



Special End-of-the-Year Issue, 2003

Communication No. 238

The Pleasant Places of Florida

Vol.7 No. 10

It is hard to believe that we are nearing the end of the year. It is also hard to believe that we have been publishing the Communication in its present incarnation for seven years. Why, it seems like just 38 issues ago, we were celebrating the PPOF's 200th issue.

The end of the year is a time to reflect, a time to reminisce about what has occurred during the preceding twelve months, and a time to remember what might have been. It is also a time to party like we were about to be raided by Scotland Yard. So, to all our Holmesian homies, we wish you the best compliments of the season. May next year be the safest, happiest and most prosperous. And don't forget to bring the dip.

The Papers on the Sundial

Miracle on Baker Street

by Tom Takach

"Oh yes," said Holmes. "I deduced your existence long before that eloquent reply to Virginia O'Hanlon's question appeared in *The New York Sun*. It wasn't difficult for one possessed of my especial talents."

"You yourself have long been an interesting case to me, Mr. Holmes." The portly gent with the rosy cheeks, snow-white beard and engaging smile gratefully accepted his host's offer of a second cup of tea. Not that a winter's evening on Baker Street could even be considered remotely cold by old Kris's standards. It was just that he so seldom allowed himself the luxury of a relaxed, amiable chat that he had no wish to see the evening end too soon. There was something simple yet very fulfilling in the sharing of a warm beverage with a friend, and Kris was beginning to consider Mr. Holmes just that, though this was their first meeting.

Kris gazed into the cheery fire and said, "I have always wondered why you never wrote to me before now. I, of course, am quite familiar with your reputation, and many times was in hope that I would hear from you so that I might supply your modest holiday wants. Why am I finally hearing from you after all these years?"

The great detective lit a cigarette, allowed himself a few puffs, then began slowly. "It's just that, of late, I have been feeling that London really has no need of me anymore. Years ago, I found my time constantly occupied, attributable in no small part to the schemes of Professor Moriarty." Holmes looked searchingly into his guest's eyes as he put the cigarette to his lips once more.

"Yes," replied the ruddy-faced chap. "The name is familiar to me. He was one of a select few who made my 'naughty' list every year without fail. He ended up passing from this life unloved and unmourned. A tragic story."

Holmes threw his cigarette into the fire with disgust.

"Yes," he agreed, "a tragic story. The more so because the end of his existence signaled the beginning of the decline of my own. True genius is all too rare, as I have, to my chagrin, come to realize since his death. I want you to bring him back to life, so that I (continued on page 2)



(continued from page 1) may once more face an adversary worthy of my steel. That is what I am asking of you during this season which is your own.”

The perpetual smile disappeared from the jolly man’s face, replaced by a look of sadness mingled with a certain weariness.

“I understand you completely, my friend. Many people have asked me over the years to have departed loved ones returned to them. Please understand that, although I have many gifts which it is within my power to call upon, that is not one of them. Surely life without this man cannot be such a bleak prospect?”

Holmes rose from his chair and began pacing back and forth very slowly, his chin resting upon his breast.

“As I say, I feel that there is nothing left for me that would justify my existence on the globe. Forgive me for saying so, but sometimes I almost feel like....” His sentiments were silenced as his portly guest pulled himself from his chair with some difficulty and placed his arm around the shoulder of the man in torment.

“Listen to me. You must yield to my greater experience,” the large man said. “After all, I have been around for what may seem an eternity as mortals reckon time. There is a gift which I possess which I use only sparingly. I believe that your case demands that it be employed. It is within my power, within limits, to know the future. I would like to relate just one incident to you, and then you may decide for yourself if your existence truly lacks meaning. Please sit down.”

It was, to say the least, unusual for Holmes to be the one who was surprised by a revelation. A strange sensation, to be sure. He resumed his seat, never taking his eyes from his uncommon visitor. Trying to put himself in the shoes of his good Watson, who was perpetually astonished, he decided to pour himself a generous glass of whisky. After its warming influence permeated his system, he said, “Pray, continue.”

Kris stood in front of the fireplace, eyes fixed on the man who was longing to hear words of comfort spoken. Another novel position for the great detective to be in. The man who turned dreams into reality continued.

“Relieving pain and preserving the life and spirit of another is the greatest good that man can aspire to in this plane of his existence. No doubt this is even more rewarding when this office may be performed for a friend. And I think that I may refer to John H. Watson as a particular friend of yours, may I not?”

Holmes’ face rapidly drained of all color.

“Wat—Watson, my dear Watson? What are you say—saying?”

“Only this,” said Kris, lighting his pipe and drawing upon it slowly. “Dr. Watson will marry again—wait—let me finish. He will marry again, he will leave Baker Street, and he will know greater happiness than has been his lot since his beloved Mary passed on years ago. However—it will not last. He will lose his new wife in a terrible railway accident. He will become a morose recluse, permitting none to cross his doorstep. He will feel very much the way you feel tonight. He is a doctor. He knows how to leave his suffering behind, and he will be sorely tempted to apply that knowledge to his own case. Only a great friend who has shared so much with him, one who has gained his complete and utter trust, will be able to stay his hand from this course of action. That friend is you, Mr. Holmes. If you are not here to intervene....”

For just the third time in his life, Holmes wept. Bitterly and profusely. He regained his composure only after many minutes had passed. Looking steadfastly at his guest, he offered, “It is so easy to become ensnared in one’s own problems that we fail (continued on page 3)



(continued from page 2) to give adequate consideration to how our actions may affect others. I am a fairly keen student and I feel that this lesson will never leave me. Thank you for coming tonight and giving me the guidance which I now realize that I needed so desperately. This gift which you give so freely I accept with ceaseless gratitude. Again...I thank you."

Kris nodded his head, beaming a great smile once more, and thanked the Baker Street sleuth for a pleasurable evening. Disappearing slowly as he stood in front of the fireplace, he wished his new friend the compliments of the season.

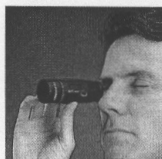
Eleventh Hour Shopping

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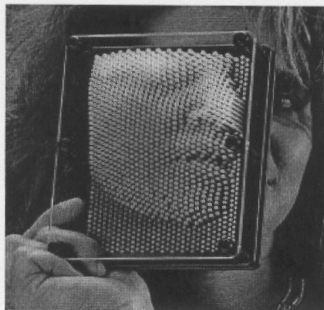
delightful little items for sale. You can get them large or small, spinning clockwise or counterclockwise. You can even specify a distance from the sun. The perfect gift for that physics or mathematics professor you just don't know what to get. Each one comes with a certificate of authenticity. Log on to www.DYNAMICS.COM and find the perfect one. Delivery before Christmas is guaranteed if ordered before December 16.

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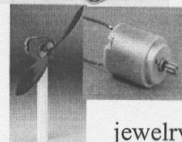
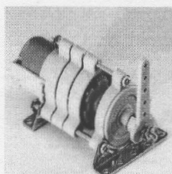
settings allow you to zoom in on hard-to-get-at areas. And Toby's patented cloth-tipped skimmer/wiper is guaranteed not to harm a Chihuahua. And if you act before December 31, a battery-operated sonic cleaner will be included free. That's a \$39.95 value. Big or small, floppy-eared or straight, AKC-registered or Heinz-57, all dogs love the Doggy Nose Cleaner.

Everyone loves the



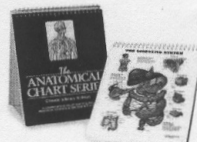
Disfigurement Hider. Have fun with the Ronder Disfigurement Hider by **Ronder Novelties Inc.** Just press the box of needles against your face and whatever blemishes you might have instantly disappear. Great at birthday and retirement parties.

The Tunnel Finder from **Edmund Scientific** is



guaranteed to locate those nasty subterranean caverns that have been mysteriously opening up in front of banks, jewelry shops and "Momma's Fudge" emporiums. Battery-operated so you can take it anywhere.

Be a doctor—or pretend to be one to pick up girls. You'll know everything you need with the Anatomical Chart



Series from **John H. Watson Enterprises**. Real doctors use it, so it has to be good.

Is it a Dunlop or a Goodrich? With **Holmes Brand Plaster**, you'll be able to take impressions like the pros.

(continued on page 5)



The Night Before Solstice

(with apologies to Clement Moore or Henry Livingston Jr., depending on who you think wrote the original. Sounds like a job for a consulting detective.)

'Twas the night before Solstice
And all through the town,
Some urbanites were stirring,
Not all in their gowns.



Beppo lay all snug in his bed
While visions of plaster danced in his head.
"Smash them," he murmured, "smash them
all—smash them all."
In hopes of recovering a profitable haul.

Victor, poor Victor sat in his chair
Hoping for solace, a feeling so rare.
He stared at the fire, while his thoughts passed
so glum:
All I want for Christmas is my own real thumb.

Lestrade was at the 'Yard, the air was quite
tense.
Of the clues before him he tried to make sense.
A hairbrush, an umbrella, a half-full bottle of
gin.
"I'll not call him," he mumbled, "I'll not call
him in."



Rodger sat at the edge of the
mire
And stared at the 'Hall—his
one true desire.
"I'll have you, I'll have you,"
he said standing up.
And he went back inside to
feed his sweet pup.

Martha paused and set down her tray,
Wondering if she'd ever have a free day.
How they drive me to distraction, she thought,
they haven't a clue.
If I could just, she thought now, be rid of those
two.

Reginald looked out the window of his

Hurlstone estate.
And thought being rich is not so grand, is
hardly so great.
The conclusion was there, no matter how he
might shun it.
It was obvious to him now that the butler had
done it.

Leon Sterndale took a draw from his pipe.
The odd fruits before him looked succulent and
ripe.
These will not do, he thought, tapping his boot.
I need something quicker, I must have the root.

Big Bob Ferguson dreamed of his teas:
Gunpowder, Earl Grey, Pekoe—all mixture of
leaves.

He smiled in his sleep at
the wonderful sight.
It's no wonder his wife
was frustrated that night.



John Watson lay near the
fire, crammed on the
couch.
His head was still aching, his temperament a
grouch.
His wife slept soundly in their new bed—light
and airy:
Watson's wife's name was Alice but he had
called her by Mary.

Holmes gazed down from his second story
view,
Contemplating the letter head received from
Perry Temmew.
The deception it described was compelling, the
crime very base.

Happy Solstice to all, Holmes
thought, on the morrow I'm on
the case.





(continued from page 3)

Don't be caught in the country



without these great accessories. They fit right in the glove compartment so they're always available.

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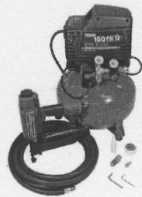
Medical



Equipment's
Supersize
Syringe. Just load it up with your favorite

medicine, pull back on the patented bolt-plunger device and release. So easy to use, a child could do it. Child not included.

Craftsman, always an innovator in fine power tools, introduces the Rug Spinner 2500. A two hp universal



motor provides greater starting torque than induction motors for improved

operation in low-voltage conditions. Ideal for opening coffin lids too. Backed by Craftsman's famous five-year guarantee.

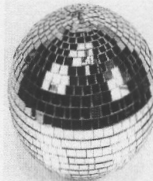
Need to locate a missing bride? Having trouble scanning the great alkali plain? Then you need **St. Simon**

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Night Vision Goggles. Equipped with 1:1 real-time image projection, the 'Hawk' boasts an impressive 1,885 feet field of view. If it's out there, the Flying Hawk will find it.

Beppo Enterprises novelty Disco Ball is a great stocking stuffer.



New Year's Resolutions

Editor's Note: We have come into possession of certain New Year's Resolutions written by children. We hope you find them of educational value.

I resolve to get along with others and not cause them offense, particularly my sisters.

Sarah Cushing, 12

I promise to be of good cheer and always patient with others, even when their behavior is quite egregious.

Violet de Merville, 15

I resolve to be more giving and honest during the coming year. And I resolve to be more underhanded and cunning.

John Clay, 18

I have this awful habit of introducing people to one another and it never seems to do anyone any good. Therefore, I resolve never to do this again.

W. Stamford, 11

I must restrain my insatiable desire to spy on the neighbors. It has gotten me into more trouble this past year, and I

therefore resolve never to do it again.

S. Holmes, 8

The time has come for me to rise above my fear of the water. There is nothing to fear. I resolve to learn how to swim this year.

Fitz McPherson, 9

I really must improve my ability to interact with others. I resolve to better my skills and become a "people person."

Grimes Roylott, 16

The Pleasant Places of Florida

*founded in 1972
by Leslie Marshall, B.S.I. (dec.)*

Recorder Emeritus: Dr. Benton Wood, B.S.I.

For the Record: **THE LAST COURT OF APPEALS**

David McCallister, Master of the House,

(Master of Ceremonies at most gatherings, host of the annual Wessex Cup)

Carl Heifetz, Representative (both with the Servants and with the Tradespeople),
(Correspondent & Communication)

Wanda & Jeff Dow, The Papers on the Sundial,
(Communications, Bookkeeping)

Please make note of the date after your name on the mailing label. This is the expiration date of your club membership. You will not receive further Communications after this date unless you renew. Renewals should be sent, with any updates, to Wanda Dow. Make all checks payable to Wanda Dow. US\$12.00 (US/CAN) or US\$13.00 (INTL)

PLEASE NOTE ABOVE INFORMATION! ALL CHECKS FOR RENEWAL SHOULD NOW BE MADE OUT TO WANDA DOW. CHECKS MADE OUT TO THE PLEASANT PLACES OF FLORIDA WILL BE RETURNED. WE NO LONGER HAVE A CLUB ACCOUNT AT THE BANK AND WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CASH SUCH CHECKS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.
