



Communication

#186

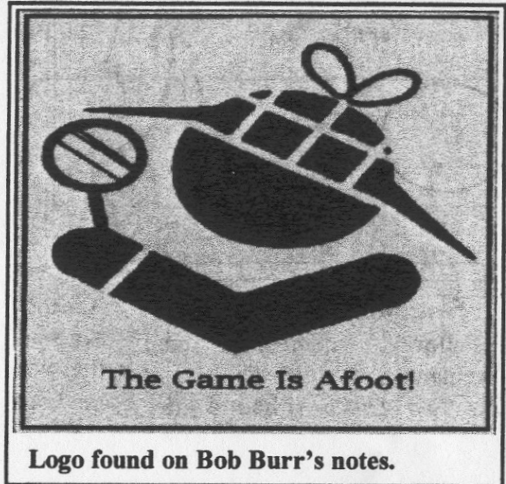
New Series

September/October 1998

Volume 3 Issue 7

Hello from the Hurricane season. In this issue, we've got some new members to introduce to you (check out the Roster Update on page 3), and reviews of a book and a play. Carl Heifetz poses an interesting hypothesis concerning Sherlock Holmes' private life and editor Wanda Dow finds some canonical quotes to back it up, and we've found cases of life imitating art and art imitating art. For those of you who are actually reading this, we have an introductory offer of a Pleasant Places of Florida window decal for your car window for \$2.00. We have a limited number and although we found them a little hard to get on without air bubbles, they are holding up well under the Florida sun. Payment to Wanda Dow.

The Papers on the Sundial



Logo found on Bob Burr's notes.

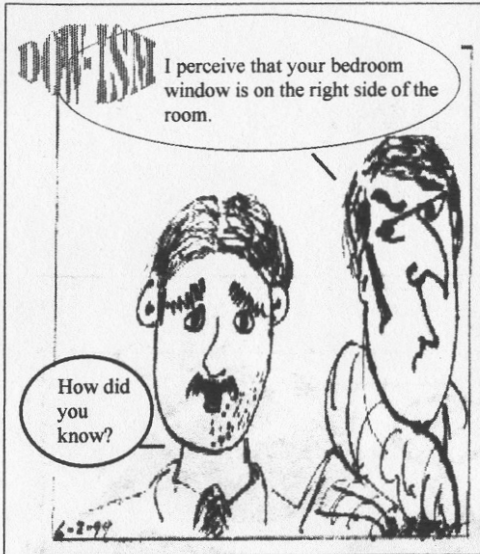
Slain wife found in casket with other body

Such was the headline in another "life imitates art" case. This one was in the Saturday, August 12, 1999 *St. Petersburg Times*. Seems a funeral director by the name of Mark Vilella stabbed his wife as she slept, then hid her body in the funeral home cooler until he could stuff her in the coffin with another body whose family wanted a closed casket service. Seems Vilella didn't get a special coffin from Stimson & Company, though. When investigators dug up and unsealed the coffin used by Vilella, they found the body that was supposed to be there, lying on top of a sheet, under which lay the late Mrs. Vilella's body. It didn't take Sherlock Holmes to figure this one out, however. When co-workers and the missing woman's sister started calling the police, they interviewed Vilella. His story was that his wife had left in the middle of the night and he didn't know where she was. He couldn't explain why he had not called

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her place of employment to ask if they had seen her, nor to report that she wouldn't be in, and police found her car still sitting in the garage. Sheriff's Investigator Steve Willis began to check cemetery records at that point, and when he found a closed casket service listed, he knew where to look. Hmmm. Was the victim's



Sherlockiana, Etc.

Fellow members and exchangers, *The Harpooners of the Sea Unicorn* had a nice article written about them in a local paper, *The St. Charles Journal* (MO) on June 23rd. A nice quote from Michael Bragg, group president: "The three most read, filmed and written about works in English literature are the Bible, Shakespeare, and Sherlock Holmes. You read the Bible because you need to, Shakespeare because you have to, and Holmes because you want to." Here! Here! Michael!

Tim Pigott-Smith is appearing on Broadway as Larry Slade in *The Iceman Cometh*. In a July 6th article in *The New York Times*, Pigott-Smith made mention that he and his British actress wife, Pamela Miles, had appeared in *Sherlock Holmes* together. She

was the French maid and he was Watson. Somehow it seems right that Watson would wind up with the French maid, no?

AlterYears is a catalog for the costumer with over 1500 patterns, over 1000 costume reference books and over 200 hard-to-find supplies and accessories (think Corset stays, busks, bustles, etc.). You can get last year's catalog for \$5.00 4th class. Write to AlterYears, 3749 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91107-3808. Out of U.S., write for prices.

We received this info recently from member Tom Takach. It's a reprint from the December, 1947 issue of a *Terry and the Pirates Comic*. "Next she counted the telegraph poles that passed by steadily. By timing the number of poles per minute for a five minute period, she fixed the

black sedan's speed. And in half an hour when they blindfolded her and brought the sedan to a stop, she had a good idea where she was - not Los Angeles, but San Pedro which is the waterfront city of the big metropolis. The smell of slat water was sharp and overpowering enough to tell her that they were on the waterfront." The story was titled *Black Cat*, and later the heroine uses judo to subdue the bad guys. Methinks the author may have read at least *Silver Blaze*?

On August 4th, 1999, we lost Carl Toms, 72, one of the most sought after and successful British stage designers of his time. He designed sets for the theatre, Films opera & ballet in a career that spanned 40 years. He won a (cont. page 7)

PUBLISHED PPOfers

Carl Heifetz was published in Issue #5, August, 1999 of *The Holmes Front* titled *Sherlock Holmes: Typical Research Chemist*.

Brad Keefauver can be found within the same pages, with his article, *SH2K (Yes, It Really Is The End Of The World As We Know It!)*.

The Holmes Front is described by publisher Bob Burr, BSI as "a very irregular gallimaultry of Sherlockiana, published whenever the Editor find enough nonsense to fill its pages. Nonprofix contributions are solicited. All the views that fit we'll print." So for all you authors out there, give *THF* your best (or worst) shot. Published by The Lascarian Press,

And them them we sent you so they'll be indebted to us. And don't forget, WE TAKE ARTICLES, POETRY, PUZZLES, ETC. TOO!



Agony Column



Classic Specialties requests your help on two projects. Project One is a collection of stories about how Sherlock Holmes has affected the lives of his modern "fans." Has Holmes influenced anyone's choice of profession or job? Brought about friendships, associations, or business relationships? They are particularly interested in any accounts of romances which might have been kindled or nurtured by the participant's joint interest in Sherlock Holmes.

Project Two is assembling audio tapes of original materials of a Sherlockian nature. Anyone having such tapes, or doing a play or program, or attending a meeting with a speaker, please tape it and send along for reviewing for possible future inclusion in their proposed collection. You can

e-mail Classic Specialties at <sherlock@sherlock-holmes.com> or post it to P. O. Box 19058, Cincinnati, OH 45219

Contact Jerry Soderquist at _____ or phone : _____ for info on the **Third Annual Sherlock Holmes/ William Gillette Festival** being held on November 5 & 6 in Tyron, NC, wherein sits the house Mr. Gillette called home. Mr. G.'s play will be reenacted and there will be a day-long *Tribute to William Gillette*, featuring a breakfast, awards, ceremonies, a concert, a film festival, a performance as well as a Biographical Commentary by Henry Zecher.

Don't forget to sign up for the 24th Annual Fall Gathering of the Pleasant Places of

Florida. This event will be held at the Sarasota Classic Car Museum. It's a B.Y.O.B. (Bring Your Own Bag lunch) affair and we will be eating at an open-air atrium (weather permitting), so dress comfortably. Wine will be provided for toasts.



Tom Takach sends us this reminder of "The Priory School" from Batman Comics, 1988.

ROSTER UPDATE

New: Alexander, Ty, Duty Officer Supervisor FL Div. of Forestry,

Gibson, Willard A., Retired, aka J. Neil Gibson,

Smith, Richard G., Systems Engineer, aka Victor Hatherley,
e-mail _____

Please check the address on your mailing label to make sure the correct information is being held by the club.

SHERLOCK IN LOVE

by Carl Heifetz

Recently, I was overwhelmed by the amount of evidence presented in a thesis I had read about Sherlock Holmes and Irene Adler being secretly married. Unfortunately, the writers base much of their conclusions on the fact that Sherlock Holmes spoke so highly of her and, in his own words, described her as "the loveliest thing under a bonnet on this planet... with a face that a man might die for." In this, I thoroughly disagree. A man does not need to love a woman or want to marry a woman to admire her or lust after her. Yes! I used the word lust. Where in the Canon does it say that he did not have sexual relations with women? On this aspect, the Canon is silent. It has been pointed out that there are many instances in which Sherlock Holmes says or implies that he could never love a woman or fall prey to such emotion. Contrary to some suppositions, he meant it because he said so, and no amount of wishful thinking on the part of theirs, including Laurie King, would convince me otherwise. So what? Nowhere does it say that he was celibate. In the old days, with a very few notable exceptions (i.e. *The Decameron*, *Fanny Hill*, the *Bible*) people did not write about sexual encounters. But, I'm certain that Sherlock Holmes had many sexual encounters during his career. I'm just as certain that

Dr. Watson, had he known, would not write about them. He may have warned his friend in private about the dangers of the many incurable diseases that could be contracted by such episodes. (I can't help myself; once a microbiologist, always a microbiologist.) Anyway, here are the reasons that I think that Sherlock Holmes, although never loving a woman, was not a virgin:

(1) Sherlock Holmes had many encounters, some published, most not, with many beautiful women. In the published encounters he displayed an appreciation for their charms. Note especially *Lion's Mane* as well as *Scandal in Bohemia*.

(2) Sherlock Holmes was a self acknowledged "Bohemian." Such a life style has always been associated with a free and easy attitude toward sexual activities whether that bohemianism is of the Victorian era, the art community of "la belle epoque," the Lost Generation, hipsters, Beatniks, hippies, or whatever. The available literature concerning such individuals is a testimony to this attitude. Just read *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn* for more recent examples.

(3) What did you think Holmes and Watson did at the Turkish bath? I'm sure that they supplied Ladies of the Evening to help the men bring on their sweat.

(4) Sherlock Holmes had a great knowledge of London, including

the lowest sections where prostitution flourished. He was often gone for long intervals. Now we know what he was up to, don't we?

(5) Sherlock Holmes is a musician. Everybody knows what that means - cocaine, cigarettes and whiskey, and wild, wild women, and groupies.

(6) Finally, we have Mrs. Neville St. Clair. Need we reiterate the passage on page 237 in Doubleday about the eager lady in her bed attire waiting expectantly, only to be disappointed at the sight of Watson. What do you think she was waiting for? Sherlock Holmes, of course. His reputation with pleasing the ladies had preceded him.

I am certain that the many astute members of this scion can provide other evidences to support my contention that Sherlock Holmes was probably not celibate although he never allowed himself to become emotionally involved with a woman. I think that the ladies understand about men who, while wanting to have a "fulfilling relationship," never intend to make a loving commitment. Sherlock Holmes most likely falls into this category.

Besides all of that, you never fool around with the wife of a barrister. You'll get your butt sued off for sure!

SHERLOCK IN LOVE

Part II

by Wanda Dow

I was intrigued by Carl's article enough to go searching the Canon myself. Herewith are observations which tend to support his theory.

In SIGN, Watson says of Mary Morstan, "What a very attractive woman!" To which Holmes replies that he hadn't noticed. Watson is astounded and chastises his friend, accusing him of being "an automaton - a calculating machine." He even accuses him of being inhuman. This amuses Holmes. He gently explains to the smitten doctor that "It is of the first importance not to allow your judgment to be biased by personal qualities. A client is to me a mere unit, a factor in a problem. The emotional qualities are antagonistic to clear reasoning. I assure you that the most winning woman I ever knew was hanged for poisoning three little children for their insurance money." In spite of this, Watson persists and is halted when Holmes states, "I never make exceptions. An exception disproves the rule."

This exchange is quite informative. That Holmes claims to not notice Mary's attractiveness tells us that Mary is a client and he doesn't get involved with his clients. We can also figure that Holmes sees that Watson is interested and wants no conflicts with his new roommate. We know that there was once a woman that Holmes found to be "winning," and that this encounter did not end well. It may even have been the beginning of his policy not to mix pleasure with business (i.e. don't get involved with the clients.)

In IDEN, Holmes notices a client through the window. "I have seen

those symptoms before," he says, "Oscillation upon the pavement always means an *affaire de coeur*. She would like advice, but is not sure that the matter is not too delicate for communication.... When a woman has been seriously wronged by a man she no longer oscillates, and the usual symptom is a broken bell wire. Here we may take it that there is a love matter, but that the maiden is not so much angry as perplexed, or grieved."

And how does he know all this? Through observation of women he himself has wronged! What of Milverton's maid? Did she oscillate on someone else's pavement or did she break a bell wire?

Later, Holmes welcomes in the lady client "with the easy courtesy for which he was remarkable" and he looks her over in the "minute and yet abstracted fashion which was peculiar to him." Here we see that Watson has become more accustomed to Holmes' methods. Looking back to their first case together, we can perhaps conclude that Holmes actually did notice how attractive Mary Morstan was, but that when Watson, whom he has just met, who is sharing his lodgings and rent, and who had mentioned previously that he "kept a bull pup" (one such meaning being that he has a temper), is obviously smitten with her, he feigns disinterest and steps aside. Before, Watson is appalled that Holmes barely lifts his eyelids to look at Mary; now he is described as observing the client in an "abstracted fashion which was peculiar to him." There are other instances in which Watson mentions that Holmes has a gentlemanly way in his handling of woman. So we know that he can be quite charming when the mood

catches him. Indeed, Holmes tells Miss Sutherland, his client, that she interests him extremely. "And since you draw so large a sum as a hundred a year, with what you earn into the bargain, you no doubt travel a little and indulge yourself in every way. I believe that a single lady can get on very nicely upon an income of about £60." This was not simply a way of obtaining information from a client, it was checking her out for possible future use. You have money of your own? Do you travel? Do you indulge yourself in every way? Do you really want to find this lost love or would you be just as happy getting revenge by having an affair?

That Holmes does, indeed, notice women can be proved by his description of Violet de Merville: "She is beautiful, but with the ethereal other-world beauty of some fanatic whose thoughts are set on high. I have seen such faces in the pictures of the old masters of the Middle Ages. How a beastman could have laid his vile paws upon such a being of the beyond I cannot imagine." He goes on to describe her as "spiritual" and an "angel." Rather than being the cold-hearted calculating machine that Watson describes, Sherlock Holmes did indeed take notice of women!

As for his Bohemian nature of "love and let love," he allows his true colors to show more than once, even through Watson's veiled verbiage. For instance, at the end of IDEN, does Holmes make Mr. Windibank promise to stop? He not only lets him go, but he laughs as Windibank hurries away down the street. Does he tell Miss Sutherland who Hosmer Angel is? No! And why is that? Perhaps a little envy on his

If Sherlock Holmes Were a Woman

A mini-review by Tom Takach

This is the title of a play by Tim Kelly which was the Venue Teen Theatre Summer Project of 1999, produced by special arrangement with Baker's Plays. It was directed by Corinne Broskette and performed at The Sunshine Center in St. Petersburg, Florida on July 30 & 31, 1999. Member Tom Takach had the opportunity to see it and had the following to say about it.

I found it to be both unique and enjoyable, a 'Sherlockian soufflé' which rose to the occasion. It was liberally peppered throughout with quotes and references to a number of cases in the canon. "Mrs. Hudson" owns a house which is inhabited by seven school girls - a budding actress, a French exchange student, a Southern belle, a hypochondriac and a Dotty Watson.... and two, count 'em, two Shirley Holmes's.

This last named pair are doing a term paper on Holmes and, along with Dotty, serve up all of the canonical bill of fare. They often speak at the same time or finish each other's thoughts, while Dotty

usually identifies the wrong case which they are quoting from and then accepts their corrections gracefully.

In a nutshell, Mrs. Hudson is "murdered," the room is sealed, and everyone is a suspect. As a cast member had said earlier in the play, "This place is just filled with unique people." Deducing the identity of the murderer isn't easy, as evidenced when the brace of Shirleys is frustrated when searching for footprints because "Mrs. Hudson wasn't much with a vacuum cleaner," and there are footprints everywhere.

I found it to be a breath of fresh air.



Catalog cover sent in by Carl Heifetz.

Editor's Note: Just to remind you, if you see something Holmesian about to happen, like this play, let us know. We can at least notify members in the immediate area so they have the opportunity to try and see it.

For instance, this fall, the Avenue Players Theatre in Tarpon Springs will be doing "The Mask of Moriarty" on weekends Nov. 5-20. More info will follow as we get it.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE 1999

November 6

*24th Annual Fall Gathering
Sarasota Car Museum*

*Hosts: Charles & Marilyn Amick
2000*

January 29

*Sherlock's Sunshine Celebration
III: Birthday Bash*

*Leverock's Restaurant
St. Petersburg*

June 9, 10, 11

*Sunshine State Sherlockian
Scion Symposium II*

*Dolphin Beach Resort
St. Pete Beach*

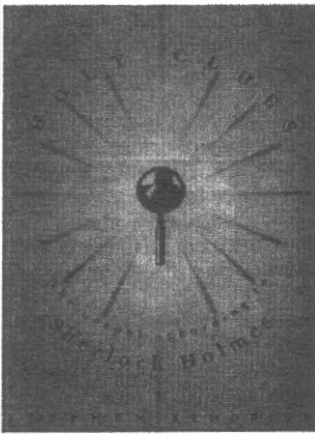
*25th Annual Spring Gathering
(inclusive)*

HOLY CLUES

This is the *Gospel According to Sherlock Holmes* by Stephen Kendrick (Pantheon \$21).

This is not a “whodunit,” but it is a must-read for fans of the world’s greatest consulting detective Sherlock Holmes.

Stephen Kendrick, the minister of the Universalist church of West Hartford, Connecticut, has dissected the Holmes stories to extract the religious and metaphysical lessons they



offer. Kendrick begins with the five principles Holmes gives to his colleague, Watson. They are:

1. Nothing is irrelevant.
2. Notice what you see.
3. Beware of the
4. The bizarre is not
5. Never presume anything.

Kendrick explains Holmes’ lasting impact and examines his Zen-like sleuthing

techniques that compel readers to return again and again to stories they are familiar with and take entertainment value in tales that confront the lowest instincts of humanity - murder and betrayal. With humor and insight, Kendrick probes into the mystique of Holmes and draws on both Eastern and Western religious traditions to bolster his theories.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Holmes’ creator and a spiritualist himself, would have loved this book.

BOOK REVIEW IN ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, 8/99.

(cont. from page 2) Tony Award and Drama Desk Award for design in 1974 for *Sherlock Holmes*, which had runs in London and New York. He died of emphysema.

Member **Charles Amick** will be giving a talk at the Venice Ranch on Venice Street (Jacaranda Ave. exit) in Venice at 10:30 A.M. on Sept. 19 on *Mysteries and Moralities in Sherlock Holmes*. Any friendly faces in the audience would be welcome!

part to a fellow (cont. page 7) (cont. from page 5) Bohemian pulling off a good trick. We see another sample of Holmes’ admiration of such behavior in *ILLU* when he tells the Baron, “I have a respect for your brains, and the little which I have seen of your personality has not lessened it.” He goes on to tell him that “no one wants to rake up your past and make you duly uncomfortable. It is over and you are now in smooth waters...” Make the Baron uncomfortable? How about all the women the Baron made “uncomfortable?” He asks the Baron, “Is the game worth it?”; the expression sounds as if it is a warning coming from a fellow hunter rather than from the warden who is saying “out of season.”

And what of that spring of 1891. Holmes was in France, and from all reports, his stay was to be a long one. Watson is surprised to find his friend at his doorstep one April evening. This leads one to suspect that there is more to this “airgun” story than was told. Spring? In Paris? Holmes’ first words to Watson are “I have been using myself up rather too freely.” Aha! Perhaps Moriarty was involved, but could it not have been to the Professor’s advantage to use the passionate ire of an angry father, or a suitor dropped for a suave Englishman? Yes, my good man, your daughter was wronged by this foreigner! Here! Use this airgun! It is untraceable!

As Carl has stated, I am sure many more examples can be found by the astute reader in the Canon. Holmes states in *GLOR* that it is the first case in which he “was ever engaged.” Is he talking about the case? Or was he about to tell Watson a personal story, then changed his mind? Many things are not what they seem at first sight. Perhaps that is why we read and re-read our 60 symphonies. To find out what is between the lines. Dear Watson told us so much and yet, so little. And just because he didn’t write about it, doesn’t mean it wasn’t there. No, I tend to see Carl’s point. Holmes, while perhaps not becoming involved in a lasting relationship, most certainly was not a

Sunshine State Sherlockian Scion Symposium II



Yes, it's back by popular demand! *The Pleasant Places of Florida*, a corresponding Scion of the Baker Street Irregulars, will be having a repeat performance of its highly acclaimed weekend symposium in St. Pete Beach. This time, we are honoring the 25th Anniversary of our first Spring Gathering. This long-anticipated event will take place on June 9-11, 2000, on the shores of St. Pete Beach, Florida, at the beautiful Dolphin Beach Resort.

June 9, 2000, Friday night . . .

Reception and casual get together at 6:00pm in The Stranger's Room, featuring hor d'oeuvres and a cash bar, to meet and greet, play a meeting game, register, get handouts, sing along, and toast Sherlock Holmes. Attendees will receive an assignment to be handed in Saturday.

June 10, 2000, Saturday . . .

From 7:30am to 9:00am a continental breakfast will be supplied free of charge in Mrs. Hudson's Kitchen.

From 9:00am to 5:00pm there will be displays of commercial vendors, member and club sales, handouts, and a silent auction.

From 9:00am to Noon there will be Symposia and individual presentations.

Lunch will be on your own from Noon to 2:00pm. Many will gather across the street at the Three Lions Pub.

From 2:00pm to 5:00pm, there will be Sherlockian presentations, games, videos and music.

From 6:00pm to 7:00pm there will be a Cocktail Gathering (cash bar) at Simpson's, with the silent auction still open for last bids, and a wandering photographer.

From 7:00pm to 11:00pm, there will be the Banquet, held this year to honor the 25th Anniversary of the First Spring Gathering of the Pleasant Places of Florida. Black tie and Victorian garb are optional, but encouraged for this sit down dinner with toasts, quizzes, entertainment, including an original radio play performed live, a sing along, silent auction, favors and reminiscences of the club.

June 11, 2000, Sunday . . .

From 9:00am to Noon, there will be a Dutch treat breakfast gathering at pool side for door prizes, presentation of awards and trophies, light talks and farewells.

Each attendee of the Symposium will receive a souvenir t-shirt upon registration Friday evening or Saturday morning. A souvenir program containing presentations, quizzes, histories of the Pleasant Places of Florida and other Florida scions, and photos will be sent out when completed.

As expected of the more low key West Coast of Florida, there will be more fun and frolic and less, but still plentiful, scholarly discourse. The hotel (only \$62 to \$82 per night) is right on the water, and it will already be warm but not yet real hot. Can you think of a better way to start your summer a few weeks earlier, than by surrounding yourself with both the "Charming climate of Florida" and Sherlockian fellowship?

Already confirmed are:

Presentations by Robert Zuczek, Brad Keefauver, Rosemary Michaud and Dr. Charles M. Carroll. The Dow Family Players will be performing *A Prairie Holmes Companion*, and various short skits. A Sherlockian Jeopardy game designed by David Scott will be played during the day. An original radio play by Mike Bryan will be performed at the banquet.

Attention Dealers! For information on charges for table space in our vendor area, advertisements in our programs, and your logo on our t-shirts, please contact Carl Heifetz,

or E-mail _____ or FAX or phone _____



THE PLEASANT PLACES OF FLORIDA

Registration for the Sunshine State Sherlockian Scion Symposium II

Name _____

Address _____

Phone/Email _____

I am enclosing \$ _____ for:

_____ Symposium (\$30.00 per person)

_____ Banquet (\$25.00 per person)

(Make checks payable to The Pleasant Places of Florida and mail to Carl Heifetz, USA.)

My banquet menu choices are _____ Prime Rib of Beef, Au Jus and/or _____ Chicken Marsala.

Call 800-237-8916 for reservations at the Dolphin Beach Resort at St. Pete Beach, FL. Weekend rates are \$62.00 (Standard Blvd.), \$72.00 (Superior Poolview) and \$82.00 (Deluxe Gulfview). Efficiencies are \$9.00 extra per night. All rooms have two double beds for up to four adults. Tax is 11% and cancellation policy is 72 hours. All reservations must be made and confirmed by May 9, 2000 and you must mention Pleasant Places of Florida, or give the code # G-PLEA.

The Pleasant Places of Florida

*Founded: 1972
by Leslie Marshall (dec.)*

Recorder Emeritus: Dr. Benton Wood

For the record:

THE LAST COURT OF APPEALS

David McCallister, Master of the House,

Jeff & Wanda Dow, The Papers on the Sundial,

Carl L. Heifetz, Representative both with the Servants and with the Tradespeople,

IF YOU SEE A RED CHECK HERE: , THIS IS YOUR LAST COMMUNICATION! USE
THE RENEWAL FORM INSIDE TO CONTINUE YOUR MEMBERSHIP.

**PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF THE DATE AFTER YOUR NAME ON THE MAILING LABEL.
THIS IS THE EXPIRATION DATE OF YOUR CLUB MEMBERSHIP.**

PLEASANT PLACES OF FLORIDA
THE PAPERS ON THE SUNDIAL

