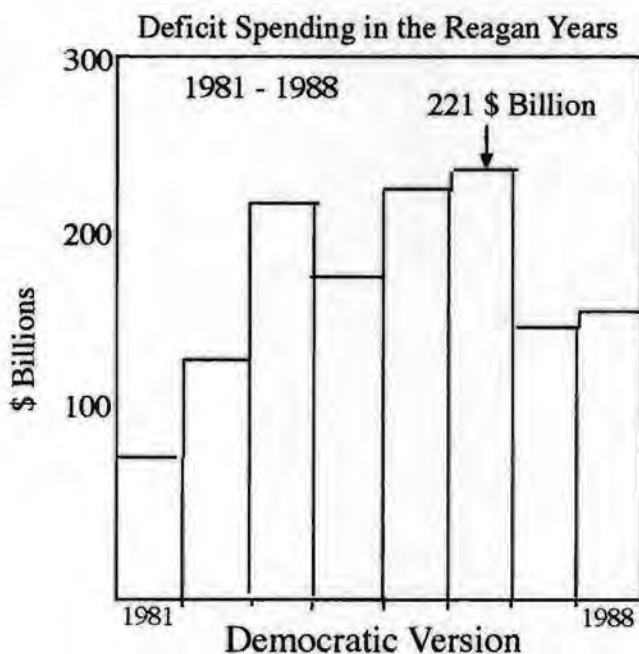


It is possible to make an opponent look bad by simple subterfuge, such as ignoring inflation. It appears from the graph on the left that the New York State budget is out of control, particularly in the years 1970 to 1977. However, the graph on the right which takes into account the diminishing value of the dollar and an increase in population, tells a very different story. The budget during this period was very much under control.



These examples are from the book, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, Edward R. Tufte, 1983.

But it is possible to influence people to your way of thinking without resorting to dishonesty. Both of the graphs below are perfectly legitimate, but plotted in different ways with different captions.



## YOU FIGURE IT OUT

One of the more successful safety programs in the past decade, has been the encouragement of bicycle riders to wear helmets, in some states, by new laws. What is hard to understand is the fact that, while the number of riders have decreased, the number of head injuries have increased by 51%.



**POKER SCHEDULE FOR JULY**

Don Cooke Saturdays, July 5 & 12, 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, July 25, at Mike s, 8:00

Mike lives at 41 Muzzy Rd.- left off Route 96, about three miles south of Ithaca College. The first house on the right

English Dept. Tuesday, July 15 at Amie s, 7:30

Tom Dilliplane Mondays, July 7 & 21, 8:30

A. J. Zahn Games on hold for July and August

Bart Deluca Friday, July 18, 8:00

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, July 2 & 16, 8:00, at Don s

**THE FACE OF THE DEPRESSION**

It is interesting that this 67 year-old photo is still one of the most frequently requested items in the Library of Congress photographic collection. It is entitled Migrant Mother. It is a picture of Florence Thompson, a thirty-two year old widow with five children, one of them still nursing. It was taken by in Nipomo, California in 1936, by Dorothea Lange, a photographer of the Resettlement Administration, who was documenting the plight of the rural poor. Eventually, Lange's photos would be published in a book illustrating the sad, desperate, situations under which many Americans lived in the depths of the depression. The book is a heartrending collection of misery.

Thompson was a migrant worker who traveled from area to area in a battered car following the crops. She arrived in Nipomo to work on a pea farm. But overnight, snow and cold ruined the crop and there was no work. On leaving, her car broke down and she had been there a couple of days, living off rotting peas, when Lange happened upon her and snapped this enduring photograph. Before the internet, this would have been the end of the story. But here is what happened to the family. Lange's picture and story had such an appeal that it received national attention in newspapers. It so happened that her brother saw the photograph and came to her rescue. It may be hard for some of you younger guys to realize, but in those days there was no organized support system. If help was not forthcoming from family, friends or compassionate strangers (there were a lot of them), it did not happen.

Florence actually made it, and moved on to a comfortable life. On the web I was even able to find this photograph of her taken in 1979 with three of the daughters who were with her in Nipomo. Her children bought her a house but she moved back to a trailer because she felt more relaxed "living on wheels".

**WHERE THE MONEY IS**

When Funny Cide won the 2003 Kentucky Derby, his owner took home \$800,000. That is peanuts compared to other ways to make money in the horse racing game. You probably never heard of the stallion Storm Cat because his whole racing career amounted to only eight races. But given his bloodlines, a grandson of Secretariat and Northern Dancer, he became a stud horse. He is now 20 years old and breeds mares at \$500,000 a pop. Last year he bred 123 mares. As I calculate it, he earned over 60 million dollars for his owner that year.



## THE SIGNIFICANCE PRONOUNS

President Bush, in his post 9/11 speech to Congress made the following statement,

"I will not forget this wound to our country or those who inflicted it. I will not yield; I will not rest; I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people". Contrast this with Churchill's speech to Parliament in the dark days of 1939.

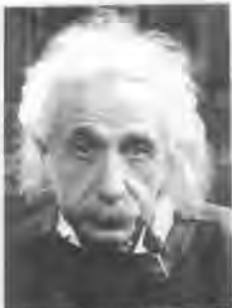
We shall go on to the end. We will defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we will fight in the fields and in the streets, we will fight in the hills. We will never surrender".

Or, with Roosevelt, the day after Pearl Harbor.

"Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger. With confidence in our armed forces - with the unbounding determination of our people - we will gain the inevitable triumph - so help us God".

I am not comparing the rhetorical style - it would be unfair to make a comparison with two of the greatest orators of the century. I am comparing the use of pronouns, the "I" versus the "we". Maybe a slip of the tongue? Not likely - most of his speeches are in the first person. Further, the phenomenon is a well know technique of speech coaches called "personalization". It is used when the speaker wants to project forcefulness and dominance. He has been coached. Whether he is well coached, or not, only time will tell.

## EINSTEIN ON POKER - A VERY TOUGH GAME



"God does not play dice with the universe. He plays an ineffable game of His own devising, which might be compared, from the prospective of the other players (i. e. everybody ), to being involved in an obscure and complex variant of poker, in a pitch dark room, with blank cards, for infinite stakes with a dealer who won't tell you the rules, and smiles all the time".

## THE INCONGUITIES OF WAR



I was stationed in London in June of 1944 when the Germans first bombarded the city with their V-1 bombs, the so- called buzz bombs. The V-1 was no more than a ton of explosive attached to a monoplane with a jet engine. In the beginning, there were a lot of them, about 100 per day. There were so many that I saw three in the air at the same time. Where was I when this happened? On a golf course getting in a round - it was about 10 o'clock at night (Double British Summer Time)

Getting defenses in place was not easy. The RAF Spitfire could keep pace with the jet, but imagine shooting at a ton of explosive which you were approaching at 400 miles an hour? Not a piece of cake - to use RAF lingo. But an interesting method was developed to bring them down. The Spitfire pilot would ease up next to the flying bomb and put his wingtip under the wing of the jet and tip it over. The gyro control system was designed only to fly level and the bomb would usually wind up in the English Channel.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST

Don Cooke Saturdays, August 2, 9 & 30, 8:00

Chemistry Dept. To be decided

English Dept. Wednesday, August 20 at Arnie s. 7:30

Tom Dilliplane Mondays, August 4 & 18, 8:30

A. J. Zahn Games on hold for July and August

Bart Deluca Tentatively, Friday, August 22, 8:00

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, August 13 & 27, 8:00, at Don s

### A PHENOMENA



It was Satchel Paige who said, "Don't look back, someone may be gaining on you". If Tiger Woods were to look over his shoulder he might see a most improbable future competitor - a thirteen year old schoolgirl, Michelle Wie is in eighth grade, she weighs in at 150 pounds on a willowy six - foot frame. She is breathing down Tiger's neck in one category - driving. Tiger is one of the heavy hitters, averaging 292 yards per drive. Wie is just a bit behind with 290. For women, the longest hitter in the LPGA is Annika Sorenstam with an average of 273 yards. (Wie is not listed because she is not a professional).

Fred Couples has this to say about her, "When you see her hit a golf ball, there is nothing that prepares you for it. It's just the scariest thing you have ever seen".

It is not only her driving, she won the Hawaii Open by thirteen strokes. She has a national title, the Women's Amateur Public Links Championship. She is the youngest person ever to win a national golf title and she is one of three women who have competed against men in tournament play this year.

### THE LAND OF THE FREE? IT DEPENDS ON WHOM YOU COUNT

The new government of the United States accumulated it's first census in 1790. The total population was 3,893,635 consisting of 3,199,355 freemen and 694,280 slaves (18%).

### THE MOON ILLUSION REVISITED



The moon illusion was discussed in a previous newsletter. This illusion results from the fact that at the horizon, a rising full moon seems to be so large and dominating. In fact, the size of the rising moon is identical to the size of the moon at the zenith - it just does not seem to be so.

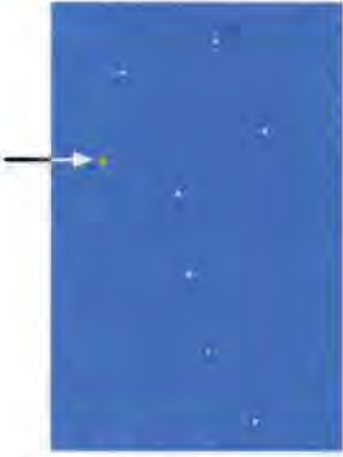
The bright silvery full moon results in other illusions. To the left is a representation of the constellation, the Big Dipper. Try to mentally visualize an image of a full moon superimposed on the drawing. What would it look like? The answer is on the following page

V~J DAY



AUGUST 15, 1946





The moon plays tricks on the human mind. It looks so big, but in reality, it is quite small. That little yellow dot represents a full moon superimposed, in scale, on the big dipper. The Big Dipper from end-to-end, subtends an angle of about 25 degrees. The full moon subtends an angle of one-half of one degree.

## IRAQ - 1920. CHURCHILL'S "UNGOVERNABLE MORASS"



In 1926, an exasperated Winston Churchill, when asked to find another million pounds to shore up the British puppet King Faisal of Iraq, blurted out, "I hate Iraq. I wish we had never gone there". The source of Churchill's exasperation began in March 1918 when the British army, having defeated the Turks, invaded Mesopotamia (now Iraq) and marched triumphantly into Baghdad. (Which, incidentally, had been completely looted by its inhabitants). This would be the high point of the British effort - it was downhill from that point on.

In 1920, the Iraqis mounted an organized guerilla warfare against the 60,000 British soldiers. The war rapidly deteriorated into savagery on both sides. The British pounded Iraqi positions with shells filled with poison gas and unsuccessfully tried to develop aerial bombing with mustard gas. The British staged public hangings of Iraqi leaders, and burned villages which did not cooperate. The Iraqis replied in kind.

After a year of chaos, and with 1040 British soldiers dead or missing and with about 8000 Iraqis killed, Churchill decided to quit "this ungovernable morass". In 1921, he declared Iraq to be a kingdom, and installed a 36 year old, King Faisal I. Faisal had been deposed a year earlier as King of Syria and had never set a foot in Iraq. The country was under a British mandate from the League of Nations and remained unsettled until it received independence in 1932. The monarchy ended in 1958 with the butchering of the family of Faisal II by Abdul-Karim Qassim. From 1958 the country was brutally ruled by a bewildering secession of strongmen.

Saddam Hussein took control in 1974 and lasted so long because he was more ruthless, better organized and received massive support from the United States. Here is a picture taken in Baghdad of Donald Rumsfeld shaking hands with Saddam Hussein on December 20, 1983, during one of his two trips to Iraq.



## A TREE REALLY GROWS IN BROOKLYN

A group of Cornell scientists set out to study the deleterious effects of urban pollution on the growth of trees - in this case cottonwoods. They chose New York City for the test and planted trees throughout the city with controlled plantings, from the same cuttings, in rural areas of the state. After three years they were in for a surprise. The city trees grew twice as fast as the trees in the country. To explain the unexpected results, the scientists speculate that the difference is due to ozone which inhibits the growth of trees. Ozone is formed from pollution products but slowly. So winds remove the precursors from the urban areas before the ozone is produced, leaving it to the rural areas. You often learn more from research results that show the opposite of what was expected.



# Poker Schedule for September

Don Cooke Saturdays, September 6 & 27, 8:00

Chemistry Dept. To be decided

English Dept. Thursday, September 18 at Mike's - 7:30

Tom Dilliplane Mondays, September 1 (Labor Day), 15 & 29, 8:30

A. J. Zahn Games on hold for September

Bart DeLuca Friday, September 19, 8:00

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, September 10 & 24, 8:00, at Don's

Paul Rubin Saturday, September 13, 8:00 Paul lives at 530 Hudson Street



## HOW TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE

The cost of influencing congress has reached a level of 1.8 billion dollars a year, or 35 million per legislator. There are 17,500 registered lobbyists in Washington, or 34 for each lawmaker.

General Electric employs twenty lobbyists. Since GE contributes 3.5 million to congressional campaigns each has \$175,000 to dangle before senators and congressmen.

I wonder how the GE lobbyists spend their day? With 17,500 others competing for face time with congressmen and their staffs, there cannot be much time spent dealing directly with congressional offices. Who knows? Maybe they stand around in the hallways all day passing out GE ballpoint pens.

Lawmakers would bristle if anyone suggested that such lobbying and campaign funds in any way influenced their judgement. On the other hand, I cannot imagine that the businessmen at GE spending so many millions of dollars, year after year, and getting nothing in return.

## BEAT'S ME

In the political campaigns of 2000 and 2002 the Democratic and Republican parties raised almost equal amounts of soft money, about 500 million dollars each. But there is a big difference as to where the fat cats donors made their contributions. Focusing on the top ten largest contributions, how many of them would you guess went to the Democrats and how many to the Republicans?

I must say I was surprised by the fact that eight of the ten went to the Democrats. Five came from unions, with amounts ranging from 3.5 million to 6.6 million. The others were from three wealthy private donors, Halme Saban, Fred Eychauer and Stephen Bing, who gave \$9.3, \$7.4 and \$6.7 million respectively. And considering those contributions which were at least one million dollars, \$48 million went to the Democrats while the Republicans raised only a paltry \$4 million. The Republican strength was with the smaller contributors. For donations less than \$200, the GOP received \$31 million and the Democrats \$8.4 million. Contrary to how I would have guessed, the big donors favored the Democrats and small contributors the Republicans.

Things will be different this time around. As of June, 2003, the Republicans have raised \$55 million to the Democrats \$18. Source: A study by the Center for Responsive Politics, June, 2003.

## A GEOGRAPHY QUESTION

Which of the fifty states can lay claim to the easternmost point of land in the United States? Hint: just so you will think about the question, I do not believe that many of you are going to get the correct answer, which is shown on the next page.





As to which state claims the easternmost point of land, the unexpected answer is Alaska. How can that be? The most easterly point on the globe is just west of the 180 degree longitude line. This line runs through the Aleutians chain in Alaska and Amchitka Island is one half degree west (179.5 degrees east longitude), which is as far east as one can get in the United States. Alaska also has the westernmost point in the country. This is Tanaga Island, about 150 miles east of Amchitka Island or 179.5 degrees west. Strange things happen at the International Date Line.

## THE BIGGEST BANG

The loudest sound ever generated in recorded history is, without question, associated with the explosion of the volcano Krakatoa in what is now Indonesia, at 10:02 AM on August 27, 1883. The reason that there is no question about the statement is that this sound was 50 to 100 times more intense than any other sounds of record. The sound of the explosion was heard 3000 miles away. (Imagine hearing an explosion in California as far away as New York City). For comparison, the explosion of Mt. Helens was limited to the local mountain area.

The shock wave of the cataclysm was recorded throughout the world. The British had installed recording barographs in each of their stations worldwide and they tracked the course of the explosion. At first, observers wondered at the two hour dance of their instruments, having no knowledge of the reason for the phenomena. But the Dutch in Batavia, Dutch East Indies, had telegraph facilities and the word soon spread throughout globe. Further surprises were in order. Thirty six hours later the barometers repeated their dance. It was the same shockwave passing the second time around. In fact, the shock wave was still detected on its seventh pass around the world.

## WAR IS HELL - AGAIN

In the current Iraqi war, air commanders were authorized to make their own decisions if a planned air strike was thought to result in the deaths of thirty, or fewer, civilians. The approval of Secretary Rumsfeld was required if the number of expected deaths exceeded that number. Fifty such requests were received and all were approved.

While such orders seem calloused, it must be remembered that in WW II, Japanese and German civilians were purposely targeted in Allied bombing raids. The numbers were not thirty or fifty. A few single raids resulted in the deaths of a hundred thousand men women and children to say nothing of the maimed and injured. The U. S. Army Air Force spent a great deal of effort in devising ways to maximize the fire damage to Japanese homes. Bomber Harris, Commander of the RAF, was the leading advocate of saturation bombing of German cities. In the last newsletter it was noted that in an earlier Iraqi war, the British tried to develop methods of using mustard gas in bombing raids. The leader of that effort was none other than the same Commander Harris.

## BRITISH HUMOR

George Bernard Shaw, having finished a new play, wrote Winston Churchill: "Have reserved two tickets for my first night and bring a friend, if you have one". Churchill replied: "Impossible to come first night. Will come second night, if there is one".



## Poker Schedule for October

Paul Rubin The Second Annual Don Cooke Tournament, October 11, 3:00  
Paul will also try a Wednesday night game ( \$5 anytime).  
Wednesday, October 15, 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, October 3, 8:00 at Tyler's

English Dept. Tuesday, October 21 at Steve's - 7:30

Tom Dilliplane Mondays, October 13 & 27, 8:30

Bart DeLuca Friday, October 17, 8:00

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, October 8 & 22, 8:00, at Don's

Don Cooke Saturdays, October 4 & POSSIBLY the 25.



The Seven of Acorns  
Bavaria, 1700s

### HOW MUCH DO YOU OWE?

A lot more than you think. In addition to what you know you owe, there is another big item that you probably do not think much about, if at all. As of September 15, 2003, the United States government had a public debt of 6.8 trillion dollars or \$23,342 for every woman, man and child in the country. ( There is an additional \$4,500 if you happen to live in New York State). Even though you do not worry about it, it is real money that will be paid. (It is hard to imagine this nation defaulting - at least at this point in time).

This debt for a family of four is about \$100,000. For many families this would be an impossible debt load. If so, how can the system work? Politicians are a tricky and unscrupulous lot. Payment of the debt will be passed on to our children and grandchildren. It will be paid by a lowering of the quality of life - less money for entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, student support, etc. Present day politicians cannot imagine facing present day financial problems, so they pass the difficult decisions on to future politicians. And the problem is getting worse - the debt has been increasing by 1.7 billion dollars every day or, to my mind, a shocking 10% per year.

One of the rallying cries of the Revolution was, "Taxation without representation is tyranny". Who represents the youth of today, and the unborn, in our present day decisions affecting them? It seems that no one does.

### A SIMPLE PROBLEM

Mentally, sum up the following column of numbers.

1000  
40  
1000  
30  
1000  
20  
1000  
10



If you got 5000 for the total, you are like most people - wrong. Now that you know that 5000 is the wrong answer, go back and add the column again. Most people get 5000 the second time around.

There are four 1000s = 4000. Then,  $40 + 30 = 20 = 10 = 100$ . -  $4000 + 100 = 4100$ . Simple

Source: Why Do Buses Come in Threes? Eastaway & Wyndham

## **HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO BOTCH THINGS SO BADLY?**

An article in the August 27, 2003 issue of the New York Times gave some background on the Regents test in mathematics. Over all high school classes, only 37 percent of the students attained the passing grade of 65. Twelfth graders were required to pass the test to graduate. Since only 28 percent of the seniors passed, as one might imagine, the requirement was waived.

What I find hard to believe is that the State Education Department had pretested the examination, found that the average score was 46, and proceeded anyway with the passing grade of 65. When a spokesman for the Department was asked why the State had proceeded when it expected the average score to be low, came up with what I think is a really dumb answer. "The purpose of the test is to measure whether the students meet the standards, not to make sure that a certain number of students pass or fail". In other words, what is important is the level of mathematics we believe students should know, not what they do know.

In August, the Education Department changed the passing grade of 65 to some lower number depending on the class. For the seniors, the passing grade was lowered from 65 to 39. Even with that lowered grade, 45 percent still failed. What a way to develop a fear of mathematics in the young.

## **UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE**

Those who do not have health insurance might be happy to hear that the White House has proposed complete medical coverage for all, with no direct cost to the individual. But they might be bothered when they find that the program will be available only to Iraqis.

## **THE WONDERS OF NATURE**

The bittern is a marsh bird which, when startled, stands erect with the head pointing skyward. The vertical, striped marking of the feathers blend well with the vertical reeds found in marshes. But some species of bitterns carry camouflage a bit further. When it is windy and the reeds sway back and forth, the bird synchronizes its body with the movement of the reeds.

## **A SIGN OF THE TIMES**

Between July 1, 2001 and June 30, 2003, a record number of bankruptcies were filed. In fact one out of every 65 families declared themselves to be bankrupt.

**WOULD YOU BELIEVE** that, twenty-eight years ago, the Secretary of Defense under President Ford, was none other than Donald Rumsfeld



# Poker Schedule for November

Paul Rubin Saturday, November 29, 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, November 7, 8:00 at Frank's

English Dept. Not yet decided

Tom Dilliplane Mondays, November 10 & 24, 8:30

Bart Deluca Friday, November 21, 8:00

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, November 5 & 19, 8:00, at Don's

Don Cooke Saturdays, November 1, 8 & 15 8:00



**Guy Fawkes Day**  
**November 5**

## ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENT OVER TIME

In 1922 Jenny Weissmuller broke the one-minute barrier for the 100 meter freestyle swim. This record was not unlike the four minute mile which would come many years later.

Can you imagine trying to convince someone in those days that a swimmer of the future would be able to single-handedly defeat a relay of fifteen Weissmullers. In 1980, Vladimir Salnikov maintained Weissmuller's pace over 1500 meters to break the 15 minute barrier.

It is interesting to note that the same phenomena does not come close to running. In 1924, the world record for the 100 meter dash was 10.6 seconds. If the same pace were sustained over 1500 meters the time would be 2 minutes 39 seconds. The current world record is a far slower 3 minutes, 26 seconds.

## RUNS PER INNING

In the first game of the Marlins, Cubs game, the Marlins were leading 8 - 6 with the Cubs going into the bottom of the ninth. I began to think about the odds of the cubs scoring at least two runs. It then occurred to me that I had thought about the same type of question a couple of years ago and did a bit of research on the question. I dug into the backlog of upcoming newsletters and found what I was looking for. It is essentially impossible to answer the question for a specific situation. So much depends on the strength of the teams, who is pitching, the batters coming up and a long list of other variables. However, it is possible to get an average over many teams and many situations. I had gathered data for 2440 innings (actually half innings) over the 2000 season. Here are the results.

<u>Runs scored 1/2 Inning</u>	<u># of occurrences</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Chances of scoring at least that number of runs</u>
0	1723	71%	
1	361	15	1 in 3.4
2	194	8	1 in 7
3	95	4	1 in 15
4	37	1.5	1 in 40
5	16	0.7	1 in 80
6 or more	14	0.5	1 in 175

So if it is the bottom of the ninth, and your team is behind by 4 runs, go to bed. It is something like 40 to one against.



## FROM THE FILES OF THE ITHACA JOURNAL

September 30, 1927 Dr. Papez, curator of the Cornell brain collection, after a two year study, concluded that the brain of a woman need not be inferior to that of a man.

September 29, 1909 Two student residents of Sheldon Court men's dormitory were arrested in their room with two town women and all were convicted of "immoral conduct". The men were fined \$15 each. The women, although they had no previous records, were sentenced to a female reformatory for one to three years. It was ever thus.

1937 First woman ever selected for Jury duty.

October 30, 1939 Whole town turned out to welcome the football team back from their victory over Ohio State. (That year the Big Red had beaten Penn State 47 - 0. But it went to their heads - they lost a later game to Columbia. They beat Ohio State again in 1940.

## PHILANTHROPIC GIVING

Here is a list of the organizations which were the most successful fund raisers for the year 2000. First, and far ahead of the pack is the Salvation Army with \$1.4 billion. The YMCA is second with \$693 million and third is the Red Cross with \$678 million. Harvard ranks 10th with \$452 million. Cornell is the next university with \$314 million which places it in 16th place overall. I do not quite know why I chose this item. Perhaps because, to me, the results were unexpected.

## A CASE OF THINKING ONLY INSIDE THE BOX

Before WWII the Chicago Tribune was staunchly isolationist. On October 27, 1941, the editorial of the day went as follows: "What vital interest of the United States can Japan threaten? She cannot attack us - that is a military impossibility. Even our base in Hawaii is beyond the effective striking power of her fleet".



Ken Heck was a charter member of the Cayuga Poker Society. Then came Ken Beck. The newest member is Ken Hecht.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

Paul Rubin Saturday, December 20, 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, December 12, 8:00 at Fred's

English Dept. Thursday, December 4, 7:30 at Isaac's

Tom Dilliplane Tom will now has a game every Monday, 8:30

Bart Deluca Friday, December 5, 8:00

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, December 3 & 17, 8:00 at Don's

Don Cooke Saturdays, December 13 & POSSIBLY the 27,



The Winter Solstice will occur at 2:04 am on December 22. The word < solstice > is from the French, Sol, meaning sun, andistere to be still. It is that time at which the sun's travel south pauses, and reverses direction. The date is December 21 or 22, the 21st in leap years.

### HOW OLD IS THE WATER YOU DRINK?

Perhaps a silly question, but I hope that you will find the answer to be interesting. What does one mean by the age of water? It means the length of time since the water in question fell as rain. How the hell can they know the answer to that? The isotopes in the atoms of hydrogen and oxygen in water in the atmosphere are changed over geologic time. But once a molecule of water falls as rain, the ratio of isotopes stops changing. So, by measuring the isotope ratio of a sample and consulting a chart, one can tell when, in time, that water fell as rain.

This topic came up in a discussion with a geologist, John Bird, who is knowledgeable in this area. If you drink the water at Cornell University, where water is taken from Six Mile Creek, the water might be a few days old. But if you drink water from a well as at our house, the age of the water can be very different. Knowing the location of my house, the altitude and the depth of our well ( 100 feet ), John estimates that our water fell as rain about a thousand years ago. ( He told me that it would be simple to make a measurement if I really wanted to know ). He noted that at his house, at a lower altitude and a with a well depth of 200 feet, the water probably fell as rain 5000 years ago. Some water in deep aquifers out West can be a million years old

Why so long? The answer has to do with the geology of the locations, pretty much solid shale which is highly impervious to water. It takes about a thousand years for rain water to penetrate 100 feet of such rock.

Does it make any practical difference? Not a whit. One thing about this newsletter is that you learn a lot of useless information

### AN ACCOMPLISHMENT



Edwin Moses

Over a ten-year period, 1977 - 1987, Edwin Moses excelled at the 400-meter hurdles. In that period he competed in 107 races. "Excelled" is probably not the right word - he won all 107 races, breaking the world record four times. Counting heats, he was undefeated and untied in 122 consecutive races.

But young guys come along. In the 1988 Olympics, Moses ran the race in 47.56 seconds, his best ever time - and placed third. But he had another go - in the 1990 Olympics he won a bronze medal - in bobsledding.



## FROM THE CAYUGA POKER SOCIETY'S EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT

This release concerns a poker player, Edgar Blokhuis, who was a postdoctoral student with Ben Widom who plays in the Chemistry game. Edgar is an associate professor of Chemistry at the University of Leiden



A dramatic turn of events marked the final stages of the limit Hold'em tournament at the BARCELONA OPEN POKER 2003. With four players left at the final table, surprise finalist Edgar Blokhuis decided to raise pre-flop with pocket threes only to find himself raised and reraised by ace-4 suited and ace-queen, offsuite, who at the end of the betting round, found themselves both all-in. The ensuing showdown gave a flop of 2 3 5 giving Blokhuis a set and the ace-4 a straight. The turn brought a 4, so that the ace-queen also straightened up. In addition, because the 2 3, and 4 were all the same suit as the ace (all being spades), the ace-queen had a flush draw on the river. Blokhuis, desperately needing 2 3, 4, or 5 for a full house or quads, saw his miracle card appear, the 5 of spades. His thoughts of becoming the clear chip leader with only two players left and 18,000 Euro for the winner, were rudely interrupted by cries of "straight flush" by the spectators who had the patience of hanging around until 5 AM.

Realizing that his full-house had lost to a straight flush, Blokhuis had to be content with third place yielding him 5,000 Euro in his first ever poker tournament. I am sure we will hear more of him at the November tournament in Amsterdam.

### THIS IS THE ARMY MR. JONES



It was 1943 in Army Air Force Headquarters on the outskirts of London. We were planning for the invasion and I needed some information from another office in our organization. So I wrote a memo making a request for the material that I needed. The memo began something like, "Would you please \_\_\_\_". The communication would go out under the name of the colonel, who was my boss. Soon after I got it on the way, I was summoned to his office. He was quite bothered, and began, "Capitan Cooke, the word 'please' has no place in the military. Rewrite the memo without it".

### JUSTICE, TEXAS STYLE

The Dallas Morning News mounted an investigation in the year 2000 which found that one-quarter of all death row inmates had been defended by attorneys who had been or, who were later, disciplined by the State Bar of Texas for everything from lying to neglecting their cases.

### HUMANS HAVE SOMETHING TO LEARN FROM THE BABOONS



Hamadryas baboons are a surly lot, but they have an inborn wisdom. If you throw a peanut to a male, he will eagerly go after it and gulp it down. But if you throw a peanut to two males, they will not even notice that it is there. They have learned that it is not worth fighting over peanuts.



There is a strange provision in the Medicare bill just passed. It forbids government agencies (such as Medicaid and the Veterans Administration) from negotiating prices with drug companies. I wonder how much the pharmaceutical industry paid for that little goodie? At least \$37.7 million, which is what the drug manufacturers contributed to political campaigns through the first half of this year.



# POKER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Saturdays 3 & 24  
Open

Chemistry Dept. Friday, January 23, 8:00 at Ben's

English Dept. Tuesday, January 27, 7:30 at Glenn's

Tom Dilliplane Scheduled for every Monday 8:00

Bart Deluca In Las Vegas all month

Don Cooke Saturdays, January 10, 17 & 31, 8:00

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, January 14 & 28, 8:00 at Don's

## The Ascent of Man



From the cover of the December issue of the Economist

## TWO BORN LOSERS

On March 17, 1977, one Vincent Johnson broke into the house of Nancy Hart and David Conner in Austin, Texas. He stole a number of items including a few checks and deposit slips belonging to Hart and Conner. He took only a few so they would not be missed. He decided to increase the take of the robbery by using the checks. He made out a check to Hart for \$200 drawn on Conner's account and presented it, with one of Hart's deposit slips, to the teller. Deposit half to the account, he said, and return the rest in cash. He probably thought that such a routine transaction would be unlikely to arouse suspicions. A sound plan perhaps, but there was a catch - the teller was Nancy Hart. Johnson went to jail.

And then there was James Perry, who lived in Connecticut, and who was denied a driver's license as a result of four drunk-driving convictions. So he decided to steal the identity of one Robert Kowalski. So, Perry, posing as Kowalski, got a new driver's license and some credit cards and was having a lot of fun. So much so, that he got arrested for disorderly conduct. All his identification was in the name of Kowalski. The police were happy to find Kowalski, a convicted sex offender who had failed to register. Perry decided to go back to his real identity and face the charges that went with it.

## CEO SALARIES

In 2001, Fortune magazine pointed out that CEO compensation for the year 2002 would be "The acid test" of improved corporate governance. It seems that corporations failed the test. Fortune obtained the compensation of chief executives of 100 of the nations largest corporations. Neither scandals, nor a slumping economy prevented the average CEO from getting an average salary increase of 14% to more than 13 million dollars. These increases occurred while the performance of the average company stock fell by 23%, and the wages and benefits of employees barely kept pace with inflation.

What should a CEO of a large company be paid? One way to consider the question is to compare the salary of the top executive in a company to the average salary of the hourly workers. A recent study by the magazine Business Week, notes that the ratio of the salary of the top executive to a typical hourly worker differs markedly from country to country as shown below.

United States	400 times as much
Brazil	57
Hong Kong	38
Britian	25
China	21
Spain	18
France	16



## **BITS AND PIECES**

When uncle Sam was Uncle Scrooge. It is easy to believe that the celebration of Christmas has been pretty much unchanged for a long time. After all, A Visit from St. Nick was written in 1823 and a Christmas Carol in 1843. It may come as a surprise that Uncle Sam considered Christmas as just another working day. It was not until 1885 that federal employees were given the day off.

Drunken sailors. For the most recent federal fiscal year, which ended the past September, the money spent per household was \$20,301. Corrected for inflation, this is the most amount of money spent since the peak year of World War II, 1944. Will your household have to put up \$20,301? You couldn't. But don't worry, it's almost all on the tab.

Big business. In the year 2002, the Wal-mart system averaged 660 million dollars a day in sales. Up from 600 million in the previous year.

Smoke, mirrors and unemployment. President Reagan had a political problem with high unemployment rates. He needed to find new jobs for those out of work. It was probably some bright young bureaucrat who found more jobs, in fact two million of them, and the unemployment rate went down. But the jobs were not new, and the number of unemployed remained the same, but the figures sure looked better. How did he do it? Prior to this stroke of genius, those in the military were not counted in the employment figures for a good reason - there were no unemployed soldiers. They were classified as "not in the labor force". So let's change the classification to "employed". Voila - two million more jobs.

Bribery There was a time when slipping someone a fin was bribery. Times have changed. American prosecutors are investigating the role of Exxon Mobile in a scheme to pay 78 million dollars in bribes to senior officials in Kazakh.

Winning hearts and minds. In Iraq, the US Army decided to get tough on the Iraqis who were giving them a hard time. Here is how one officer, a Colonel Sassaman, sees it. "With a heavy dose of fear and violence, and a lot of money, I think we can convince the people that we are here to help them".

Between 1960 and 1995, the United States spent 5.8 Trillion dollars on 32,000 nuclear weapons. That is \$23,000 for every man woman and child in the country.

An interview with Gorbachev The Bangkok Post reports on a London news conference in which President Mikhail Gorbachev was asked, "What effect on history do you think it would have had if, in 1963, President Krushchev had been assassinated instead of President Kennedy?" After considering the question, Gorachev responded, "I don't think Mr. Onassis would have married Mrs. Khrushchev."



## ♥ Poker Schedule for February ♥

Chemistry Dept. Friday, February 20, 8:00 at Geoff's

English Dept. To be decided

Tom Dilliplane Tom has a game every Monday, 8:30

Bart Deluca Friday, February 6, 8:00

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, February 11 & 25, 8:00 at Don's

Don Cooke Saturdays, February 14, 21 & 28, 8:00



Who was Saint Valentine? Actually there were three St. Valentines. All go back to the third century and little is known of them. What is the connection to the present day, featuring romance, a practice that goes back to the 1300s? Again, little is known. The most popular explanation is that the birds of France paired off in mid-February and the feast day of the saint is February 14.

### OUR THROWAWAY SOCIETY



The disposal of our seemingly escalating amounts of trash seems to be a problem of increasing difficulty. So much of what we carry out of the supermarkets seems to wind up in our trash bins. But, if New York City is a reasonable indicator, it will come as a surprise to many that the amount of trash and garbage from the city was much higher in earlier days. Professor Walsh of The Earth Institute of Columbia University came across a detailed log of the weight of trash handled by the city over the past 100 years.

The amount of trash per person was slightly more in 1900 (1000 pounds per person), than it was in 1999. The year with the greatest weight of trash was 1940, when the city carted away 7.7 million tons. This compares with only 3.7 million tons in 1999, despite the fact that the population of the city had increased 7% in the same time period. The amounts have been quite stable for the last thirty years.

A variety of factors caused the decline. The fact that oil and gas replaced coal for heating resulted in less ash to be thrown away. Manufacturers found ways to reduce the weight of materials in packaging so bottles and cans became thinner and thinner. And, of course, recycling reduced the amount of material to be thrown away.

While the weight of trash has declined, the job of disposal is much more complicated. The city used to just dump everything into the sea off Coney Island, there was a lot more land available to fill up with refuse and there was much less concern about deleterious effects.

### NEVER, NEVER, TRUST YOUR INTUITION ON STATISTICAL MATTERS - ONCE AGAIN

Marty Mark invited Clara Conn over for dinner. After a nice meal, Clara asked if he had a deck of cards. He produced one and Clara picked out seven cards, two black kings and five red cards. After mixing the cards, Clara proposes a bet. "You pick two cards and I am willing to bet, even money, that one of them will be a black king. Marty thinks it over, imagining the two kings and the five red cards and decides the bet is worth it. As always, Clara cleaned him out.

What are the true odds? There are 21 two card combinations, of which eleven have at least one king for an edge of nine percent.



## **HARD EVIDENCE ?**

After seeing 130 prisoners freed in Florida on the basis of DNA testing procedures, prosecutors mounted a vigorous challenge to similar new cases. As of October 1, 2003, prisoners are barred from seeking DNA testing for old cases.

A case in point is Wilton Dedge who was convicted of rape in 1981. He was sentenced to life and still remains in prison. At his trial, the only physical evidence against him was two hairs found on the victims sheets. The hairs were, the prosecutor said at his trial, "microscopically identical" to those of Mr. Dedge. Last year, a DNA test of the two hairs demonstrated that they were not from Mr. Dedge. The prosecutor still thinks he is guilty and he sits in jail.

In addition to Mr. Dedge, there are a large number of people sitting in jail cells who were convicted by a forensic analysis which matched their hair with hair found at the scene of the crime. In the early 1970s, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, over a three-year period, evaluated 240 law enforcement laboratories on their ability to match hair samples microscopically. The laboratories were asked to find matches for hair samples where the results were known by the agency submitting the samples. In general, the 240 laboratories got the matches correct about as often as they missed. The error rate ranged from 27% to 67% from lab-to-lab. The results were little better than tossing a coin. Later the Justice Department did a similar study with similar results. Yet in the following years, many people wound up in jail on such evidence. (Now DNA testing of the two hairs would be the preferred procedure). Of the first 74 prisoners who were exonerated by DNA testing, 26 % were implicated, at least in part, by microscopic hair analysis.

How can it be ? Are the prosecutors that ruthless, or the defense attorneys that unaware? There are six lawyers on the Cayuga Poker Society list. Anyone care to comment ? wdc2@cornell.edu

## **SCANDANAVIANS ARE DIFFERENT**

Recently, Al Qaeda threatened Norway (of all places) with "an inferno". So someone decided to provide a bombproof limousine for the beloved King Olav, who was know to travel around in streetcars. It turns out that when the car was taken to be registered, it was found to be 88 pounds over the limit for passenger cars and registration was denied. A spokesman for the Prime Minister noted that "We must stick to the code". The car has set for the past six weeks, unused and without plates.

Once the king's car was stopped for speeding with a resulting flurry of scolding editorials.

Can you imagine such things happening that way in our country ?

## **WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS**

I wonder how our security eavesdroppers distinguish between the real and the phoney. I can imagine a group of terrorists, sitting around their waterpipes, with the conversation going something like this: There must be some expression in Arabic equivalent to, "How can we rattle the infidel's chain this week ? Just to see what happens, suppose we make a couple of reservations on Air France in the name of Abdul and Iman. We know they are on the American high priority list. Another pipes up " Lets get our guys in Indonesia to generate a lot of chatter about bridges". Then maybe we can have the Pakistani bunch talk a lot about oil tankers. Somehow we ought to get the Superbowl in somewhere. Let's try to get them back to the orange alert level. And wouldn't it be great if we could trick them into a red alert? That would really get things going.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

Chemistry Dept. Friday, March 12, 8:00 at Don's

English Dept. Wednesday, March 31, at Steve's

Tom Dilliplane Tom now has a game every Monday, 8:30

Bart Deluca Friday, March 26, 8:00

Tom Reiss Wednesdays, March 10 & 24, 8:00 at Don's

Don Cooke Saturdays, March 6, 13 and 27 8:00



## PLANNING IN FANTASYLAND



The federal government makes long range plans based on budget estimates ten years into the future. Realistically, there is no way that spending for the year 2014 can be predicted even with the wildest error assumptions. We have a whole bureaucracy involved with preparing plans that have no rational basis. Budget predictions for a single year can be wide of the mark. For example, in January, 2002 the White House presented a budget to Congress which predicted a 14 billion dollar deficit for 2003 and a return to a surplus for 2004. What was the deficit for 2003? Would you believe 400 billion? Will there be a surplus for 2004? The projected deficit is now 500 billion.

You might think that the reason for being so far off was that unexpected factors affected the spending. Well, it was post 9/11, the stock market bubble had burst, the recession was in full swing and Iraq was on the horizon.

How can an estimated deficit, over only one year, be off by a factor of twenty-eight? Part of the explanation lies in the fact that the budget is not a financial document but a political one. My own opinion is that those involved decide on a politically acceptable budget, and then use "voodoo" economics to come up with that figure (all this is not new with the Bush administration, and corporate leaders are in jail for similar slight-of-hand).

Why are predictions made that are almost certain to be wrong? I think that it is impossible for the government to take the position that "We do not know what the situation will be in five years, so we will wait and see". As a result, right or wrong, there has to be a number. The fact that the number is pure fantasy is beside the point - there has to be a number.

The whole question brings me back to a time in 1944 when a member of Eisenhower's staff, one Kenneth Arrow (who later became a Nobel prize winner in economics) was quoted as saying, "We know that long-range weather forecasts are wrong, but we need them for planning purposes". Since I was the author of many of those forecasts, I rise to defend myself. Long range weather forecasts predict the weather for the period by averaging past weather records for the same period. On any given day, the forecast is most likely wrong - but it is still the best bet.



Theoretically, and considering the role of the Electoral College, how many individual voters does it take to guarantee a candidate the presidency? The answer follows on the next page.



The answer to the question illustrates the fatal flaw in the Electoral College procedure. All it takes to elect a president is eleven votes, one vote from each of the eleven states that comprise a majority of the College. If the opponent had received 50 million votes in the other thirty-nine states, they do not beat the eleven that count. This item came from George Beichl, a Cayuga Poker Society member from Philadelphia.

## STORIES ABOUT PLAYING CARDS



The Eight of Leaves

Thanks to Hugh Corrigan for giving me a couple of references which are the bases of this story on the origin of cards. Cards came late to the gambling business. Archeologists have found dice in Egypt which date back to the 13th Century BC. In fact there have been numerous discoveries of loaded dice. Playing cards appeared in Europe in the late 1300s. There was little effort at uniformity by the manufacturers, except for the concept of four suits. But the suits were named at the whims of the manufacturers. Some of the more common names for suits were coins, cups, bells and acorns. But there was an endless list of more exotic names such as peacocks, monkeys, parrots leaves, roses, books, vases and knives.

How did circumstances lead to the four suits we have today: Spades, Hearts, Diamonds and Clubs? First, the playing card industry was an important aspect of national trade. In 1766, a factory in Brussels produced 600,000 decks of cards. In 1848 Russia produced four million decks.

The French manufacturers all used the same suits we have today. It seems that the four suits were devised by the famous knight, Etienne de Vignolles, a fervid supporter of Jeanne D'arc. He designated the spade as a lance point representing the aristocracy, the diamond, as a paving stone for the citizenry, the club, a clover leaf for the peasants, and the heart for the church. The French became highly proficient in the production of cards. One reason for the increased efficiency was that the simple designs of the spade, heart, diamond and club were far easier to produce than peacocks, roses or acorns. With that advantage the French dominated the market and thus solidified the use of the four suits that are used, worldwide, today.



A Joker from a Russian Deck

The Joker has an interesting origin. Originally, most decks were supplied with an extra card which was left blank. The extra card might, for example, be used to replace a damaged card. Not unexpectedly, it was found that some players were using the extra card for nefarious purposes. As a result, the extra card was still supplied, but as a Joker. Why this particular choice, I do not know.

## GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE ?

There are two drugs on the market which are used to treat certain forms of cancer. One is made by Amgen and costs \$1300 a vial. The other is made by Johnson & Johnson and costs \$470 a vial. The federal government spends over a billion dollars a year on these two drugs alone. Given the level of government cost, two years ago a decision was made to test the two drugs in a head-to-head evaluation. The effort has stalled for the reason that if the study were to be completed, the government would probably not be able to use the results to guide them in the purchase of the drugs. The most likely result of such a study is that no difference in efficacy could be documented. Last fall, the drug industry persuaded Congress to forbid the use of evidence of "functional equivalency" in its purchase decisions. In other words, if two drugs are considered to be identical, using price as a factor in its purchase decision, would be illegal. The lobbying effort for this gem was lead by Amgen. Source: The New York Times, 2/27/04



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR APRIL

Chemistry Dept. Friday, April 16, 8:00 at Barry's

English Dept. To be decided

Tom Dilliplane Tom has a game almost every Monday, 8:30

Bart Deluca Friday, April 16, 8:00

Don Cooke Saturdays, April 3, 10 & 24 8:00

Tom Reiss The game is on now hold. But there will be a game on June 23 because Tom will be here. We hope to line up some of the former players for hotdogs and hamburgers before the game starts.

### OPERATION MIGRATION



This picture shows an ultralight airplane, flying at 32 miles per hour, leading a flock of juvenile whooping cranes on a migration from Wisconsin to Florida. Behind this photograph, to my mind, is a remarkable story. Whooping cranes, the largest birds in North America, are an endangered species. A few years ago there was only one flock of 188 birds, which was still migrating - from the Northwest territories to a site in southern Texas. Since the Texas site was near one of the busiest shipping lanes in the oil fields, there was concern that an oil spill could wipe out this one remaining flock. While chicks could be hatched, they could not be released in the wild because they did not know how to migrate.

So a group of naturalists, Operation Migration, came up with a far out idea - to teach young cranes to migrate by following an ultralight plane. The idea did not come totally from outer space. William Lishman, an ultralight plane enthusiast, noted that young geese would form the familiar V formation behind his plane as he flew around Ottawa.

In training the whooping cranes, they were exposed to the sound of the engines of the light aircraft as they were breaking out of their shells and were raised with no visible contact with humans. They were trained to follow the ultralights by being placed in a circular pen with the planes slowly circling outside the fence.

The first attempt to teach the cranes to migrate used a previously known fly route from Wisconsin to Florida. It involved a trip of 1200 miles and 54 days over seven states. Landowners volunteered the use of their land as stopovers along the route. The flock arrived safely but the real question remained as to whether the birds would migrate on their own. One day, at the appropriate time of year, the flock took off and found their way back to their place in Wisconsin.

This brief description of the project presents a simplistic picture of the accomplishment. For example, the birds had to be taught that they should come down on water rather than land in order to have a proper diet.

### IT'S GOING TO BE A 'NO HOLD BARRED' CAMPAIGN



This picture, under the logo of the Associated Press, depicts John Kerry and Jane Fonda, together at the microphone, at an anti-war rally during the Vietnam War. The picture did not get much of a play in newspapers, but, recently, was widely distributed on the web and was sent to all veterans groups. But the picture is a fake as shown on the following page.





The picture of Kerry was taken in August 1971 at a Register for Peace rally at Minola, NY. The picture of Fonda was taken in August 1972 at the site of the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida. There is another picture of Kerry and Fonda in the same audience at another peace rally. This is legitimate, as is the picture of Donald Rumsfeld shaking hands with Saddam Hussein which was shown in the August 2003 poker newsletter

## **BIG BROTER'S SOPHISTICATED EYE-IN-THE-SKY**

Casinos work hard at keeping their customer happy by providing goods and services known as comps. Comps vary from a free lunch to a shopping spree with the casino's credit card. Who gets what is generally determined by the value of the individual to the profit line as estimated by the pit boss. But the pit boss is taking a guess. There are bettors who bet big when the pit boss is watching. And, for the same level of betting, a lousy player is more valuable than one with better skills.

But there is now a system that takes the guesswork out of the evaluation. One such program, called Mind Play, used for Blackjack, has fourteen cameras in the sky which follow every card which is dealt to each player and every decision that is made. The program reports the skill level of each player, how fast they play (time is valuable to the casino), how long they play, the total amount bet, the amount won and lost and the won/loss percentage.

What it comes down to, is that the casino knows far more about their customers gambling than they know about themselves

## **MORE HIGH TECH**

The Hubble Telescope recently photographed a galaxy which was formed in the early days of the universe and the light from this galaxy has been traveling through space for thirteen billion years. The light is pretty dim - equivalent to the light given off by a firefly on the surface moon being detected on earth.

## **AS A COUNTRY, WE LIKE TO DO THINGS OUR OWN WAY**

Ithaca 34 KM

There are only three countries in the world which have not formally adopted the Metric System They are Liberia, Burma and the United States. In 1790, President Jefferson tried but failed

## **RECORDS WHICH WILL BE HARD TO BEAT**

Between September 1988 and July, 1989, Vince Coleman of the Cardinals, stole 50 bases without being caught once. It must have been discouraging for the catchers when Coleman got on base.

And then there is the case of Bob Seeds, a Newark (International League) outfielder who hit four home runs in a game against Buffalo on May 6, 1938, with Newark winning 22 - 9. So what's so special about that? Twelve players in the majors have hit four home runs in a game. What's special is that Seeds hit a homer in each of four consecutive innings.

## **HOW DUMB CAN ONE GET?**

When Richard Clarke spouted off last week about Bush's lack of attention to Al Qaida, Vice President Chaney came to the defense of the President. He said that Clarke didn't know what he was talking about, "he was not in the loop". It did not take long for the administration to realize the implications of the statement. The head of the antiterrorism effort was on the periphery of decision making, which seemed to support Clarke's position. Condolizza Rice issued a statement which disageed with the Vice-president.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MAY

Chemistry Dept. Friday May 14 8:00 at Milt's

English Dept. To be decided

Tom Dilliplane Tom has a game almost every Monday, 8:30

Bart Deluca Saturday, May 29, 8:00 This will be Bart's last game.

Don Cooke Saturdays, May 1, 8, & 15 Also Wednesday May 19 because I can't do Friday or Saturday that week 8:00

### THE GREATEST ?



If a group of top ranking poker players were asked to name their choice for the best player ever in no-limit, hold'em tournament play, Stu Ungers name might head the list. While Unger won three World Series of Poker Tournaments, that would not be the primary reason for their choice. In his short life, he entered thirty tournaments with buy-ins of \$5000 or more. He won an astonishing nine. The best pro players, on average, win ten percent of the big tournaments. Winning ten percent of the entries will generate a lot of money

Unger was what might be called a card savant. He was born in 1953 in the Lower East Side of New York. His father was a bookie so he was exposed early on to the gambling world. He won his first tournament ( gin rummy ) when he was ten years old and, at fourteen he was beating the best gin players in New York. ( He is the unanimous choice as the best gin rummy player who ever lived ). His father died when he was fifteen and he became a professional gambler. At that age, a backer paid his entry fee of \$500 for a \$10,000 gin tournament. He won easily. In fact, he won without losing a hand - a feat that has not been duplicated in the card rooms of New York City. A week later he was broke - he lost his winnings playing the horses at Aqueduct. Unfortunately, this was a harbinger of his future behavior. For a few years he mined the big gin games in Miami and, in 1980, at age 27, he decided to try the Word Series of Poker. He won the first time he played, and, to show that the accomplishment was not a fluke, he won the next year. He won again in 1997 when the prize had reached a million dollars. Two months later he was broke. In one afternoon he lost \$900,000 in a Razz game.

He excelled in Blackjack because, at the time, with a single deck he knew every card that had been dealt and could name all the cards left in the shoe at any time. In one evening he won \$83,000 at Caesar's Palace before he was barred from play. When the casinos changed to a six-deck shoe, it did not slow him down a bit. He offered to bet \$10,000, even money, that with a six-deck shoe, after four decks had been dealt, he could list the 104 cards that remained in the shoe. No one took him up on the bet. But a casino owner, Bob Stupak, offered him a different bet. He offered \$100,000 to Unger's \$10,000 that Stu would not be able to list the 156 cards in the last three decks of a six deck shoe. Stupak lost the bet when Unger correctly named the 156 remaining cards.

Unger was an arrogant show-off and about as aggressive a poker player as ever picked up a hand. In one high stakes, seven card stud game, an opponent made a very large final bet. Unger called with a pair of threes and swept in the pot before the guy even had a chance to throw away his losing hand. But Unger had his demons. In 1988, at age 45, he was found dead in a motel room with an overdose of cocaine.

**Good Luck to Bart who is moving to Las Vegas. You can always use a bit of luck in that town.**



## THE OPTIMIST AND THE PESSIMIST

President Bush declared an end to major combat operations in Iraq on May 1, 2003. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's staff had just completed a plan for bringing the troops home. The so called Rumsfeld Plan envisaged that, by the end of the year a force of 30,000 soldiers was all that would be required to handle the situation. At least that was the civilian view. The military had a different opinion. General Eric Shinseki, Chief of Staff of the Army, testifying before a congressional committee, was asked about the need for troops in Iraq. He replied that, in his opinion, the pacification of Iraq would require "several hundred thousand soldiers". He was ridiculed by the civilian leaders in the Pentagon. General Shineski "retired" in May 2003.

## THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - WHOSE SIDE ARE THEY ON



Lobbyists should be careful about what they wish for - they may get it. Last summer, the meat industry won a victory which has resulted in no end of financial problems for the industry. There was a move in Congress to ban the slaughtering of diseased cows. Such cows, called "downers" were sold to slaughter houses for processing as food.

The bill had substantial support among legislators but the powerful lobby of the meat industry mounted a full-court press to prevent it from passing. Three attempts were made to get the bill passed, but all were beaten back, even once when the bill had been passed by both the House and Senate. A critical factor in the debate was the fact that the Department of Agriculture opposed the ban. It is worth noting that Ann Veneman, the Director of the USDA, was a former obbyist for the meat industry, and the Chief of the departments inspection division spent 25 years in the Meat industry. He was also Chairman of the American Meat Institute. That's putting the foxes in the hen house.

Six months later, in Washington State, a cow was found to have hoof and mouth disease. This particular cow was a downer, and if the ban had passed, would never have been processed. The diagnosis came ten days after the meat from the cow had been shipped to eight states.

Since December, many nations have barred the importation of American beef. One company, Creekstone Farms in Kansas, which exported beef to Japan, lost 25% of its business. Japan tests every cow, so Creekstone decided to do the same thing to recover the lost business. A testing lab was built and staff trained. (Since each test cost \$20 and they made a profit of \$220 per steer, it seemed like a good idea). But the company was shocked when informed by the USDA that they would not be allowed to run such tests. "Certifying some beef for Japan as disease-free might confuse American consumers into thinking that untested beef was not safe". Or, it might be, as one cattleman said, "If you allow one company to step out, other companies would have to follow".

## INFLATION

When I was cleaning out my office in Baker Lab, I came across a 1960 letter I had sent to American Cyanimid to compensate me for travel expenses associated with a consulting visit. Here are a couple of items: round trip air fare, Ithaca to Newark, \$39.70. Hotel ( Biltmore, New York), \$8.75.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JUNE

A Tom Reiss game with Tom Reiss, Wednesday 23, \$3/\$6  
Come at 7:30 to have a beer and to say hello to Tom. Poker will start later. Everybody welcome - even if you never met Tom.

Chemistry Dept. Friday June 18, 8:00 at Mike's

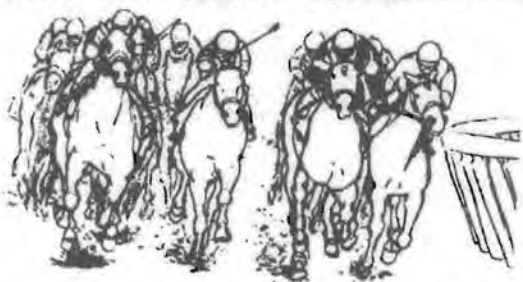
English Dept. To be decided

Tom Dilliplane Tom has a game almost every Monday, 8:30

Don Cooke Saturdays, June 5 & 19, Friday 11 8:00

After canvassing players, while there was no ideal night for a non-Saturday game, Friday seemed the best compromise. But most months will have four Saturday games.

### CAN YOU BEAT THE HORSES ?



You have a somewhat better chance than a snowball in hell. At New York tracks there might be only a small fraction of bettors who make money because of the eighteen percent cut. That is a difficult edge to beat. Since the Off Track Betting (OTB) parlors tack on an additional five percent, I doubt that anyone can beat a twenty-three percent house take. (Those of you

who have ever been in an OTB "parlor" know that the word is an euphemism. It is said that the OTB is the only bookie in the world who loses money. (At least, this was true a few years ago).

But the really big players, those who bet up to 100 million dollars a year, hardly ever set a foot in a race track. They bet over the Web with companies which either reside offshore, or in a few states which have favorable laws, such as North Dakota. These operations are called rebate shops because bettors get a rebate on the amount bet, win or lose. The amount returned varies between four percent and ten percent with the larger amount going to the heavy hitters. For those who get the ten percent rebate, ninety percent of the money bet is returned compared to an average of twenty percent at race tracks. At that level there are those who can make money. One horse bettor wagered \$24 million in the course of a year and made a profit of \$960,000.

A lot of money is transferred back and forth. Racing and Gaming Services, a rebate shop in St. Kitts, handled \$692 million in 2003. This company's 120 biggest bettors averaged bets of \$21,000 a day. The company pays \$30 million a year to race tracks for services rendered, such as videos from the tracks.

Source: A recent article in the New York Times.

### BUGS

In the battle between man and microbes, the bugs have a big advantage - they adapt much more readily. If our Earth were to be subject to some catastrophic event which wiped out humankind, it is likely that some bacteria would have survived and adapted to the new conditions.

Bacteria survive in unimaginable circumstances. For example, high levels of radioactivity are used to sterilize food by killing bacteria. Imagine the consternation of scientists at Brookhaven National Labs when they first observed algae multiplying happily

I am unable to host a \$5?/\$10 game on the weekend of Friday 25

Saga Dawa  
June 14, Tibet



Buddha's Birthday



on the core of a swimming pool reactor. They had adapted to lethal levels of radiation by means of powerful DNA repair mechanisms.

Bacteria adapt to, and survive under most extreme conditions. They live in hot springs where the acidity is as high as that of battery acid. They are found in the crushing pressure of depths of 35,000 feet in the Marianas Trench. They thrive in the Dead Sea where salt concentrations reach two and a half pounds per gallon. In the dry valleys of Antarctica, where there is no water and temperatures fall as low as minus eighty-five degrees, below zero, they are found in translucent rocks. Then there is the abundance of life found in the black smokers on the sea bed where sea water enters the earth's crust, heats up and is expelled at temperatures of two hundred and fifty degrees, well above the temperature of boiling water.

But, to me, the most unusual are the varieties of organisms found 10,000 feet below the surface of the earth. They live off oil deposits without oxygen. ( One species feeds on toluene ). It is believed that these critters are remnants of bacteria that populated the earth far back before the atmosphere contained oxygen.

## FRONTIER JUSTICE



The northern part of British Columbia, bordering on Alaska, is about as wild an area as one can find in Canada. Each person has ten square miles of his own in which to roam. It takes a tough brand of person to survive the dreadful winters.

In the 1960s there was a motorcycle gang in Vancouver which went by the name of Satan's Choice. They got their kicks by descending on a small town, roughing it up and terrorizing the inhabitants before roaring on.

One summer they picked a small town, Clinton, in this rugged land to do their thing. They converged on the bar at the Frontier Hotel for a boisterous binge. When they left the bar, they swaggered out the front door into the main street - and a semi-circle of locals armed with rifles.

They watched, in slack-jawed horror, as the locals blasted their beloved Harley Davidsons into piles of junk. The members of Satan's Choice got back to Vancouver by bus.

## RIGHT ON

When asked why the United States should not invade Iraq and overthrow Saddam Hussein, a prescient critic replied: "Once you've got Baghdad, it's not clear what you do with it. It's not clear what kind of government you would put in place of that's currently there... how much credibility is that government going to have if it is set up by the United States military when it's there? I think to have American military forces engaged in a civil war inside Iraq would fit the definition of a quagmire, and we have absolutely no desire to get bogged down in that fashion". Dick Chaney, Secretary of Defense, 1991, explaining why the army pulled back from marching on Baghdad.

## I WONDER WHY ?

In 1975, American Blacks comprised 27 percent of the positions on the players' rosters of the major leagues. In July 2003, they represented only 10 percent.

I am 86 years old, and just got my driver's license renewed. It is valid until May, 15, 2012. The Motor Vehicle people have a pretty optimistic view of my longevity.

The Philadelphia Mint produces 26 million pennies every day. The "why" is very complicated, but has little to do with need and a lot to do with the metals lobby.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JULY

Don Cooke Every Saturday, July 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, July 16 at Mike's 8:00

English Dept. To be decided



Tom Dilliplane Tom has a game most Monday nights at 8:30

### THE WAY IT WAS, WHEN I WAS A LAD

*In your lifetime all of you have seen great changes in the way we live. But, since I go further back than any of you, I thought that you might be interested in the how much things have changed since I was a boy.*



*I was born in Philadelphia on May 15, 1918 (at home). It so happened that it was the day the Postal Service inaugurated air mail service. The project was launched with great fanfare. A new airmail stamp was issued and the first flight was to be from Washington D. C. to Philadelphia. A large number of dignitaries was present for the event, including President Wilson. The project did not get off to an auspicious start. The pilot could not get the engine started - it seems that the airplane had not been fueled. When that was taken care of, the intrepid pilot finally took off - but he did not get far before he was lost. Finally, out of gas, he landed in a pasture in Waldorf, Maryland, which is 15 miles south of Washington. (In those days, next to the compass, the most important navigational aid was the system of railroad tracks). I suspect that my parents had greater expectations for their newborn son.*

*One of my earliest memories of Philadelphia involved horses. My father would take me to a nearby firehouse to see the beautiful animals that pulled the firetrucks - how they loved to run. Except for street cars, all city vehicles were horsedrawn. There were, of course, automobiles, but they were very different than what we know today. I remember cars that had to be cranked manually to be started - an operation that could be a feat of strength on a cold morning. The selfstarter did a lot for women's liberation, although the expression was not known at the time. There were also hand-operated windshield wipers and dip sticks used to measure gasoline - the famous Ford Model T did not have a speedometer. While there were automobile repair shops, they were only for the rich. Ordinary men knew how to replace head gaskets, grind valves, change cylinder rings and work on transmissions. I even remember helping a guy mould a crankshaft bearing to replace a defective one. But cars were much simpler then and there was a lot of room under the hood.*

*Anyone my age knows the origin of the expression, "banker's hours". Banks opened at ten and closed at three. I suspect for the reason that they did not have all that much to do. Pretty much everything was done in cash. The milkman and the iceman would come by once a week to collect what was owed. The insurance company did not send you a bill, they sent an agent around each month to collect the premiums in cash. My father owned and operated a pharmacy but he did not have a checking account. Supplies were delivered to the store and paid for in cash. Things could be bought "on the installment plan" but still, payments were made, in cash, each week.*

*I remember when our home was lit by gas light and, yes there was a lamplighter who went around each evening to light the street lamps. In fourth grade (about 1926), I went to a grammar school*



about three miles from the center of the city. When you wanted to go to the bathroom you did not walk down the hall. You went across the playground to an outhouse about 50 yards from the school. And the janitor raised chickens near the schoolyard.



We look askance at the Muslim practice of using religious police to enforce dress codes on women. But we had our own "morals squads" who did the same thing. They were always on the lookout, particularly on the beaches, for someone showing too much thigh. They were egged on by the Society for the Suppression of Vice and many a young woman wound up in the lockup charged with "indecent exposure". The picture on the left shows one such arrest in Chicago in 1923.

The medical profession was very different in those days. To begin with, there were hospitals for whites and hospitals for blacks, even in Philadelphia. (The movie theaters were also segregated well into the Thirties). One only went to the hospital in extremis, either an accident or in danger of death. Anything less was treated at home. You did not go to the doctor for physical exams or checkups and had a physician only when seriously ill. And you did not go to the doctor, he (there were not many females in the business) came to you. In cases of contagious diseases, the Health Department would post big glaring signs on the front door screaming such things as SCARLET FEVER. As far as I am aware, the first doctor to put a stethoscope to my chest was an army MD. That is not technically true, because in 1942 I consulted with friends in medical school in order to make sure I would pass the physical for military service.

As a young boy, I served five o'clock mass - not PM, but AM. The reason for such an early start was that most workmen started their day at six or seven and worked for twelve hours. It was in the middle Twenties that progress started to be made on reducing the length of the working day.

Lynching of Negroes by white mobs averaged one a week. In 1925, a bill in the Senate to outlaw lynching was killed by a Southern filibuster and, in the same year, the Klu Klux Klan marched down Pennsylvania Avenue, in Washington, in full regalia, 40,000 strong.

## **ANTITERRORISM AND POLITICS**

Last year, congress voted \$800 million, and this year \$500 million, to be distributed to the states to combat terrorism. How did New York fare? How about 49th of fifty (on a per capita basis). How could it happen? With a pork barrel of that size, given the power of the small states, places like South Dakota, must be taken care of. The first 40 percent of the money was divided equally, the rest was awarded on a per capita basis. As a result Wyoming got \$3225 a person while New York got \$460. Who knows, maybe the terrorists have their eyes on the Mount Rushmore monument. But don't worry, it will be surrounded by a lot of shiny new police cars. Recognizing there was a problem, there was to move to award \$450 million to seven "high threat" areas. But the list of high threat cities grew, like Topsy, to include such terrorist targets as Fresno, Baton Rouge and Columbus, Ohio. But the measure failed anyway.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST

Don Cooke The Saturday games are on hold for a while.  
I will be in touch

Chemistry Dept. **FRIDAY, THE THIRTEENTH** 8:00 at Tyler's

English Dept. To be decided

Tom Dilliplane Tom has a game most Monday nights at 8:30

### A MEMORANDUM TOO FAR

In 2003, Secretary Rumsfeld charged a group of lawyers in the Defense and Justice Departments to prepare a document outlining the legal limitations of the President, as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, in time of war. The group produced a 56 page memorandum in March 2003, presenting its legal opinion. I can summarize such a long document with two quotations, taken from it. The first maintains that, "Any law that seeks to prevent the president from gaining the intelligence he believes necessary to prevent attacks on the United States, would be unconstitutional". (Emphasis mine). So much for congress. The second quote cited "The complete authority over the conduct of the war, overriding international treaties such as global treaties banning torture, the Geneva Conventions and the U. S. federal laws against torture". As a layman, it seems to me that, under this opinion, the president would be responsible to no one.

The memorandum was by no means acceptable to all. A group of lawyers within the departments met with an international organization for human rights to inform them of what was going on. There were leaks of classified documents to various media. Another group of lawyers proposed that all lawyers associated with the document be disbarred. The final blow came with the decision of the Supreme Court which found there are limitations on the power of the president.

The author of the report was Jay S. Bybee, Office of Legal Council, Department of Justice. What happened to him, given all the negative reactions? A month after the report was completed, Bybee was nominated, by President Bush, to a federal judgeship in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, where he now serves.

Judge Bybee's legal philosophy can be determined by a phrase from one of his legal documents, "Homosexuals are emotionally unstable".

### HIGH TECH



The dangerous car chases that we see on TV may soon become a thing of the past. Devices mounted on police cars are being evaluated in the United States and England that can render the engine of a target car inoperable.

The device works by blasting the speeding automobile with an intense pulse of radio waves which induce surges in the car's electrical systems, upsetting such things as fuel injection and cylinder firing signals. I presume that the manufacturers worried about the effects on that other exquisite computer, the brain of the driver of the car being targeted.



George Beichl, a friend of more than 70 years, writes to remind me that the Moral Squads did not go after women exclusively. A man would not dare to go on the beach without a top to his bathing suit.



August 22  
Valentine's Day  
In China



## HIGH TECH II OR PERHAPS LOW TECH

I doubt that many of you read the New York Daily News, from which this story is taken. June is from New York, and although she left the city 58 years ago, we still buy a copy every day.

Computers have fantastic abilities, once they are programed. But they are mindless and slavishly follow what they are programed to do. The story tells of the trials of one Gloria Benavides-Lal who got a letter from a collection agency about an overdue bill from Coney Island Hospital. Two weeks later she got a follow-up notice demanding payment - or else. It seems that Gloria had treatment for a back problem, had received a bill and made four payments of \$277.43 for a total of \$1,109.72. The problem was that the cost of the treatment was \$1,109.73, so she was short by \$0.01. The News advised Gloria to make sure that she paid the bill in full or else, or another dumb computer might trash her credit rating.

## THE VOLATILE ARAB

On a less humorous note, on the same page as the above story, there was another about turmoil in the Middle East. It seems that a Muslim peeping Tom had been caught photographing Christian Palestinian women in a clothing store's dressing room. The incident sparked an overnight battle between Muslim and Christian Palestinians using clubs and stones.

I can make an observation that might be relative to this story. I spent some time in Cairo in 1946 and, to get a feel for the people, I rode public transportation. I was struck by the constant battles that erupted. Someone would get jostled and a screaming match would explode. In the beginning I thought that the knives would come out, but they never did. The incidents left me with the impression that the trigger leading to anger, is set very low in the Arab-speaking world. Perhaps too broad an observation based on little experience.

## DOOMED POKER HANDS



You are in a ten-handed hold'em game and had gone a long time without a playable hand. This time you look down and see a beautiful pair of queens, hearts and clubs. Just as you were reaching for your chips, you hear a voice in your ear. "I am your fairy godmother, throw away the queens, the hand is doomed". Its been a long time since a good hand, and believing you are not superstitious, you decide to go ahead. It was a costly decision.

Win

A♠ A♣	37.4%
K♠ 9♠	6.2
3♠ 6♠	6.9
2♣ Q♠	0.6
2♦ 4♣	3.1
7♠ 9♥	8.0
Q♥ Q♣	0
J♣ 7♥	9.5
K♥ Q♦	8.2
6♥ 4♥	11.4

Percent win, 100k deals. They don't add to 100% because of ties

The voice comes back, "I told you that the hand was doomed". You protest, "What do you mean a doomed hand, queens are a powerful hand". The voice responds, "a doomed hand is one which has no chance of winning - a win rate of zero, zilch, nada". You question how that can be. "Look at the ten starting hands (on the left with the win percentage). With the cards that are already gone, it is impossible for you to win any pot, but you do have a tiny chance at a three-way tie. If a pair wins the pot, you lose to the aces. Same with two pair. You cannot get trips because both other queens are gone. You can make a straight, but two other hands have a queen for a three-way tie. You might make a flush but you lose to an ace or king flush. The only full house possible for you is with trips on the board and you again lose to the aces or four of a kind". "How about a royal flush with the queen of hearts". "No.", comes the reply, "the king of hearts is gone, as well as the nine which eliminates a straight flush. And the same for the queen of clubs". Of course, this is all theoretical because in real poker, players drop which might give you an opportunity to win something. But as long as the aces play, the queens are a badly compromised holding. This is a real, dealt hand and was not made up. Such zero win hands are not uncommon. In eight deals there were five examples of doomed hands.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER

Don Cooke Saturdays 4, 11 & 25. 8:00

**Saturday the 18th is open**

Chemistry Dept. Friday, September 10, 8:00 at Don's

English Dept. To be decided

Tom Dilliplane Tom has a game most Monday nights at 8:30

### THE CRUEL SEA



Marine architects, when designing ships, platforms, piers, etc., use a wave height of 49 feet as the maximum that would be expected over the life of the project. Waves higher than that are presumed to be very rare. To them, it was probably a shock to read about a recent study (Maxwave) that measured, by satellite, wave heights in the oceans of the world. In a mere three weeks, ten waves were recorded with heights of 82 feet (25 meters) or more.

This discrepancy may account for the fact that, on average, every week, two large ships go down to Davy Jones' locker. The closing of the Suez Canal inspired the maritime industry to build ships that no one ever dreamed of, superships. The largest, the Jahre Viking is 550,000 tons, almost four times the size, and half again as long as the recently launched, Queen Mary 2. Many weigh in at 200,000 to 300,000 tons. Even these very large vessels sink at the rate of about one a month. Often they and their crew disappear without a trace or a word.

A couple of years ago the poker newsletter described the loss of a supership, the newly launched Derbyshire, the pride of the British maritime fleet. It just disappeared with 44 crewmen. But in this case, an investigation was mounted, the wreck was located and the cause of the disaster determined. A giant wave had overwhelmed the hatches and the ship was gone in a few minutes. In today's paper there is a article about a small plane crash in Pennsylvania that killed four people. One never reads newspaper stories of the sinkings of these large ships. Perhaps because they occur so frequently.

A footnote: During WWII, the British liner the Queen Mary had an encounter with a rogue wave. The Queen Mary and the Queen Elizabeth were used as troopships carrying fifteen thousand troops at a crack. ( I was on one of those trips ). On the night of December 23, 1942 400 miles off the coast of Scotland, in complete darkness, a large wave hit the ship broadside. The ship rolled. At 30 degrees it was gaining momentum. At 45 degrees it was still rolling. At 53 degrees it came to an agonizing halt - 3 degrees short of it capsize point.

### THE QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Alfonso Jackson, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, in an appearance before congress, expressed the thought that "being poor is a state of mind." ( One wonders how Bush finds these guys). I am worried that the individual who is responsible for alleviating poverty, has such a simplistic view of a complicated problem. I worry more that a lot of people share his view.







Like any other 14 year old soccer player, his mother drove Freddy Adu to practice. But the similarity with other 14 year olds stops there. Freddy is a professional soccer player for DC United. Not only that, but he is the highest paid soccer player in the country (\$500,000) and with endorsements (Nike) takes in over a million a year. It seems that there is a new phenomenon in sports - teenage prodigies who compete at the highest levels. Soccer has Freddy Adu. He came from Ghana, and at age ten was attracting the attention of international organizations. His mother received many offers to sign up

up her son. Once she turned down was \$750,000 from Milan. At thirteen, he was selected for the under 17 U. S. soccer team. Hat tricks ( three goal ) are far rarer in soccer than in ice hockey, but Freddy scored three of them in the under 17 competition. In a game against Poland he scored all three goals in a 3 - 2 win. This year, at 15 he was selected for the All-star game.

There are those who hope that Freddy will play for the United States in the 2006 World Cup. He will be 17, the age when Pele burst on the scene.

## THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM AND MR. PONZI



Charles K. Ponzi 1920

Government regulations prohibit companies from funding retirement programs from current income. The regulation is admirable in that the money has to be set aside for the protection of the future retiree. This way workers are not dependent on the financial well-being of the organization. But the government exempted itself from the regulation so that Social Security is on a pay-as-you-go plan. It does not take a rocket scientist to see that the system is in trouble. Forget about numbers, inflation and the Social Security Trust Fund. Just focus on the fact that when the plan began there were over forty workers for each retiree. In 1950 there were sixteen, in 1995, three and in 2033 there will be only two persons working for each retiree. I do not think that will work. (My first paycheck had a quaint 63 cents deducted for social security because of the small number of retirees).

"It was not a Ponzi scheme in the sense that the original planners meant to defraud. It was the period when modern medicine actually began, and there was no way to predict the great effect it would have on demography. In 1935, life expectancy was 65, now it is 77. Those who did reach 65 had, then, a life expectancy of 13 years, now it is 18 years.

In 2003, the system took in \$543 billion in taxes and distributed \$406 billion to beneficiaries. The remaining \$137 was assigned to the Social Security Trust Fund. But what was assigned was not the real money, the government borrowed that to be used for federal operating expenses, so that the deficit would be decreased or the surplus increased. What went into the Fund was \$137 billion in government bonds - in other words a promise to pay. There is now \$1.4 trillion, all borrowed for operating expenses, and when the time comes to use that money, it will come out of current taxes. The Trust Fund might better be called The Trust-us Fund.

By 2018, it is estimated that all of the money coming into the Fund will be paid out to beneficiaries. After that, Trust Fund money will be required to make the payments. Then, if the government lives up to it's promise to pay, in about a twenty-two years the Fund will be depleted. What then? In 1935 the planners misjudged the future - it is almost impossible to predict the future thirty years ahead. Maybe there will be a spectacular increase in birth rate or a pandemic might decimate old people. Or perhaps, society will begin to think the untinkable - that it just cannot bear the financial burden of all the elderly.

The data I have used comes from the official site, <[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)>. The site also notes that "the Social Security System is "unsustainable in the long run".

One of the problems with our system is that legislators can stay in office by passing the hard decisions on to their successors. Further, it is political suicide to face the problems of Social Security, so we will probably do nothing until, like the lemmings, we go off the cliff. Medicare is in far worse shape than Social Security, but, nonetheless, Congress just initiated a prescription drug program costing \$534 billion in ten years. Reelection seems to be far more important than the good of the nation.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

Don Cooke Games to be announced weekly

No game Saturday October 2

Chemistry Dept. Friday, October 29, 8:00 at Fred's

English Dept. Tuesday, October 12, 7:30 at Mike's

Tom Dilliplane Tom has a game most Monday nights at 8:30



### THE WAR THE SOLDIERS ENDED



The thousand mile stare.  
A term used in Vietnam but  
applicable to all wars

nothing to show for the effort. Morale plummeted. The French high command reacted with a tough attitude. They charged 1800 men with desertion, or cowardice, of whom 600 were executed by firing squad. The British executed another 400 men. Things went somewhat differently on the German side. In the summer offensive the Allies made a substantial gain in taking back a significant part of occupied France. The German high command drew up a plan for a massive counter attack. But they never checked with the infantry man. One half million men went AWOL. The crews of two battleships mutinied and refused to leave port and the mutiny spread throughout the navy. Soldiers went beyond mutiny to armed rebellion. The insurgent army controlled Kiel, Hamburg and Bremen. The country collapsed and Germany gave up.

Some years ago I read that the Dutch army was unionized. At the time I did not understand the concept and thought that it was a crazy idea. But now, I am beginning to understand. A union could be a real counterbalance to the politicians who are willing to fight to the last warrior. I suspect that the Vietnam War might have ended at a more appropriate time, with fewer casualties, if the guys doing the fighting had a say. But, somehow I do not believe that America is ready for a unionized army

### EXPERT OPINION

In 1948, during the Dewey-Truman campaign, Newsweek magazine polled 50 leading political writers as to who was going to win the election. The result? Fifty votes for Dewey, none for Truman.

### TIMES CHANGE

A 1958 poll found that 96 % of white responders disapproved of marriages between blacks and whites. In a 1997 poll responding to the same question, 77 % approved of such marriages.



## NEUROSCIENCE, SOCIETY AND POLITICS

One of the shortcomings in the testing of intelligence is the effect of culture and how to account for differences in background. Some years ago, a company by the name of Neurometrics took up the challenge of eliminating cultural bias in measuring intelligence by using physiological measurement instead of IQ tests. The company developed a simple device called an IQ Cap which measured brain waves in a subject which were then correlated with IQs measured by conventional methods. With a 16 second scan, IQs could be predicted for all eleven subjects of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale to within an acceptable one-half of a standard deviation. The results were the same for the Wechsler test for children. Neurometrics had great expectations for their device. Not only would it remove cultural bias and not only save the cost of producing and administering the test but also remove security problems. It seemed like a sure winner. But there was not a ripple of interest in the project. It was not that people did not believe that the technique worked, they did not want to be confronted with the possibility that intelligence was hard-wired into the human brain and that different individuals and groups had different mental capacities. It seemed more comfortable to retain the concept that all men are created equal and the uncertainty of the conventional IQ tests. The IQ Cap went nowhere.

This is only one example of science going down a path where society is unwilling to face what might be found. There is the case of Frederick Goodwin, a renowned psychiatrist, who led a program at the Mental Health Administration concerned with the origin of violence. One of the studies involved the monitoring of a colony of chimpanzees. It was observed that all the cases of disruption of the social order, such as murder, abuse of females etc., were caused by a few aggressive males. In presenting a paper on this research, Goodwin went a step too far. He speculated whether the same phenomena might be applied to human society and if so, whether those individuals could be treated therapeutically with drugs. The hell that broke loose reached the halls of Congress. He was characterized as suggesting Nazi eugenics methods. A member of the Black Caucus described him as a racist and demanded his head. He got it - two days later Goodwin was out of a job and the program on the origin of violence was expunged.

Another case involves Edward O. Wilson, a famous Harvard zoologist. In reacting to a study which concluded that the brains of women and men are wired differently, He came up with the following disastrous statement. "Forcing similar role identities on both men and women, flies in the face of thousands of years in which animals demonstrated a strong tendency for sexual division of labor". He then went on to suggest a genetic origin of the difference. Wilson paid a price for his statement. Vengeful women hounded him at meetings, cutting him off with derogatory chanting and in one case dousing him with ice water. Gloria Steinem, appearing on a TV show proposed that all work on the genetic difference between women and men be terminated.

Society has ways of eliminating things that it does not want to know about. There could be many characteristics built into the genes of embryos that would, if they were known, upset a lot of people.

## SUPER INFLATION

It is estimated, by a knowledgeable person, that the ball with which Barry Bonds hit his 600th home run is worth about \$125,000. When Babe Ruth hit his 600th in 1920, he gave some kid a twenty dollar bill. Accounting for inflation that would be \$180 today or about 700 times less. Why such a large increase? My guess is that in 1920, when guys were working twelve hour days, there was less time to enjoy such frivolities.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER

Paul Rubin Tournament, Saturday November 13, 2:00

Don Cooke Saturdays, November 6 & 20 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, November 19, 8:00 at Frank's

English Dept. Tuesday, November 30, 7:30 at Dave's  
Dave Corina lives at 13 Janiver Dr. Take N. Triphammer  
past Pyramid-a right at Craft Rd. go past Credit Union  
- a right at Janiver - #13 a pink house, 266-0955

Tom Dilliplane Tom has a game most Monday nights at 8:30

Doughboy  
WWI



Dogface  
WWII



G.I.  
Iraq



Grunt  
Vietnam

**Veteran's Day  
A Salute**

### RUSSIA - A COUNTRY COMING APART



There is an article in the October 11 New Yorker which describes the present social situation in Russia. It was written by Michael Specter, a medical reporter, and outlines a country which is coming apart at the seams. Life expectancy has been so sharply declining that a boy born in Russia today can expect to live 58 years, shorter than a lad born in Bangladesh.

Some projections of population indicate that, by 2050, the number of people will be 75 to 80 million compared to the 140 million today. The birth rate is one of the lowest peace time rates in history and it is expected that, by 2015, there will be 5 million fewer people in the workforce. The country is in the grip of major AIDS epidemic which is pretty much ignored by the government which in 2003 spent only 4 million dollars on the problem. There has been a dramatic rise in syphilis infection. Most modern countries report something like a half dozen cases per 100,000 people. Russia has 144 cases. The nation has more billionaires than any other country but most of the money is made by Mafia type operations and competition is removed by assassination. Drug use is overwhelming. While anti-drug laws are exceedingly harsh, the problems are often overlooked by the police. Bribery is rampant, even in academia where one can buy good grades. The country has a draft, but only eleven percent of those called up are considered fit for service. In 2002, 5000 draftees were rejected because they tested for HIV. Last year 25 percent of those inducted had eight years of education or less. Maintenance on military equipment, even submarines (they lost one), is at a dangerous level and supplies and spare parts are at a critical level. In the recent terrorist attack on a school where over 300 died, bullets for the soldiers were in short supply.

The picture painted by Specter was so bleak that I thought that I ought to seek other opinions through my usual source, the Web. Here are some of the things I found. The AIDS situation in Russia is described as, "a catastrophe", "crisis", "a time bomb" and "scarier than Africa". Other factors: half the people live below the poverty line; alcohol consumption, by men, has tripled between 1990 and 2000 and deaths outnumber births by 700,000 a year.

My guess is that, in a few years, Russia will be a dictatorship (probably Putin), and the secret police will be back to take care of the drug dealers and the Mafia.



While the United States represents 4.6% of the world's population, we house 25% of the world's prisoners. We also use a bit more than half of the world's medicinal drugs and a bit less than half of the supply of gasoline. And, although we discharge 36% of the total carbon dioxide, we are the only major country which is not a party to the treaty involving its control. We withdrew because it would cost industry too much.



## PIRACY, THE OLD FASHIONED WAY



If one thinks that piracy on the high seas went out with sailing vessels, they would be very wrong. The fact is, it is far more prevalent these days than it ever was in the time that Captain Kidd roamed the Spanish Main. According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), in 2003, there were 445 incidents of pirate attacks on shipping. The attacks are usually made by armed boarding parties, just like in the movies. Most of the attacks occur in Southeast Asia, although about 20% happen in waters off the

Americas. Twenty-one seamen are known to have died, and 71 are missing. The reason that so many are missing is that, when a ship is hijacked, the crewmen are usually thrown overboard and the pirates sail off with the ship. The hijacked ships are not always little ones. The *Alondra Rainbow*, 370 feet long, with a cargo of aluminum, was hijacked. It was quickly renamed, repainted and reflagged and seemed to vanish. Sometime later it was discovered and run down by the Indian Coast Guard. The IMB produces a weekly report on pirate activity. The one I checked recorded five instances for that week.

## WE HAVE BEEN THERE BEFORE, ONLY WORSE

In the presidential election of 1876, the election returns gave the Democratic candidate, Samuel J. Tilden, a victory over the Republican, Rutherford B. Hayes, by 300,000 votes, 4300590 to 4,036,298. However, Tilden only had 184 electoral votes, one less than the required 185. Hayes had 165. The reason for this situation was that 20 electoral votes were undecided because the elections in three southern states (Florida included) were in dispute. The wheeling and dealing which went on then makes the 2000 election seem like a Sunday school picnic. (One elector offered his vote to Tilden for \$100,000, an offer which was declined). In the end, the Republicans had the votes and, along strict party lines, awarded all the disputed 20 votes to Hayes. Just enough for the required 185. The election was in doubt until March 3, 1888, two days before the inauguration on March 5. The rancor ran deep. The NY Sun published this picture of Hayes on the front page on the day of his inauguration.



I doubt that the World Bank engages in loan sharking. However, the following story from the New York Times, might lead one to that conclusion. In the 1970s, Nigeria borrowed 5 billion dollars. To date, they have paid 16 billion dollars toward the loan. However, they still owe 32 billion dollars on the same debt.

In 1924, the governor of Texas, Miriam "Ma" Ferguson, decreed that foreign languages could not be taught in the Texas school system. Her reason? "If English was good enough for Jesus Christ, it's good enough for us".

You probably don't remember, but in the Spring of 1999, the average price of gasoline dipped below a dollar a gallon.

A sign on the door of a New England church. "If you are the last one out, please extinguish the perpetual candle".

On the wall of a Baltimore estate: "Trespassers will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law".  
The Sisters of Mercy



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

Don Cooke Saturdays, December 4 & 11 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Friday, December 10, 8:00 at Ben's

English Dept. To be decided

Tom Dilliplane Tom has a game most Monday nights at 8:30

Saturday, December 18, is an open date



Mrs. Claus

### THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL SECURITY

A few months back, I wrote a pessimistic view of the future of the Social Security program. That was an analysis of a financial system by a chemist. I now have a more expert view.

I came across an Annual Report produced by the Social Security and Medicare Trustees. I presume that that there is a joint report because both programs are so financially intertwined. The trustees are all appointees of President Bush. There are six, the Secretaries of Treasury, Labor, Health and Human Services, and two public trustees, both academicians. The Trustees have no control over taxes charged, benefits paid or the economy. The only input they have is to monitor the programs.

Here is what they have to say about the future of the programs under their scrutiny:

- "We do not believe that the currently projected long run growth rates of Social Security and Medicare are sustainable under current financial arrangements".
- "The program (Social Security) continues to fail our long-range test of close actuarial balance by a wide margin".
- "Social Security could be brought into actuarial balance over the next 75 years in various ways, including an immediate increase of payroll taxes of 15 percent, or an immediate reduction of benefits by 13 percent, or some combination of the two".
- "The program (Hospital care) could be brought into actuarial balance by an immediate 108 percent increase in program allocation or an immediate 48 percent reduction in program outlays, or some combination of the two".
- "In 2003, the combined annual cost of Social Security and Medicare was about 7 percent of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) or 40 percent of total federal income. It is expected to double by 2040 to 15 percent of the GDP, or 79 percent of total Federal income". Note: this statement does not include the civil service and military retirement programs, which, if included, would probably require more than the entire Federal budget for these three items.
- "In just twenty years, Social Security will go from providing surplus revenue equal to 7 percent of income tax to requiring a transfer from the treasury (the redeeming of the bonds that comprise Trust Fund reserves) equal to 6 percent of Federal income taxes".
- A statement by the two Public Trustees: "As Public Trustees we are compelled to point out the inadequacy of the Medicare financing arrangements in current law, to meet the projected costs".

Have I selected only the negative aspects of the report? The only positive statement I can find is "Although highly challenging, the financial difficulties facing Social Security and Medicare are not insurmountable".

How well does Congress adhere to the advice of their Trustees? After this report was presented to Congress, they added a prescription drug program to Medicare. To me, the situation seems bazaar.





## A PHENOMENON

In the early Seventies, Nolan Ryan had the fastest pitch in baseball - in the Eighties he still had the fastest pitch in baseball. To this day, Ryan holds 53 major-league records. Some of these accrue to him because of one of the records he holds - he played 27 seasons, more than any other player. (It strikes me as odd that a pitcher would be the one who lasted the longest).

He has the record for strikeouts, 5714, which is well ahead of Carlton at 4136. He struck out 19 in a game four times, but did not tie the record of twenty. In fact, of these four games, he lost one of them, 1 - 0. He holds the record for no-hitters, at seven. One of these was in his last year, 1991, when he was 46 years old. He also had a no-hitter in the previous year.

## NEED A QUICK BUNDLE ?

Try the four horse parlay at Aqueduct. On October 30, this year. In the B3 race, a mere two dollar bet returned \$ 107,388. Here are the details

**B3** Purse \$1,500,000, 3-up, The Mile, 1 m (turf-veiling). Off—1:37. Start good, won driving. Time—:24 :48 3/5, 1:12 3/5, 1:24 3/5, 1:36 4/5. Winner—B c 4 by Sultry Song-Joliski's Star. Trainer—D. Chafios.

Horses	Wt.	PP	%	%	Str.	Fin.	Jockey	Win	Pl.	Sh.	Odds
10-Singlefory	126	10	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	Flores	35.00	15.60	9.80	14.50
7-Antonius Plus	122	7	12 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Spencer		37.60	13.60	31.40
11-Six Perfections	123	11	8 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Bailey			5.00	5.90
4-Soaring Free	126	4	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	Kobel				10.90
Silver Tree	126	2	7 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	Prado				21.90
Musical Chimes	123	9	10 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	Dekommene				72.00

## HOW TO REALLY KILL PEOPLE

There is now a weapon called a fuel-air explosive which was first used in the 1991 Iraq War. It consists of a canister containing 400 kilograms of highly compressed methane gas. When the gas is released it expands rapidly over a wide area and mixes with air. At the appropriate time, the mixture is ignited, creating a zone of intense heat which snuffs out all life within 300 yards of the ignition point.

## STEEERIKE !!!!

From the beginning of baseball the home plate umpire has called balls and strikes. But it was not until 1888 that the right arm was raised to indicate a strike. The practice came into being to accommodate William Hoy, an outfielder for the Washington Nationals, who was a deaf-mute. Hoy played 14 years with a life time average of 0.287 and 594 stolen bases (which still ranks him 17th of all time). Hoy was known to his teammates by the nickname, "Dummy", and is carried in the official record books as Dummy Hoy. Maybe people were less sensitive then.

## MORE SIGNS

In a funeral parlor: Ask about our layaway plan.

On a display of "I love you only" Valentine cards. Now available in multipacks.

On a Tennessee highway: When this sign is under water, this road is impassable.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Don Cooke Saturdays, January 8, 15 & 29, 8:00 (22nd open)

Chemistry Dept. Friday, January 21, 8:00 at Barry's

English Dept. Tuesday, January 11, perhaps at Lamar's.

Tom Dilliplane A game most Monday nights at 8:30 check e-mail



### HOW TO MISLEAD PEOPLE

In July 2003, Wendy Hamilton, President of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), made the following public statement: "Last year, 18,000 people were killed in drunk driving accidents". The statement was questioned and MADD issued an explanation. The statement was questioned because it could not be true. The number of people killed in drunk driving accidents is not known. What is recorded is the number of "alcohol related accidents". The following examples illustrate the difference between the two concepts:

- 1 - John and Mary are finishing work and John asks Mary for a ride home. As they are walking to the car they pass a bar and John, noting the hot day, asks Mary if it would be OK to stop for a beer. Mary does not drink but goes along and John has a beer. On the way home, Mary is involved in an accident. The investigating officer, noting alcohol on John's breath would classify the accident as "alcohol related".
- 2 - A guy at a bar, worried about driving, calls a cab. The cabbie is in an accident. Because the passenger has had a drink, the accident is alcohol related.
- 3 - You are driving along and run into the back of a pickup truck. The officer notes an empty beer bottle on the floor of the truck. That is enough evidence for your accident to be classified as alcohol related.
- 4 - "Drunk driving" is usually defined as a driver having a blood alcohol content of 0.08%. If a driver has a blood alcohol content of 0.01% (one half a beer) the accident is alcohol related.

How did such a bazaar situation ever come into being? MADD lobbied hard for the use of the term "alcohol related". The purpose, it seems, was to increase the numbers. But MADD and the National Highway Safety Agency frequently lapse into the term "drunk driving" instead of using "alcohol related".

MADD is an aggressive organization, raising over \$40 million a year, which has a broader agenda than safe driving. The founder of MADD left the organization with the following statement: "It has become far more neo-prohibitionist than I ever wanted or intended. I didn't start MADD to deal with alcohol, I started MADD to deal with the issue of drunk driving". The organization does have an agenda that goes well beyond drunk driving. They lobby for higher taxes on spirits, shorter hours for alcohol sales and other restrictions intended to reduce the use of alcohol.

MADD has been criticized from various quarters (Some I suspect from the alcohol industry) for playing fast and loose with statistics. MADD lobbied hard to have the drinking age raised from 18 to 21. To prove that the action saved lives, the organization noted that the death rate from automobile accidents for the age group 18 to 20 dropped 5 percent, presumably as a result of the increase in drinking age. But they failed to note another statistic, probably because it undermined their argument. The death rate in auto accidents for the 21 to 24 age group rose 8 percent in the same period. Despite the increase in the drinking age, the death rate for youths on the highways actually remained about the same for the age group 18 to 24. A number of studies have an explanation for the two observations. The first finding is that the legal drinking age has no perceptible effect on fatalities. The second is that inexperience in drinking is the apparent risk factor and is independent of age. As a result, when the drinking age was increased to 21, the inexperienced drinkers were no longer 18 but 21 and this risk factor shifted to the older age.

Groups that represent younger populations are aware of these facts and complain about being unfairly singled out. But their puny voices can't compete with the powerful MADD organization.

The United States is one of only four nations in the world which have 21 as the legal drinking age. Two others, Ukraine and South Korea tried such a limitation but abandoned the idea after studying the results.

It strikes me that MADD is a born again Woman's Christian Temperance Union, except that they are more subtle and far more powerful.



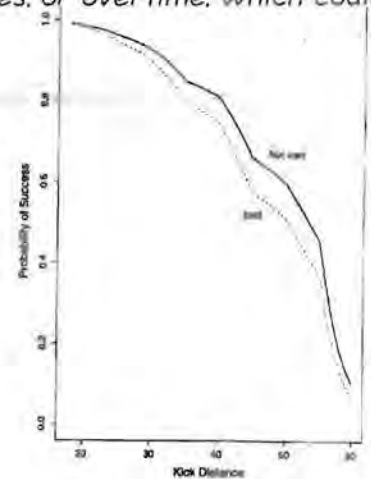
# PSYCHOLOGY IN FOOTBALL



The 2004 Superbowl featured the Patriots and the Panthers. With 1:08 left in the game, the Panthers scored on a twelve yard touchdown play to tie the score 29 - 29. The Patriots came roaring back with four completions to get the ball on the 23 yardline with nine seconds left in the game. The Patriots kicker Adam Vinatieri came on the field for a 41 yard attempt to win the game. Carolina called a time out to let Vinatieri stew for two minutes, a practice known as "icing the kicker." The ploy did not work and the Patriots won the game. But, besides this result, does the strategy of allowing the kicker to worry about his upcoming attempt, have the desired effect?

Scott M. Berry writes a column devoted to statistics in sports in the journal *Chance*. He studied many aspects of placekicking including the question of icing. To his surprise, he found that icing does have a negative effect on kickers. He studied 2003 field goal attempts for the years 2002 and 2003. These was a subset of 139 "pressure kicks", defined as attempts in the last three minutes, or overtime, which could change the outcome of the game. There were 38 times where the defense called a time out to ice the kicker, who made 66% of the field goals. Kickers who were not iced were successful in 76% of the attempts.

The graph on the right shows the difference between the two situations. The graph shows that the probability of success is about 98% at 20 yards and about 10% at 60 yards. Other findings: pressure situations ( other than those where the kicker was iced ) make little difference. ( That is why Berry was surprised by the results on icing). As expected snow, rain and cold have a negative effect. What I find surprising is the big difference between kicking off grass and artificial turf. Kicking off grass reduces the odds of a successful kick by 31%.



## THINGS CHANGE WITH TIME.

Suppose, for some crazy reason you wanted to know who won the 1902 Cornell - Penn football game. How would you find out? You could call Cornell and, with time, they might find out. A surer way would be to go to the John Howell Web Site on College Football Scores <[www.cae.wisc.edu/~dwilson/rsfc/history/howell/](http://www.cae.wisc.edu/~dwilson/rsfc/history/howell/)>. The site has scores of almost all college games going back to the beginning, 133 years ago

In 1902 Cornell lost to Penn 12 - 11 at Penn. You can also find out that, in 1915, the Carlisle Indians beat Holy Cross 23-21, and, in 1873, Stevens Institute beat NYU 6-1.

Did Cornell really beat Ohio State? Yes they did, on October 28, 1939, at Ohio State, with a score of 23-4. The previous week the Big Red handed Penn State a shellacking with a score of 47-0. How things change.

It may be hard to believe, but, far back, the powerhouse teams were those who would one day make up the Ivy League. I gave some thought to why. Were the state teams little provincial colleges? I checked the enrollment of Ohio State in the Thirties (thanks to the Web). That was not it, at the time, the Ohio State had about 16,000 students, far larger than the Ivies. There is another conceivable explanation. Athletics was for the rich young men. Except for Cornell, almost all the students at the Ivies were from the "elite" private prep schools. The students at the state schools may not have had time for such frivolities.

Another change. This from the world of golf. In 1980, the longest driver on the tour, Dan Pohl, had an average of 274 yards. In the year 2002 that distance would merit 158th place.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY

Don Cooke Saturdays, February 5, 12 & 26 8:00 (19th open)

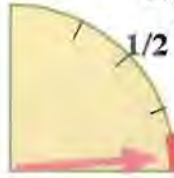
Chemistry Dept. Friday, February 18, 8:00 at Len's

English Dept. Tuesday, March 1, at Isaac's 7:30

Tom Dilliplane A game most Monday nights at 8:30 check e-mail

### RUNNING ON EMPTY

**F** The title is from the name of a book by Peter G. Peterson, secretary of commerce under Nixon, published in 2004. Much of the material here is from that source.



In early 2002 Enron, named the best run company three years in a row by Fortune Magazine, submitted a financial report which showed a net income of over a billion dollars.

But there was a problem - the spectacular profits were conjured up using financial mirrors and, by September, the house of cards began to collapse. By December, it was evident that the billion dollar profit was more like a five billion dollar loss. Their financial people had been able to hide a great deal of a thirty-five billion dollar debt.

People were outraged, particularly by the fact that the pensions of the ordinary workers vanished with the bad news. Congress reacted with great anger and enacted a sweeping set of corporate regulations (called Sarbanes-Oxley), in order to prevent such malfeasance in the future. However, congress did not feel that it was subject to regulations that they had imposed on corporations and reported, in the same year, a record surplus of 236 billion dollars. If it had been required to follow applicable regulations, particularly The Employment Retirement Security Act, the 236 billion dollar surplus would be more like a trillion dollar deficit. Instead of hiding debt by accounting trickery, they just declare it "off budget". Keeping crooked books under Sabanes-Oxley is a felony and Senator Sam Nunn acknowledged that fact when he said that if Congress was a private company we would all be in jail.

The main theme of Peterson's book is that congress, both Republicans and Democrats, has been irresponsible in making future commitments with no idea where the necessary funds are going to come from. The total unfunded debt, as estimated by the Treasury, is 27 trillion dollars as of January 1, 2003. How much is 27 trillion dollars? It is 15 years worth of total income of the federal government or \$200,000 for every family in the country.

Peterson's is not alone in his concern. He is a member of the Concord Coalition for Fiscal Responsibility, a group of former government financial officials from both parties. Paul Volker, former chairman of the Federal Reserve Board is a member. As are a former Comptroller General, a Secretary of the Treasury, a White House Counsel and two former senators, one Democratic and one Republican. The group continuously chides congress for lacking fiscal responsibility. Just recently they ran published a full page warning in the New York Times (2/9/05) about the folly of present fiscal policies.

There are warnings from many other sources. From Greenspan who says the government is making promises it cannot keep. There are grim reports from the Office of Management and Budget, 2004, the Comptroller General of the United States, 2003 and the Presidents Council of Economic Advisers which, in 2004, described some of the promises as "fictitious".





## ON-LINE POKER - A BIG BUSINESS

There is a web site for Pokerpulse ([pokerpulse.com](http://pokerpulse.com)), an organization which monitors on-line poker activity. Their data show that there are 235 on-line poker rooms (naturally worldwide, since almost all are offshore). At any one time, the average number of players (hourly count on January 5, 2005) in all the games was 88,434 (31,954 in ring games and 56,480 in tournaments). The average amount of money wagered in a 24 hour period is 150 million dollars. No wonder so many government agencies would like to get a piece of that action. Alan Hays put me on to Pokerpulse

## REALLY BIG



Almost everyone knows that the blue whale is the largest creature on earth. At 200 tons, it is probably the largest animal that ever existed, since it is far heavier than the greatest dinosaur. But you probably do not realize just how big one of them actually is. Here are a few facts to help you. The tongue of a blue whale weighs as much as an elephant. Its heart, which is the size of a compact car, pumps ten tons of blood through veins that are wide enough for a child to swim through. It can produce a sound, which, while too low a frequency for a human to hear, can be detected at a distance of 500 miles. Ahab should have had more sense. Source: David Attenborough, a naturalist for BBC

## OVERKILL

In April 1998, the Internal Revenue Service sent Lorie Marling of Columbus, Ohio a letter dunning her for back taxes. They wanted a rather large sum - 270 billion dollars to be exact. But the letter was conciliatory. If she preferred, she could make three equal payments of 9 billion dollars each. The IRS finally conceded that there might be something wrong with the numbers.

## ROBOTS



R2D2 from  
Star Wars

The great success of the Mars rovers makes the success of robots seem like a "slam dunk". They have done everything expected of them, and then some. But wait a minute, and listen to the following tale. The Defense Advanced Research Agency (ARPA), the agency which funds the far out stuff, in March 2004 sponsored the Grand Challenge, a competition, with a prize for the winner of one million dollars. The task was to build a vehicle which could navigate a 142 mile course across the Mojave desert in 10 hours. The condition was that, once started, the vehicle would be on its own. Thirteen high tech companies entered the competition.

The test was a spectacular demonstration of just how far robots have to go to even come close to human intelligence. Despite being loaded with lasers, radar, stereoscopic cameras, gyroscopes, GPS guidance systems, advanced computers, etc., etc., the vehicles had trouble figuring out, fast enough, the significance of objects that a toddler recognizes immediately. She is more advanced, even in diapers, than any robot that humans have devised.

One of the vehicles had its brakes lock up at the start; one flipped over; another took off on the wrong direction; one ran into a wall; another got as far as a mile and collided with a fence; the best performer got as far as six and a half miles when its front wheels caught on fire.

What about the Mars rovers? First, their top speed was one tenth mile per hour. Further, in any uncertain situation, the decision was made by someone at Cornell University. Robots are great in putting a rivet in a car door on an assembly line - but don't ask them to think.

Source: National Geographic Magazine 11/04



If the land mass of the earth was smooth, the planet would be covered by an ocean two and a half miles deep.



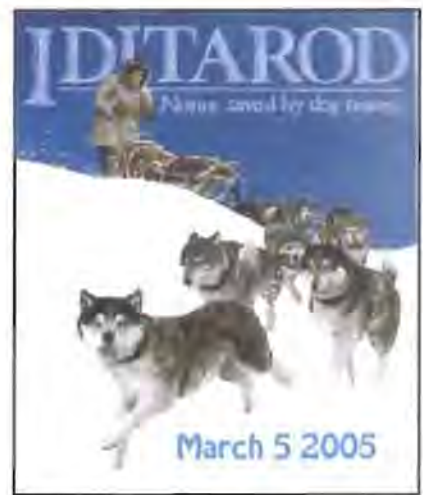
## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

Don Cooke Saturdays, March 5, 12 & 19 8:00 (26th open)

Chemistry Dept. Friday, March 11, 8:00 at Milt's

English Dept. Tuesday, March 1, at Isaac's 7:30

Tom Dilliplane A game most Monday nights at 8:30  
check e-mail



### THE LAST GREAT RACE

The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race is so named. It begins at Fairbanks, Alaska on the first Saturday of March and ends ten to twelve days later at Nome, eleven hundred and fifty miles away. It is about as grueling an effort as one can imagine. The country is harsh, and in early March there is less than eight hours of sunshine a day and the average minimum temperature is seven degrees below zero - wind chill temperatures can reach minus 100 degrees. The mushers average two hours of sleep a night. The best time belongs to Martin Buser, a Swiss, just under eight days. Iditarod is the Indian name for a hunting area, and means "distant place". A trail that went through the area was named the Iditarod Trail.

In the 2003 race, Cindy Gallea, a 51 year old woman, finished 47th out of 86 starters (22 never finished). Not bad, especially considering that she finished ahead of her 22 year old son. Women do well in this grueling event - Susan Butcher is a four time winner.

The first race was run in 1973. It was established to honor a group of mushers for a heroic effort in 1925. In late January, Dr. Welch, of Nome, discovered two cases of diphtheria, and being aware of the high susceptibility of the Eskimo population to the disease, he feared an epidemic. He was informed that the hospital in Fairbanks had sufficient serum to stay the spread of the disease - but how to get it to Nome (the airplanes of the day were not up to the Alaskan winter). It was decided to ship the medicine by train to the town of Nenana which still left 674 miles to go with the only possibility being dog sleds. Twenty different mushers were assembled along the route to relay the precious cargo. They were a diverse crew of Eskimos, Russians, Norwegians, Irish and Indians. On January 27, 1925, "Wild Bill" Shannon set out from Nenana for Nome with the temperature hovering at fifty degrees below zero. Five days later, at 5 am, Dr. Welch was awakened by a knock on the door. He opened the door to find 13 exhausted dogs and Gunnar Kaasen, the musher for the last leg of the journey, who had covered the final 53 miles in the dark, in seven and a half hours. Within a week the crisis was over.

Nome is still a distant place. It only has fifteen hundred inhabitants, far fewer than the bustling city it was during the gold rush. It is located on the Seward Peninsula which has no roads to the outside world. The town does have three roads to other towns but these are not open in the winter.

### POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

A few months back I wrote about the African nation of Nigeria which got into financial trouble because of mismanagement a loan from the World Bank. You don't really have to go that far. In 1990, New York State was desperate for cash. A 200 million dollar bond issue was a consideration but, at the time there was no appropriate project for which bonds could be issued. So, a decision was made to purchase Attica Prison. I can find no objection to the fact that the prison was already owned by New York State. To date, the state has paid back 242 million dollars to the bond holders. That may not seem too bad except for the fact that 323 million dollars more is still owed on the same bond issue.

Source, NY Times 2/2/05



## GETTING AWAY WITH MURDERING STATISTICS IN THE COURTROOM

In the O. J. Simpson trial, his lawyer, Alan Dershowitz, in defense of his client, constantly made reference to the fact that fewer than one in a thousand women, who are abused by their husbands, are killed by them. While the statistic is true, it is a non-sequitur. Maybe Dershowitz was not aware of it, but the statement could be turned against his client. The prosecutor did not pick up on the opening.

While women are rarely killed by an abusive husband, the fact is that Simpson's wife was killed. There is another statistic which could have been devastating to Dershowitz - if the wife of an abusive husband is killed, 80% of the time it is the husband who did it.

Source: Once Upon a Number. John Allen Paulos, 1998

## FAITH



In the predawn hours of August 13, 1944, thirty-nine bombers were lined up for takeoff at the Kimbolton airbase in England. The weather conditions were lousy with a visibility of 70 yards. But the weather people were reassuring and predicted that by the time they returned, the fog would be gone - and so it was. It is one thing to depend on the forecasters to have a sunny day for a picnic, but another to depend upon them for your life.

The forecasters were not always right. One day, earlier in the year, a thousand bombers took off from their fogged in bases with the expectation that conditions would be fine when they got back.

But that afternoon, conditions at many of the fields were still difficult. There was a frantic effort at headquarters to get as many of the planes down as was possible. Many landed wherever they could. Even so, sixty of the aircraft did not make it. The autopilots were set to fly the planes out over the North Sea and the crews bailed out. Six hundred airmen came down all over England. None of this ever appeared in the newspapers. In fact, it was not widely known in Air Force headquarters.

## CAN YOU BELIEVE IT ?



A social security number is supposed to be unique. But the card shown here, (now invalid,) issued to Hilda Whitcher, was used by over 40,000 individuals. In 1938 a wallet manufacturer decided to promote his product by demonstrating how well a card would fit into the wallet. He thought that it would be nice to use a real person and number so he chose his secretary, Hilda, for that honor. The wallet was sold in Woolworth and other department stores across the country. Even though the card was all red and had SPECIMEN printed

across its face, many purchasers of the wallet liked this particular number and adopted it as their own. The number continued to be used long after the sale of the wallet was discontinued. In the peak year, 1943, 5,755 people were still using the number. Despite the effort of the Social Security Administration to eliminate the problem by invalidating the number, it kept appearing. Thirty-nine years later, twelve individuals were found to be using Hilda's number.

Source: Social Security web site.



Victoria's Secret can't be much of a secret - the company distributes one million catalogues a day.

Want to see what your house looks like in an aerial photograph? Go to <http://terraservert.microsoft.com>, type in your address and voila With our house I could distinguish the deck, garage, driveway and individual trees.

It may be hard to believe in today's climate, but there was a time when one of the thrills of a New York subway rider was to see a member of the Yankees, Dodgers or Giants riding out to the stadium for the afternoon game.



# Poker Schedule for April



Don Cooke Saturdays, April 2, 9, 16 & 23, 8:00 (30th open)

Chemistry Dept. Friday, April 8, 8:00 at Geoff's

English Dept. Wednesday, April 20 at Don's 7:30

Tom Dilliplane A game most Monday nights at 8:30  
check e-mail



The day after I mailed out the March newsletter I came across another article about the 1925 effort to get a diphtheria serum to Nome by dog team. It so intrigued me that I bought a recently published book on the episode, entitled, *The Cruellest Miles*, by Gay and Laney Salisbury, 2003. It is a well named description of the limits of endurance and the indomitable spirit of those who took part in the rescue mission. The 674 mile trek was made in the depth of winter, with only four hours of twilight, in weather as bad as anyone could remember. For the five days of the effort, the "warmest" temperature was forty degrees below zero. The twenty-man relay started at Nemana with the temperature at fifty below zero and ended five and a half days later at Nome.

Some of the mushers had to "break trail" when the snow got too deep for the dogs to get enough traction. That meant getting on snowshoes and flattening the snow enough for the dogs to work - an agonizing fifty yards at a time. An all-important rule in such a relay is to avoid leaving the trail - it is the only hope of getting to shelter and meeting up with the next member of the relay. Charlie Evans, the twelfth member of the relay, encountered ice fog so heavy that he could only see the tails of the dogs. In such a situation one would usually hunker down and wait for better conditions. But Charlie drove on at full speed, mile after mile, trusting his lead dog to follow the trail. (A good lead dog, using his sense of smell, can follow the trail through several feet of new snow). Another musher, Gunnar Kaasan, who drove the last lap in the dark, encountered drifts so large that he had no choice but to make a wide detour around the obstacles. This action meant leaving the trail, circling around and hoping his lead dog, Balto, would be able to find the trail. Balto was up to the challenge.

The musher who put up the greatest effort was probably Leonard Seppala, a Norwegian. On the fourth day of the effort, the organizers of the relay in Nome, despite the fact that there were now 38 cases of diphtheria, decided to call a temporary halt because of worsening weather conditions. In addition to a temperature of forty degrees below zero, there was an offshore gale of 65 miles per hour with visibility greatly reduced because of blowing snow. (They worried about a total loss of the serum). But Seppala never got the message. He had already been on the trail for 170 miles to get to his assigned relay point. He received the package and drove an additional 84 miles (the longest lap) at an average speed of eight miles per hour.

The epic effort inspired the imagination of the nation and newspapers across the country were publishing hour-by-hour reports. It was the finest hour for the sled dogs but also their last hurrah. It would not be too long before the airplane took over. The epidemic claimed six lives.

Alaska is still a far place. In the 700 miles between Fairbanks and Nome, there is not one road large enough to appear on the AAA map for the State of Alaska.





**UCLA 121**  
**Pepp 46**



## THE BEST SEASON EVER ?

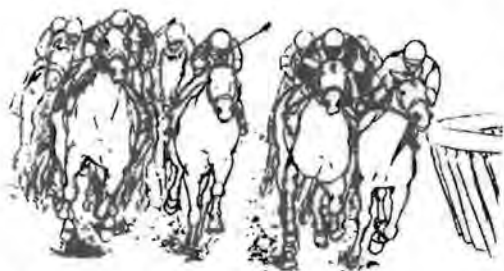
What athletic team do you think had the best ever season? I have my own candidate but I am sure there are others out there. The undefeated Cornell hockey team is certainly a candidate because they are the only hockey team to accomplish the feat. Another team would be the Raybestos Brakettes, a women's fast-pitch softball team that went the whole 1970 season, 57 games, undefeated.

But my candidate is the 1965-1966 UCLA freshman basketball team. They went 21-0, but it is how they did it that gets my vote. They began by whomping (75-60) the UCLA Varsity which happened to be the reigning NCAA champions. In the 21 games they averaged 113 points a game. Their average margin of victory was 56 points and Southern Cal freshmen came the closest, losing by only 28 points.

Lou Alcindor (later Abdul-Jabbar) was the superstar of the team. In his career at UCLA he won 109 games and lost two (including his high school career he went 209 wins and 8 losses). But, of course, that was the time when UCLA won seven consecutive NCAA championships

Any other nominations ?

## YOU NEVER KNOW



The Travers Stakes is the highlight of the Saratoga racing season. It dates back to 1864 and, this year the purse will be one million dollars. The race on August 16, 1930, featured Gallant Fox, who was undefeated in nine races that year and had the Triple Crown (the Derby, the Preakness and the Belmont all of which he won easily). Another horse in the race was Whichone had been second at the Belmont. There was another horse in the race, a third rater, Jim Dandy. In 141 starts

he had finished last in the majority of them. But the track was awash in mud and its owner was aware that funny things happen under such circumstances. Gallant Fox went off as an odds-on-favorite about 1 to 2 and Whichone was 7 to 5. Pari-mutuel betting was unknown in 1930 but it is guessed that Jim Dandy was at least 100 to 1.

Going into the final turn the race was going as expected, with the two favorites battling head-to-head. But, suddenly, Jim Dandy found room on the rail and, with a burst of speed, rushed past the leaders to win by an astonishing eight lengths before 30,000 shocked fans. Gallant Fox would never lose another race and Jim Dandy would never win another stakes race.

The upset was so spectacular that, now, another feature of the Saratoga season is the Jim Dandy Stakes.

## WONDERS OF NATURE THAT YOU NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT



When was the last time you cut your eyelashes ? You never have. Why ?

Eyelashes grow to a predetermined length and then fall out. The length of the eyelash varies from person-to-person and is determined by their DNA. There are all kinds of products on the market for increasing the length of your eyelashes. Don't buy any of them - they do not work.

If you enjoy eggs in the morning you can consider yourself lucky. The hen is a rare bird. When an egg is removed from the nest of most birds, that is the end of the effort. Not so with the hen which will slavishly continue to replace each egg which is removed.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR MAY

Don Cooke Saturdays, May 7, 14 & 21, 8:00 (28th open)

Chemistry Dept. Friday, May 27, 8:00 at Tyler's

English Dept. Wednesday, May 18 at Arnies 7:30

Tom Dilliplane Game on hold for a while



## RECORD KEEPING IN THE MIDDLE AGES



I have always been intrigued by the amount and breath of information which is still available relative to such distant times. A case in point is the battle of Agincourt, which occurred in 1415. Books have been written outlining the events of that day in minute detail. I write about this battle because of some interesting factors surrounding the conflict.

On October 25, 1415, an English army, 7000 strong, returning to England from a campaign in France, was met by a French army of 20,000 near a small town of Agincourt.

The English prevailed at a cost of a few hundred lives while the French lost over 10,000 fighting men. History records that, for the English, the Duke of York and the Earl of Oxford were killed in battle. It might be thought that ordinary footsoldiers (archers in this case) died anonymously. But this is not the case. A Roll of Honour exists with the names of 1500 men who fought honorably that day. There still exists, probably in the British Museum, a list of all 7000 men who left England with the campaign and another list of those who returned. The reason that so much detail about the battle is available is that both sides used noncombatant Chroniclers to record what happened. Both sides also had Heralds who filed reports. The heralds served interesting functions. Their loyalty was not to the army in which they served, but to an international corporation which regulated civilized warfare.\* Both the English and French heralds were together when they observed the battle. They acted as referees and go-betweens and they reported on the conduct of the combatants according to the laws of war and chivalry. The decision as to who won the battle was in the hands of the heralds as well as the naming of the particular battle. How the French managed to lose is another story. It involved overconfidence, divided leadership, aristocratic rivalry and the weather - a muddy field.

As was customary in those days, Henry V, the king of England, led the charge (he was 28 years old). He was not on the sidelines, but in the thick of the battle. He was attacked by a French knight, Chevalier de Rohan who staggered him with a blow to the head but who went to his death by the king's sword. (Henry's helmet, dent and all, still sits on the top of his tomb in Westminster Abby). The French king, Charles VI was not at the scene. Because he was insane, he was tucked away in a nearby village.

\* "Civilized warfare" - a fine oxymoron.





The Battle of Trenton

The custom of the commander in chief leading the troops in battle has disappeared. I believe that George Washington was the only American commander-in-chief who actually fought in battle while holding the position. He led the attacking forces in the raid on Trenton on Christmas Day, 1776, and was at the point of the charge in the Battle of Princeton the following January. It is true that President James Madison was at the battle of Bladenburg, Md in the War of 1812 as the British neared Washington. He went to Bladenburg armed with two borrowed dueling pistols, but observed the fight from a nearby hilltop. It was also a disastrous defeat for the Americans.

Alexander the Great is the personification of a hands-on leader in battle. He was always at the point of the battle and in sieges, he was the first one up the scaling ladders. He paid for his rashness in the siege of Multan, India, in 326 BC. In the final days of the siege, scaling ladders were thrown up against the walls. Alexander raced to the top of the first one with his shield over his head and fought the defenders as he went over the battlements. Unfortunately, there was such an effort to go to his aid that the ladder collapsed, leaving him alone with the enemy. There was a frantic effort to get help to him, when it arrived, although he was gravely injured, he was still fighting for his life. He never fully recovered from these injuries.

## STILL ANOTHER WAR STORY - DESPERATE MEASURES

In August 1944, Patton's tanks were rolling across France in the pursuit of the fleeing German armies. But Patton ran out of gasoline and the Germans kept going. Then, the entire effort of the military was to get more gas to the front in order to get moving before the German army could build defensive positions. There were streams of trucks, bumper to bumper, loaded with five gallon cans of gas. (Most ground transport was in five-gallon cans). There was plenty of fuel in England and despite, a pipeline under the Channel, there was not enough getting to France. Then someone, probably a general who would not have to do the job, came up with an idea. Why not load bombers with gasoline? So heavy bombers, each with a few tons of gasoline in jerricans, were flown from bases in England to fields in France. Can you imagine the feeling of the aircrews looking at all those cans of gasoline. Fortunately, at that time, the chances of encountering a German fighter plane was very low. I know of no accidents from the effort.

## WASTED ENERGY



A single thunderstorm can expend enough energy for a four-day supply of electrical power to all of the United States. (Source: Bill Bryson, A Short History of Nearly Everything. A delightful book).

Since, in the course of a day, there are about 44,000 thunderstorms around the globe, there is an awful lot of power out there. Unfortunately, there is no way to harness this energy and, even if it were possible, there is, as yet, no way to store such large amounts of sudden power.



What is it with Texas? - of the 72 juveniles on Death Row in the 18 states that allow such executions, forty percent are in that state.

At one time 41 states had laws forbidding interracial marriages.

Here are two titles used in the federal bureaucracy. Chief of Staff to the Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary and Principal Deputy Deputy Assistant Secretary. (Deputy Deputy is not a typo).



## The Poker Schedule for June

Mike Lakin will host the June 4 \$5/\$10 game, 8:00 -  
see reverse side for directiond to Mike s

Don Cooke Saturdays, June 11, 18 & 25 8:00

Chemistry Dept. Not yet decided

English Dept. Wednesday, June 15, 7:30 at Dave s

Tom Dilliplane Game back on - check e-mail



### LONG SHOTS IN THE SPORT OF KINGS



The Kentucky Derby, May 7, 2005

A couple of days before the Kentucky Derby, I had finished something for the newsletter on long shots in horse racing. The outcome of that race was so improbable that it superseded what I had in mind, although it is still worth noting. Most people are aware that a 50 to 1 long shot, Giacomo, won the race. But what makes the whole thing so improbable is that the second horse was 72 to 1, the third was 4.5 to 1 and the fourth was 29 to 1. Forget about the win, place and show betting and look at the multiple bets. The Exacta ( picking the first and second horse ) paid \$9,814 for a \$2 bet. The Trifecta ( 1, 2, 3 ) paid \$133,134, and the Superfacta ( 1, 2, 3, 4 ) would have paid \$1,728,506, if anyone had a \$2 ticket.

But there were only seven bets of one dollar each, which reduced the payout to only \$864,253. Of more than six million dollars which was bet on the Superfacta ( it was a national betting pool ) only a total of \$7 was bet on the winning combination. "Incredible" is hardly the word.

The next story is a bit more mundane, but it is a classic long-shot win. The date was August 30, 1930 and a featured race at Saratoga, the Travers Stakes was ready to go off. The race was considered to be a match race with Gallant Fox the odds-on-favorite, at 1 to 2, versus Whicome at 7 to 5. Gallant Fox was the favorite because he already had the Triple Crown ( the Derby, the Preakness and the Belmont ) and nine wins in ten races. Whicome had run second in the Belmont. There was another horse in the race, Jim Dandy, who had no business being there. He had started 141 races and finished last in the majority of them. In 1930 he had run 20 races without a win. Jim Dandy's owner entered him because the course was awash with mud, and, in such circumstances, anything can happen. It did. Coming into the final turn the race was going as expected, with the two favorites fighting for the lead. Then, out of nowhere, came Jim Dandy with a burst of speed that gave him a victory of eight lengths before 30,000 shocked fans. Since this was before pari-mutuel betting, with each bookie setting his own odds, there is no exact figure on the payout. But it seems that it was at least 100 to 1 to win. Jim Dandy never won another stakes race but was not forgotten. Each year at Saratoga, there is a Grade 1 Stakes race which honors this famous upset - The Jim Dandy Stakes.

### COOKIES WITH FORTUNES

You may have missed the cute story in the NY Timrs about the troubles with the Powerball Lottery. The six correct numbers for the March 30 drawing were 22, 28, 32, 33, 39, 42. To the consternation of the operators, there were 110 second place winners, instead of the usual four or five. The chances of that being a coincidenxce is far smaller than the chances of a snowball in hell. Further, almost all the winners had selected the exact six numbers, 22, 28, 32, 33, 39, 40. In contrast to other types of lotteries, each ticket had a fixed value of \$100,000 to \$500,000, depending on the amout bet. The figures showed that the 110 tickets would cost the lottery 19 million dollars of the 25 million reserve. The first thought was some kind of fraud. But an investigation quickly came up with the explanation. It seems that a fortune cookie manufacturer had come up with this:

All the preparation you've done  
Will finally be paying off  
Lucky numbers 23, 28, 32, 33, 39, 40



## EMOTIONAL OVERLOAD

It is almost impossible to overestimate the ability of the human mind to permit emotions to hold sway over rationality, fairness, compassion and just plain common sense. The following event is described to illustrate the extent to which this can happen. In October 1958, in a small town, Monroe, North Carolina, two black boys, Hanover Thompson, age nine, and Fuzzy Simpson, age seven, while riding their bikes, were invited by a group of five white children to stop and join them in play. They eagerly joined the group. A white girl, Sissy Marcus, recognized Hanover as a boy with whom she had played as a toddler when his mother worked for her mother. Excited to see her old playmate, she kissed him on the cheek. Later, she reported this to her mother who was horrified and phoned the police reporting a sexual assault by a black boy on a white girl. Both youths were arrested, charged with attempted rape and held incommunicado for a week. The NAACP contacted a lawyer, Conrad Lynn, to represent the boys. After accepting the case, Lynn found that Juvenile Judge Hampton Price had already held a trial and had sentenced Thompson to fourteen years and Simpson to twelve years in the state reformatory school. Lynn argued before Judge Hampton that such a proceeding was unconstitutional, but, to no avail. He made two appeals to higher courts but was denied.

But Lynn had an ace-in-the-hole - he knew Eleanor Roosevelt and explained the situation to her. She phoned President Eisenhower who, in turn, contacted Luther Hodges, Governor of North Carolina, and the boys were released.

One might wonder how Fuzzy Simpson, the innocent bystander, got swept up in all of this. Judge Hampton explained to Lynn, that the event had caused "his morals to become seriously impaired and he needed a term for indefinite rehabilitation".

## WAR IS HELL - AGAIN



During the course of World War II, the German military executed 22 000 of it's own soldiers for the crime of desertion.

## OVERCOMING HANDICAPS



How about a fighter pilot who had lost both legs and became an ace? A twenty one year old fighter pilot in the RAF, Douglas Bader, lost both his legs in a plane crash in 1931. (One was lost just below the knee and the other above the knee). He was no longer allowed to fly, and in 1933, he left from the service.

In 1939, with the RAF desperate for pilots, Bader asked, and was given a chance to fly again. He flew magnificently. In the next two years he became commander of a wing and was credited with destroying 23 German aircraft before he was shot down and became a prisoner of war. He flew at the head of the RAF Victory flight over London in 1946. He was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross and a Distinguished Service Order. Perhaps, more importantly, he has a pub named after him, The Bader Arms.



The last newsletter noted the abundance of detailed information from medieval times. I forgot to include one fanciful item. Art historians, studying Michelangelo's works, were able to take advantage of an unusual source of information. His bank account, with balances, deposits and withdrawals, was available for the period 1498 to 1501

It may be hard to believe that the Enron Corporation published a half-inch book entitled, ENRON CODE OF ETHICS 2000. I guess that was written for the little guys.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JULY

Don Cooke Watch e-mail

Chemistry Dept. Friday, July 15, 8:00. Host undecided

English Dept. Tuesday, July 12, 7:30 at Alan's. Directions to Alan's home on other side of this page

Tom Dilliplane Monday nights, generally 8:30 - check e-mail



### WHO'S IN CHARGE?

In recent weeks both Republican and Democratic members of Congress have been trying to track the billions of dollars that have gone into the Iraq effort. Some of the concern have focused on the Halliburton Corporation and its subsidiary, Kellogg, Brown & Root which had been awarded a 2.5 billion dollar contract. Congressional committees had general concerns as well as specific questions about particular expenditures. Since the Pentagon internally audits such contracts, the committee requested a copy of the audit for the Halliburton contract. When the report was received, it was found to be heavily edited and all the sections dealing with their specific questions were blacked out. It turned out that the editing had been done by Halliburton. How come? According to Pentagon counsel, audits could not be released without the permission of the contractor and, therefore Halliburton had the right to edit the material.

As one might imagine, this did not sit well with Congress and Christopher Shays, Republican of Connecticut, threatened to subpoena the unedited documents. But there was no need. An unsolicited, unedited, copy of the audit appeared in the mail of Senator Waxman who made the document public. (Leaking of documents is becoming a weapon in these bitter political wars)

To my mind, there is no way to ever account for the vast amounts of money which have gone into Iraq. How did things get done before the recent establishment of the Iraqi government? Where did the Oil Ministry, for example, get its operating funds? Since there was no functioning banking system, the Oil Ministry got its operating money in cash. Not in Iraqi money but in American \$100 bills. Between May of 2003 and June of 2004, the Federal Reserve shipped 12 billion dollars in \$100 bills to Iraq. I suspect that it might be a bit difficult to trace what happened to the twelve billion dollar gravy train. For example, an office, staffed by American officials, had the responsibility for distributing development grants to Iraqis (of course, in cash). The office is missing seven million dollars, cash, and a criminal investigation is underway.

Source: Mostly, the New York Times. June 22, 2005.

Note: Shipping, moving and distributing 12 billion dollars in \$100 bills raises some interesting logistical problems. It is a lot of cash. I calculate that such a cache would weigh 132 tons, and, if stacked, would reach 83 miles. How is the money handled when it gets to Iraq? You could have one-ton batches, or 90 million dollars. Or maybe 100 pound packages with 4.5 million which could be moved by fork lifts, or even a handy-dandy 10 pound satchel size, which would have only \$450,000

### A FUNNY STORY

So far I have avoided jokes and funny stories in the news letter. But this one from Mike Lakin was just too good to pass up.

From the state where drinking and driving is considered a sport comes a true story from Sunset, La. A routine police patrol is parked outside a local neighborhood bar. Late in the evening, the officer noticed a man leaving the bar so intoxicated he could barely walk. The man stumbled around the parking lot for a few minutes with the officer quietly observing. After what seemed an eternity and trying his keys in five different vehicles, he managed to find his own car, which he fell into. He was there for a few minutes as a number of other patrons left the bar and drove off. Finally, he started the car, switched the wipers on and off (it was a dry night), flicked the hazard flasher, tooted the horn and then switched on the lights. He moved the vehicle forward a few inches, reversed a little and remained stationary for a few more minutes as more patrons left in their vehicles. At last, he pulled out of the parking lot and started driving slowly down the street. The police officer, having patiently waited all this time, now started up his patrol car, put on the flashing lights, promptly pulled the man over and carried out a Breathalyzer test. To his amazement the Breathalyzer indicated no evidence of the man having consumed alcohol at all. Dumbfounded, the officer said, "I think I'll have to ask you to accompany me to the police station, apparently this equipment is broken".



"I doubt it," said the man. "Tonight, I am the designated decoy".

## IRONWOMEN - WHEN THE GOING GETS REALLY TOUGH



Pam Reed

There are very few sports in which women and men compete head-to-head. Dressage, in horse shows, is one that comes to mind and there must be others.

One such sport is the ultramarathon, 50, 100, 150 miles or more. Often, half the field in these races are women and usually a higher percentage of women finish than men.

One of the outstanding ultramarathoners is Pam Reed who is 44 years old, stands five feet three and weighs in at 100 pounds. She twice won the 135 mile Badwater Ultramarathon held in Death Valley, California. She also holds the record for non-stop running. She ran 300 miles in three days, eight hours. The record for men is 262 miles. It seems to me that just staying awake for three days is hard enough. The medical people believe that the reason women do so well in such sports is that they can withstand pain better than men.

It just happened to occur to me that the Iditarod Dog Sled Race is another event in which women compete well against men. Susan Butcher won x times. This race is another example of a grueling effort that pushes the mind and body to its limit. Maybe, when the going gets really tough, ironwomen do better than ironmen.

## REDEFINING THE "PERFECT GAME"



Katie Brownell

Here is another story of athletes on the distaff side. It is about an eleven year old Little Leaguer, Katie Brownell who plays for Oakfield, a small town between Buffalo and Rochester. She is the only girl playing in the league and has been playing on boys teams since she was nine-years old. Last month, she pitched a perfect game, but with an added twist - she struck out every batter. The best anyone did against her was getting as far as two balls and two strikes. Katie is also pretty good at the plate - she batted .714 for the first three games. The "perfect game" has still one more step to go - every pitch a strike.

Did you ever wonder where the word distaff, meaning the domain of women, comes from? The distaff is a device which holds the material being spun on a spinning wheel.

## SOME THINGS ARE HARD TO EXPLAIN



If I were to come across this table at a flea market, I would give it a second look because it is, to my eye, particularly ugly. Shows you how much I know - It was designed by Carlo Mollino in 1948 and sold at Christies for 3.82 million dollars. I still think it is ugly.



The game of poker has arrived. The venerable New York Times now has a weekly column on poker. It is published in the Saturday edition, in the sports section. It can be seen on line at <[nytimes.com/pokerjournal](http://nytimes.com/pokerjournal)>



## **POKER SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST**

Don Cooke Decided week by week. Watch e-mail

Chemistry Dept. Friday, August 5, 8:00, at Fred's

English Dept. Thursday, August 18, at Mike's

Tom Dilliplane Monday nights, generally 8:30 - check e-mail

### **ONE PICTURE IS WORTH MORE THAN TEN THOUSAND WORDS**

Chinese Proverb



This picture was taken at a suburban train station, at homecoming time in the early nineteen fifties. It illustrates some of the great changes in our society in the past fifty years. There are about 70 people in the photograph. Of these, sixty can be seen well enough in an enlargement, to compile some information. There are only three women and not a black face that I can identify. Only six are hatless, with all the others wearing fedora hats. There was a single guy without a tie, (but one with a bow tie). All fifty-seven men wore fancy overcoats - not a parka or a sweater in the crowd.

I am not sure why I find the scene so interesting - it seems to convey a lot of information about other times. It is certainly true that, at the time, all men wore hats, mostly fedoras. There are those who believe that the decline in men wearing hats resulted from the fact that President Kennedy, was hatless when he gave his inaugural address in 1961 on a bitterly cold day. (For a time in my youth, I wore a derby - very dashing).

What about the name "fedora" for a man's hat? It is a Russian woman's name. In 1882 Sarah Bernhart played the title role in the play *Fedora*. The felt hat that she wore inspired a fashion trend for both men and women.

### **ITS NOT OVER TILL ITS OVER**

In 1968, Don Drysdale was headed for new pitching records. As of May 31, he had pitched four consecutive shutouts and 40 scoreless innings. But this day, against the Giants, he was in trouble. The Giants were scoreless for eight innings. But, in the bottom of the ninth, the bases were loaded with no outs. Dick Dietz was the batter and the count was 2 - 2. The next pitch hit Dietz in the elbow. The runners started to advance and the home crowd groaned at the end of the streak. But wait! The umpire signaled, "Ball Three".

The rule book says that the base is disallowed if the batter does not make an effort to avoid being hit, and umpire Wendelstadt had so decided. The Giants protested vigorously, but to no avail, and Dietz returned to the plate with the count 3 - 2. He popped up and the next two batters were easy outs. So Drysdale extended his streak to 5 consecutive scoreless games and 49 scoreless innings. He ended with six scoreless games, which still stands, and 58 innings which was broken by Orel Hershisser with 59 in 1988. Such a call can be difficult. The average pitch lasts 0.6 seconds, and the umpire is watching the ball not the batter. I came across a source who believes that this incident, 37 years ago, was the last time such a ruling was invoked.

### **THE DAY THE LION ROARED**

In the mid-nineteen forties, collegiate football was dominated by a powerful Army team. They were ranked number one in 1944 and 1945, number two in 1946 (second to Notre Dame, with whom they had played a scoreless tie). In those three years the team was undefeated and scored 1188 points to their opponents 161. The first four games of the 1947 brought their undefeated string to 32 games and had yet to be scored upon. The streak ended on October 25, 1947 with their fifth game. And which team brought down the vaunted cadets? Was it Notre Dame, Southern Cal, Michigan, Oklahoma or Ohio St?



If you did venture a guess you probably got it wrong, unless the heading of the story gave it away. The team that ended that great Army streak was none other than Columbia. A monumental upset. Army went into the fourth quarter leading 20-7. The missed extra point did not seem important. But Bill Swiacki made a diving catch in the end zone and not long after, Lou Kusserow scored from the two-yard line. Yabonski made both extra points for a 21-20 victory.



Program  
Army-Navy 1946

About a year earlier, Army was involved in a game which came within three yards of what might have been the greatest upset in sports history. It was the Army - Navy game of 1946. I am aware of it because I listened to it on the radio and it was a doozy. To say Army was the favorite is a gross understatement. Army was undefeated in three years while Navy had lost their last seven games. Army was ranked #2, had four returning first-team All Americans and were a twenty-eight point favorite. The game opened as expected with Army scoring on three of its first four possessions and was ahead 21-6 at the half. But Navy came alive in the second half, scoring two touchdowns and making eleven first downs to Army's two. With five minutes to go, the score was Army 21, Navy 18 with Navy getting the ball deep in Army territory on the 33 yard line.

A sustained drive brought the Middies to a first down on the three yard line with 90 seconds on the clock. (It should be noted that in an Army-Navy game it would be unthinkable to go for a three pointer for a tie). Navy rushed twice and gained nothing. They were then penalized five yards for delay of game which brought the ball to the eight. The third down gained three yards. But the cruel clock dashed Navy's hope for a spectacular victory. At Annapolis, the 1946 team is still rated one of the best.

PS As a boy I sold chrysanthemums at the Army-Navy games which were played in Philadelphia.

## YOU NEVER KNOW

It is difficult to decide which major league ballplayer had the best day in his first game. But one who would be near the top of the list was Johnnie Paciorek who was an 18 year-old rookie with Houston. He started his first game on September 29, 1963, the last day of the season. Even in his wildest dreams he could not have imagined how well that day would go. He was at bat five times, got three hits and two walks, drove in four runs and scored three, in a 13-4 rout of the Mets. He also made two running catches. After his first hit, the crowd got into it and cheered him each time he came to the plate. In his last at-bat he was given a standing ovation and his stellar performance made the sports pages throughout the country. He must have left the field that day as one exuberant young man. But he had no way of knowing that it was the only game he would ever play. He had a bad back which got worse over the winter and he never played a second game. As might be expected, Johnnie's day got a big play in the Houston Post. Facetiously, they awarded him the batting title for the year with his 1.000 average. But the article ended on an unfortunately prophetic note, "The rest of his career may be an anticlimax".

## THE ART OF CAMOUFLAGE



Here is a great example of the art of camouflage. It is a German fighter plane in North Africa in 1942.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER

Don Cooke Decided week by week. Watch e-mail

**A Special Game on September 3  
Chris plans to be here**

Chemistry Dept. To be decided

English Dept. To be decided

Tom Dilliplane Monday nights, generally 8:30 - check e-mail



## Scherherazada and the specified ace



As you may remember, Scherherazada was the leading character in Arabian Nights. The Sultan of Schahriah, having discovered the infidelity of his Sultana, resolved to have a new wife every night and have her strangled at daybreak. Scherherazada, the daughter of the Grand Vizor, dismayed at the slaughter of innocent young women, decided to intervene. She asked to become the wife of the Sultan. As she planned, each night she so amused his Highness that he kept postponing the execution. After a thousand and one nights, he revoked his decree and bestowed his affection on Scherherazada. Here is a type of tale with which she might have enthralled her husband.

Tonight, my exalted highness, says Scherherazada, I will tell you about a paradox. Let me deal you five cards. Now, if one of those cards happens to be an ace, there is 12% chance that those five cards will contain another ace. So what, says the Sultan. That is not a paradox, it's a simple statistical problem that any schoolboy could solve. But, responded Scherherazada, you did not let me finish. If you specify that the ace is the ace of spades the chances of another ace is no longer 12% it is almost doubled to 22%. That makes no sense to me, said the Sultan. I do not see how the ace of spades is different from the other aces. It is not, replied Scherherazada, it is the specifying of the suit of the ace that almost doubles the chances of a second ace. You are going to have to explain that to me, said the Sultan.

Well, said Scherherazada, the calculations are a bit tedious so I will illustrate the point with a simple deck of four cards, the ace of spades, the ace of hearts, the deuce of spades and the deuce of hearts. Now we will deal a two-card hand from this small deck. Neglecting order, there are six possible combinations of two cards, as follows:



There are five combinations of hands with an ace of unspecified suit. One of these has a second ace so the chances of having a second ace are one in five or 20%. However, if it is known that the ace is a heart, the number of possible combinations is reduced as shown below:



Once the ace is specified as a heart, there are only three possible combinations, one of which has a second ace, so the chances of a second ace are increased from 20% to 33%.

By my beard, you never fail to amaze me.

For anyone interested in the calculations for a 52-card deck they can be found in *THE THEORY OF GAMBLING AND STATISTICAL LOGIC*, by R. A. Epstein, 1967, p 200.



## VOYAGER ONE



The spacecraft Voyager One was launched in September, 1977 to explore Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus. When this mission was accomplished, the system was reprogrammed to explore the outer reaches of the solar system. Twenty-eight years later, it is still functioning and transmitting data back to earth. It is 14 billion miles away and leaving the solar system - headed for who knows where. It is the furthestmost man made object and is moving at a speed of eleven miles a second. At this speed, relativity begins to have an effect and the clock aboard the spacecraft is seventeen seconds behind its counterpart on earth. It has moved back in time. When it was launched, it had a state-of-the-art computer - all 80 kilobytes. Its transmitter is a mere 23 watts but the receiver on earth is a one-hundred foot dish. When mission control sends a signal, it uses 10,000 watts just to make sure it gets the message. It takes about 15 hours for a signal to reach Voyager. It is expected that the mission has another 15 years because it has a Plutonium battery, powered by radioactive decay. Such a battery is one reason the government went back into producing Plutonium.

## SPIN

The word "spin" has taken on a new context - "To present information in a way meant to influence public opinion". It is easy to see how this usage developed. "Spin" is associated with "twist" and "fabricate". There is also the phrase, "spin a tale".

Here is a fine example from recent politics. When the Iraqi group developing a constitution for their country, could not reach agreement as the deadline approached, they decided to request a three-day extension. Lest anyone draw negative implications from this course of events, Condelleeza Rice had this to say. "The delay indicated considerable momentum toward completion of the task". It seems to be a stretch to say that the "delay" indicates "considerable momentum".

## A REALLY BAD BEAT

It happened at the 1979 Word Series of Poker, which was the first of the series won by an amateur, Ken Fowler. The final table consisted of Fowler and seven first-class poker players such as Bobby Huff, Johnny Moss and Bobby Baldwin. Huff and Fowler were the final two players. In what was to be the penultimate hand, Huff had \$350,000 with a Q, 6, and Fowler \$200,000, with a J, K. The flop came J, O, X. Huff's pair of queens put Fowler all in with a bet of \$200,00. The turn was a rag and Fowler then needed a Jack or a King to survive. The river brought the king. In the final hand, Huff had A, A and Fowler 6, 7 off-suit. Fowler bet and Huff made a big raise which Fowler called (with a 6, 7 off-suit?). The flop was J, 3, 5 and Huff went all in. Fowler called with an inside straight shot. A four on the turn made the straight. After the victory Fowler disappeared from the world of poker.



## GETTING OLD



It is well known that the elderly, along with other difficulties, have short term memory problems. It is, of course, not limited to old guys, and many of you are probably noticing a few lapses in this area of human endeavor. But you may not realize how short, "short" can be.

For years I have always made myself a Martini before dinner. The recipe is easy - pour a shot of gin into a mixer, add a bit of vermouth and some cracked ice, shake, and pour into a proper glass with an olive. (Some people like a twist of lemon instead of an olive, but that is a newfangled idea). But, a while back a problem developed. I would pour the gin - then I puzzled over whether I had or had not added the vermouth. A short term memory problem involving only a few seconds. After a few wrong guesses, I developed a procedure which did not depend on my memory. When you get old you improvise. I sometimes wonder how I survive in the poker games - but I am ahead for the year.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

Don Cooke I Have family things on the 8th and 29. Beezer has a tournament on the 15. Hopefully, 1st & 22.

Chemistry To be decided

English To be decided

Beezer (Steve Clapp), is having a no-limit hold em tournament on Saturday October 15, 2:00, \$60 buy-in. Contact <bbclapp@yahoo.com> for details.

### ASK THE EXPERTS

If you want to know about the future - ask the experts. Here are some examples:

"I think there is a market for maybe five computers". Thomas Watson, Chairman of IBM, 1943

"There is no reason that anyone would want a computer in their home." Ken Olson, President, Chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corporation 1977.

"Six hundred and forty kilobytes (of memory) ought to be enough for anyone". Bill Gates 1981

"I have traveled the length and breath of this country and talked to the best people, and I can assure you data processing is a fad that won't last a year". The editor in charge of business books, Prentice Hall, 1957

"Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible". Lord Kelvin, President of the Royal Society 1895

"The concept is interesting and well-formed, but in order to earn better than a 'C', the idea must be feasible." A Yale University management professor in response to Fred Smith's paper proposing overnight delivery service. (Smith went on to found Federal Express). It is worth noting that the world's seventh largest airline is Federal Express. (I would have agreed with the professor.)

"We don't like the sound, and guitar music is on the way out". Decca Recording Company, rejecting the Beatles, 1962

"Who the hell wants to hear actors talk"? H. M. Warner, Warner Brothers, 1927

"Can't act, can't sing, balding, can dance a little". A Paramount executive's summary after Fred Astaire's first tryout.

"Professor Goddard does not know the relation between action and reaction and the need to have something better than a vacuum against which to react. He seems to lack the basic knowledge ladled out daily in high schools". A New York Times editorial about Robert Goddard's rocketwork, 1921

"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us". Western Union internal memo, 1876.

"Everything that can be invented has been invented". Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, U. S. Patent Office 1899

"Louis Pasteur's theory of germs is ridiculous fiction". Pierre Pachet, Professor of Physiology, Toulouse.

"Airplanes are an interesting toys, but of no military value". Ferdinand Foch, Professor of Strategy, Ecole Supérieure de Guerre. Foch would later command the Allied Armies in World War I.



The World Serie





## † A RED LETTER DAY †

A special day. Did you ever wonder about the origin of the term? It goes way back to the time when monks produced the manuscripts of the day. It was customary, when, to emphasize something of importance, red ink was used so that it would stand out against the black lettering. When the monks first produced calendars, they continued the practice, and used red ink to note holydays and the birthdays of saints.



The coronation of Charlemagne 800

This bit reminds me of something which I consider to be eventful in my life. Back about 35 years ago, I spent a month in Romania under the auspices of the State Department. We were wined, dined and shown around. One of the visits was to the national rare book collection. The curator brought us to a vault which contained their prize possession, the bible that Pope Leo III presented to Charlemagne on the occasion of his coronation as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire on Christmas Day in the year 800. He proceeded to put it in my hands. I was overwhelmed. I was also amazed at the clarity and brightness of the colors after 1200 years. It is interesting to note that most the monks who copied those manuscripts were illiterate - they were like ancient Xerox machines.

The derivations of words sometimes have interesting twists. "Symposium" is one that I like. The prefix, "sym", is conventional. It come from the Latin "sin", meaning "together", as in symphony, or synonym. But the "posium" is unexpected. It derives from "potare" to drink, as in potion or potable. Originally, the word meant "drinking party". Then it evolved into more like "convivial meeting for conversation", then, to it's present meaning. Considering some of the symposia I have attended, there is still a good bit of the original meaning in the present word. Source: The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology.

## BASEBALL ODDS AND ENDS

In the history of baseball, only seven players managed to get four hits in their first game. Casey Stengle was one, in 1912 playing for the Dodgers. Unexpectedly, three of the seven were pitchers. One of these pitchers deserves special recognition. Russ Van Atta in his first game as a Yankee in 1936, not only got four hits, but he pitched a shutout, winning 1-0.

Then there is pitcher Milt Gasten of the Washington Senators, who on July 10, 1928, had a very bad day on the mound, giving up fourteen hits. But there was an upside - he managed a shutout, winning 9 - 0. This "feat" tied a record which had stood since 1913- another team had 14 hits without scoring a run.



## JUST TO BE SURE

The city of Chico, California, has a city ordinance which carries a \$500 fine for anyone detonating a nuclear device within the city limits.



## Poker schedule for November

**Don Cooke** Saturdays, November 5 & 19. I have family things on the 12th and 26. Maybe Alan or AJ will pick up the slack.

**Chemistry** Friday, November 11, 8:00 at Milt's

**English** To be decided

Alan and AJ have occasional games- watch the internet

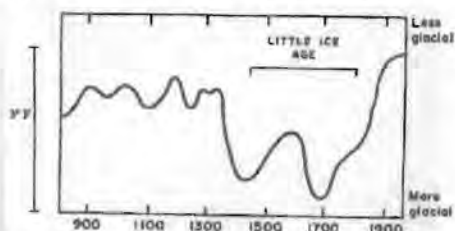
### THE FUTURE OF MAN - ON A KNIFEDGE



The eruption of the volcano Krakatoa in Indonesia in 1883 is well known and well documented. News spread around the world in hours by telegraph. But there was an earlier eruption, Tambora, also in Indonesia, in 1815. It was a far more powerful and devastating explosion (by a factor of ten) but the news did not reach the London Times until seven months later.

Tambora ejected 150 million tons of ash into the atmosphere. The ash reduced the amount of solar energy reaching the earth and resulted in a "year without a summer" in 1816. In New England, it snowed every month of the year. On June 6, three feet of snow covered Quebec and the same storm dumped six inches on New England which experienced hard frosts in August. The effect of the cold weather on crops was catastrophic. Livestock were slaughtered because of a lack of fodder to feed them. Europe was worse off. Famine and related diseases killed sixty-five thousand in Ireland and an estimated 200,000 succumbed on the Continent.

What is frightening is that the average annual temperature for 1816 only declined 1.5° F. Temperature changes that seem insignificant can have profound effects. This fact is illustrated by the following graph which plots average annual global temperatures for the thousand year period from 900 to 1900 A.D.



The graph shows a cold period, 1350 to 1850, which is known as "the little ice age", a time of increasing glaciation, shorter growing seasons and severe winters. As can be seen from the plot, this cold period resulted from a global annual temperature decrease of less than 2° F.

- You may wonder how we could possibly know the average annual temperature for the year 900 A.D. Oxygen atoms exist mainly in two forms (isotopes) which are identical, except that one is slightly heavier. So when water evaporates, the heavier atoms evaporate more slowly and the ratio of the two atoms in the water vapor depends on the temperature at which it was evaporated. Where do you find water from the year 900? In the annual layer labeled 900 A.D. of an ice-core from the Greenland ice cap. Snow never melts in Greenland so every annual snowfall is compressed into layers going back about 100,000 years. Or one can use the isotope ratios of the debris accumulated in annual layers of sediment on the bottom of the sea for the same purpose.

The last ice age ended a mere 12,000 years ago. All of Canada and the northern third of the United States were covered by a sheet of ice over a mile thick. Almost all of Europe was covered. Twelve thousand years ago the planet was sparsely populated and given the slow rate





of advance, the people just migrated ahead of the leading edge with little disruption. Man would probably survive a similar event these days, but the physical and cultural dislocations are unimaginable. Nothing in Man's arsenal, at present or what can be imagined for the future, could put a dent in the advancing ice. Can you imagine a wall of ice, a mile high, approaching the skyscrapers of New York, long ago deserted by its population?

Will there be other ice ages? It is believed that the ice ages are caused by minor aberrations in the orbit of the Earth such as precession and tilt. They have been cyclical with the interglacials, the warmer periods between the ages, being as short as 8000 years. (We are now at year 12,000). But the fact is, that we just do not know. And in the past, Earth has had vastly different periods, the reasons for which are at best speculative. Dinosaurs walked lush jungles far above the Arctic Circle. And three times in the past 600,000 years, the temperature of the Earth declined by as much as 80 degrees F. The oceans froze to a depth of a mile with even the equatorial seas covered with ice. Somehow, some bacteria survived, as well as some creatures in the deep oceans. For most of its existence, the earth has been ice-free. If the ice were to melt, the oceans would rise by 200 feet which would inundate most of the major cities.

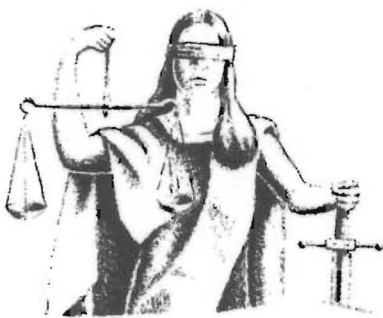
Scientists once believed that climate changes occurred gradually over time. But when the Greenland ice cores were first analyzed they were in for a surprise. Some changes happened in far shorter times than they could have imagined. For example, in one ten-year period, the average annual global temperature changed by 15 degrees F. That event happened a long time ago, but the consequences of such an event today are difficult to imagine.

In the known history of the Earth, there have been five cataclysmic events in which 60 to 95% living species have been annihilated. Civilized man has been around for a few thousand years, at a time when the climate has been unusually benign.

In the overall scheme of things, the power of nature makes Man seem insignificant, regardless of what we may think. It reminds me of a little story I read as a child, and still remember. It goes like this: If the earth were to disappear as a fiery ball, some child on a distance orb would delightfully exclaim, "Look at the pretty falling star".

Sources: Many, with inspiration from Bill Bryson's *A Short History of Nearly Everything*.

## THE LAW IS AN ASS, AN IDIOT - DICKINS



Isidore Zimmerman was convicted of murder in New York in 1937, spent 9 months on death row, and 24 years in prison for a murder he did not commit. After his release, he spent the next 20 years seeking redress from the State of New York. He was finally awarded one million dollars in damages - and died, at the age of 66, four months later.

The reason it took so long is, that, in such a case, the state would award damages only through a special act of the legislature.

It was widely recognized that the law had treated Zimmerman unjustly and, as a result, the law was changed to allow those unjustly imprisoned to seek damages. But the change was not wholehearted. The fact that the prosecutor and a judge decide that the conviction was in error, is not sufficient evidence to settle the suit. The individual must prove innocence. A case in point is Barry Gibbs, who was convicted in 1984 on tainted evidence manufactured by a corrupt detective and spent 19 years in prison. The district attorney and a judge agreed to his release. But that is not sufficient to allow an award of compensation. He now has to prove he is innocent. After many years and many dollars, he might get something.

Source Joyce Matters, New York Times, 10/10/05



# Poker Schedule for December

Don Cooke Saturdays, December 3 & 17 10th uncertain  
Not 24 & 31 - Christmas and New Year 's Eve

Chemistry Friday, December 9, 8:00 at Ben's

English Wednesday, December 7, 7:30 at Don's

AJ and Alan Occasional games - watch the internet

## ANCIENT THINKERS

I have always been impressed by the intellectual ability of the ancients. The speed of light is known with exquisite precision (299,792,458 kilometers per second). Such precision is possible because of the array of scientific instruments that can measure a millionth of a millionth of a second and can chop up a beam of light to only a few inches long. But back in 1675, Ole Roemer was able to calculate the speed of light as 220,000 kilometers a second. He did it by observation and logic, without an experiment. How would you scientists out there set out to come up with such a number? Perhaps it is not a fair question because Roemer did not set out to establish the speed of light. As is so often the case in science, he stumbled into it. He was interested in the moons of Jupiter, particularly Io. He noted that once Io disappeared behind the planet, it reappeared from the eclipse about 42.5 hours later. But then a critical observation. He discovered that the length of the eclipse changed with the seasons on earth. Presuming that the earthly seasons had no effect on the moons of Jupiter, he deduced that the changes in the length of eclipse occurred because the distance between the earth and Jupiter changed with the seasons with the light traveling a shorter or a longer path. The next step gave him the answer. The 22 minute difference between the shortest time for an eclipse and the longest time was the time necessary for light to cross the diameter of the orbit of the earth. The diameter was known, so he knew the distance and the time - ergo, velocity. The largest error in his calculation was the error in the orbit of the earth.

Note that the distance to Jupiter is not a factor. Beautiful!



Stonehenge was constructed about 2000 BC. Fifty ton stones were transported twenty miles

## THE ENEMY WITHIN

There is a parasite, *Toxoplasma gondii* that thrives in the brains of rats. It only has one effect on the rat, but an important one. It turns the rat's instinctive aversion to cat smell around and now they are attracted to it rather than repelled. That is hard on the rat but necessary for the parasite. It can only reproduce inside a cat host. But, after reproduction, how does it get back to its usual host, the rat? Rats eat the excrement of cats.



Parasites have the ability to remarkably alter a function of a host to fit their own survival needs. For example, rabies is a parasitic virus which, to survive, must be passed on to another host. It accomplishes this by greatly increasing the aggressiveness of the host, resulting in frenzied attacks. The saliva from the bites, which is in greatly increased quantities, passes the virus on. How the virus manages to change a docile canine into a mad dog seems to be unknown. Rabies is from the Latin word, *rabidus*, rage. Source Monkeyluv by Robert Sapolsky, 2005

## WORD ORIGINS

Yahoo - A crass, boorish or stupid person

I presumed that this was of recent origin. But no, the word goes back to 1726 with the publishing of *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift. In his fourth voyage, Gulliver came across a race of brutish humanlike creatures. Swift named them Yahoos.



## **I OBJECT ! ENOUGH IS ENOUGH !**

I object to the nomination of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court. My objection has little to do with the man. My problem has to do with the fact that he was a Princeton undergraduate who went on to Yale Law School. If appointed, eight of the nine justices will have Ivy League degrees. The eight Ivy League schools have about 50,000 undergraduates which represents only 0.4 percent of the 15 million undergraduates in the country.

The nine justices would have a combined total of 18 academic degrees, twelve Ivies. Seven from Harvard, three from Yale, two from Stanford, and one each from Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Georgetown, Holy Cross, Northwestern and Princeton. As for the law school they attended, five went Harvard, three to Yale and one each to Northwestern and Columbia (Ginsburg went to Harvard and Columbia).

The situation is getting worse. In 1970, the nine justices had a total of seventeen degrees of which only seven were Ivies. Note that there were only seventeen. Justice Whittaker never went to college. In 1923, he went directly from high school to law school and was admitted to the bar while still in law school. His career on the Supreme Court was undistinguished.

I do not believe that it is in the best interest of the country for a membership of nine to have five from Harvard Law and three from Yale Law. And too, Alito would make eight males and one minority (who never votes like a minority).



Does Harvard deserve such an exalted reputation? Yes and no. As to academic quality, the institution is indistinguishable from six or eight other U. S. universities. But they have excelled in building and maintaining an image. It all goes back to the early 1920s when those who ranked highest on the admission examination were selected. That was all well and good when those admitted came from the private prep schools of New England. But when the bright Jewish lads from the Boston public schools began making significant inroads and reached an enrollment of 20%, it was felt by the powers that be, that the image of Harvard was being threatened. The institution's response to its "Jewish Problem" led to the almost complete elimination of Jewish students and its present stature. More about this in a future newsletter.

### **SOUND CANNONS**

When pirates attacked a cruise ship off the coast of Somalia last month, the ship responded with a weapon called a Long Range Acoustical Device (LRAD). The device, a disk 33 inches in diameter and about six inches thick, produces a concentrated piercing sound which can be aimed at a group of attackers. At 100 yards the sound can be extremely painful and at 300 yards, the sound level is 105 decibels which is enough to make an attacked have second thoughts about the mission, and an aversion about getting any closer. The instrument also has a warning voice mode which is effective to 500 yards. During the 2004 Republican Convention in New York, the police deployed a LRAD for use in crowd control. They never used it. My guess is that they did not have the guts to try it.

The other night, more in whimsy than anything else, I typed my army serial number (13,127,044) into the Google search engine. I was surprised when I got 27 hits - none dealing with me. The fact that such a large number appears in 27 locations tells you something about the vastness of the Web. A few examples; the federal government awarded Minnesota a grant of \$13,127,044; it is the number of a shipping container, a NASA site notes that 13,127,044 milliseconds had expired at some point in an orbit and the number is related to a batch of Salk vaccine, etc.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY

Don Cooke Saturdays, 7, 21 & 28 at 8:00 Not the 14th

Chemistry **FRIDAY, THE THIRTEENTH 8:00 AT BARRIE'S**

English Thursday, January 26, 7:30 at Lamar's

AJ and Alan Occasional games - watch the internet



OUR SWEET COLLEEN

*This one is longer than I like them to be. I got carried away by the outlandishness of the politics.*

### A BOONDOGGLE INVOLVING MANY BILLIONS

*(A boondoggle is an impractical or useless project wasting time and money).*

*These days, the use of ethanol as an automotive fuel is getting a lot of play in the news and in legislative bodies. Ethanol is presented as a way of lowering our dependence on foreign oil, being more friendly to the environment, and a renewable resource. These are aspects of ethanol which are being used to justify billions of dollars in government aid to the ethanol industry. Unfortunately, none of the claims are true. I am not alone in my belief. Senator John McCain had this to say on the floor of the Senate "Let me repeat for emphasis: ethanol does nothing to decrease fuel consumption; nothing to increase our energy independence, and nothing to improve our air quality". - "I have yet to hear any plausible, substantiated argument in support of ethanol". He might well have been talking to the wall - the fix was already in.*

*The beginning of the story goes back to the oil embargo of the seventies and a search for solutions. The use of ethanol which can be made from corn, among other things, was one idea considered. 1980, the Reagan administration convened a Gasahol Study Group in the Department of Energy, to look at the feasibility of ethanol as a fuel. The Chairman of the group was David Pimentel, a professor at Cornell University. To the surprise of many and the dismay of some, the study concluded that ethanol required more fossil energy to produce than it yielded when used. A real loser. The agency, conscious of the sensitivity of the conclusion, had the study reviewed by 26 scientists, who unanimously approved the findings. But that did not satisfy the critics of the study. The Department of Agriculture, the corn lobby and the ethanol producers vilified Pimentel. Congressmen from the corn states demanded that the General Accounting Office (GAO) investigate the findings. The plan backfired when the GAO endorsed the report as scientifically sound. Ethanol in the United States is produced by a handful of companies with one company, Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), accounting for 47 percent of the total. They had dollar signs in their eyes and dollars in their pockets. Too much was at stake and Pimentel was the barrier. So, to use a modern expression, he was "swift boated". Not only was he wrong, he was outdated, incompetent, had a vested interest and lacked credibility in the scientific community. Truth and facts are no barriers to swift boaters. Pimentel was an advisor to the Nixon White house, served on a dozen Academy committees and is a highly respected scientist.*

*The juggernaut continued on, extolling the merits of ethanol. Even when numerous scientific organizations, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Academy of Science, the White House science and Technology Council and the Sierra Club challenged the environmental claims, they were ignored and the ethanol advocates continued to extol the environmental advantages of ethanol.*

*In 1994 President Clinton became a believer when a contribution of \$350,000 was received. Gore and Kerry were supporters because they needed votes in the farm states.*

*So far, here is what government has given the ethanol industry:*

- \*A three billion dollar annual subsidy of which only a small part goes to the farmers. \$2.80 an acre (\$500 million per year goes to the ADM company);*
- \*A Senate bill, in June 2005, which mandates that the states use 8 billion gallons of methanol by 2012 ( this compares to the 2.1 billion gallons in 2002);*



- An unprecedented liability protection against legal redress if ethanol harms the environment or public health:
- A 54 cent a gallon tariff on imported ethanol.

With so much money going to ADM, it might be fair to ask about the company. Three of its executives went to jail for collusion with competitors. The company was fined \$100 million for price fixing and they put \$100 in reserve for legal suits.

What about the merits? Ethanol is touted as a renewable resource. Nonsense - it takes more than a gallon of fossil fuel to make a gallon of ethanol. And cropland to grow the corn at that level is not renewable. The production of 8 billion gallons of ethanol would require 40,000 square miles, about the area of Ohio.

As for the environment, corn is a high fertilizer, high pesticide crop both of which wind up as pollutants. And there is 100 billion gallons of waste water which is needed to produce the 8 billion gallons. How is that to be handled? Further, it takes a lot of fossil fuel to produce corn.

There is also a question of price - without the subsidies, it costs (2005) \$7.12 to produce a gallon of ethanol versus \$1.26 cents for gasoline.

All of this illustrates to me that if you have enough money, you can bypass scientific arguments. But you cannot bypass science. I venture a guess that the laws will be passed, but the United States will never produce 8 billion gallons of ethanol a year.

Source: It all started with an article in the Ithaca Journal based on a paper by Professor David Pimentel. It noted that it took more energy to produce a gallon of ethanol than the ethanol yields. That sounded interesting so I got a copy of the paper from Dave Then to the web. Many of the concepts here are from Pimentel's papers. I thank Dave for his help.

## SPELLING ACCORDING TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND



When you first look at this it seems that my computer developed a hiccup. Stick with it for a few seconds and you will find that you can read it easily, and much easier the second time.

I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacilty uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid! Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch taem at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. Thle rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Such a cdonition is arppoatiely cllaed Typoglycemia.

Anzamig huh? Yaeh, and yuo awlyas thought slpeling was ipmorantt. Thanks to Ken Beck for this one.

## DR. JECKYL AND MRS. HYDE

In the House of Representatives it is customary to allow a newly elected member to give a one-minute maiden speech. On September 6, 2005, Jean Schmidt, from Ohio, in happy contrast to the present political rancor, gave the following soothing words. "Honorable people can certainly agree to disagree. However, here today I accept a second oath. I pledge to walk in the shoes of my colleagues and refrain from name calling or questioning of character. It is easy to quickly sink to the lowest form of political debate --- this great house pays a price". A month later a hostile debate raged when John Murtha, a decorated Vietnam war hero with thirty-seven years in the Marine Corps, proposed that our troops be withdrawn from Iraq, as soon as possible, perhaps six months. The same Jean Schmidt, given one-minute, did this bit of angry questioning of character. She noted that she had received a call from a Marine officer. He asked me to send Congress a message, "Stay the course". He also asked me to give Congressman Murtha a message, "Cowards cut and run, Marines don't". I feel kinda sorry for her to blow it so badly, so early on. Source: New Yorker, 12/05/05

## A BIG TICKET ITEM

How much oil does the country use in a year? The answer is 7.3 billion barrels (2004). That may not mean much to you. But imagine a tank with a base the size of a football field and 2500 feet tall - almost a half mile. That would contain 20 million barrels - an average day's supply.



## Poker Schedule for February

Don Cooke Saturdays, 4, 11 & 28 at 8:00 - Not 18th

Chemistry Friday, February 10, 8:00 at Mike's

English At Lamar's - date unknown

**NEW** Chris Diemand Thursdays February 2 & 16 8:30 - 1:00 \$4/\$8

Chris lives at 422 Troy Rd. A grey contemporary  
between Nelson Rd and Muzzy Rd - closer to Nelson



**Punxsutawney Phil**

### IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE BUT TRUE

Joe is a bit worried. His longtime girlfriend, Suzy, seems a little cool and he worries that she may be seeing someone else. He would love to know. There are probably some sleazy characters whom he could hire to tap her phone, but he does not have a clue to go about it. Not to worry a friend tells him. He can buy Suzy's telephone record for the past month. There are a lot of web sites that provide this service. Two of them are, <locatecall.com> and <celltolls.com>. (both of them were active a couple of weeks ago). All you need is Suzy's telephone number and a credit card. For about \$100 you will be supplied, within 24 hours, via e-mail, a record of all the telephone numbers that Suzy called within the past 30 days. (If you want to make doubly sure you can get the records for her home phone and cell phone). For an extra fee, you can get the name and address of the listing for each number she called, the date and time of the call and it's duration.

The service, known as pretexting, has been around for decades, but it's availability not generally known until the Washington Post ran a story on it six months ago. Both of the sites noted above say that their information cannot be used in a legal context. No wonder, I suspect that they surely do not want their material to surface in a court of law. Telephone carriers are not involved, except to the extent that their data is not well protected.

### WHY DOES A ZEBRA HAVE STRIPES?



Of course no one knows the answer and no one has asked a zebra. They would not know even if they could talk. But there is a theory which has some basis in fact and makes sense. When a predator, usually a lion, approaches, the herd stands absolutely still. Then, it explodes going in all directions. The theory is that the mishmash of stripes makes it harder for the lion to focus on one animal. Zebras have another defense mechanism. They graze near wildebeests. They have learned, over time, that the wildebeest is the lion's favorite prey.

### A POKER PROBLEM

This newsletter started with poker stories. But as time went by, I started running low on poker stories and added other items as fillers. Eventually, I pretty much ran out of poker stories making the newsletter as it is today. But I discovered a new poker story using Pokerwiz

You are in a hold'em game. A player ahead of you raises, going all in. You are the last better and everyone else has dropped. Just as you are about to look at your hand, you hear a voice in your ear. "I am the goddess Fortuna, and I don't like that loudmouth dame who went all in. I can tell you that she has a pair of black sixes. You tell me what hand you would like to play against her".

What would you choose? Obviously, I would not be writing this if the best hand were to be a pair of aces. Think about it before going to the next page



The answer is a pair of red sevens, which, head-to-head, will win 80.4 % of the time. The choice must be a pair. AK suited in hearts wins only 48 %; A6 hearts wins 33 %; 67 hearts is 38 %. The only non-pair which I have found that is above 50 % is TJ of hearts at 51 %. But the pair of sevens is hardly different from aces which wins 79.8 %. But the small difference is significant with 100,000 deals. One factor is that the sevens lower the number of straights the pair of sixes can make. The fact is that any pair above six will win the same 80 % of the time. Why doesn't the ace exert more influence? I think that I know most of the answer. If the highest winning hand is one pair, the sixes can never win and any pair higher than sixes would always win. This is also true for two pair. Winning hands with only one or two pair make up 75 % ( of the 80 % winning hands) In these cases, any pair above six is just as good as aces.

There is an interesting corollary Whenever you have two different pairs, head to head, the higher pair wins 80%  $\pm$ 1% of the time I have not tried this on all 169 combinations but I did ten very different deals such as AA/22 AA/KK 88/99 TT/JJ 66/99 and they all came out 80% Maybe this is well known: Does anyone know if it is well known?

## CELESTIAL MAGIC - ACTION AT A DISTANCE



In 1935, Einstein, along with two colleagues, Podolsky and Rosen published a famous paper related to a remarkable quantum effect known as the EPR Paradox. The theory predicted that if two particles interact and then become widely separated, what happens to one has an instantaneous effect on the other. They are entangled. The paradox lies in the question as to how can a change in the status of one particle have an effect on the other which is far removed? And the effect is instantaneous, faster than the speed of light. Einstein could think of no possible mechanism by which information could be transferred from one particle to another - action at a distance. He felt that it was too "spooky", and thus came to the conclusion that quantum theory must be incomplete.

However, years later, what Einstein believed to be impossible, was experimentally verified. Many experiments have shown that entangled particles do interact. One of the papers demonstrated instantaneous interaction at a distance of seven miles. (Fiber optics were used). Seven miles is not the limit - it is believed the effect is operational over light years of distance. At the present state of our knowledge, the effect seems magical. Explanations have been proposed, but none have much acceptance.

In 1930 Einstein had this to say, "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious".

He also had a lighter side: "Gravity can not be blamed for people falling in love", and, "I am no Einstein"

Thanks to Al Silverman for his help on this one.

## A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Recently, Charles Kennedy, leader of the British Liberal Democrats, resigned, citing alcohol abuse. The British leadership has few qualms about drinking, but a gentleman is supposed to be able to hold his liquor, which Kennedy did not do very well. The upper echelons of British politics has always had problems with old John Barleycorn and young pretty women. It is worth noting that, technically, it is impossible to be drunk in the chamber of Parliament. The subject is taboo. In 1945, a resolution was passed which essentially barred discussion of any member's sobriety

Drink was a problem for George Brown, Labour Foreign Secretary, in the 1960's. The story is told that at a reception in the British Embassy in Lima in 1960, George was in his cups. When the music started up, he saw a vision in long purple attire. Stumbling on his words, he asked for a dance. It was not to be. The object of his quest replied, "First, you are drunk; second, this is not a waltz, it is the national anthem of Peru; third, I am not a woman, and fourth, I am the Cardinal Archbishop of Lima.



## Poker Schedule for March

Don Cooke Hopefully, Saturdays, 4, 11, 18 & 25, 8:00

Chemistry Friday, March 24, 8:00 at Geoff's

English Thursday March 2, 7:30 at Lamar's

Mark Sullivan Mark has been having a game on  
Wednesdays, 8:30 Watch e-mail

Beware the  
Ides of March



Julius Caesar - Assassinated  
March 15, 44 BC

### HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN



In 1955, General Motors was the largest and most prestigious corporation in the world. While there were a dozen other automobile companies (most of you guys never heard of a car called a LaSalle or Nash), half the vehicles on the road were manufactured by GM. The company was so important that Charles Wilson, in testimony before Congress, was able to brag, "What is good for General Motors is good for America."

Today (1904), Harley Davidson Inc. is more valuable than General Motors. One measure of the value of a company is how much it would cost to buy all its stock. For Harley Davidson this would be \$15 billion and for General Motors \$12 billion.

Budweiser is much more valuable at \$32 billion, but these are little companies compared to the giants such as General Electric, with a net worth of \$360 billion and revenues of \$160 billion. With these numbers GE is the biggest company on earth. But Bill Gates, with Microsoft, is catching up with \$296 billion. In 2001 General Motors ranked 76th in the nation behind Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Disney and McDonalds. But the value of the corporation has dropped dramatically in the past few years and I would guess that it does not rank in the top one hundred, nor does Ford. In comparison, Toyota is worth \$180 billion, 15 times more than GM.

It is not that GM can't sell cars. In 2004, it ranked third behind Wal-Mart and Exxon with \$194 billion in sales. But the profit margin was a dismal 1.4% (\$2.8 billion) and, in 2005, there was no profit at all, but a loss of \$8.6 billion. Further, the corporation has a crushing debt of \$286 billion. In 2005, Exxon had a profit of \$36 billion (which they are desperately trying to explain). This one-year profit is enough to buy both GM and Ford with \$8 billion in change. General Motors is an American industrial icon. Bankruptcy is almost inconceivable, but the outlook isn't brilliant.

### THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE

Last month's newsletter left poor Joe worried that his girlfriend, Suzy, was seeing another guy. On the advice of a friend he had gotten a listing of Suzy's telephone calls for January and discovered that she had made quite a few calls, some pretty long, to a telephone listed under Lou Lothario whose address was 222 North Second Street. Joe wondered that maybe they had a business deal but he was concerned they were seeing each other, perhaps at his home. He again talked to his friend. He speculated that he could follow Suzy, but that seemed kind of gross. His friend mentioned that if he did not want to do that, there were services available that would follow the location of her cell phone. He decided to think about it.

But it all ended happily. Joe and Suzy had a date a few nights later and Suzy came up with this. "I forgot to tell you, an old college roommate, Betsy Lothario, just move to Ithaca with her husband Lou, and I am helping them get settled. You will have to meet them". Whew!

As of 2005, all cell phones are required to have a global positioning chip in their circuitry. The stated reason for the regulation is the problem of locating a 911 caller, but I suspect that the CIA had some input in the decision. (Nationally half the 911 calls are from cell phones). Computer programs are available to contact the phone and tap into the position chip.

The basketball great, Wilt Chamberlain, probably broke as many records as anyone. But he holds an unusual one which you would not hear much about. He played in 1045 games in his career - but, never fouled out.



## THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

In 1920, many readers wrote letters to the London Times about the war in Iraq. One reader complained that "we were wrong in thinking that the Iraqi people will welcome us because we have saved them and that the country only needs rebuilding to repay our expenditures".

Another wrote that, "We have been led into a trap from which it will be hard to escape with dignity and honor. Things have been far worse than we have been told and our administration more bloody and inefficient than the public knows. We are today not far from disaster". This letter was from Lawrence of Arabia. ( He was right about the "disaster" The British Army suffered 51,800 dead in the ugly conflict the British used poison gas and public hangings ).



T. E. Lawrence

The situation reminds me of the words of Samuel T. Coleridge. "If men could learn from history, what lessons it might teach us. But passion and party blind our eyes, and the light which experience gives, is a lantern on the stern.

## MUSINGS



I have had a martini before dinner for many a year. I prefer an olive as garnish - not that new fangled lemon peel ( probably invented by a bartender who ran out of olives). On the occasion when I had the drink in a bar or restaurant, I would, at times, look at the drink with a casual question in mind. It has been niggling at my mind for years. Sometimes one gets one olive, and at other times up to three or four. I wondered whether the establishment does better financially adding more or fewer olives. In other words, what is the relative cost, per volume, of gin versus olives?

The other night, during my martini, I decided to do the calculations. I find that gin costs about one cent per cubic centimeter (cc) compared to one and a half cents for olives. So it costs a bit of money to add olives. But life is always complicated. My calculations were based on the gin I buy - cheap stuff. (The depression mentality is still with me). The numbers are so close that in an upscale bar, which uses expensive gin, it may be better to add a lot of olives. Now, having answered that momentous question so easily, I may go on to other momentous questions, perhaps, about black holes.

## GETTING OLD

Some things that you do unconsciously when you are younger take a bit more effort as you get older. For example, I try to avoid heavy beer glasses. It is not that I can't lift them. It is because they are heavy enough to result in a conscious effort which is distracting.



I usually don't do jokes - but sometimes I can't resist - Here is another from Mike Lakin.

**The Bathtub Test** It doesn't hurt to take a hard look at yourself from time to time, and this should help get you started. During a visit to the mental asylum, a visitor asked the Director what the criterion was which defined whether or not a patient should be institutionalized.

"Well," said the Director, "we fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub."

Oh, I understand," said the visitor. "A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup." "No," said the Director. "A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?"





## POKER SCHEDULE FOR APRIL

**Don Cooke** No game on the weekend, April 8, because of Beezer's tournament. I'll try all other weekends

**Chemistry** Friday, April 28, 8:00, at Tyler's

**English** Tuesday, April 25, 7:30 at Steve's

**Mark Sullivan** Mark has been having a game on Wednesdays, 8:30 277-7406

The third week of  
April is National  
Dark Sky week

### THE RED SCARE - 1919-1920 - WHEN AMERICA LOST IT'S WAY

If you think that our civil rights are being curtailed by the present administration, the situation was far worse in 1919 - 1920. The Communists had overthrown the Czarists in Russia and mounted a campaign for power on an international basis. There was a widespread fear that the country was the target for a Bolshevik revolution. It was also a time of substantial labor unrest which added to the national tension. To give you an idea of the prevailing mood, here is a portion of a public speech:

"I myself am an American and I love to preach my doctrine before one hundred percent Americans because my platform is undiluted Americanism. Each and every radical is a potential murderer or potential thief. Out of the sly and crafty eyes of many of them leap cupidity, cruelty, insanity and crime; from their lopsided faces, sloping brows and misshapen features may be recognized the unmistakable criminal type."

The speech was presented, not by some red neck member of the Klu Klux Klan, but by A. Mitchell Palmer, the Attorney General of the United States under President Wilson and a candidate for the presidential nomination by the Democratic Party. Incongruously, Palmer was a Quaker.

The stage was set for this difficult period by passage of the 1918 Sedition Act, which forbade the "use of disloyal, profane, scurrilous or abusive language about the United States government, the flag or the armed forces". The Act was upheld by the Supreme Court with Justice Oliver Wendall Holmes writing the opinion that the first amendment did not protect speech "if the words used create a clear and present danger". In *Schenck v U. S.*, the Court upheld the conviction of Schenck for passing out pamphlets in opposition to the war.

Here are some incidents where individuals were convicted and imprisoned in violation of the Sedition Act. Ben Kahn, a 38 year old liquor salesman was having breakfast in a Helena, Montana hotel. He mentioned to the waitress the "wartime food regulations were a joke". By lunchtime he was arrested. He was convicted and sentenced to seven and a half to twenty years on this single charge. Another case was Rose Stokes who wrote a letter to the *Kansas City Star* claiming that, "no government which is for the profiteers can be for the people". She was sentenced to ten years in prison. The number of such convictions is unknown, but students at the Montana School of Law have an ongoing project to determine, by examining old court records, the effect of the Sedition Act on the residents of Montana. So far, up to 200 individuals are known to have been arrested, of which 75 were convicted, with 45 going to jail and 19 being fined.

Victor Berger, German born, and a member of the House of Representatives representing Milwaukee, was elected on a Socialist ticket. He was quoted as saying that the "only thing that the United States got out of the war was prohibition and the flu". He was sentenced to twenty years by Judge Kenesee Mountain Landis. (Later the first Commissioner of Baseball). Protected by the secrecy of the ballot box, the convicted Berger was reelected to the vacated seat. Five members of the New York State Legislature who were duly elected on the Socialist ticket, were expelled by their colleagues. The *New York Times* applauded the action.

A climate of fear, violence and hatred swept the nation, and not all of it involved the Bolshevik threat. Henry Ford railed against the Jews, a moribund Klu Klux Klan got a new lease on it's life and raged against the Negroes and Catholics. There were 83 lynchings in 1919 and many large cities experienced race riots. For nearly a week, Chicago was virtually in a state of civil war. Forty-three people died, mostly Blacks, five hundred and thirty were injured and a thousand were left homeless. Unions were considered to be part of the conspiracy and one union leader was tortured and hung and his headquarters burned to the ground.



The offices of a Socialist newspaper in New York City, *The Call*, were ransacked by 400 servicemen. In Cleveland, the headquarters of the Socialist Party was destroyed by a mob. At a Victory Loan pageant in Washington D.C. a man was shot to death by a sailor for not standing for the Star Spangled Banner. New organizations were established to counter the Bolshevik threat. One, started by a Chicago businessman and condoned by the Justice Department, was the secret (there were initiation rituals) American Protective League which had 250,000 members in 1200 local units with a responsibility to inform on any suspicious activity. The present-day American Legion was formed and had a million members in it's first year. It's constitution was, "to maintain law and order" and "perpetuate one hundred percent Americanism". The commander ordered the membership "to be ready for action". At the bottom of the pile was the Anti-Yellow Dog League, with it's thousand chapters, which was composed of schoolboys, above the age of ten, who searched out disloyalty.

A segment of society which suffered disproportionately under the Sedition Act were the aliens. On January 2, 1920, Attorney General Palmer initiated raids on "radical" aliens in 30 cities. The raids were led by a young J. Edgar Hoover and about 5000 individuals were arrested. In many cases there were no warrants for the arrests or the searches that accompanied them. Those arrested were not charged with any crime. Many were held incommunicado and bail was rarely available. In Hartford, Connecticut, visitors to those being held were arrested and jailed. (The visit was *prima facie* evidence of disloyalty). There was no due process and the prisoners went before a secret deportation hearing where lawyers were not allowed. There were many human tragedies associated with the deportations. Families were broken up, children who were citizens were left behind and some who emigrated as children could not speak the language of the country to which they were being deported.

Fortunately, the Red Scare was short lived and came to an abrupt end. Much of the reason for the quick demise is credited to a single individual, Louis F. Post, an assistant secretary at the Immigration Department. He vetoed 1500 deportation requests from the Justice Department. The American Legion got wind of this and Post received a great deal of negative publicity. There was a move for his impeachment and he was summoned to appear before Congress. The move backfired. Post excoriated the Justice Department for their incompetence and inadequate knowledge of the law. He must have dazzled Congress because, at the end, a motion was passed that Post would not be further investigated. A short time later, a 60 page manifesto signed by the country's most prominent lawyers decried the loss of civil rights and the Supreme Court reversed it's decision on the Sedition Act. The nightmare was over.

## COMPUTERS



At one time the word "computer" had a different meaning than it does today. For a couple of centuries a computer was a person who ground out calculations for scientists using paper and pencil. They were the blue collar workers of the laboratories and usually women. While male scientists deemed creative science beyond the female kin, they were considered perfect for drudge work, besides, they were cheaper. There were teams of computers supervised by a calculator who was responsible for the accuracy of the calculations. The size of a task was measured in girl-hours, or even kilo-girl hours.

Back in the Depression days, the Works Progress Administration hired 300 computers to produce mathematical tables. Half of them used the mechanical calculators of the day but the other half used paper and pencil. Some of the computers made significant scientific contributions but rarely got much credit. As the Wizard of Oz said to the Scarecrow, a brain is not enough, you need a diploma.

## FAR, FAR OUT

A forthcoming article in an astrophysics journal will present evidence which supports the Big Bang concept. It seems that the universe started in a volume about the size of a marble and, in a trillionth of a trillionth of a second, expanded to a volume larger than the observable universe. Now that stretches the imagination



In 1810, 84 percent of the work force was engaged in agriculture. Today, only two percent of the workers do the same thing. In 1810, two million people worked the farms. Today, the figure is still two million. (But production is much larger on much less land).



## Poker Schedule for June

**Don Cooke** Hope to have a game every weekend

**Chemistry** Friday, June 30, 8:00, at Fred's

**English** At Arnie's. Working on a date

**Mark Sullivan** Mark has been having a game on  
Wednesdays, 8:30 277-7406

The summer solstice occurs on June 21, which, in the Mayan calendar, comes in the month Chen shown here.



Time zero on their calendar occurred on our August 13, 3114 B.C. The cycle ends on December, 22, 2012, the end of the world.

I do not suppose that many, if any, noticed that there was no newsletter for the month of May. I got absorbed in a research project involving hold'em poker. I have now completed a paper, which, I think, uncovers some new aspects of the game.

### MOVING COAL - A HIGH TECH APPROACH



This is with apologies to those who read John McPhee's long article in two recent issues of the New Yorker Magazine. I found it to be fascinating and I hope that you will enjoy this summary.

Coal train CBTMMHS is slowly pulling out of the Powder River Basin coal field in northeastern Wyoming headed for the Scherer power plant in Georgia, five days away.

Some of the details surrounding this train illustrates remarkable changes in the coal industry brought about by high technology. To begin with, the train is a mile and a half long and weighs 19 thousands tons, of which 15 thousand represents the coal in 140 gondolas. Sixty-five similar trains will leave the coal fields in an average day with another sixty-five empties returning for another load. There is a continuous 200 miles of coal train on the tracks. The daily output requires filling over 9000 cars, each with one hundred and fifteen tons of coal. That leaves allows nine seconds to fill each car. Not to worry - the train is filled on the fly - one second for a car holding 115 tons.

The existence of the vast coal fields of Wyoming have been known for a long time but they were ignored because the coal had 30% less energy than the eastern variety. But when the Clean Air Act was made into law, there was a big advantage in having low sulphur. The fields had another advantage. With eastern coal deposits, a seam seven feet thick would be a good one. In Wyoming, the seams are a hundred feet thick allowing the mountains to be chopped up by machines as large as naval vessels. They are run by electric power which is supplied by trailing umbilical cords, six inches in diameter. They spew coal into huge vehicles that look like trucks except that they can almost fill three railroad cars at a gulp. The coal is transferred, by a conveyer belt which moves it, at 25 tons per minute, to a silo from which the trains are loaded.

There are 500 coal burning power plants in the country with 140 more on the drawing board. The largest is Scherer Plant in Georgia which burns three and a half megatons a day, or 52 thousand tons. That is 2000 miles of rolling coal a year. The plant has a reserve pile covering 500 acres, 50 feet deep. The coal is pulverized, mixed with air and burned at a rate of 21 tons per minute. This energy will, in a day, convert eighty-one million gallons of river water, into steam in three boilers, each as high as a twenty-five story building. There are four cooling towers that circulate a quarter million gallons of water per minute and the smokestacks are a thousand feet high. They are also the largest point source of atmospheric carbon dioxide in the country - 22 million tons a year. Plant Scherer occupies an area three miles by six miles. Why so much land? They are thinking of expanding. There should be enough coal. Wyoming estimates that it has enough for the next 250 years.



## THE SULTAN OF SWAT



Babe Ruth watches his 60th homer go into the bleachers. Yankee Stadium, Sept 30, 1927

Barry Bonds just broke Babe Ruth's record for career home runs by blasting his 715th. Does that mean that Bonds is a more prolific home run hitter than Ruth? As is so often true, it depends on how one does the accounting. In 1927, when Ruth set a new record for a season with 60, he claimed 14% of the 442 home runs in the league. When Roger Maris broke the record with 61, he had 4% of the leagues total. In 1995, the most recent year for which I have records, Brad Radke led the league with 32 homers or 1.5% of the leagues total of 2164. (Of course, there are twice as many teams as there were in 1927). It is worth noting that in 1927, Ruth and teammate, Lou Gehrig, together, had 25% of the league's homers.

I saw Ruth play in 1927, the year of his 60, but I do not remember seeing him hit one.

## REPARTEE

There is a delightful new book, *VIVA LA REPARTÉE*, by Mardy Grothe. Here are a few examples from this small volume. There are written items that are thought out. For example, an exchange of notes between George Bernard Shaw, who had just written *Pygmalion* and Winston Churchill:

Dear Winston: I am reserving two tickets for you at my premier. Come and bring a friend, if you have one.

Churchill's response. Dear George: Impossible to be at the first performance. Will be at the second, if there is one.

Then there are the quick-witted, spontaneous responses: Quarterback Broadway Joe Naimith was doing his thing when artificial turf was being introduced. When asked by a reporter whether he preferred grass or AstroTurf, he came up with this:

"I don't know, I never smoked AstroTurf".

Then there are the clever ones. Mary Sherwood, wife of playwright, Robert E. Sherwood, gave birth to her first child. She received a telegram from her friend Dorothy Parker:

"Congratulations Mary. We all knew you had it in you".

## A BIG BLOW

The greatest wind velocity ever recorded was clocked at 231 miles per hour on April 12 1934. This does not mean that it was the highest velocity ever experienced, because it would only be happenstance if there was an anemometer at the location of the greatest wind, especially one that could withstand the onslaught. As to the location, one might think of Tornado Alley or some great typhoon in the Pacific. No, it was in prosaic New Hampshire, Mt. Washington, to be exact. The topography of the mountain is such that Bernoulli and funnel effects make it one of the windiest places on earth.

## PLACE NAMES

Place names can have funny origins. The Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico is one. It comes from the Mayan "uicathan", which was the response to the Spanish explorer's question as to the name of their land. What "uicathan" really means is, "We do not understand the question".



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR JULY

**Don Cooke** Hope to have a game every weekend

**Chemistry** Friday, June 30, 8:00, at Fred's

**English** At Arnie's, Wednesday, June 28, 7:30

**Mark Sullivan** Mark has been having a game on  
Wednesdays, 8:30 277-7406



Major General LaFayette  
Age 20, 1777

*I wanted a patriotic theme for this month's newsletter but I drew a blank. So I decided to fall back on an old one five years back. Many new names have been added in the last five years and this will be new to them. For the oldtimers, I hope you enjoy it the second time around.*

### AH YOUTH!

*America lucked out in the Revolutionary War. While there were some Members of Parliament who believed that England was headed for disaster, most just did not understand what all the fuss in the colonies was about. On the other hand, on our side, we had a confluence of remarkably able individuals. And how young they were. We all know that Marquis de Lafayette played a vital role in the war. In 1777, he accepted an appointment as a Major General in the Continental Army, serving without salary. What is less known is that he was only 20 years old at the time. (He did, however, have six years of experience in the French Army).*

*In 1776, George Washington was 42; Thomas Jefferson, 33; John Hancock, 39; Alexander Hamilton, 21; John Adams, 41. Benjamin Franklin was the greybeard at 70.*

*As to the Continental Army, General "Mad Anthony" Wayne was 32; Captain John Paul Jones, 29; General Nathanael Greene, 36; General Thaddeus Kosciuszko, 30. Lieutenant Colonel John Mercer, who led troops in the Battle of Princeton, was 18. Lieutenant Colonel Aaron Burr was 21.*

*Young they were - at least by the standards of our day. But in colonial days being "young" was probably very different. Life expectancy was lower so there were fewer old guys around. But this fact can't explain it all. Excluding the high rate of child mortality, males died at an average age of 65. Of the 56 individuals who signed the Declaration of Independence, only 12 were over 50. If such an important document were to be signed today, it is unlikely that any one of the 56 would be less than 50. It may just be that revolution is a young person's game. Also, in those days real life began at a younger age. And you do not have to go that far back. My father-in-law, at age 14, moved away from his family to another city to apprentice as a printer's devil.*

*About a century later, in the Civil War period, the ages of the leaders had substantially increased. In 1863, Lincoln was 54 and his Vice President, Andrew Johnson, was 55. There were two generals who were quite young, Jeb Stuart at 30 and Phillip Sheridan at 32. As for the others, Grant was 41; Lee 56; Hooker, 49; McClelland 49; Meade, 48; Early, 47 and Admiral Farragut, 62.*

*One war later, the leaders were still older. Roosevelt was 60; Truman, 58; Patton, 57; Marshall, 62; Arnold, 56; MacArthur, 62; Admiral Leahy, 67. Eisenhower was the youngest at 52.*

*I do not know how to interpret the above information. In the Revolution, older people were probably more likely to opt for the status quo. Is it that the world has become more complicated, so that more experience is required? Or perhaps, we do not credit young people with the ability they actually have. One thing is certain - we have far less confidence in our youth than was previously true. Makes me wonder. Is it that we have so little confidence in them because we treat our young men and women as boys and girls and, as a result, they never have the opportunity to show their ability?*



## PLUMBING THE DEPTHS OF THE HUMAN MIND



Carl Frederick Gauss  
1777 - 1855

In the middle of the 1800s, long mathematical tables appeared in print. There were hyperbolic functions, trigonometric tables and even the natural logarithms of the first million numbers - to eight decimal places. How were they compiled? It would have taken armies of people years to make such calculations. In a way, it was an army - a one-man army. Johanne Dase, who compiled them all, did the calculations in his head. He just jotted down the numbers as they came to mind. He was hired to do such work by Gauss, who may have been the first man to buy computer time.

## ECONOMICS IS OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE DISMAL SCIENCE

but economists do write interesting books. A case in point is a new book by David J. Berri entitled, *The Wages of Win: Taking Measure of the Many Myths in Modern Sports*. One of the sports covered is professional basketball where detailed records of all games played are available. As with most sports, the team with the most points wins the game, a basic concept which tends to make high scoring players more important. A foul shot is worth one point. But how much is a steal or a blocked shot worth? Actions can also have negative values such as a missed shot or a turnover.



Suppose a player finished a winning game with 18 points (9 field goals). But suppose he had 8 missed field goals, blew 2 foul shots, committed 2 fouls and gave up 2 turnovers. If you were to be asked what this player contributed to the win, how would you answer? You know the 18 points, but what about the downside of his play? There are no numbers to guide you, so you would probably draw a blank. Berri's study comes up with those numbers and, at the same time, proposes a new method for measuring the overall productivity of individual players. Currently, there is an NBA Efficiency Number to serve this purpose, but it is crude by comparison.

Using straightforward statistical procedures, Berri has been able to quantify eleven different actions that players take during a game (positive factors: two-pointers, steals, foul shots; negative factors: shots missed, turnovers, fouls). For example, a three pointer has a value of 0.066 wins. If in a season, a player scores 100 three-point field goals, he is credited with 6.6 wins. If the same player committed 100 turnovers (at -0.034 each) 3.4 wins would be subtracted. Doing the same thing for all eleven factors gives the player credit for so many wins in that season. The system marks Michael Jordan as a great player. In 1992-93, the Bulls won 57 games, of which twenty-five are credited to Jordan. In six years, his average contribution was 23.4 games a season.

Does it all make sense? There is one strong piece of evidence that it does. If you calculated all the wins credited to all the players on a team, the total wins should equal the number of victories the team actually achieved. It does agree quite closely. For the 2003-04 season, Minnesota won 58 games. The predicted number was 55.8. Orlando had 21 wins compared to the predicted 22. For all teams in the league, the average error in wins predicted was 1.7 wins.

I suspect that the owners will try to dismiss Berri's work as ivory tower poppycock. Why? Because the correlation between salary and performance leaves a lot to be desired. There are high scoring, high profile players, whose negative numbers wipe out their positive contributions and vice-versa. There are tables in the book for underrated and overrated players for the year 2004-05. The most underrated player was Damon Jones with 10.6 wins and a below average salary of \$2.5 million. The most overrated player was Antoine Walker with a 19 point average and a salary of \$14 million. He is credited with less than one win. Other overrated players, for the year, include Chris Webber, at \$17 million and four wins and Antawn Jamison at \$13 million and just over one win. On the other hand, Jason Kidd, even at \$15 million is considered underrated. The new information may make for some interesting salary negotiations.



## **POKER SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST**

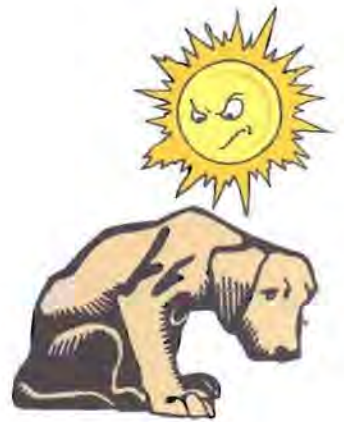
Don Cooke August may be complicated for me.

We'll play it week by week.

Chemistry Friday, August 25, 8:00, at Frank's

English Hopefully, one in August - the last

Mark Sullivan Mark will be back from Maine in early August  
Wednesdays, 8:30 277-7406



### **POKER NEWS**

The Cayuga Poker Society will be represented by at least one player in the \$10,000 World's Series of Poker Tournament starting July 28. Many of you will remember Tom Hunt who hosted one of our games. He has won a seat. We wish him luck - you can't win that tournament without some luck.

He also finished fourth, of 1919 entries, at the \$2000 buy-in Game 6 of the World Series buildup, taking home \$160,000. This game will be featured in an hour-long TV show on October 10, ESPN Poker.

Tom is a professor at The University of Nevada School of Medicine.

### **THE DAY THAT CHANGED AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION, FOREVER**



The day was June 22, 1922 and Commencement Day at Harvard. As President Lawrence Lowell approached the podium, he probably had little idea that, on that day, he would initiate a movement that would drastically change the nation's colleges and universities. Lowell noted in his speech that Harvard had a "Jewish problem".

The "problem" was that 22% of the students were Jewish, with expectations that the number would double in the foreseeable future. The situation resulted from the fact that Harvard, like most universities in the world, admitted students on the basis of their performance on an admission examination. The system worked fine for years as applicants from the aristocratic private academies of New England filled the freshman class. But things changed with the arrival of Russian, Jewish immigrants. These parents instilled in their children a love of learning and exhorted them to academic achievement. The children responded by excelling at every step of the educational stepladder. For example, in 1920, thirty percent of the population of New York City was Jewish, but they represented fifty percent of the high school population. And they creamed the college entrance examinations. At the time, forty percent of the Columbia student body was Jewish.

But Lowell made an error of judgement. While the developing situation was viewed with alarm by the eastern educational establishment, and rampant, widespread anti-semitism was being used to stem the tide, Lowell made the mistake of publicly admitting to the practice. All hell broke loose. The New York Times featured a front page story; the Massachusetts legislature proposed a legislative inquiry; a bill was introduced to remove all reference to Harvard from the state constitution; the governor established a committee to investigate discrimination in the university and the Boston City Council (being Irish and knowing about discrimination) condemned the Harvard administration.

President Lowell did what all university presidents do when under fire - form a committee. (I actually found a copy of the report in the Cornell Library). The first sentence of the report came out strongly against any form of discrimination or quotas. Not too many sentences later, the report recommended that the admission of students by examination, which resulted in the Jewish success in the first place, be deemphasized.



And what criteria did the committee propose to replace admission by examination? They decided that geographical diversity would add something to the student body. The problem was the students from the west and the south had a difficult time with the entrance examination, so a recommendation was made that students who ranked in the top seventh of their class would be exempt from the examination. This move made for a much larger pool of applicants from which to pick and choose. Decisions would then be based on the individual's "character" and "leadership" - with letters of recommendation to help with these evaluations. In other words, the nature of the student body was now determined by the institution rather than, as previously, academic merit. Similar procedures were rapidly adopted by other institutions and the number of Jewish students dropped precipitously - at Columbia, from forty percent to twenty-two. It is interesting that our present system for admitting freshmen arose, in 1923, from the Harvard committee which devised ways to limit the number of Jews.

Our system is unusual - if a student at a European university were to be told that athletic ability, character and leadership were factors in the selection process, the result would be a blank stare. I believe that our system is different because most of our institutions are private rather than public. As such, they are financially dependent on alumni, who have a voice in institutional policies. The alumni remember "how it was" and resist change. One topic that got alumni worked up in the late 1960s was the possibility of the admission of women at all-male schools, with Princeton being the most bitter. The Old Tigers believed that the presence of "girls" would destroy the institution. A group ACTION was formed to save the university. A poll of alumni showed the fifty seven percent wanted the status quo, with the old guard heavily opposed to women and the young alumni relaxed. The undergrads were all for it. ACTION tried to take over the alumni organization, with Donald Rumsfeld '56 being one of those leading the charge. They failed.

## ELITISM



A concept that "may be a bit difficult to precisely identify, but you know it when you see it. The public school systems of New York, Chicago and Philadelphia, the three largest urban areas in the country at the time, had a combined total of 13 students in the entering class at Yale in 1930. St. Paul's Episcopal Academy, a boarding school in New Hampshire, was represented, in the same class by 24 students (from a graduating class of 64).

## THE WONDERS OF NATURE



And what do you think that this bazaar looking animal might be? If you saw the most recent National Geographic, you would know that it is a speckled emperor moth from South Africa. The picture shows the moth's left and right wings. Note the glints in the "eyeballs". That might be enough to scare the daylight out of a predator.

## THE WONDERS OF MAN



This is an aerial view of Santa Monica, California, taken in 1943. As in the picture above, it is not what it seems to be. It is the Douglas Aircraft Factory, camouflaged to prevent detection. It is a fake city built on four hundred poles with millions of square feet of chicken wire, flimsy houses and fake trees. There is even a working smokestack which is real.



## Poker Schedule for September

Don Cooke Hopefully every Saturday. Watch e-mail

Chemistry Friday, September 22, 8:00, at Ben's

English Mike Koch plans to host a game

Mark Sullivan Most Wednesdays, 8:30 277-9462



Earth as seen from  
from the moon

This year, the autumn equinox is on September 23. It is a day which, in a way, brings the world together. Except at the poles, in every place on earth, sunrise is 6:00 am and sunset is 6:00 pm (real time) which makes night and day each twelve hours long. The sun rises exactly in the east and sets exactly in the west. At the poles, the sun travels around the horizon and at the equator, at noon, the sun is exactly overhead and casts no shadows. "Real time" is different than the time your watch says which is "local" time. It exists only in theory. The two times differ because there are time zones - otherwise, the time (real time) would be different in Buffalo than in Ithaca and every place in between would have a different time.

Then there is a sea level problem. To observe sunset correctly, you and the horizon both have to be at sea level. Then there are problems with refraction by the atmosphere which changes the time of sunrise and sunset and differs from hour-to-hour. So, accept the time your watch says - it is not real time - but anything else is impossible.



An advertisement in  
the New York Journal,  
June 23, 1768

When we think of slavery most of us think of Southern plantations and slaves picking cotton. The fact is, that, early on, it was a national institution - a thought that seems to have been expunged from our psyche. In fact, at one time New York City was the center of the trade, with more black people being enslaved than in any other city with the possible exception of Charleston, S. C.

Four out of every ten households in the city owned human beings and slaves provided the muscle to build the city and supply the labor for the beef, grain and shipping industries.

New York was the last Northern state to abolish slavery - in 1827.

Chris Murison sent me some mind benders which illustrate anomalies of the brain. In this one the object is to count the number of times that the letter "F" appears in the following passage. How many are there?

**FINISHED FILES ARE THE RE  
SULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTI  
FIC STUDY COMBINED WITH  
THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS...**



You probably counted three. There are actually six. Go back and count them again. Still three? There are really six - try once more - slowly.

## THE HYPING OF THE WEDDING



About 2.3 million weddings are performed each year in the United States with an average cost of \$27,000 with another \$4,000 being spent on the honeymoon. So the marriage business amounts to about 75 billion dollars a year - a big business which supports a number of people. There are about 3,000 bridal shops, caterers, photographers, jewelers, flower shops, musicians, magazine publishers etc. etc. There are also 7,000 wedding consultants who have their own organization - after all, the young couple could not possibly know what they want. The industry runs conventions, shows, seminars and motivation sessions whose main thrust, as I see it, is to increase the cost and the hoopla of the affair. One should not get a cake from the local bakery - wedding cakes are a nationwide business items costing thousands of dollars being air freighted around the country. Shipping is about \$500 dollars with a minder accompanying it (for an extra cost) to make sure that all goes well. Or how about a roomful of butterflies - \$95 a dozen. Or invitations with hand calligraphy for the average 164 guests. Then there are destination weddings where the ceremony is held in some exotic location with families outdoing each other in choosing imaginative places. Even some in the industry believe that things are getting out of hand - like the consultant who had to contend with a bride-to-be who had a meltdown over the choice of her hankie.

As the wedding becomes more and more extravagant, families are becoming financially hard pressed and the couple often shares some of the expenses. In 2005, 30% of the couples shared expenses and 25% paid the entire costs. As a result, a substantial number of young couples start their married lives deeply in debt with wedding expenses and student loans.

Maybe I am just an old grouch with a Depression attitude about money.



I think that this photograph from an article on surf boards in the New Yorker, is awesome. I wonder how the surfer fared?



Wilt Chamberlain played in 1,045 basketball games in his career - he never fouled out.

In 2002, half of the nation's medical expenses were expended on 5% of the Americans.

The Battle of Verdun began February, 1916. It ended in December with 400,000 casualties on each side.



## POKER SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

Don Cooke Game on hold

Chemistry Friday, October 20, 8:00, at Geoff's

English To be decided

Mark Sullivan Most Wednesdays, 8:30 277-9462

### REGRETS

I am afraid that this will be my last newsletter. The problem is the availability of time - June requires a lot of Tender Loving Care. When I started this endeavor some twelve years ago, it had to purpose of letting players know the poker schedule for the month. This function was overtaken by e-mail a few years ago, but I kept on just because I enjoyed doing it. I have always been fascinated by the unusual. I did not run out of material- I still have a six-inch folder of unused stuff. I hope you enjoyed reading them.

### A CATASTROPHE LURKING IN MANHATTEN



The new Citicorps building opened in 1977 to wide acclaim. With a broad internal plaza for people, with shops, restaurants and entertainment centers, it was considered an exciting addition to the life of the city. It was the apple in the eye of Citicorps chairman Walter B. Wriston and a jewel in the crown of Hugh Stubbins, the architectural firm. The structural engineer, William J. LeMessurier, won his own share of praise for the tower's technical elegance and singular grace, and he was elected to the National Academy of Engineers.

About a year later, June 1978, LeMessurier was called from a meeting to answer a phone call. The caller was an architecture student from New Jersey who had been assigned to study the Citicorps building. He related that he and his professor thought that the support pilings for the building were in the wrong place. As he recalled the conversation, LeMessurier told the student (in a nice way, he said) that his professor did not know what the hell he was talking about because he did not understand the problems they had to deal with. But he added that he would call the student back when there would be more time to discuss the matter. When he did so, he explained that the columns had to be placed on the sides of the building rather than the conventional corners, to better resist winds blowing from an angle. They had an extended discussion and LeMessurier felt that he had been very helpful with the young student. Later in the day, he decided that the topic they had discussed would be of interest to the students in a course he taught at Harvard, and decided to prepare some material for a discussion. The strength of the wind braces had only been calculated for head-on, perpendicular winds which was the only requirement of the N. Y. C. Building Code. He decided, as an interesting project, to calculate the strength of the braces for a wind coming from a forty-five degree angle. He was surprised by the result which indicated that the strength of the braces significantly declined. That would not be of concern in normal circumstances, but the circumstances were not normal because he had learned, only two weeks earlier, that there had been a change-order in securing the braces. Originally, the braces were to be welded, but Bethlehem Steel had recommended that welding was not called for, and that bolting the structure would be sufficient. They believed that the more expensive welding project, while stronger, would be a waste of money. Now, really worried, LeMessurier, returned to the company which had done the original wind tunnel work. He told them, "Don't go easy if it does not come out the right way". It didn't and they didn't. Their measurements indicated that a wind of 70 miles per hour, (on average, occurring every 16 years), from a certain direction, could topple the building. The weakest point was on the thirtieth floor (of 59) and, if it gave way, the building would be subject to a catastrophic collapse.





LeMessurier realized that, before doing anything else, needed a plan to fix the problems with the building. He decided to weld two-inch steel plates over all the bolted joints which would make the braces stronger than originally planned. He was now ready to face the music. There were a lot of bases that had to be notified and many had to be involved in the planning. Citicorps refused to close the building for repairs, and all the welding had to be done at night which made a great display of flickering lights on the skyline. The New York Building Commissioner involved a crew of nine and was helpful in lining up enough welders. The Red Cross was planning on a disaster response team of twelve hundred individuals and a team of meteorologists was assembled to monitor the weather.

It seems that a Times reporter got wind that something was up and put a call into LeMessurier. He was unsuccessful in reaching him but he kept calling back. The last thing that LeMessurier wanted was a discussion with a Times reporter. But he knew it was inevitable, so he went home, mixed himself a martini and picked up the telephone. He could not have been more pleased to hear a recorded message that the Times, and all other New York newspapers, were closed because of a strike. They would remain closed until October when the crisis was over.

On September 1st, with the work half completed, a situation was developing which everyone had dreaded. Hurricane Ella was off Cape Hatteras and one possible path was directly across New York. A meeting was held at 6 a. m. to decide on a course of action. Evacuation plans were ready to implement. These plans included not only the Citicorps building but a large swath of surrounding area. All at the meeting recognized the gravity of the situation and the potential for chaos. Fortunately for all, Ella took a more easterly path, roared out to sea, spared the city and relieved some extremely worried people. The weather watch and the evacuation plans ended on September 13 and the work was finished by October.

In one way it was a rare event in which there were many heroes but no bad guys. The fact that Messurier blew the whistle on himself and took full responsibility, probably set the stage for such an outcome. There was no litigation and Citicorps settled for the two million dollars that the insurance company offered.

A couple of interesting points. Despite the fact that many people knew what was going on, the story did not surface to the general public, apparently, until an article in The New Yorker, 17 years later. (Perhaps, because the newspapers did not resume publishing until after the crisis had ended). A second point - the name of the student who started it all was lost in the shuffle and neither he, nor his professor subsequently acknowledged their role. Source: An eleven page article in the May 29, 1995 New Yorker by Joe Morganstein. Condensing this long, exciting tale was difficult and the full article can be found at [www.predesign.org/citicorps.htm](http://www.predesign.org/citicorps.htm)

## HOW IT USED TO BE



There is no record at Princeton that there was ever an Afro-American student enrolled until well after World War II. You might think that some must have been admitted by mistake. As a matter of fact, mistakes were made, but they could be rectified. There is the case of Bruce White who was admitted in 1939. He came from one of the best high schools in New York City with a record good enough to be awarded a full scholarship. He arrived on campus and was in line to register

when he was spotted by a passing student who realized that there must be a horrible mistake - the person in line was Black. The student went to Dean Radcliffe Hermance who rushed to the scene, and told Mr. White that he could not register. The Dean wrote a letter of explanation to Mr. White's father which opened with the sentence that "Princeton University does not discriminate ---". The reason that Bruce was not allowed to register was for his own good - he would be happier with his own kind". (I believe Dean Hermance really believed what he wrote and would be astonished if anyone called the action discrimination). The human mind is very effective in developing the logic which makes things come out the way we desire them to be.



Bruce went to Lincoln University, was a decorated hero in World War II, and, in 1983, was appointed a Justice in the Supreme Court of the State of New York. These facts, if somehow known to Dean Hermance at the time, would probably have made no difference.

As times changed, Princeton also changed - but with great reluctance. In 1961 there was one Afro-American student. But by the next year this number doubled - to two.

Source: *THE CHOSEN*, Jerome Karabel, 2005

### **SKIRMISHING WITH BUREAUCRACY**

When I slaved away in the administration at Cornell, for some reason, I was the one who got stuck with writing reports. One big job was a five-year plan for Cornell mandated by the State Education Department. They indicated everything that had to be included in great detail. The requirements were so extensive that the twenty, or so, copies of 400 pages had to be shipped, not mailed, to Albany. One year chafing at all the nonsense, I put a stamped self-addressed postcard at about page ten of every copy. It read "If you get this far, would you please drop this postcard in the mail. As expected, none were returned.

But there was a sequel. I did the same thing with the next five-year plan and got back all the postcards promptly. Did the Education Department reform? Hardly likely. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* got wind of my project and had written a little squib about my caper. This time they were ready for me. Long range planning is OK, but not in the detail that requires 400 pages.

Another story also with the State Education Department. One day I received a form to be completed. It had to do with compiling information derived from each professor completing a form as to how they spent their time. What percentage went to teaching, research, administration etc. etc. It really made no sense to me. For example, if a professor spends some time with a graduate student, what percentage should be allocated to teaching the student, to the research effort, to self-development etc. Or suppose an undergraduate came to see a faculty member about a problem set - obviously teaching. But then she asked for advice as to graduate schools - not teaching - administration? I thought that the roles are so intertwined that the questions were unanswerable. Further I thought that no self-respecting teacher would respond to such a request. So I decided to ignore it. But the State decided to play hardball. A few months later, someone from the finance office gave me a call. It seems like New York had not sent the money due us for something or other. A call to the State office informed them that the money was being withheld because we had not submitted the form in question. What to do? Finally I spent ten minutes completing the summary form and sent it off. My guess was probably as good as any. We finally got the money so the treasurer was happy, the State was happy, and, the faculty had every right to be happy, even if they knew nothing about what they should be happy about.

I wonder how much time and effort are wasted on such mandatory requests? I hate to think.

### **HOW IT USED TO BE II**

And how different. At one time, there was a censor for the Hollywood movie industry, the Hays Office. The office set ground rules for movie makers, mostly about sex. One of these applied to showing married couples in bed. It was only possible if twin beds were used. As for unmarried couples - forget about it.

You guys are not old enough to remember the bathing suits of the 1920's. They looked like they were made from potato sacks with holes cut in them. The droopy bottoms reached to the knees. They came in one color - black. Worse, they were indistinguishable from what men wore. Women's Lib was a long way off.

