



SAARP SOCIAL SERVICES - PINELANDS

(Reg No 2006/003084/08)

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Monthly Meetings: 3rd Thursday at Pinelands Bowling Club
St Stephen's Rd. Doors open at 09:00, meeting closes 11:15

NEWSLETTER : JUNE 2020

Hello, again

As I write, the rain is pouring down and raindrops are chasing each other down the window-panes – so much more satisfying than the pathetic drizzles we've had recently! Only a few months ago we were preparing ourselves for Day Zero, when our taps would run dry but, *at last*, the much-prayed-for rain arrived; my September 2018 newsletter said it was 'torrential', and I quoted the song:

*The day that the rains came down
Mother Earth smiled again*

Jane Morgan (1958)

Usually I can report on Committee and general meetings, outings etc, and bring you news of good things to come, but this is just not possible during lockdown. I've therefore been searching for something interesting to write about and have re-discovered a document from which I have previously selected items for newsletters - please forgive the repetition, but I feel sure most of you will enjoy reading these again. Here are some historical derivations of commonly used words or phrases:

1. During World War II, US airplanes were armed with belts of bullets which they would shoot during dogfights and on strafing runs. These belts, 27 feet long, were folded into the wing compartments that fed their machine guns and contained hundreds of rounds of bullets. After successful missions pilots would return to base having expended all their bullets on various targets, saying, "*I gave them the whole nine yards*", meaning they had used up all of their ammunition. (Remember: 3 feet = 1 yard!)
2. In the days of George Washington there were no cameras and images of people had to be sculpted or painted. Some paintings of Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back, while others showed both legs and both arms. At the time painters' charges were not based on the number of people to be painted, but on *how many limbs* were to be painted, as painting them would cost the buyer more. Hence the expression, 'Okay, but it'll cost you an arm and a leg.' (Artists know hands and arms are more difficult to paint.)
3. As incredible as it may sound, men and women took baths only twice a year (in May & October). When they did, women kept their hair covered but men shaved their heads (because of lice and bugs), and wore wigs. Wealthy men could afford good wigs made from wool, but those couldn't be washed - to clean them they had to be placed in a hollowed-out loaf of bread and baked for 30 minutes. The heat would make the wig big and fluffy, hence the term 'big wig'. Today, someone who appears to be powerful and wealthy is sometimes referred to as 'a big wig'.
4. In the late 1700's, many houses consisted of a large room with only one chair. For dining purposes a long, wide board folded down from the wall; the 'head of the household' always sat in the chair while everyone else ate sitting on the floor. Occasionally a guest (usually a man) would be invited to sit in the chair during a meal – sitting there meant the person was important and in charge - he was called the 'chair man.' Today in business, we use the expression or title 'Chairman' or 'Chairman of the Board.'

5. Ladies wore corsets laced up in the front. A dignified or prim & proper woman wearing a tightly tied corset was described as 'straight laced'. (*I question this as my dictionary gives 'strait-laced' as meaning puritanical or over-scrupulous.*)

6. Common entertainment included playing cards but there was a tax levied when purchasing a pack if it included the Ace of Spades. To avoid paying the tax, people would buy only 51 cards. Since most games required 52 cards, these people were thought to be stupid or dumb because they weren't 'playing with a full deck.'

7. Early politicians required feedback from the public to determine what the people considered important. Since there were no telephones, newspapers, TV or radio as we have today, politicians would send their assistants to local taverns, pubs and bars, telling them to 'go sip some ale' and listen to people's conversations and political concerns. Many assistants were dispatched at different times, each being told 'You go sip here' and 'You go sip there'. The two words 'go sip' were eventually combined when referring to local opinion, giving us the term 'gossip.'

8. At local taverns, pubs and bars, people drank from pint- and quart-sized containers. A bar maid's job was to keep an eye on the customers and the drinks flowing. She had to pay close attention and remember who was drinking from pints and who had quarts, hence the phrase 'minding your p's and q's'. (*I'm sure when my Mum told us to 'Mind our p's and q's', she was reminding us to say 'please' and 'thank you' when appropriate!*)

9. In the heyday of sailing ships, all warships and many freighters carried iron cannons which fired round iron cannonballs, a good supply of which needed to be kept near the cannon. But, how to prevent them from rolling about the deck? The best storage method devised was a square-based pyramid with one ball on top, resting on four resting on nine, all resting on sixteen; thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon. A major problem, though, was to prevent the bottom layer from sliding or rolling out from under the others. The solution was a metal plate called a 'Monkey' with 16 round indentations to house the cannonballs. However, if this plate were made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust onto it. The solution to the rusting problem was to make 'brass monkeys.' Few landlubbers realize that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled; consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannonballs would come right off the monkey. Quite literally, it was 'Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey.' (All this time, you thought that was an improper expression, didn't you?!)

PLAYING CARDS

Did you know that the traditional deck of cards forms a strikingly coherent calendar? The mathematical perfection is mind-blowing.

- *In a year / In a pack:* 52 weeks / 52 cards; 13 weeks in each season / 13 cards in a pack; 4 seasons / 4 suits; 12 months / 12 court cards (Jack – King in 4 suits)
- Red cards = Day / Black cards = Night
- If Jacks = 11, Queens = 12, Kings = 13, then the sum of all the cards in one suit (1 + 2 + 3 + ... to 13) = 91; multiply this by the 4 suits (91 x 4) = 364. Add 1 for the Joker, and you have 365, which equals days in the year!). Some games require 2 Jokers – so there's Leap Year!
- Spades indicate ploughing/working; Hearts 'Love thy crops'; Clubs flourishing & growth, while Diamonds reaping & wealth.
- If you add all the letters in 'one, two, three ... through to Jack, Queen, King' = 52 (back to weeks in the year!). If you're really bored, check it out during lockdown!

UPDATE ON 'CUP OF COFFEE' FUND-RAISER FOR THE BAXTER

Lara Foot, CEO of the Baxter, has advised that #BaxterCoffeeAngels have already raised the 'overwhelming' amount of R1.2 million by donating R30 a month in response to their appeal (their target is R10m by the end of 2021). She asks that her very sincere and grateful thanks be conveyed to all those who have already contributed to the appeal. For those who have not yet

had a chance to donate R30 a month, their EFT banking details are below:

Account Name: UCT Baxter Theatre Centre Deposit Account Bank: Standard Bank
Branch: Rondebosch Acc Number:270628444 Branch Code:025009

THE IMPORTANCE OF A HYPHEN

I'm still sifting through piles of papers to find all the things needed by the ICOD Personal Checklist, and came across this poem by Linda Ellis.

THE DASH

*I read of a man who stood to speak
At the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on her tomb-
stone
From the beginning to the end.
He noticed that first came the date of
her birth,
And spoke of the following date with
tears,
But he said what mattered most of all
Was the dash between those years.
For that dash represents all the time
That she spent alive on earth,
And now only those who loved her
Know of what that little line is worth.
For it matters not how much we own –
The cars, the house, the cash;
What matters is how we live and love,
And how we spend our dash.*

*So think about this long and hard:
Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left
That can still be rearranged.
If we could just slow down enough
To consider what's true and real,
And always try to understand
The way other people feel,
And be less quick to anger,
And show appreciation more,
And love the people in our lives
Like we've never loved before.
If we treat each other with respect
And more often wear a smile,
Remembering that this special dash
Might only last a while.
So when your eulogy is being read
With your life's actions to rehash,
Would you be proud of things they say
About how you spent your dash?*

Makes you think, doesn't it?

In the same pile of papers I also found the following, and I think I'll attach a copy of this to my Will! It's called The Last Farewell, and I tried in vain to find the poet or how it originated. Plenty of other things with the same title, though.

*Dear Friends I go, but do not weep –
I've lived my life, so full, so deep.
Throughout my life I gave my best;
I earned my keep, I've earned my rest.
I never tried to be great or grand,
I tried to be a helping hand.
If I helped in a team,
If I helped on my own,
I was more than repaid
By good friends I have known.
And if I went the extra mile
I did it with pleasure,
It was all worthwhile.*

*If I brightened your path,
Then let it be -
A small contribution
From my loved ones and me.
But mostly I cherished the family
I knew
In a bond never ending,
So precious, so true.
Now sadly I leave you and travel alone
Through the mystic veil
To the great unknown
With such beautiful memories
That forever will be.*

The way that I hope You'll remember me.

On Friday I received the following: This is the first Friday in history when people can't wait for Monday morning! I anticipate a delivery from Wine of the Month Club with great expectation!

Cheers for now. Ruth