

Minutes of Literary Club

May 2019

May was decidedly a month of papers about familia: parents, children, siblings, historical lineage, extended clans of cousins and uncles and aunts, plus families not linked by name but just as committed to one another, and perhaps even more connected by bloodlines, those groups forged and formed under duress, as in soldiers, trauma teams, hospital and recovery units, essentially any group dedicated to service for before their needs.

Lew Gatch's family is surely a founding family, in many meanings of that word which often overlap. Arriving in the colonies (Maryland specifically) half a century before the American Revolution, the establishment of his family in the New World essentially parallels the establishment of our country as an independent nation...it's hard to be more "founding" than that.

Lew's family history also captures the founding of religious freedom as part of America's promise to the new citizens; fair to call them immigrants as besieged and battered a term that is nowadays. Some called themselves pioneers, first families, explorers, some even light-heartedly called themselves vagrants as they dug in to become law-abiding neighbors – beyond a doubt they all were ingredients of the melting pot that was a stone soup recipe where every color and former country contributed to the flavor of the stock. As America was overwhelmingly agrarian, as were Lew's great-great-great grandparents who secured transport to these shores as indentured servants, they then bought their freedom with the fruits of the labors wrested sustenance from the earth.

The other thread which wove together generations of Lew's forefathers, as well as America's burgeoning society, was the establishment of property rights. The paper posits that without written documentation of who owns what, how it can be sold or transferred, and the legal definition and maintenance of such administration. Finally, his pencil underlines how charities are currently and might be classified in the future to be responsible for part of the tax "ownership" of property and how such would benefit our society. Finally, Lew's paper was also filled with names familiar to decades of Literary Club membership, and Literary Club leadership. His is a family of letters across the Club's history, as much as our current patchwork family which this club shelters and celebrates.

On May 13th, Bob Watkins presented a paper that was warmly written and deftly delivered to a group of 59 members and 6 guests. Bob's approach to sharing his family's tale was as congenial and supportive as he is in service and attendance here at 500 E 4th Street for decades. Bob's family settled in Bellefontaine, OH or Bellfountain as some call this Norman Rockwell-ish burg about two hours north and east of Cincinnati. Considering the town is due east along State Route 47 from Versailles, OH which the French would obviously call Versailles, perhaps the proper pronunciation is too fine a hair to split for Ohio's rural villages.

Bob's immediate family established themselves "in town," although probably no one thought of them as "city slickers." But when his uncle, who had maintained the farm acreage outside the town line, was physically unable to keep answering the bell year after year, Bob's family moved the homestead to the hinterlands.

They moved into a building inhabited by his uncle, and certainly the domicile had walls, windows, and a roof overhead, but the list of amenities might end there...none of the creature comforts like indoor plumbing and heat that Bob and his family had grown fond of, there weren't part of the Watkins' country living experience. Even a century after Lew's family started cultivating the land, America was still decidedly a far-flung farm-based society, so this work almost seemed universal across the land. Tilling, planting, hoeing, and harvesting, from dawn to dark, day after day. It is said that hard work breeds character. (It is also said that characters breed offspring who have to live out in the country. I'm sure that the Watkins were never grouped in the latter.) Instead, the hard work polished their mettle. When I was growing up, the lilting lingua franca that tickled our ears as we headed out to the barn to grab our crude instruments of plant-life destruction was – "All I want to see is asses and elbows" which is precisely why Bob rose higher and learned more. But he never forgot what he learned on the farm, nor did he ever flinch when living by the adage "family comes first." It's remarkable that after all the sweat and horseflies and concrete-hard clods of dirt that he somehow could describe these memories with rose-colored glasses nostalgia. Then again, it's always better to be able to look back on a situation and describe the time with a touch of tenderness, which is what remains once the blisters and sunburn heal and when all the calluses smooth back into what's called skin.

We've enjoyed budget of all stripes this season: some tied to a theme, some written by the organizer but read by a few, one even with a soundtrack and title song. On May 20th, Rich Lauf capped the year, chronologically and metaphorically, with a Memorial Day budget. When layered upon themselves – As He Lay Dying, One Lousy Day and The Honored Dead – Rich as a dedicated son, dedicated military leader, and dedicated brother-in-arms presented a triad of reminiscences which those of us lucky enough to be here that evening will not soon forget. His

first paper was a memorial to his father with the family gathering in a hospital room as death hovers just a room, or breath, or stock tip away. The following two papers both centered on his military experiences, episodes that were brutal in terms of flesh rendered to liquid, firefights from positions hidden on hillsides, and valor from Rich in particular, seemingly then embodied in each of the men whom he commanded. We learned about the lives (lost) of Steve Thormodsgard and Paul Mckenzie in detail, and saw their fine, young faces on this desk, and knew why their families grieved for them. But the one true, strong recollection was how Rich was fully aware of the Catch-22 lunacy of military engagement, yet he was going to serve his unit because as he said, "Then I actually thought how useless it would be to die at age twenty-two for a piece of shit streambed that nobody would ever care about. I also thought how unhappy my family would be if that happened. I made a very conscious decision that even though I was so tired, I would fight it and hold on."

Looking back, it's been an difficult year for the Literary Club family as too many members have passed; Rich's budget provided the gravitas to allow the emotions a place to settle, while his words were far more lyrical than this blunt assessment: it's so damn hard to say goodbye and God Bless to our departed friends.

The evening closed with Literary Club elections. I'm pleased to report that there was no Russian interference, predatory influence, nor malfeasance. Joe Dehner was elected president for the 2019-2020 season and Ted Silberstein elected vice-president. As trustees, Steve Strauss was elected to serve a three-year term, Rich Lauf will be taking on the middle trustee spot vacated by Ted Silberstein and serving two more years while Richard Hague will be the senior trustee for a final year (while training to be incoming secretary; granted this is obviously fake news, but in today's world, we can go from a rumor which I'm officially starting tonight to fact within a tweet or two). Returning to their posts by votes of acclimation, the treasurer (Tom Bennett), Clerk (Tom Cuni) and Secretary will serve under the truism that no good deed should go unpunished. We are, though, uncertain what, if any, good deeds these Three Musketeers might have actually done to deserve the sympathy vote.

Often when the final bell rings at the end of a school year, we're greeted by the sight of students flying out of classrooms and papers spilling out of notebooks while the now senatorial Alice Cooper's anthem of "School's Out" plays over the intercom system. As this is our final meeting in the clubhouse for this season, I suspect that our members will contain their exuberance as they make their way out the door – but if giddy, you can certainly trust the handrail now. Certainly before we close, we must recognize and thank outgoing El Presidente

Kathman – especially for the mini-tutorials on safety, audio, rules of order, dining and cookie protocol – Jerry, we've all benefitted for having your steady hand at the helm of good ship HMS Literary Club.

Before he blew his whistle to dismiss us one final time, our gym teacher's parting blurt was: don't get anybody pregnant. Yes, I went to public high school. Also obviously yes, this was a regrettable remark from an era, or perhaps an epoch before any political correctness was defined to keep these poor dimwitted unbrows who feel the need to wear a whistle around their necks to establish their pecker order, I mean pecking order. But for once, I think I can confidently respond to that lummoX's command about avoiding teenage parenthood, and I think I may speak for us all: this summer, no problem.

Happy summer vacation, one and all.

Minutes of the Literary Club

April 2019

Secretary's note: counting a memorial, there were eight papers delivered during the month of April. That number is certainly more than the combined total upcoming in May and June; in fact, depending on how our Clerk schedules it, eight may be more than May, June and next September combined. To not unduly test the collective patience of our group, I'll limit my remarks to one paragraph per paper, a squeeze which will save at least 20 minutes.

On April 1, the evening's exercise began Paul Sittenfeld reading a memorial to Lou Prince to 61 members and 6 guests.

Thereafter, Terry Horan brought a budget which relished it's April Fool's Date. It is not uncommon to have a certain theme unifying the three papers, but this is perhaps the first time that a budget had a soundtrack of a single album: The Door's "Strange Days." Terry was first with "The Age of Aquarius" which niftily wrapped his recollection of that turbulent decade with the rainbow changes rippling through American society – all these and more colored those days like a tie-dyed t-shirt. It wasn't easy to find one's path to adulthood when so many sublime attractions beckoned young Mr. Horan, yet eventually green prevailed and he followed the yellow-brick road into the financial advising. Yet the siren song(s) of the Sixties reverberate still.

"Dawning of the Age of Incivility" Mike Kremzar had responsibilities for P&G during this same time which carried a tougher veneer than tiptoeing through the tulips. Lines were drawn in the sand, be they protest lines or script lines for TV shows; undeniably, society was never going to be the same. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ruled that the old way was no way: jobs had to be open for all genders and races. Some might have seen this decade as a social studies experiment, but for Mike, the workforce uprising emphasized force overwork, serious threats were made, and in time, the wheels of progress lurched forward into a Brave New World, leaving scars upon our interactions with one another.

"The Throes of Yesterday" Paul Franz concluded the evening with a paper that was as mystical as the decade it described: was it fact, was it fiction, was it a hallucination? The

probable fiction could be seen as a UC version of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland: Drink Me. Eat Me. Get Small. Smiles materialize during a long, hazy night at the Peyote Palace, ushering Will (the main character with more than just a hint of secondary meaning to his name) fifty years into the future. Riffing on the decade's prevailing themes of sex, drugs and rock 'n roll, just like with Alice, there are more questions than answers: Who are the millennials? How can Bob Dylan win the Nobel Prize for Literature? What's an opioid or is that just a good word for Scrabble? As we now live in the period of alternate history, Paul's paper shows that an alternate future can also lead to confusion and wonder as to what's real and what's not.

On April 8, 2019, Tony Covatta's "A Beginning, A Middle and An End" tested the group of 62 members and 5 guests on the extent of our collective Core Curriculum education. Tony's quest for Wisdom with a capital W began in earnest at a Roman Catholic college that put a lot of emphasis on studying the Greeks. The Holy Trinity in his case were Socrates, Aristotle and Plato – Philosophers all. This foundation evolved into a graduate course in literature with an interesting premise: if a reader does the math to plumb the exact middle of a book, there he will find the central truth to the work. As an echo of Chekhov's advice to short story writers – cut off the first third, which is a preamble, and the last third, which is review: the middle third which remains is the story. Mathematicians with a literary bent like Bertrand Russell and Lewis Carroll undoubtedly support Tony's divining of words into halves to reveal the whole.

Perhaps following Tony's thesis, Dave Edmundson split April in half with his paper, "In a Quiet Country Village" for 63 members and 4 guests. This lighthearted homage to Spring Valley, OH was a recollection of Dave's boyhood, bringing to mind Sherwood Anderson's "Winesburg, OH" although with more humor, especially in regards to the division between Quakers and Methodists. During that time, at least through young Dave's eyes, the backwater seemed like Garrison Keillor's "Prairie Home Companion" with a touch of John Irving to layer in the dark secrets, salacious longings that riff through the cornfields and rift the daily do'ings of this rural crossroads. A thoroughly enjoyable evening of storytelling.

Jim Wesner brought "Bede's Necklace" on April 22, 2019, to an audience of 53 members and 6 guests. St. Bede was perhaps the greatest chronicler of theological works, notably "The Ecclesiastical History of the English People." Celebrated by Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Anglicans, he was the only Englishman to be listed among the blessed in "Dante's Paradiso." Bede's "History" gathers and presents a swath of events and people, including Caedmon, author of the oldest verse in the English language, quite the legacy for "an illiterate

cowherd.” The imposing scholarship of presenting the moment when Roman stronghold weakened, allowing a confluence of cultures, precipitated by warring city/states/tribes to develop into the fledgling English nation.

Everything you ever wanted to know about mantels and more...on April 29, 2019, Stewart Maxwell brought “Stoking the Fire” to a group of 5 guests and 48 members. Another instance of the remarkable depth and breadth of knowledge that club members possess about archival, arcane, and architectural matters, Stewart, aka Sherlock, pored through construction plans of yore to discern how and where it was originally before it was moved to the infamous third floor. Akin to counting the rings of a felled tree to divine its age, as the paint and years were peeled back, the heritage of our hidden treasure was revealed. Although in this case, our mantel is moving on to the Cincinnati Art Museum where it will be reunited with Judge Burnett and admired by legions in the Cincinnati Wing for decades to come.

Minutes of the Literary Club

March 30, 1850 or perhaps 2019

Quote: "The club met at half past 7 o'clock. An essay was read by William Guilford entitled "Ingenuity." The subject of American creators was then informally discussed after which refreshments were partaken of. Club adjourned."

Now I know that paragraph is probably Tom Shuck and others' version of perfect minutes: short, sweet and time for partaking refreshments; perfect. Today being the first day of the fourth month, that historical excerpt is more than just a bit of April's foolery. As with many things here at the Literary Club, the chronicling of our history is as ingrained and indelible the cigar smoke in the library or sepia photos in the foyer. Kudos to Eugene, and Jim Myers, whose diligence brought the LC into the digital age, and by doing so, allowed me to bring the past into a more accessible present.

On March 4, 2019, Polk Laffoon brought "Titans" a splendid compare and contrast between the legendary lives, and subsequent legacies of, Henry Luce, founder of *Time*, *Fortune*, *Life* and *Sports Illustrated* and Rupert Murdoch, owner of many Australian and British newspapers, as well as a mind-numbing empire of other media outlets (emphasis on the mind-numbing with tabloids and Fox News on his ledger). Both men's respective upbringings provided fertile foreshadowing as their goals were much larger than just sporting the ink-stained shirtcuffs of publisher.

It's not hard to imagine these two as opponents in the prizefighting title match, title in this case referencing 60-point headline font; Luce in this corner wearing a robe of stars and stripes and polishing his masthead with high style and sophistication, with Murdoch opposite, bedecked in a Union Jack garb (even though Polk focused his paper on Rupert's domestic conquests, not his global empire, albeit virtually all his holdings are within English-speaking countries). With Luce's stature, he'd mix it up in the gentlemen's sport in a boxing ring – Murdoch would stomp wild-eyed into a mixed martial arts' octagon. Both defined and defended their turf.

What seems prescient in both these individuals is how they merged newspapers and politics – with a nod to Citizen Kane, this potent blend of print, persuasion, influence and both hidden and overt agendas melds into Power with a capital P, an inextricable part of modern machinations and how they molded their lives and companies as the profilers of human foibles

and purveyors of government gossip, pulped, printed and promoted into virtually every household in America.

Luce and Murdoch had vastly different family circumstances, but a similar path was found from boarding schools to the dining halls of Ivy League and Oxford educations. As Polk noted, quote, “Rupert was arch, aggressive, charming, funny and just a little bit rebellious...He didn’t care much about his studies, but was interested in buying the undergraduate magazine *Cherwell*.” End quote. This line zeroes in on the dinger, a significant difference being one that Murdoch carried almost from birth: most journalism students long for a by—as in BY-line; Murdoch was a student looking for a buy- BUY-line right from the get-go. It’s almost too bad that half a century separated these men and their organizations as it would have been gruesomely fascinating to see them duke it out in a four-sided boxing ring, an eight-sided cage, or a boardroom. Ultimately, the clout each carried/carries was unparalleled prior to their respective time at the helm; the breadth of their roles and how each oriented their organizations mirrors the mass market, a swirl of readers and viewers.

March 11, 2019. Dick Wendel’s paper, “Managing Health Care” deserved a heart monitor beeping in the background and a crowd of surgeons and nurses gathered around on the podium; unfortunately LC tradition frowns on props. Moreso, it's a shame that we didn't have guests from the US Senate or House of Representatives that evening as Dick presented a smart paper filled with insight drawn from a years of professional experience, advice which they’d be wise to consider and adopt.

One unfortunately not-shocking stat: healthcare costs have risen much faster than the consumer price index, by one or two percentage points annually. Not a big deal from one year to the next, but overlay it across three or four decades and it’s now approaching 20% of the GDP. Here’s a description only a doctor could love, or pen: “To identify the fat and slack within our healthcare system is not rocket science. However, remedies for this bloated system have been elusive for as long as I can remember.” End quote. The paper then dug into the myriad of ills, from price inelasticity for treatment to misplaced pay incentives to lack of advocacy (for patients and doctors) and more.

Contrary to the healthcare debacle spawned by elected officials, Dick's paper focused first and foremost on providing care to all. Even with industry lobbying groups and continuing education boondoggles in Belize, it seems that doctors still want to heal the sick, including the system. Dick's paper, and online addendum, illustrated clear steps that coulda (control drug prices), woulda (control HMOs) and shoulda (reasons for healthy lifestyles and universal access) be enacted to bring down Americans’ skyrocketing medical costs and provide true world-class

treatment. The coup de grace was anti-filibuster surprise ending: Dick appended seven additional pages to his paper on our website so he could hew to the Club's recommended time behind the lectern.

“It’s Not Elementary, my dear Watson,” by Jim Nordlund. By virtue of regular attendance at the LC, club members are denied prime time viewing of whatever NCIS wannabe is airing on Monday nights, but Jim did an able and ample job of filling in the literary antecedents to the genre, focusing on Conan Doyle’s prized albatross, one Sherlock Holmes. The whole field of forensic crime solving has roots on the written page, with the deerslayer hat also perched upon the metaphoric heads of Edgar Allan Poe’s characters. E.A, his DJ name, is credited not only as the father of the mystery story...but also the horror story, so it’s a coin toss whether those heads were still attached to bodies. Nonetheless, these cases benefit nicely with the never-ending supply of real-life murder and mayhem.

It is also not so surprising that the medical field was on the frontlines of forensic crime solving as the laboratory is the proving ground for guilt when examining those poor souls who were destined for infamy based on their unplanned destination in the ground. As Jim revealed, blood samples, left behind lockets of hair, skin cells, footprints, and fingerprints all have implicated killers who hid in plain sight until science tracked them down. While it seems indecorous to use the adjective cutting edge when talking about gruesome murders, we’ll simply describe DNA profiling as the most recent and resilient of evidence pointing to a conviction. From Sherlock to “lock ‘im up”, Jim presented a buttoned-up history of how truth is stranger than fiction, until the detectives come along.

Fittingly before Joe Tomain’s “My First Time” Terrell Finney signed the rolls of membership at his first meeting as an LC member. As he didn’t falter in front of the group of 61 members and three guests, Terrell proved his readiness to canvass the room many, many times in order to collect tiny slips of paper when the 2019-2020 election takes place. I wonder if Paul Shortt mentioned to Terrell about this part of the hazing, I mean new member perks.

Professor Tomain then swept us into the bowels of Port Authority in NYC as passage to seeing five naked women. As a wizened and weary former commuter, I can attest to there being many naked women who congregated around nearby Times Square, and that the ignominious Port Authority bus terminal may be the only building that rises six stories above the street yet is only bowels.

As Joe and his pal Pat Federici made their way to, and through, the Museum of Modern Art...a bold work by a bald artist bade them welcome. Picasso's remarkable transformation of a visual chronicler of the 20th century, time and again his art pushed viewers into new ways of seeing. And Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. version) which stopped the young men in their tracks was a landmark work of modern art, with as much acclaim and declaim as all masterpieces seem to generate. The canvas itself was oversized – the notebooks and sketches that preceded the final brushstroke cemented Picasso's position at the forefront of Cubism.

Quote: "For all of his notoriety as the preeminent "painter of modern life" (as Baudelaire would have it), Picasso did not create Les Femmes in a burst of artistic genius and energy. Rather, he brooded over the painting that has been called the "most deliberate, the most carefully plotted of his career." On the way to completion, Picasso filled sixteen sketchbooks with hundreds of preliminary studies, the quantity of which was not only unique to Picasso, but "without parallel . . . in the entire history of art." End quote.

There are so many points of view on this masterpiece, and Joe adroitly tied up all the details as he led the group through description and diagnosis of intent. Context is crucial to understanding Picasso's groundbreaking piece, not just in the art world, but for the world at large. Not only did art critics poke and prod and pile on, but cultural and literary reviewers added their perspectives as well. The responses were psychological revelations just as much as they were philosophical questions. Final quote: "early criticisms were based on rejection; Picasso's rejection of the erotic in favor of the exotic; of classical representation for something new and unfamiliar; and of space, depth, and perspective for something flat and cropped. One might imagine that the idea of the conflation of space and time was in the air given that 1905 was Einstein's year of special relativity. Les Femmes stops and fuses space and time. For all of its angles, the surface is flat. For all of its figures, motion is suspended. And, if there is a story to tell, it is told in a glance; there is no narrative. It is all impact." End quote. All the secretary can say in summation is that for a lawyer, Joe sure does know an awful lot about art...and we are all the better that he shared his views and others' reviews so we can see things anew.

Good evening.

Minutes of Literary Club

February 2019

The month was a rich gathering of experts, with well-written papers on politics, dentists, race cars, Freud's interpretation of dreams, and war. Heaven knows why women aren't attracted to the Literary Club.

On February 4, 2019, Peter Stern's "Mysterious Case of Dentistry" began with a premise that is obviously true but errant in expectation, and I quote: "The American presidency is the most powerful office in the world." (That's not the errant bit, this is) "In a perfect world, we'd like our Commander-in-Chief to be impervious to illness." Rattling through how these elevated mortals still succumb to disease and death, just like their electorate, nonetheless, they also go to great lengths to project a hale-and-hearty veneer. Presidents who suffered covertly while in office include Woodrow Wilson and FDR, and lesser known, Grover Cleveland, our 24th President and subject of Peter's paper. Cleveland re-entered the Oval Office during a period of financial crisis, so while trying to calm the nation's fears of economic collapse, he and his closest advisors felt the need to be clandestine when diagnosing and treating his malignant cancer of the mouth to avoid further unsettling the nation.

Keeping POTUS' condition secret from the Cabinet, Congress and the American public, the surgery took place at sea. A medical team of six set up the operating theater with one ceiling light, no suction, no ventilator, and no blood for transfusion. Remarkably, the procedure was a success and when the yacht pulled into the dock at Gray Gables, the statement issued was that "the president enjoyed good fishing and that his health was excellent." The next challenge was to reconstruct Cleveland's palate and face, necessitating a dental procedure, but the dentist essentially fulfilled the old axiom about loose lips sinking ships and a Philadelphia newspaper ran the story as to Cleveland's precarious health; as they say nowadays, the story went viral. A rival paper tried its best to vilify the reporter – decades later, one of the three remaining witnesses to the surgery vindicated his original account. While this was the first time a US President had a malignant mouth, the intervening decades have provided countless candidates and incumbents who have carried forward this unfortunate condition in pre-election debates.

Tyler Winslow stepped behind the lectern on February 11, bringing his paper, “Spy-Gate” to a group of 54 members and 6 guests. Focusing on the 2007 Formula One season, this pinnacle of auto racing is akin to horse racing and other high-stakes, high-glamor sports, as it attracts Saudi princes, Hollywood celebrities, social climbers, and legions of fans, a potent mix for high-speed hijinks and dramatic crash-and-burn, both on the track and off.

It’s fair to say that the faces, facts and dates zoomed by as Tyler settled into race pace. A roster of European and American names flashed by: Nigel Stepney, Martin Whitmarsh, Ron Dennis, Favio Briatore, and Rory Byrne, were the puppetmasters to the two prima-donna drivers whose egos were the only things larger and louder than their engines: Fernando Alonso and Lewis Hamilton. Pitted on the same team, also pitted as fierce competitors, until, “All hell broke loose in the pits.”

The Spygate title evokes a John LeCarre espionage feel, and Tyler did a good job of conveying how these behind-the-scenes principals had no qualms about pinching documents or pitching drivers. The action heated up at the Hungarian Grand Prix where Alonso and Hamilton did everything they respectively could to sabotage the other. Horsepower in full flagrant display, Tyler captured a season of in-fighting and outlandish behavior by all the characters, leaving our author to take the checkered flag.

Our February 18th meeting began with Robert Dorsey read a memorial for Jim Bridgeland. Thereafter, Jack Leibold brought, “Sweet Dream” to a gathering of 53 members and 9 guests. We live in an era of Dreamers, in a country built upon the premise and promise of The American Dream. More on that to come at close. Songs, scientific discoveries and sewing machines all came to their creators in a dream. But pinning down what dreams are, where they come from, and what they mean is an endeavor that has captivated man for centuries.

Dreams arise in our slumbering brains with theories as to the physiological and psychological benefits abounding. Jack then shared a personal aside, explaining that after a 35-year career in diagnostic radiology, he’s remaining in the healing arts but approaching wellness from a POV slightly outside conventional medicine.

Recently, the world has seen a blending of Western and Eastern religion, evidenced by Dalia Lama co-authoring “Book of Joy” with Bishop Desmond Tutu, and digital delinquents: Facebook social media malingering and WikiLeaks political muckraking – so perhaps our speaker is on the leading edge of melding traditional medicine with Freudian analysis and Jungian interpretation is right on time. Although almost twenty years apart in age, Freud and Jung maintained a professional collaboration. As Freud seemed to elbow out Oedipus in terms

of a Mommy Dearest sequel, still and all, his theories are pinned to dreams being containers of repressed sexual longing. Jung was less lurid, more expansive.

Jack illustrated how dreams are the language of personal and collective unconscious. The four principles of dreams – 1. That the individual is the final arbiter of a dream’s meaning, 2., that all dreams come in the service of health and wellness, 3., that dreams have multiple meanings that are simultaneously true, and 4. dreams speak in a universal language of metaphor and symbols. Jack concluded with the interpretation of one of his dreams. It was multi-layered visually and full of nuance. It seemed full of risk yet restive. He was poised to dive, but didn’t. Suddenly falling, the dream ends before he either hits the rocks or finds the water instead. As he ends: “Everyone dreams. But whether you sense these dreams offer potential meaningful messages from your inner unconscious, or [are] simply your brain resetting its circuitry...gentlemen, sweet dreams.”

February 25, 2019. The evening began with a memorial for Dave Reichert, read by his son Jim. Nick Ragland then brought a budget, starting with his paper, “The Great American Art Heist.” Through some nifty research, Nick unveiled a couple local heroes – Walter Farmer (who also was a Literarian of long standing in his time) and Charles Kuhn – aka “Monument Men” who served to protect cultural property in war areas during and after World War II. Paintings from the Berlin State Museums had been hidden in the Merkers salt mines, where they were discovered by soldiers under Patton’s command. Farmer’s job was to renovate a former Luftwaffe HQ into a clean, heated, and secure facility for safekeeping these priceless pieces. Using the MO of “It’s better to beg for forgiveness than ask for permission” Farmer secured replacement windows, means of transport, and fashioned systems that would keep the artwork preserved.

But an order came down to ship 202 paintings to the US National Gallery in DC, even though none were part of Nazi plunder. Although a manifesto opposing this directive was signed by 24 of the 32 Monument Men, the transfer still took place. Nevertheless, the Monument Men persisted. Kuhn, back in his post at Harvard, wrote about Farmer and his remarkable efforts in an art journal and appended the manifesto to this article. What followed was a further protest signed by 95 museum officials and academics and forwarded to President Truman. On April 22, 1949 justice prevailed, the paintings were returned to Germany, a chain of events for which the German government awarded Farmer the Commanders Cross of the Order of Merit for his moral courage in stopping the Great American Art Heist.

Harry Santeen followed with *The Prothonortory Warbler*. Spoiler alert – while Harry withheld the name of his subjects until the end, these minutes would be Byzantine knot if I tried to keep their identities secret while compressing his paper into two paragraphs. Alger Hiss and Whitaker Chambers, both major players in US government post-WWII with sparkling credentials leading up to their duel in the courtroom. Initially Chambers came under McCarthy’s magnifying glass, admitted to being a communist, then with immunity granted, named Hiss as a “comrade” as well. Hiss sued for libel, so Chambers set a trap using Richard Nixon, a new member of the House Un-American Activities Committee as a foil. Or dupe. You decide. On a visit to Chambers farm, Nixon found incriminating microfilm in a pumpkin patch. Nixon believed that this evidence had been there for years (even though most farmers tend to till the ground every spring). Hence the Pumpkin Papers were the opening salvo to imprison Hiss, as the charges against him had elevated to being a Russian spy as well. Back and forth the combatants went, and ultimately Hiss was indicted based on an inimitable typewriter and a rare yellow-headed warbler. Hiss went to the joint for five years, Chambers’ farm, site of the pumpkin patch, was made a national monument, and Nixon went on to such greater glory.

Polk Laffoon delivered Tony Covatta’s “Beside the Golden Door” a riveting history lesson in courage and valor. As Tony is a seasoned literarian, there was an adroit pivot in his paper as he set up a military lineage, filed under the name Lee by bringing Harry Light-Horse Lee and his son, Robert E. Lee, to the foreground... then retiring them to focus on Kurt Chew-Een Lee, the first Asian-American to serve as an officer in the US Marines.

Lee distinguished himself first in training his troops, then when leading them against the Chinese forces at Sudong Gorge in Korea. Shot in both the knee and elbow, he was transported from the battlefield and was en route to convalescence in Japan when instead he rushed back to the front by stealing a Jeep, and when that ran out of gas, walking the last ten miles to rejoin the battalion. The conditions were rugged, the opposition outnumbered Lee’s troops 5 to 1, nevertheless, he persisted.

Lee, always at the point of his battalion, led them back into conflict time and again, always brave, always visible, always ready for combat. Tony made a compelling argument that we should recognize, quote “the courage of Chew-Een Lee [that] rises to another level. We should cherish it in these days of xenophobia, of fear of the immigrant and the person of color. Like so many before and one can only hope in the days to come, Major Kurt Chew-Een Lee, U.S.M.C. Ret., had the additional courage to turn his back on his ancestral homeland and cultural heritage and devote himself totally to protecting all of us, his fellow Americans.”

Minutes of the Literary Club

January 2019

Nominally, March is National Women's History Month. Here at the Literary Club, since we're always one shuffling step ahead of the curve, January's papers highlighted the many roles of women. The first was a heartfelt endorsement for all those in majority of the US population and popularity; in the second and third papers, women occupied featured roles, but their character qualities were not as incandescent.

Pete Strange brought "The Female of the Species" to 62 members and 4 guests. A loving homage to the fine women in his life, Pete started with his grandmother who dispelled any notion of women lacking entrepreneurial spirit. Grandma not only kept the house, she also provided a daily lunch to all the workers of her husband's construction crew, ably computed seamstress math, and made candy that was, pun fully intended, nonpareil to local candy companies we know by name. Pete learned the art of sugary supplication at this tender and formative age as well, with his teachers receiving a candy gift perhaps to augment grades that needed some bolstering.

Next, Pete's mother, sister and wife didn't just disprove the theory that theirs is a weaker sex; they dragged that misconception across a field, pummeled it mightily, and stomped it into dust. Capping this section, Pete's better half uttered this memorable bon mot: "Oh, I have given this matter a lot of thought and I don't think we can afford a divorce. We can afford as nice a wake as Pete would like, but not a divorce."

The final nails in the cultural coffin were the separate but equal roles of female coworkers at Messer. It's not true that these ladies rained on Pete's parade; more precisely, water occasionally dripped off the edge of the metaphoric umbrellas they used to keep the Messer male majority dry. Finally, invoking the highest plane of luminary ladies, Sister Jean, Sister Francis, and Sister Ruth served as Pete's finishing school. What was apparent throughout was the paper's overarching thesis: a deft heads-up for we lumbering men-types who think we rule the planet: the women in our lives are certainly strong and smart enough to hold up the mirror that reveals the error of our ways.

With a couple papers under his belt, Pete is our Will Rogers, with a passel of human insight infused with down-home country charm; an entertaining blend of humor and delivery. Heck, Pete could read the ingredients from the side of a cereal box and it would be fun. Most of

all, though, his content provides context for further musing...and muses, like in Al Lopez's La Zacatecana, which followed on January 14th.

Al's historical narrative introduced newlywed newcomers to Santiago de Queretaro. Her name was Aurelia Sanchez de Rodriguez, his was Don Vitupero Rodriguez Velazquez. Rumors swirled around the couple, from her upbringing as an orphan raised by the sisters at Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe; plus the dark and brooding husband who was more than twice her age and said by some to have "saved" her before her beauty went to waste.

Influential male Spanish writers of the time vented strong opinions on the nature of women. They bumptiously agreed women were less intelligent, rational, and wise than men; obviously, they didn't have the benefit of meeting Pete's family and friends. I quote: "Because of their intellectual inferiority and limited understanding of serious matters, they were incapable of treating matters of substance. As a result of this, Spanish women were admonished to keep silent on all matters of importance."

With his historical and lyrical description of Old World grandeur in Nueva Espana, Al swept the audience of 58 members and 5 guests back to a time and place where society's mores were more important than individual liberties; where pure-blood Spanish ladies were prized and secreted away behind estate walls, and where cultural expectations of young brides bestowing large families unto their successful husbands was the standard, and any instance that didn't bear heirs was suspect.

From this cloistered and constrained background, emerged a tale of passion, money and murder – the Holy Trinity of a good mystery. Don Vitupero's responsibilities as the owner of far flung mines kept him away from home for weeks at a time, when he was in residence, as a man of influence, visitors looking to curry favor flitted about the mansion. Aurelia started spending time with Don Rodrigo in Don Vitupero's absence...until Aurelia's body was discovered in a pool of blood in the courtyard, Don Vitupero never returned from his journey for work, and Don Rodrigo disappeared. With questions still unanswered about the childless and essentially cloistered couple, Aurelia was tagged as an incarnation of evil who killed her husband and possibly also her lover. The truth has been lost to the passage of time.

And so we segue from an ancient crime of passion to the subject of crime reporting with Tom Schuck's paper presented on January 21st entitled "True Crime; The Case of the Bubble Bath Strangler." Tom noted at the start that crime reporting is a literary genre with respectable antecedents, a line that was delivered to a literary gaggle who also claim surprisingly

respectable antecedents. Within all this respectability, it's somewhat surprising when considering the grisly ends that many characters meet.

The universal wag for newspaper and broadcast journalism is "if it bleeds, it leads" which could have been the coda for Tom's paper. The first two-thirds of the paper chronicled the literary lineage for tales of true crime. Early practitioners of the genre include Cotton Mather, whose *Pillars of Salt* is a history of criminals executed in New England for capital crimes and features what Mather called "dying speeches," a popular form of farewell address; Daniel DeFoe who in *Merry Old England* reported on the lives, and deaths, of notorious ne'er-do-wells; Benjamin Franklin's "Murder of a Daughter which led to the conviction of the guilty father and mother, after which they were incredulously sentenced to being burnt on the hand; clearly 241-KIDS was not established back then. Nathaniel Hawthorne, Abraham Lincoln, Mark Twain, Ambrose Bierce, Damon Runyon, Theodore Dreiser, James Ellroy and our own Steve Strauss rounded out the lineup of notables who captivated readers with twisted torment of low-lifes being tried for high crimes.

The final part of Tom's paper zeroed in on the case of Harry, a Cincinnati lawyer who descended from a family of means, yet felt so at odds from his well-heeled upbringing and Hyde Park existence that he became a mean heel himself, attempting to drown his mistress Ruby when she threatened to spill the beans to the missus, aka Sally. Alcohol played a major role as accessory to the crime, time in the clink followed, "I'm a new man" became the refrain for his release, but unfortunately, the old devils returned and Harry steered off course once again.

Although two time zones away, nonetheless simultaneous to Tom's presenting from the podium, I was touring of the offices of *Outside Magazine* in Santa Fe, NM where I noted their most recent issue had the bold headline of "10 Shocking Stories of Madness, Mystery, True Crime and Survival" plastered across the cover. So while freelance journalists might decry that crime doesn't pay (well), readers never seem to tire of such stories and shell out their two-bits times two for these escapades on the dark side of the law.

Jim Adam's budget focused on "Tragedy and Failure." The theme within that theme was a rising scale as the subjects grew exponentially larger from first story to last scene. Steve Phillips opened with "The One That Got Away." A classic story of hook-n-line adventure. Steve was invited by Lucy, his girlfriend at the time, to the family's summer getaway in northern Wisconsin. Steve had wet a line or two with his dad on the waterways of Greater Cincinnati, with photos to prove his provenance as an angler of note. But trouble lay in the cattails.

Meeting one's girlfriend's family for the first time carries enough potential snags to make listeners wince in sympathy; throw in some hardcore fisherman, a couple Hollywood

casting fishing guides, a nervous visitor, and enough weather/water advisories to scare off the faint of heart, but to twist the current meme: And Still Steve Persisted.

Chekhov's mandate is that if a pistol is hung on the wall in the first act, it needs to be fired in the second act; this is how Lucy's brother's foreshadowed the sad outcome: "For you, we're going with my black bucktail," Kenny said to me, and he pulled from his box a scrawny-looking lure about six inches long, with two large treble hooks covered by a few strands of black deer hair. "My favorite fish catcher," he said as he waved it toward me. "Caught more fish with this bucktail than any other lure ever." The 48 members and 4 guests knew what was coming next. After canvassing miles of lakeshore, and whiling away hours of time, Steve succeeds in hooking the mightiest musky in Tenderfoot Lake. You could almost hear the banjos in the background. The most telling detail: when what was certainly the largest fish in North America jumps out of the water, it sneers at Steve as it breaks the line and dives back into the cold water...which is exactly what was dumped all over our narrator when the fishermen returned with only this story to share.

Steve had a final surprise up his sleeve as I would have bet that he'd invoke Literary Club lore with his bait-and-switch title, anticipating that Lucy would have been the one who got away. Maybe that was too easy. If nothing else, it was a different story.

Kris Gillis also had a one-that-got-away fish story, although his scaled up REALLY fast. It might surprise some members that this was Kris' his first paper, for he has addressed the club a few times from behind the lectern. But those instances were always when reading someone else's words; the good news is that this time when reading his own, it was tremendous.

In "Small Boats" Kris recounted the ill-fated voyage of the Essex, a ship sailing from Nantucket in 1819, with hardware invisibly damaged to the untrained eye, two of the six whaling boats ruined just two days after launch, and a crew that would go down in infamy, known to millions by other names, yet united by their connection to a marine animal even larger than Steve's musky, if one can believe that.

In retrospect, it seemed that a bad karma was hanging over the Essex from the start; very quickly, things went from bad to worse. As Kris spun his story like a canvas sail unfurling from the rigging, the familiarity of the crew members' quirks and character flaws, which I like to call queequegs for short, had everyone in the audience thinking, "wait, I think I've heard this tale before" and of course we have, it's the doppelgangers of Ahab and Ishmael, Stubb and Starbuck, Captain Boomer and Elijah all aboard the Pequod, united and haunted and destroyed by the monstrous Moby Dick. Pay no attention to the white whale behind the curtain, the real-life story of the Essex and its crew is just as mesmerizing. Here's the line that filled us all with foreboding: "off the weather bow, Chase spotted a monstrous sperm whale, which he

estimated to be about eighty-five feet long, only two feet shorter than the Essex itself. Since each foot of an adult whale typically equals one ton, this whale probably weighed as much as thirteen elephants or, more simply, the space shuttle. This is what charged the Essex.”

Moreso, after that giant beast stove in the hull of the Essex, Kris pointed out that this was only the beginning of the crew’s agonies; theirs was a true odyssey that challenged Ulysses’ namesake in terms of danger, loss, and endurance. Kris brought a thrilling paper peopled with characters whose names sound like a John Irving novel but whose horrific misdeeds seem drawn from the best and the worst of Joseph Conrad. Two years is too long to wait for the full-length version of whatever comes next.

Jim concluded his budget with “To End All Wars” a vivid recollection of the international machinations, treaties and events that followed World War I. If Moby Dick seemed like wanton death and destruction, consider this which we all know but still struggle to comprehend: one out of three youths from France, Britain and Germany would perish in the Great War, the War to End All Wars. The aftermath was just as destructive, more darkly poignant in the way history retrenched and repeated itself, and more ineffably sad in its losses.

The only toll that scuttled the financial reparations Germany was ordered to pay - \$400 billions in today’s dollars – was the human cost. France waged for merciless destruction of the German military machines on the ground, Britain as the island empire was to get the German battleships.

The Treaty of Versailles, which has an upcoming centennial on June 28th of this year, scuttled world affairs into complete disarray. To quote: “The maps of Eastern and Central Europe and the Middle East were redrawn, the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires simply dismantled. Land was divvied-up in accordance with an arrogance of adherence to an outdated Nineteenth Century colonial mentality with almost no regard to any selfdetermination of the peoples affected and no regard to nationalities, spheres of influence, or religions or religious sects, tribal interests and cultural and historical patterns of fears, hatred, disunion or union. Ultimately, maps would reflect new nations: Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and Yugoslavia.” end quote. It seems as if everyone and everything was damaged by stipulations signed in Versailles. President Wilson, the Jewish state, French Indochina – all laid asunder.

To close with Jim’s pointed question: “what say we of the Treaty? ... I say it should be called what it was: a tragedy, a failure of man’s efforts to end war as the way to resolve legitimate disputes among nations and the cause of the 20th Century’s seemingly endless rounds of madness of instability, out-right warfare and ethnic cleansings. Does this year’s call

to remember the Treaty remind us not to repeat its mistakes? ... Perhaps ...maybe ... but ... we shall have to wait and see.

Minutes of the Literary Club

December 2018

Mike Kremzar opened the month on December 3 with “Absorbs the Worry” an insightful business tale coupled with an intense personal recollection as it was presented to a group of 58 members and 6 guests.

The 1978 roll-out of Rely tampons had all the earmarks of success: P&G’s pillars of rigorous research, market analysis, product design, and safety testing were all in place. Hence Mike’s new assignment as Group Manager within the Paper Division overseeing the new product launch was an exciting opportunity for professional growth.

But as is often said, one’s character is truly revealed when responding to crisis, and in early 1980, the P&G world headquarters one block north was under siege when the recently named Toxic Shock Syndrome was tied by the CDC to tampons, and in the bulls-eye was Rely. P&G staff knew their product was never directly tied to TSS cases, plus the CDC’s investigation was specious. But the “trial” was not held in the halls of justice, but in public court, which as we learned by the CEO’s decision to pull two million cases of the new product from the shelf carried greater weight. This put into motion an operation that had to reverse two years’ worth of logistics in a 24-hour period. The next obstacle, once everything was gathered, was how to and where to safely destroy the product. Last, the hardest decision – what to do with the 200 employees whose jobs were directly to the Rely brand?

Mike’s insider’s history of those calamitous events could be used as a textbook example of corporate stewardship...which cynics might claim to be a quaint, even bygone evocation of company values under pressure. The often hilarious revisitation of Mike’s sweaty presentations of female products to the target audience revealed his character and values stood up under pressure. Even though I didn’t do the research to validate this hunch, nonetheless, I’d wager that this chapter in P&G’s pantheon was the very first time feminine hygiene has ever been the subject of a Literary Club paper. It should be noted that I have risen above, or more correctly, deleted from this final minutes every bad pun and unfortunate joke that showed up with during the initial draft.

On December 10th, Jim Friedman brought “What’s in a Name” to 60 members and five guests. Invoking the LC equivalent of entr’actes (I’m still working on my French – New Year’s resolution #138) Jim opened and closed his paper with two poems. With that grace note raising

the curtain, Jim introduced his paper as a celebration of the extraordinary lives of Cincinnatians who, while dead for over 100 years, their names are still known by most of us as local Uber drivers.. Most important, the late Cincinnatians Jim profiled provided, and I quote, “lasting impact through tangible enduring evidence of their civic leadership and exceptional transformational philanthropy resulting in the betterment of the community - not only during their own lifetime but for many generations that succeeded them. That is, as they say, a high bar.

It does a disservice to the luster of Jim’s research to only detail a few factoids from each of five great civic leaders’ exemplary lives; I would recommend reading his paper on the website for the depth and breadth of respective accomplishments by this quintet: Jacob Burnet Sr wrote Ohio’s first state constitution, was elected to the Ohio Supreme Court, then appointed to represent Ohio in the US Senate. His desk mate was Daniel Webster. A business partner of William Henry Harrison, Burnet put Harrison’s name in nomination for the Presidency at the Whig convention of 1840. David Sinton, as noted in the volume Cincinnati, the Queen City was one of the wealthiest, most successful and best known citizens of Cincinnati. Sinton earned an enduring place in the esteem of the community by reason of his extraordinary philanthropy and public spirit. Andrew Ereknbrecker most notably founded what became the Cincinnati Zoo, served as President of the Telegraph Company and the first President of the newly created subsidiary, the City and Suburban Telephone Company. He was also treasurer of the great Cincinnati Industrial Exposition of 1871 and one of the prime movers of the first Sangerfest in Cincinnati, the forerunner of the May Festival. Henry Probasco was responsible for the Tyler-Davidson fountain, which is tied with the Roebling Bridge as Cincinnati’s most famous structure. Probasco was one the organizers of the Cincinnati Horticultural Society which established Spring Grove Cemetery, a charter member of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History and an early supporter of the Mercantile Library. Finally, he was a director and manager of the Public Library. Julius Dexter, last but definitely not least: upon graduation from Harvard law school, Dexter returned and devoted himself entirely to the affairs of his native city of Cincinnati and the State of Ohio, taking no compensation, nor ever marrying and starting a family of his own. Our community was his family. Dexter’s family’s mansion was next door to the Literary Clubhouse to the west; a photo of such hangs in our library. It is said that Dexter may well have contributed more time and strength to the betterment of Cincinnati than any single individual. He was a member of the Ohio Senate, President of the Ohio State Board of Commerce, trustee of the University of Cincinnati, of the Cincinnati Observatory, of the Music Hall, of the College of Music, of the Cincinnati Music Festival Association (May Festival), Treasurer and Director of the Cincinnati Art Museum Association, First President of the Cincinnati Zoological Society, President of the Commercial Club, Treasurer of the Queen City Club, President of the Literary Club and of the Harvard Club. Gentlemen, I daresay we’ve got some catching up to do.

Barely halfway through the month, the Holiday Observance rang in on December 17th. This date meant that December was a short month for our gatherings, but it allowed suitable time to recover our annual Tanenbaum and trimmings version of the Burning Man Festival. The Holiday musical program was again masterfully orchestrated by Dave Edmonson, with a full menu of song, melodic styles, poetry, instrumentation, and the Christmas dumpling was a remarkable operatic performance. Even though I was way in the back during this part of the evening, I can swear to two things: yea, I am in need of a new eyeglass prescription, but the gifted opera singer was definitely not a club member, and two, based on the fact that she was not electronically amplified, the acoustics of this clubhouse work just fine for any speaker/performer who is in good voice. What this means for those who gather in the upper deck and occasionally contend that the speakers aren't loud enough, as Walt Kelly's Pogo said "We have met the enemy and he is us." Thanks to all the members, and the ringers, who were part of the entertainment.

Next up on the holiday ticket came the Literary Club's version of the Three Wise Men as played by our trustees, with papers in hand. Dick Hague, in abstentia, brought "Gift, With Water." Dick paid tribute to three gifts, the first of his friendship with Jim Quinlivan, teaching colleague, fellow poet, and able canoeist. A river trip with Jim rendered two accounts, the first a series of poems published as a chapbook, later, a prose account outfitted with history from other river-twain-literary trips. The second gift was provided via the internet when a genealogical query in re: to Dick's great-grandmother Annie Butler brought to the surface, as it were, a great-great grandfather Dick never knew by name. The third gift via water was from two refugees from Southeast Asia, boat people as they were called postVietnam, who landed at Purcell Marian in a special program that provided acclimation to American culture and access to education. Dick teased out this insight, and I quote: I recalled that earlier members of my own extended family...had been boat people too in another time, Irish immigrants crossing to America. Our families shared, recently or more distantly, the story of a difficult ocean passage and arrival in a new and complex land...Part of our common American heritage, it was and continues to be, the story of shared pasts at once dark with danger, war, hardship, and famine, and equally bright with promise—stories of hope in hope's season." Finally, it should be noted that the speaker who presented Dick's paper has never before sounded as wise, literate, well-composed, or correct as that last evening in 2018.

Steve Straus's paper was read by Dale Flick as Steve had broken his wrist and unable to attend. Steve's subject was Hannukkah, the Jewish holiday lasting eight days and closest chronologically to Christmas, is a lesser Jewish observance when compared to Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, or Passover. But when the Jewish Reform movement in the 1800s Europe moved for a less orthodox practice, this sentiment came across the Atlantic to Cincinnati, for the Queen City was the epicenter for the Reform Judaism in America. Rabbi Isaac Wise,

founder of Hebrew Union College, and Max Lilienthal, friend of Wise and Rabbi of the Rockdale Temple, led the movement to create ceremonies for Jewish children as means of celebrating their religion, a practice that has grown over the decades to be a festival of the modern Jewish faith.

Ted Silberstein concluded the literary exercises for the evening with "The Evolution of the Bishop of Myra: Is There a Dark Side to Santa's Story." Nicholas, bishop of Myra, Turkey, became the patron saint of children because of his numerous miracles which included resurrecting a youth who had been strangled by a demon, as well as three dismembered students. Very Christmasy, much joy. Next, when an unpleasant father had either decided to sell his three daughters into prostitution because he needed the money or that the money was required so that the three girls would have sufficient dowry to be married – Nicholas learned of this financial crisis and tossed a third of his own treasure into the man's house through a chimney, landing, it is rumored, in the eldest daughter's stocking. Somehow this version of St. Nick seldom makes the season's picture books.

The Man in Red's legend continued on a twisted path in time. Martin Luther suggested the Christkindl (later pronounced "Kris Kringle") as the donor of gifts. Sinterklaas, another alias for prequel Santa, was given a somewhat menacing helper whose presence ensure good behavior, old "Black Pete." Clearly, the pirates had seized the holiday at this point in history. There are surviving drawings of Black Pete, a man costumed as a hairy, chained, horned, blackened, growling devilish parody of a monster- ho-ho and ho. The figure of Sinterklaas always protected the child, but if his catechism recitation was a bit shaky, the little one would be given sticks, lumps of coal, or ashes as a reminder of what severe punishment he had escaped. Surprisingly, Santa was next given a contemporary makeover by a venerable author, Washington Irving. All things considered, perhaps this is not so surprising as one of Irving's most famous characters was The Headless Horseman.

Good tidings, sweet dreams. The final burnish was provided by Clement C. Moore with his poem, "A Visit from St. Nicholas." Two millennia in the making, the Santa figurine has transcended from scaremeister to patron saint of commercialism. Thank you, Ted for preempting our Christmas Eve sugarplum dreams with the universal benediction of "Happy Christmas to all, and to all, a good night...mare."

Minutes of the Literary Club

November 2018

Bill Baechtold's "The Profession" opened November; 54 members and 2 guests were in attendance. Bill's paper was a compare and contrast of the three classic learned professions: law, medicine and theology. Listed in reverse from Bill's paper but following the ecumenical premise that there are no atheists in a foxhole; hence when one gets in trouble with either of the first two professions, resolution often resides with the third.

A careful review of the evolution of each field of expertise reveals the precepts of advanced and specialized education, apprenticeship, plus a code of ethics, behaviors and associations. The surprise prerequisite, which also serves as the original barrier to entry to ward against interlopers: access to vital information.

Bill, and history, started with theology. From the perspective of the general populace, the reason this subset of priests were also considered the first profession and not just a calling is that they were the only ones with the education needed to interpret the sacred texts which they also guarded. This lineage tracing from the Pharisees, Scribes, Catholic and Protestant Theologians became those who could "rule upon" matters in question within their respective faiths.

Medicine followed the same path as civilization, hence regular advances and a growing field of study mirrored the spread of Western culture: from Greek and Romans, through Renaissance Europe, then across the sea to North America. The Hippocratic Oath first laid out the rules and aspirations of practitioners; the AMA now leads in terms of selfregulation, serving as watchdog to attacks from inside and out. Finally, the profession which Bill practices – law – has a shorter geographical and historical timeline from England Common Law to America jurisprudence with many of the original principles still in place.

All that said, the one factor that poses the most potential for cataclysmic change in each of the three professions is the internet. With unrestricted global access to information, truly any occupation that depends upon limited and regulated soothsayers is now open for business in what feels more like the Wild, Wild West rather than bastions of reflection, research and dissemination.

Harry Santee brought "An Unusual Negotiation" on November 12th, a rollicking tale of the easy life in the islands, at least as purported by the travel press corps. But from Harry's

narrator's POV, purchasing a piece of paradise, complete with white beaches and aquamarine waters, is as much an Elmore Leonard crime novel as it is a Jimmy Buffett song. All the usual suspects were aboard: two young adventurers, a native monarch wanting to sell the family island after three of her four sons died in a rum-smuggling enterprise, and a dictator-president who overcomes governmental bureaucracy with clandestine, Mission Impossible-like instructions and an open palm.

There was also Harry's standard cameo of a stunning young woman wearing little to nothing; proving that Ian Fleming and James Bond have nothing on Inspector Santee. By virtue of a money drop via in the right pocket of a McIntosh rain coat hanging in a

Lexington KY country club, this Literary Club thriller was all in good fun...but don't be surprised if we're patting down the pockets in Harry's overcoat in the cloakroom for the next couple months just in case a few sawbucks happen to flutter loose.

Mark Motley's debut paper, "The Treasurer" was delivered on November 19th to an audience of 58 members and 9 guests. Mark's paper was a multi-generational, family memoir. In the good old days, it might fall under the heading of "you can't make this stuff up." But that was before James Frey blew up himself, and the memoir genre, into A Million Little Pieces when he took some liberties blending fact and fiction. To his credit, Mark presented a remarkably researched paper which featured a score or more of famous names, all of which in turn rise from the pages of colonial history as his personal chromosome chronology.

In 1606, the Virginia Company in London was established, a business that funded the first permanent settlement in the colonies, Jamestown. To say it was a rough patch is an understatement: drought, disease and death were the three legs of the stool known as the Starving Time. On deck, in more ways than one, stood immigrant John Rolfe, who arrived recently widowed and with tobacco seeds secreted on his person. Transporting Rolfe was The Treasurer, a Man-of-War which had a rich and infamous future as the floating prison of Pocahontas (who many years later, married John Rolfe) and as a pirate ship in the Caribbean. The Treasurer reached its historical inglorious high point as the carrier of the first recorded African slaves brought to any British colony in the Americas.

One of the slaves transported on The Treasurer was John Gowen, an indentured servant who 22 years later purchased his freedom thus becoming the first recorded free black man in any of the British Colonies in America. These minutes are a much-condensed version of builds to this denouement, and I must quote Mark: "The African slave John Gowen, one of the first

"twenty and odd negros" brought here and the first free black man in any of the original thirteen American colonies was my 13th great-grandfather. ... Cleopatra Powhatan, sister of Pocahontas, was another of my 13th great-grandmothers. Opechancanough, brother of Chief Powhatan and author of the Massacre of 1622 was also one of my 13th great-grandfathers. Chief Powhatan was a 14th great-grandfather, Pocahontas and her husband John Rolfe were my 11th great-aunt and uncle. Captain John Rice "Trader" Hughes, first European settler in Amherst County Virginia and Princess Nicketti Powhatan were among my 11th great grandparents."

Writers talk about story as a metaphoric vehicle for advancing character or fueling action; in Mark's case, the vehicle/vessel was literal as well. In his words: "The ship that shuttled my distant uncle John Rolfe and his contraband tobacco seeds from Bermuda to Jamestown, the ship that later set a speed record for the Atlantic crossing, the ship that was the lure for my distant aunt Pocahontas' capture, the ship on which she was held captive for a year, the ship on which John Rolfe, Pocahontas, and my distant grandmother Cleopatra were shuttled to London, the ship that pirated part of the human cargo from the slaver São João Bautista, and the ship that took the first "twenty and odd" slaves including my distant grandfather John Gowen to the Virginia Colony, was the ship The Treasurer, having weaved through this tale no less than seven times." Thanks, Mark, for this treasure of a paper.

Dateline: November 26, 2018. Dale Flick's budget closed a month of historical papers with more history, as contained in Tom Schuck's colonial history, Rich Kesterman's personal history, or Dale's well-tempered history of temperance and related matters the Literary Club.

Tom Schuck led off with "When the King of France Lived Up the River." The paper started with a razor-sharp witticism – the 16th King of France meeting Madame la Guillotine...as did his wife ten months later. But considering that both of their heads were separated from their bodies by a very large, razor-sharp falling knife...the familial description of her as his second cousin once removed is dark foreshadowing. Regardless, it was a fast start for a facile storyteller.

Louis-Charles, the Dauphin, beget Louis Philippe Josef D'Orleans who beget LouisPhillipe, the paper's main character who evaded capture and a grisly ending by fleeing to America, more specifically to Neville, a petit town located on the northern banks on the Ohio River, 30 miles southeast of Cincinnati. The burg was named for Presley Neville, aide to the Marquis de Lafayette during the American Revolution.

Once the war ended, Louis-Phillipe earned his keep by teaching French to the newly minted Americans in Philadelphia, New York City, Boston and then Ohio, climbing the

geographic ladder of success, obviously moving up in the world as he moved west. Eventually, though, he returned to the banks of the Seine and when Henri, the 10-year-old appointed leader of France had to cool his jets until he hit puberty, Louis-Philippe graciously assumed the throne. But as civil unrest seemed to be a staple of France in the 1800s, soon he too abdicated and fled with his wife to England, under the pseudonym of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, a brilliantly obvious and oblivious nom de guerre.

While Tom's paper had global reach, Rick's paper had a very specific longitude and latitude which affixed his subject at 37 Mulberry Street in OTR, a building which had once housed his father's family. Like Louis-Philippe's Paris, Over-the-Rhine has gone through a series of evolutions and revolutions leading up to the Renaissance it is currently enjoying. So, when Rick and his daughter Carolyn had the chance to step across the threshold of history during a real estate agent's open house, very little was the same...at least at first glance. But it only took only a few minutes to re-immense via the power of the imagination and projection of the past onto a canvas of the current. Rick could picture an icebox, horsedrawn carriages, and when looking out a window, a rose bush that flourished in the spot previously inhabited by an outhouse, all reminders of a fragrant past, as was a Christmas tree "decorated" with horse leavings, an earthy and touching history of a Cincinnati by-gone.

Last call was sounded by Dale in his paper "The Literary Club's Great Drought." Capturing the spirit, and spirits, of the club in late member Charles Greve assertion that "Nobody gonna' tell me how to live my life," Dale detailed the remonstrations of LC members when the government stuck its nose in our business when regulating the sales, and prohibition, of potent potables. One can almost picture the membership a century ago wrapping their neck ties around their skulls like a tribal headdress and flowing down Fourth Street in search of a drink, or two, or more.

Dale divulged to the group that he had worked on his budget for two years. Mein gott, seven hundred and thirty days. It's near impossible to do justice to that sort of preparation just six days thereafter. Oft said, Rome wasn't built in a day...although Nero did what he could to burn it down in a day, no small feat for a city-state that was ga-ga about their marble columns.

As some know, there is bonus material delivered in the spoken minutes which doesn't live past the podium. While hopefully relevant, nonetheless, posterity doesn't have need-to-know status re: whatever weak witticisms arose when composing the monthly recap. Maybe it

was an unnamed fear that these personal asides wouldn't stand the test of time, as humor often wilts before the harvest. But now that fear has a name, and it is Dale Flick. He not only spent two years working on his budget paper, moreso, he quoted the minutes of previous secretaries and their recorded recaps of what was drunk. Tom Bennett also now lives (thankfully, crisis passed) in fear as Dale also went back into treasurers' reports to announce, perhaps for the first time, how much the LC spent on spirits. Is nothing safe? Is nothing sacred? Let's have a toast to putting a wax seal on those records.

Here's a surprise twist for the club historians – as noted in the above health scare in our midst, Treasurer Bennett, displayed great wit, sophistication and grace under pressure, after being revived, helped to his feet, and as he was assisted out the door, was heard to say "Gentlemen, I'd like you to meet my guests this evening." Since one of the EMT's was noticeably female, ipso facto, our walls have been breached. The ambulance out front was a Trojan horse. But for gods' sake, namely those gods named Bacchus, Dionysus, and Osiris, let's not let the ladies know what we spend on drinks.

As these will be the last minutes read in 2018, let's close with this perspective. Five nights ago, I came across what is now my favorite story about word count as applied to writing the minutes. Back in his day, Henry James was asked to write a two-thousand-word book review, but submitted one that was thirty-thousand words in length. When the editor pointed out that, perhaps, Mr. James' review might be, respectfully, a bit too long, James cut one sentence and sent it back with a note which read: "Here__take back the mangled remains."

Pair that a line from Henry David Thoreau, which is often attributed to Mark Twain in a different form: "Not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make it short." Gentlemen, such are the mangled remains of November 2018. Good night.

Minutes of the Literary Club

October 2018

Two architects were struggling to design a third floor and roof for a new building. Peeved, the older architect hollers at the younger, who was an English major in undergrad, “Don’t you know the difference between a girder and a joist.”

“Sure, I do” came the response. “Goethe wrote Faust and Joyce wrote Ulysses.”

I share this because there simply isn’t enough literary humor in the world, so when Mark Schlachter’s paper on the first evening in October referenced Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, I couldn’t pass it up.

“A Dark and Stormy Night” a infamous phrase which Mark borrowed from the opening line from Snoopy’s ongoing novel and applied as the title of a smart, tight history of radio, was narrowcast to an audience of 51 members and 7 guests. Whereas broadcasting, aspired to reach audiences of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, and this drive to establish the radio industry was led by David Sarnoff. At one point, radio seemed destined to be an asterisk between the telegraph and television, but as Mark narrowed his focus, the voice behind the microphone revealed the dogged staying power of late night listening to the transistor. Cincinnati had an early role in the radio biz, as P&G created soap operas that featured local talent. There was also a bounty of notable stations in the region, WNOP in Newport, WZIP in Covington, across the river was WCIN, and of course, WLW. With Mark as our guide, we took a trip down in the holler to WMKY, the tiny FM station operating out of Morehead State where Mark got his chops as the master of the console board.

Tenacity supported radio’s tenure. As Mark pointed out, “Radio was cheap to produce. It was personal. It was portable. It could be local.” Hence, all the necessary ingredients for a labor of love shared by the listening community. Mark had a wild ride, from college station jock to staunch supporter of all small-town Kentucky radio stations, then returning home to a day job of writing ads for radio, he trod the path that eventually led him to become music director, program director and on-air host for a four-hour shift at his beloved WNOP, now a jazz station. With change ever-present in the industry, WNOP did not go gentle into the night at the hands of their new Catholic ownership night, the Sacred Heart Broadcasting, which in Mark’s and his station-mates POV were latter-day descendants of the Spanish Inquisition, as they set out to dismantle the beloved 740 on the AM dial, their final night of programming became the penultimate throwdown as in his paper.

Monday, October 8, 2018 started with Mark Upton signing the rolls of membership. Then Ted Jaroszewicz brought “Unexpected Gifts” to a room filled with 64 members and 6 guests. As Ted has been a member for half a dozen years, we knew of his failing eyesight...but this paper provided insight into his unfailing courage and optimism. Ted says, quote, “blindness has provided me with countless unexpected gifts, moments of great humor, and insights into the human condition. It has opened my eyes to our ability as human beings to overcome physical limitations and, to help each other with simple acts of kindness.”

Like all irrepressible Clevelanders, Ted led an active lifestyle as a youth, including football with his eyeglasses worn inside his helmet, the original Eric Dickerson look. Contact sports were soon ruled out as too risky for his perilous sight. After a summer job on a garbage truck and the urging from his fellow G-man to try out rowing, Ted took up the sport while at Yale, this being what Ted called his first big gift of blindness. As he explained, quote: “It was life-changing. Being a member of the rowing team was a tremendous experience that led to life-time fitness and friendships. Rowing taught me to be a grinder. I learned about team work, long-range planning, and the need to keep pulling no matter how much it hurt.” Rowing also led to his second gift of blindness, namely his wife Anne, who he would not have met if not rowing...which he would not have undertaken if not for his faltering vision.

Once Ted got into the “plumbing” part of his paper, i.e., explaining cataracts, glaucoma, drain pipes and “re-inflation” might be used, observation from the upper deck saw club members wincing and squirming in their seats – clearly Ted had listeners in his grip. The old line about a sharp stick in the eye came to mind, and I think that the visceral description of eye surgery was more difficult to endure than discussing frontier vasectomies or home-remedy enemas, or both, envisioned simultaneously. Through it all, as is his character, Ted persevered. The paper wound up with a user’s guide to the technology that now aids the visually impaired, from iPad, iPhone, Kindle to Uber. The human condition too often whines or takes umbrage when faced with the occasional challenge. Life makes no promise of health, wealth nor wisdom. Ted’s paper illuminated that you can have all three if you see life as a gift, especially if you are a grinder.

Monday, October 15, 2018 brought Igor Dumbadze’s “to boldly go” his debut paper and also the first paper of the new season from the burgeoning gang known as the “Walnut Hills Alumni Association.” For the few club members who didn’t attend that illustrious and obviously literarily-bent high school, perhaps we can take the old folk’s version of the SAT and petition for inclusion.

Igor proved that George Saunder's Lincoln in the Bardo has nothing on him as he brought to his paper many voices from across history discoursing on the glories of travel and adventure in the late 1700s. Although it was occasionally challenging to keep John Ledyard separate and distinct from Captain John, John's father, and Squire John, John's grandfather, suffice it to say that it was a time of great goings-on in terms of conquering new worlds. By virtue of John's admission to Dartmouth, he became a missionary to various Indian/Native American nations. He also learned valuable survival skills, which came in handy when he decamped Dartmouth in a dugout canoe, floating down the Connecticut River from Hanover, New Hampshire to the home of his grandfather, said Squire John, in Hartford, CT. With that sort of gusto, it's no surprise that he eventually found passage on Capt. James Cook's ships that sailed the Pacific. Nowadays, that might be called a gap year, or years in this case, years as the map of their journey included rounding the Cape of Good Hope then stopping in Australia, New Zealand and Tahiti. At the last stop, John described in his journal that, quote, "The inhabitants were tall, strong limbed with a clear olive complexion with many tattoos, coarse black hair and handsome faces. They were courteous, hospitable and wore clothing made from the bark of trees; they liked music and dancing." End quote. Obviously, James Cook discovered an island populated by millennials and hipsters.

From there, the travelogue becomes more and more fantastic. After the next stop, notably Hawaii, where Cook meets his match/maker, James and the rest of the ships' crew returned to London, completing one of the greatest sailing voyages in history. But Mr. Ledyard was not one to let moss grow on his north side – he soon made his way to the Pacific Northwest, established trade with China for furs, zipped back to Paris, met with John Paul Jones, made friends with Thomas Jefferson, talked with George Rogers Clark, sailed from London to Hamburg to Stockholm, traversed to St. Petersburg then on to Moscow in a horse-drawn coach where he ran afoul of Russian authorities who unceremoniously booted him out. Down, but not out, he gathered resources in London and struck out for Cairo, via Paris, Marseille, across the Mediterranean, to Alexandria and on to the African interior.

But before he lit out for Africa, John sent his cloak to his cousin Isaac, explaining that, I quote "it was made in London. I travelled on foot with it in Sweden, Finland and Lord knows where; in opulence and poverty I have kept it, slept in it, drank in it, fought in it; it has been my constant and faithful servant...and to give it asylum, I send it to you..." I do hope at some point in that journey, it also made its way to a cleaner or two.

On June 30, 1788 he left Paris, on to Marseille, across the Mediterranean to Alexandria then to Cairo. He wrote in his letters... "...up the Nile to Cairo, there were many villages on the bank, and boats laden with onions, dates, sheep...Cairo was dusty, dirty, smelly and a mud puddle. About half the size of Paris...with bugs, mosquitos, lepers and fever. A wretched hole

and a nest of vagabonds.” Thank heavens his cloak was saved from this olfactory indignity, ensconced half a world away. A remarkable life of an inveterate traveler, we thank Igor for channeling his historic in-law to share this tale of globe-trotting discovery.

Dateline: Cincinnati. Monday, October 22, 2018. Bob Olson’s paper, entitled “They Made Maps and Kings” and delivered to 54 members and 6 guests, could have been a bookend, or the sequel to Igor’s as it picked up in Cairo, over a century later with the entwined tales of Gertrude Bell and TE Lawrence. This very dynamic duo had a lot in common. Quote: “They shared a passion for archaeology and cartography, and she was a pioneer photographer. Their maps and knowledge—and her photos--of the Middle East terrain were crucial to World War I British intelligence. They each authored books that were widely read. They were fearless explorers who displayed astonishing physical and psychological endurance. Each repeatedly risked life and sanity in pursuit of adventure or a cause. They both loved the desert and its Arab inhabitants.” End-quote

Make no mistake – Gertrude Bell was a firebrand. Her upbringing was fortuitous as her family was rich; thereafter, her life of exploration was calamitous as she made her own rules and tossed off any men who didn’t match her zest. As Bob notes: “In 1897, at age 29 Gertrude set off on the first of several round-the-world trips. More significantly, from 1899 to 1904 she threw herself into mountaineering. Back then, there were no clothes for women mountaineers. In her early ascents, Gertrude would remove her skirt at the point where she and her guides roped up and continue in her underclothes.” I’m thinking what she really needed was Ledyard’s cloak.

Throughout, she was tough as nails. During her most famous expedition—after being forced to abandon the summit a few hundred feet short, she survived 57 harrowing hours on the mountain that included spinning over an abyss while suspended at the end of rope, a Hail Mary jump over a crevasse, a torn pectoral muscle and frostbite.

Back to the UK. TE Lawrence’s father had married into a wealthy Irish family, fathered four daughters, but got into a spot of trouble when he started an affair with his daughters’ Scottish governess. By the time his wife learned of the affair, the governess already had one child and another was on the way. The question has to be – what was the lady of the house doing? Had she not noticed that the governess, whose duties pretty much entailed staying home to care for the children, had mysteriously become preppers? Twice. And there was only one male loose on the grounds. So began TE’s life as part of a new household in a new country with a new last name.

Gertrude Bell changed. Once a woman who traveled light so she could scale sheer mountain faces in just her knickers, quote, “from 1909 on, her mode of travel was completely over-the-top. She took with her evening dresses, fur coats, feathered hats, parasols, lace petticoats, Wedgwood china, crystal stemware and silver candlesticks. And her entourages had grown to dozens of guides, mule drivers, cooks and guards and almost as many camels.”

Perhaps the most dangerous place to be was arm-in-arm with Gertrude. “Finally, in her early 40’s, Gertrude fell in love with a married man who she regarded as her true match. Dick Doughty-Wylie was a Boer War hero who had met Gertrude when posted as a British military consul in Turkey. They started a long-distance relationship that was carried on through admiring and then passionate correspondence and punctuated by short assignations in London and Yorkshire. Despite spending several nights together, their affair was never consummated due to her frigidity, for which she expressed extreme remorse in a stream of letters. Dick was likewise in agony. He wanted Gertrude but knew that his mentally fragile spouse could not survive a divorce.” Suddenly, TE Lawrence’s parental fracas seemed normal.

November 1915, Gertrude was summoned to Cairo as the first woman officer in the history of British military intelligence, with the title of Major Miss Bell. By the time Gertrude Bell arrived in Cairo, “Lawrence had become a constant irritant to the British military establishment. His flippant attitude, disregard for protocol and disheveled appearance drove them nuts, and he knew it. And yet he was tolerated because of his brilliance and his knowledge of the Middle East.”

“Lawrence’s place in history is clear. Without him, the Arab war against the Turks would never have succeeded and the British might have been unable to defeat the Turks. Lawrence was a legendary hero whose courage and daring deeds have been admired for almost a century. He was indeed Lawrence of Arabia. The historians’ take on Gertrude Bell is that she, more than any other person, shaped modern Iraq. After her death, King Faisal said: “Gertrude Bell is a name written indelibly on Arab history—a name spoken with awe. . . . One might say she was the greatest woman of her time.” Truly, the Queen of the Desert.

On Monday, October 29, 2018, the Literary Club celebrated its 169th anniversary with 67 members gathered in formal dress and fine fettle. Thanks to Nikko, Giovanni and their staff, we were fed well; the food, the papers, and the group all were nicely sauced. Our Historian, Mr. Robert Vitz, led off with a recollection of Cleveland Abbe, who joined the Literary Club in 1868, the same year he assumed the directorship of the Cincinnati Observatory when it was still in its original location in Mt. Adams.

From that post, Abbe approached the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce to underwrite a national network of weather reports which would arrive via telegraph, which he then assembled to divine a two-day forecast disseminated via the Associated Press. The Chamber came up with \$300 to fund his venture, which “by 1872, led him to produce over 500 sets of daily maps and bulletins, many of which were sent to authorities in European cities in exchange for similar data. In 1879, in order to more effectively collate information, now coming in from all over the country, he established four time zones, a system adopted by the railroads a few years later.”

Abbe’s relationship with the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce may have been “slightly” assisted by his membership in the Literary Club. The Chamber’s president was John A. Gano, a Literarian since 1864. The three-person Chamber committee that first endorsed Abbe’s proposal included Silas Newton and George Graham who both joined the club in 1868, and the Chamber’s secretary who signed the Chamber’s acceptance letter was George McLaughlin, club member since 1859. My heavens, that makes it sound like the LC was bastion of nefarious collaboration. As a touch of foreshadowing, let’s just call it coincidence.

Cleveland Abbe went on to help found the National Geographic Society and was elected an Associate Fellow in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The Royal Meteorological Society of Great Britain awarded him its Symans Gold Medal in 1912, and in the U.S., he received numerous medals and honors. Not bad for a former literarian, although my favorite, and most telling line, in Bob’s paper is this: Coinciding with his marriage, his attendance virtually stopped. Cleveland Abbe was America’s leading meteorologist until his death in 1916.

President Kathman closed the ceremonies with his address focused on the meaning of the term “gentleman.” From the factory that forged countless Cincinnati gentlemen, that is a West Side Catholic boys-only high school gym class ruled with an iron fist and zero tolerance by a flat-top autocrat in shorts and probably a whistle around his neck, Jerry escaped to London where civility flowed from the taps. If you get the chance to read Jerry’s paper on the Club’s website, the additional visuals are worth the clicking. There is a classic photo of Jerry from his time in England, posed with the very same sporty MGB that is occasionally parked out front—let me attest that one of the two of them has nicely endured the ensuing years. It is in Merry Olde that Jerry learned that “the code of the gentleman includes gentleness, sympathy, a kind disposition and a fine imagination and that Charles Dickens and Rudyard Kipling, though coming from rather humble origins, desired passionately to be recognized as gentlemen.” Jerry’s presidential address also examined the many etymologies of being a gentleman, plus various definitions across time and reference, and finally, the denigration of term and its association with darker versions, like the devil, pirates or the unseemly gentlemen’s club. Adding a few

applicable tidbits previous addresses, he capped the evening with le mot juste, that is, in this case, "Gentlemen, we are adjourned."

Looking back, October's papers were remarkable in the confluence of subjects, events and presenters. Aside from locations like Cairo where Igor's paper ended and Bob Olson's began, we also had Cleveland Abbe who could not serve in the Union Army because of his severe myopia, which is the same condition that affected Ted, who hails from Cleveland. Bob Vitz opened his historical paper in Mt. Adams, hence tied to Bill Burleigh's season-ending paper on John Quincy Adams who journeyed to the Queen City to lay the cornerstone for the very same Observatory, from that point forward in the neighborhood newly named for JQA himself. And of course, Robert Smith's spotlight on Churchill that commenced our new season paired with the photo from Bob Olsen's paper capturing Winston after he had dusted himself off after falling from his camel. Does all this mean that we are a club of such limited range that we can only research and write upon a narrow slate of subjects? Nay, I say, it instead reflects upon the wide range of scholarship that our members do in preparing their papers, plus the whimsy of the world. Shuffled by Clerk Cuni's scheduling, these papers are brought to the podium without collusion or advance knowledge of subjects. Heck, the titles even aim to confuse, so most of the time we don't know what the papers are about until the second or third paragraph. This potpourri of papers, this bouillabaisse of books, this spectrum of speakers and subjects – all this is what makes this is a special place. And which makes me thankful to serve as secretary to deliberate over and deliver these rich findings. So thank you. One last thing – don't forget to vote. Good night.

Minutes of the Literary Club

June/September 2018

There are scant few Cincinnati institutions older than the Literary Club. Yes, our heralded half-brother, the Mercantile Library, is an elder by 15 years. But the Roebling Bridge is not, it's almost a score younger, even though it's often presented as the symbol of the Queen City's heritage. Tonight though, we'll borrow this architectural upstart as the structural model for the minutes. Our iconic bridge spans a significant length across the Ohio, as do these minutes, which start with two papers from June, then connects two papers delivered in September. When reviewing the four, the middle two can be seen as stanchions, while the first and last comprise the cables that rise from the banks to hold tight the structure.

On June 4th, 2018, Bob Burdette delivered his debut paper: "I am not Javert." A quick admission: I am probably the single worst person in this room to recap a wonderful story replete with foreign names and places, for my struggle with French rivals Congress' struggle with civility. Thankfully, our presenter for the evening was much more eloquent as he lavished the attending 55 members and 4 guests with a witty piece of fiction that could be the literary offspring of Agatha Christie and John LeCarre. All the characters and plots were in fine fettle: WWII atrocities, ties to Islamic terrorists, some debauchery, a chateau filled to the brim with guests and suspects, a bloody fez, a fingerprint-less rifle, a hot air balloon, a helicopter, and a Leica camera that recorded the final moments of the deceased. Plus, of course, a hard-as-nails, smart-like-a-fox detective. Finally, a cameo of a dashing member of the Literary Club -- as if there are any other type of literarians -- whose chapeau was a pivotal-to-the-plot Cincinnati Reds baseball cap.

Bob's setting was a well-rendered fantasy of European wealth and noblesse oblige, criminal cunning and cold-hearted murder. The action kept pace as the detective peeled back the layers to unmask the killer, and along the way, gave room for the theological and moral high ground that murder reaches for when rationalizing the ravages of war. It's a tale that was savored as much when first heard and it was when re-read -- congratulations Bob.

At the business meeting following, Allen Rutz and Mark Upson were elected to the club, swelling the ranks back to a full membership of one hundred, a benchmark that we've not attained for quite some time.

On June 11th, 2018, Lew Gatch once again provided gracious and generous hospitality for the spring outing. There, the evening began with a conclusion...of Tom Murphy's tenure as president; these minutes formally mark our collective appreciation for his service.

Bill Burleigh brought "Dear Diary" an exhaustive and adroit detailing of John Quincy Adam's journaling prowess. We were informed that POTUS VI maintained a rigorous and remarkable devotion to daily record-keeping. Starting when he was 12 years old and stretching over 69 years until just two days before his death in 1848, Adams kept an amazing diary, filling 15,000 pages, a lifelong work that fills 51 manuscript volumes.

Bill captured the magnitude of this work by sharing Adam's commitment to recording an unparalleled daily recounting of colonial history and pre-Civil War America. Quote: "Adams would rise between 4 and 5 a.m. each morning, a practice that at one point stretched for 26 years in an unbroken daily string. The entries offer an exceptional window into the mind of one of the most intriguing figures in this nation's annals. There are verbatim accounts of treaty negotiations, transcripts of Cabinet meetings, congressional debates, dinner conversations, reflections on sermons, experiments in verse, scientific observations, even theater and opera reviews."

Adams was as omnivorous in his reading as he was omnipotent in his writing. Shakespeare at the age of ten, Greek classics in his teens. As a young man, Adams traveled the globe and sat at tables with world powers. As Bill noted, Adams has been called the most intelligent, most prickly, most oddly passionate and most highly educated man ever elected President...and yet his Presidency has been declared an abject failure by many.

Bill found in Adams' journal words to live by as literarians and worker bees in all our various professions, I quote: "Literature has been the charm of my life, and could I have carved out my own fortunes, to Literature would my whole life been devoted. I have been a lawyer for bread, and a statesman at the call of my country. The operations of my mind are slow, my imagination sluggish, and my powers of contemporaneous speaking very insufficient – But I have much capacity for and . . . a strong and almost innate passion for literary pursuits."

On September 17, Robert Smith's "A Statesman for All Seasons" welcomed club members back for a new literary season when he brought a paper detailing the family history of a global legend, as well as a literary champion, one Winston Churchill. It's not hard to see

where Winston got his pluck and his impassioned speeches through the Churchill family tree of rogues and royalty. His life story, as described in both fawning and fierce biographies, award-winning films, and a multi-volume Pulitzer Prize winning autobiography, feels as familiar to us as George Washington's or Abraham Lincoln's. Winston C. is perhaps America's most beloved Brit, here in the coarse and ungrateful colonies...which makes him seem like one of our own. His words and diatribes were just as stirring on this side of the Atlantic, his acerbic and cutting wit perhaps better known than John Quincy Adams, but cut from the same jib and well-steeped from years in the backrooms of governmental fomenting and public dis-appearances. Robert and his wife Myffy were amongst the countless mourners paying their respects at Westminster Hall. We can now number ourselves amongst the lucky to have another view of the indomitable Churchill, compliments of the indomitable Dr. Smith.

On September 24, Bernie Foster organized a budget built around the notion of superlatives; Bernie led off the evening with his contribution entitled "The Doctrine of Discovery: The Best and Worst of Times." It would be more fitting to deliver this section of the minutes next Monday, as Bernie noted, October 8th is Columbus Day and/or Indigenous Peoples Day. As to which the holiday it should be named for, it's your choice as to whether you believe white men in power who lay claim to discoveries they didn't make or remarkably literate correspondents who had no formal education. Both notions are suspect; as I was reminded earlier today, in 36 days, we'll see which of these two groups win the reenactment, which the press calls an election, 526 years later.

Using very long excerpts from two eyewitnesses to tell the story of Columbus from differing POVs: Miquel Ocampos, a shiphand, and second, a Hispaniola native named Heitiana. Both reveal the perhaps-not-shocking-revelations that there was fake news way back in the 15th century. In addition to the plunder and desecration Columbus and his cronies exacted upon the New World, disease and death followed in his wake. Gritty with sad detail, Bernie showed that while victors write the history books, first person narratives from that time period offer starkly different stories.

Bill Killen followed with a paper that captured the engineering marvel of the Copper Canyon Railroad, a venture founded by Albert Kinsey Owen who felt the Pacific Railroad would be a bridge too far with nearly two thousand miles of track. That said, his brainchild did indeed save $\frac{3}{4}$ of the mileage, but finished with 39 bridges and 86 tunnels along its route to Chihuahua, it had beaucoup bridges. Starting in 1861, Kinsey announced his intentions to build a rail line from Juarez to the Pacific Ocean. A century later, with construction that suffered more ups and

downs than the geography itself, the final spike was hammered into the ground. Traveling from the breathtaking cliffs of the Sierra Madre to verdant river valleys, as Bill was able to do, he also observed the many local entrepreneurs sell native crafts and food. Rich in color and history, this continuing economy shows how modern transport does still bring money to cities otherwise unreachable. Bill's budget showed us how perseverance pays off, but often to other's benefit.

Joe Dehner finished with the superlative title of "Superlative." The first few paragraphs seemed to encompass the history of the Guinness Book of World Records – a veritable treasury of firsts and foremost of human achievements, no matter how strange, strong or stupid. But John, the story's protagonist, tires of the endless attention-seeking of absurd performances and announces to his disbelieving wife that he'd quit Guinness to launch a publication showcasing what it means to be average. No longer did he have to be a promoter of the modern-day, worldwide freak show. Instead, his *Normal*, as it was named, was not, and I quote: "about what humbles or humiliates us but what we share – the achievability of being normal. Half the world could see average as reachable. The other half could see it as affirming success." As with all good satire, and Joe's paper is a sparkling example of such, it is a literary mirror that reflects what we know, or don't; who we are, or who we are not; and what we fear. To wit, a final quote: "Normal could not stand for rigid conformism. The journal confirmed that being normal included being different, because it is normal to be different. Normal embraced eccentricity in reasonable measure. Normal people have extraordinary passions, quirks, hobbies, and pursuits." Bravo, Joe.

Many, if not most, if not all of us were raised with a copy of Aesop's Fables near at hand, a literary lens through which to view human virtues and vices through animals and archetypal characters. The fables themselves could be either a highlight reel or a cautionary tale, but all were parables that ended with a punchline, i.e., a moral to the story.

To close where we began, it would be a remarkable achievement when future generations consider the history of the Queen City to have the literary establishments of our Literary Club and the Mercantile Library lauded as the bright stars in the heavenly firmament, both shining down upon Cincinnati's culture as testament to the power of the written word. When composing these minutes, I re-read and reflected upon Bill Burleigh's and Robert Smith's remarkable papers, notable in terms of these authors and their subjects, their service to their calling, and to this club. Those papers, and those people, each venerated with historical

significance, indelible contributions to the betterment of others, their papers are indeed soon to be part of two centuries of literary stanchions to this city within our collected papers.

Fellows, we are indeed lucky to be seated in the midst of intermittent genius, which is so much more than daily life provides. We have been granted the good fortune to have such scholars as able guides to illuminate man's struggles and share their insights with us through the long weeks of winter. We have the benefit to learn in one evening what a member has taken years to study and scribe. Searching for an ever-appreciative koan for all past papers and presenters, I had an Aesop's moment. Here's the three-word moral of their stories (personal and those presented in papers): Always Aim High.