



THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION

Box 883 Stock Exchange Tower
Montreal, Canada H4Z 1K2

November 2, 2003

Welcome

The Case of the Vanishing Introduction

For the past several newsletters, readers have been confronted with introductions of varying comprehensibility written by yours truly on an airplane, during moments stolen from family, or at the Second Cup on Greene Avenue while waiting for yours truly's far better half. This month, alas, there is no introduction of any comprehensibility due to constraints of time, place, and action (and inaction). Yet another plea is going out to members, friends, caregivers, and pulse takers: help us fatten the pages of our cherished BQ minutes by sending your thoughts, partial thoughts, epiphanies, cataclysmic moments, and printable rantings that relate to the WGCD and similar business to: elliottnewman@hotmail.com

Please rest assured that since the last meeting, yours truly has studied his spam missives daily and in detail, and is certain of having received no such e-mail. If you are sending us material, please identify the address and the subject both as Bimetallic Question.

We are looking forward to your contributions.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, December 4th, at 6:30 p.m. at:

The Westmount Public Library
(Westmount Room)
4574 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Quebec

Although it will be December and we will have experienced the artistry of Jack Frost, it is not a valid excuse to say that the parking meter was frozen and therefore did not credit your warm looney. You must feed the meters if you want to avoid parking tickets.

The Next Quiz: "The Six Napoleons" by David Kellett.

Minutes of the MEETING of the BIMETALLIC QUESTION held on Thursday, October 2, 2003 at the Westmount Library (Westmount Room), 4574 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Quebec.

Present:

Jack and Maureen Anderson, Stanley Baker, Mac Belfer, Wilfrid de Freitas, Robert P. Harrison, David Kellett, David Reich.

Regrets:

Rachel Alkallay, Linda Hartt, Leigh Lerner and Patrick Campbell.

CALL TO ORDER: Wilfrid de Freitas, standing in for Sovereign David Dowse, opened the meeting at approximately 6:30 p.m. and welcomed those present.

1. The assembly expressed best wishes to David Dowse, recovering from recent hip surgery.
2. Stanley Baker led the opening toast to the Master.
3. Stanley, ever a font of knowledge, read an article about a barrister named Howlett, who set up a society of 1,000 members in the 1890s. He also read about a Herr Kunst who led a pilgrimage to the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland, including a dramatic recreation of the battle between Moriarty and Holmes.
4. It was also pointed out that a friend of our society, Dr. Joe Schwartz, had written recently that the Gutenberg Bible looks in better shape than a manuscript of a Holmes story, despite the centuries between the two. We were informed by a knowledgeable member that the difference is due to the quality of the paper used in the German bible.
5. Wilfrid de Freitas described the preparations of Holmes's sitting room at 221B Baker Street for the 1951 Festival of Britain. To add to the authenticity of the scene, different people were asked to bite into the food to leave the impression that various people around Holmes's dining table had actually partaken of the meal.
6. Elevating the level of erudition on the subject of authentic and time-preserved publications, David Reich commented that it is preferable to read a book in the dark in order to keep the pages from yellowing.
7. In an obvious manoeuvre to toss the H₂S of confusion into the ranks, Stanley asked what the origin of the word "toast" is. We are depending on David Kellett to return with the definitive explanation.
8. For some reason or other, we briefly discussed the merits of Google over other search engines. Doyle registered some impatience over this.
9. Jack Anderson passed around a paperback edition of *The Valley of Fear*. We were all impressed that the artwork on the cover emulated the style of Louis Lamour or Roy Rogers novels.

10. Wilfrid noted that he had four early editions of *The Valley of Fear* and a purchase request. He mentioned that the British publication he showed us was produced about 1914-15, immediately after the last magazine installment of the novella, and is worth about \$400 - \$500.
11. As one of the founding members of the society 25 years ago, Wilfrid noted that we need help at the executive level. He added that it would be nice to leave a memento of the group, preferably, a publication.
12. Wilfrid also urged more attendees and friends of the society to make a commitment by paying dues of only \$18 annually. He pointed out that several people are enjoying the benefits of the society, such as attending meetings, sharing the camaraderie of devotees of Holmes, the canon, and related activities, and receiving the newsletter which is an expense for us to print and mail. Conversely, there are paid members whose busy schedules prevent them from attending but rarely.
13. We held a general discussion on content of meetings, winter activities, and the annual banquet. Re content of meetings, David Reich suggested we show representative films of the different Sherlock Holmes movies, such as movies starring Nigel Bruce, Basil Rathbone, and Jeremy Brett.

Re the annual banquet, Wilfrid cautioned that we need to consider costs and added it is time to think about venues, menus, and speakers. Robert Harrison recommended that we get the British Consul-General to speak, perhaps about the London of Sherlock Holmes.

14. David Kellett toasted Dr. Watson, and Elliott Newman toasted Irene Adler.
15. We are continuing to invite comment on our web site: www.bimetallicquestion.org
16. Maureen Anderson administered the quiz on *The Valley of Fear* on behalf of Patrick Campbell. The score was out of 100. The winners were:

David Kellett:	87
Robert Harrison:	55
Jack Anderson:	48
17. Continuing "Show and Tell" after the quiz, Robert Harrison, having considerable interest in London, England, brought a book on Victorian London, dates 1891 or 1892, which he had procured from Wilfrid. Robert mentioned that he is currently pursuing a PhD in chemical engineering at McGill.
18. Wilfrid then showed a videotape of "Reichenbach Transplanted," our society's version of the terrifying struggle between Moriarty and Holmes. Far more terrifying than the original contest, the BQ fight to the finish at the spectacular Dorwin Falls near ignominious Rawdon, Quebec, presented dastardly throat-clutchings; supernatural hops, skips, and jumps, ghoulish grimaces of menace, superb acting, unforgettable directorial techniques, a real country stream with its own rocks, and loads of verisimilitude. It will like forever in the annals of film lore.

19. Maureen toasted Mrs. Hudson.
20. Wilfrid toasted the society. We've reproduced it here because of its poignancy.

In the nearly 25 years since our society was started, we have had in the region of 200 members -- some have moved on, some have died, and several are still with us both in body and in spirit. Some have become close personal friends. All this has come about through our mutual admiration of the Master and - let me hasten to add - Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, without whose intervention we would not be gathered here today. I am sure I speak for many of you when I say that the Bimetallic Question has been a double boon -- no mean achievement in this day and age of fleeting values -- and I am grateful for the pleasures it has given me. To the Society!

MRS. HUDSON'S CORNER:

In honour of our next mystery, "The Six Napoleans"

Roasted Beet Napoleon

Rounds of brilliant red beets layered with slices of white goat cheese make up one of the most striking and elegant appetizers served. Purchase beets that are all about the same size. To save time, roast and chill the beets beforehand.

Serves 2

- 1 1/2 pounds large yellow or red beets, washed and trimmed
- 1/2 cup rice wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 recipe herbed goat cheese, cut into eight round slices
- 1 to 1 1/2 cups mixed baby lettuces, washed and dried
- 1/4 cup Spago House Dressing (recipe below)
- 1/4 cup Citrus Hazelnut Vinaigrette (recipe below)
- 1 ounce toasted hazelnuts, coarsely chopped

1. Roast beets: Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Place the beets in a small roasting pan and pour enough cold water to reach about one quarter of the way up the sides of the beets. Cover the pan with foil, and roast the beets until they are tender, 2 hours to 2 hours and 15 minutes. To check for doneness, gently insert a bamboo skewer into a beet. The skewer should slide through easily. Remove the beets from the pan, allow to cool, and then peel.

2. Cut each beet into 1/4 inch-thick round slices. Cut each slice with a 3-inch round cookie cutter. (You will need ten rounds) Cut trimmings into 1/4-inch dice and reserve 1/2 cup for garnish.

3. In a sauté pan, bring vinegar and sugar to a boil. Lower to a simmer and poach beets one minute on each side. With a slotted spatula, remove and place on a baking tray lined with parchment paper. Cover and refrigerate until needed.

4. When ready to assemble, heat the olive oil in a small sauté pan. Arrange the slices of herbed goat cheese in the pan and warm slightly, turning them with a small spatula to warm both sides. This has to be done quickly or the cheese will melt.

5. To assemble the Napoleons: Place one of the beet rounds on a firm, flat surface and begin to layer. Top with a slice of goat cheese, then another beet round, a second slice of cheese, another beet round, a third slice of cheese and a beet round (continue until you have five layers of beets and four layers of cheese) Carefully cut through the layers, dividing into three wedges. Repeat with the remaining beets and cheese.

6. To serve: arrange three of the wedges, pointed ends facing out, in a circle in the center of each plate. Toss the baby lettuces with the House Spago Dressing and mound half of the lettuces on top of each arranged napoleon. Drizzle one half of the citrus hazelnut vinaigrette around each mound. Sprinkle toasted nuts and reserved diced beets on top of drizzled vinaigrette. Serve immediately.

To prepare ahead: Through step 3, up to one day ahead.

Spago House Dressing

Makes 1 cup

3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 tbsp sherry wine vinegar
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1/2 tbsp minced fresh thyme leaves
1 small shallot
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/3 cup walnut oil (or part walnut and part hazelnut oil)
1/4 tsp kosher salt
1/8 tsp freshly ground white pepper

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the balsamic and sherry wine vinegars, the Dijon mustard, minced thyme, and the minced shallot. Slowly whisk in the oils and when emulsified, season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate in a covered container.

2. When ready to use, whisk again.

To prepare ahead: Through step 1, the dressing will keep 3 to 4 weeks.

Citrus Hazelnut Vinaigrette

Makes 1 1/2 cups

1 1/2 fresh orange juice
1 shallot, peeled and minced
1 tsp minced fresh thyme leaves
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1/2 tsp orange zest
1/3 cup hazelnut oil
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper

1. In a medium saucepan, bring orange juice to a boil. Lower to a simmer and reduce until only 1/3 cup remains. Cool to room temperature.
2. In a medium bowl, combine orange juice, shallots, thyme, vinegar, and orange zest.
3. Slowly whisk in both oils until thick and emulsified. Season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate until needed.

To prepare ahead: The vinaigrette will keep up to 1 week, refrigerated, in a covered container.

Recipe located at <http://www.cnn.com/2000/FOOD/news/11/22/celeb.books/puck.html> From "Wolfgang Puck's Pizza, Pasta and More!"

Napolean's Hutchen

Recipe By : Uta Robinson

Serving Size : 1 Preparation Time :0:45

250 grams flour (about 2 cups)
3 egg yolks
125 grams sugar (about 1 1/2 cups)
125 grams margarine
3 egg whites
125 grams almonds (about 2 cups) -- finely ground
grams sugar (about 1/4 to 1/2 cup)

- 1) Mix together first four ingredients: flour, egg yolks, sugar and margarine in a large bowl. Knead well on lightly floured surface. Set aside.
- 2) Beat egg whites till stiff. In separate bowl mix together almonds and sugar. Fold into egg whites until nearly smooth.

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Roll out dough, cut circles. Put teaspoon of filling into each circle and pinch together to make a hat. Keep rolling remaining dough to cut circles till dough is gone. Place hats on lightly greased cookie sheet and bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until lightly browned.

NOTES : One - 1/2 cup - stick of margarine is approximately equal to 110 grams.

MAUREEN'S MERRIMENT: Non-stop groaners from, about, or near the WGCD's inexhaustible supply of puns, pranks, jokes, puzzles or poems.

Passtime with Good Company

Henry VIII, king of England (1491-1547)

Pastime with good company
I love and shall unto I die.
Grudge whoso will, but none deny,
So God be pleased, this live will I.
For my pastance
Hunt, sing, and dance.
My heart is set
All godely sport
To my comfort.
Who shall me let?
Youth will have needs daliance,
Of good or ill some pastance.
Company me thinketh then best
All thoftes and fantasies to digest.
For idleness
Is chief mistress
Of vices all.
Than who can say
But "pass the day"
Is best of all?
Company with honesty
Is virtue, and vice to flee.
Company is good or ill
But every man hath his free will.
The best ensue,
The worst eschew,
My mind shall be.
Virtue to use,
Vice to refuse,
I shall use me.

SANITY REGAINED: Answers to last newsletter's quiz - Not yet available. I'm still struggling through the puzzle myself.

Our dear friends, you would confer a great favour upon us by joining us at the next meeting of "THE BIMETALLIC QUESTION" which is being held on Thursday, December 4th, 2003, at 6:30 p.m.

Society Officers and Silver Anniversary in 2004

As you will no doubt be aware there are a few tasks that must be attended to in order for our Society to function. For the past few years David Dowse has been our Sovereign a post he has held more than once), and prior to David our good friend Patrick Campbell held the reins. Recent years have seen an encouraging number of new members (thank you, Stanley Baker!), many of whom have taken on tasks without being asked: these include taking care of the wine for our toasts at meetings, arranging the annual Birthday dinner, special functions e.g the billiards night, etc.

In 2004 our Society will celebrate its first quarter century and if you would like to become involved in its continuing development we invite you to contact Wilfrid de Freitas, by telephone at (514) 935-9581, by e-mail at wilfrid@defreitasbooks.com or by mail at the above address. No qualifications are required; only the desire to contribute your talent in whichever way best suits you.

Apropos our Silver Anniversary in 2004, it would be fitting to commemorate the occasion with something concrete: speaking personally, I think a nicely printed booklet of reminiscences, with photographs, contributed by our members would be one way to go. Does anyone else have any other ideas?

Please let Wilfrid know if you do, or if you'd be willing to contribute to the sort of publication mentioned above.

Many thanks in advance for your input!