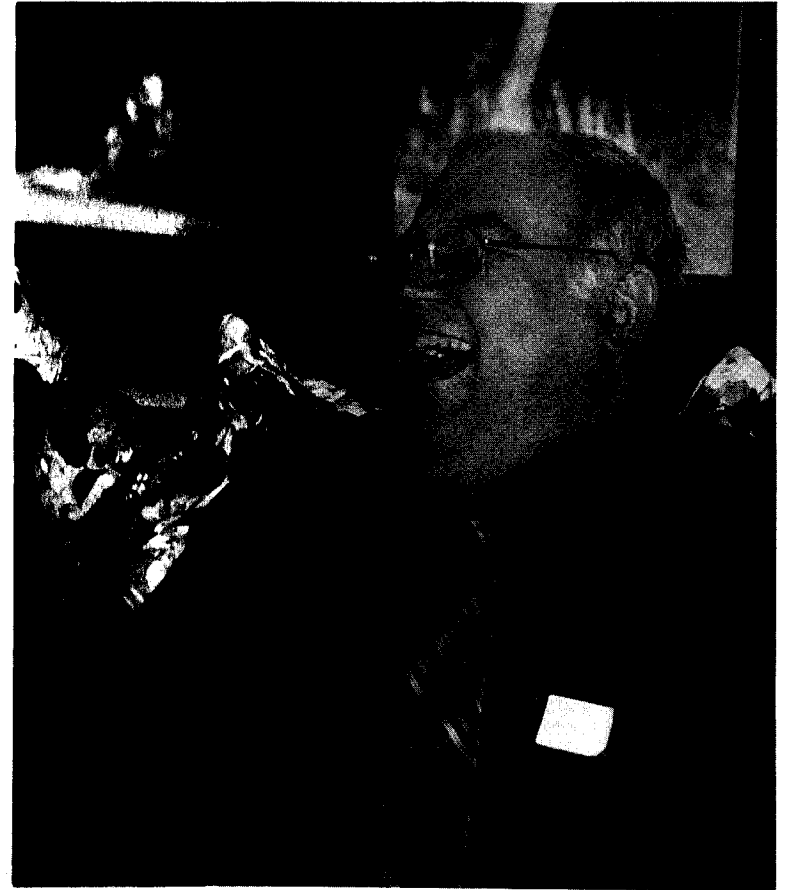


THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

August 2003

No. 119

The Fun Never Stops...



...at the Annual Meeting of the BRS!

Read the Whole Exciting Story Inside!

Cover Photo by David Goldman

BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

c/o David White

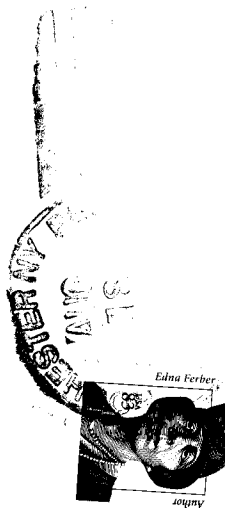
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THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY

The Bertrand Russell Society was founded in 1974 to foster a better understanding of the life, work and writing of Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) and to promote ideas and causes he thought important. The Society's motto is Russell's statement, "The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge." (*What I Believe*, 1925)

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THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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Opinions expressed in the *Quarterly* are entirely those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Bertrand Russell Society or any other individual or institution.

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QUOTE OF THE QUARTERLY

Just in case anyone was still unsure of Russell's views on the subject...

"I don't see any harm in sex—I like it."

Bertrand Russell, in "The Life and Times of Bertrand Russell," BBC Interview with Robert Bolt, May 1964.

THE BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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From the Editor:

The Continuing Value of Skepticism

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the publication of Bertrand Russell's classic *Sceptical Essays*. (Russell accomplished so much in his life that there's always some momentous anniversary associated with him to celebrate.) In recognition of the occasion, a few thoughts on the continuing value of skepticism in the modern world are in order.

The quest to provide enough intellectual gymnastics to prove God's existence continues unabated in the modern world. Just last year, as Emily Eakin reported in the May 11, 2002 issue of the *New York Times*, philosopher Richard Swinburne attempted to establish the truth of the essential claims of Christian faith using probability theory. Armed with Bayes' Theorem, which details how to calculate conditional probability values (i.e., the probability that X is true given that Y is true), Swinburne calculates that the probability the Resurrection occurred is approximately .97! No doubt the Hindu, Buddhist, and atheist statisticians of the world will want to double-check these calculations.

The article, entitled "So God's Really in the Details?" provides a response to Swinburne's argument by mentioning Russell's famous retort to true believers. "Asked what he would say if God appeared to him after his death and demanded to know why he had failed to believe," Eakin writes, "the British philosopher and staunch evidentialist Bertrand Russell replied that he would say, 'Not enough evidence, God! Not enough evidence.'"

Actually, Eakin didn't get the quote exactly right. For the record, the source of this line attributed to Russell comes from an article by Leo Rosten published in the February 23, 1974 issue of *Saturday Review/World*. In this article, Rosten reminisces about meeting Russell in hopes that he would agree to an interview about his agnosticism. (The interview was subsequently published as "What Is an Agnostic?" in the November 3, 1953 issue of *Look*, and is included in Volume 11 of the *Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell (CPBR)* and numerous anthologies.) Rosten gives the following account of the exchange:

I asked, "Let us suppose, sir, that after you have left this sorry vale, you actually found yourself in heaven, standing before the Throne. There, in all his glory, sat the Lord—Not the Lord Russell, sir: God." Russell winced. "What would you think?"

"I would think I was dreaming."

"But suppose you realized you were not? Suppose that there, before your very eyes, beyond a shadow of a doubt, was God. What would you say?"

The pixie wrinkled his nose. "I probably would ask, 'Sir, why did you not give me better evidence?'"

This delicious story demonstrates not only Russell's razor-sharp wit, but more importantly, his fearless skepticism, his unwillingness to accept conventional wisdom when there was no good reason for doing so. This attitude shines forth throughout the Rosten interview, but one particularly choice line from it is worth repeating here. "If there is, in fact, a Supreme Deity," Russell informs Rosten, "which I doubt, I think it most unlikely that he... would possess so uneasy a vanity as to be offended by my views about his existence."

In "What Is an Agnostic," Russell demonstrates further this skepticism with regard to God's existence. He writes as follows:

I think that if I heard a voice from the sky predicting all that was going to happen to me during the next twenty-four hours, including events that would have seemed highly improbable, and if all these events then produced to happen, I might perhaps be convinced at least of the existence of some superhuman intelligence. I can imagine other evidence of the same sort which might convince me, but so far as I know, no such evidence exists.

What strikes me about the passage is the commonsensical attitude that Russell demonstrates in it. If someone made a claim for the existence of anything unrelated to matters religious, wouldn't that person have to produce evidence for that claim, at about the level Russell would require here? The only reason this standard remains controversial with regard to religion is the continuation, in our supposedly secular age, of a taboo against subjecting religious authority to the same searching criticism to which all other areas of life are subject. (If this taboo were not still so strong in so many people's minds, the Catholic Church could probably not have gotten away for so long with the lack of accountability its recent crises have made plain.)

Well, almost all areas. The same issue of the *Saturday Review/World* containing Rosten's reminisces about Russell also contains a review of

Bertrand Russell's America: Volume One 1896-1945 (Viking, 1974). The review, entitled "In Search of a Peerless Democracy," is by well-known right-wing pundit Norman Podhoretz. Podhoretz found little of value in the volume, concluding that it "for the most part gives us Russell at his village-atheist worst." I suspect Podhoretz's dislike of the book had less to do with Russell's atheism (in villages or elsewhere) and more to do with the "vituperative anti-Americanism" to which, Podhoretz declares, Russell surrendered "almost ecstasically" in the last years of his life. This "vituperative anti-Americanism" was more often than not simply Russell's skepticism at work again, demanding that the actions of the U.S. in Vietnam, which looked surprisingly like mass murder, be treated as moral abominations unless a compelling argument against this position could be articulated. This argument was never produced, only bitter denunciations of anyone unwilling to respect the taboo shielding American power from close scrutiny.

One can learn much about Podhoretz's own views from an October 30, 1983 editorial Podhoretz wrote for the *New York Times*. In it, he celebrates the U.S. invasion of Grenada, and bemoans the "sickly inhibitions against the use of military force" that kept the U.S. from backing then-General Ariel Sharon more enthusiastically in his depredations in Lebanon. (Given Sharon's current position, it is all the more important to expose his apologists and what they stand for.) The phrase Podhoretz uses here brings to mind Russell's exchange with "North Staffs" during World War One, in which Russell repeatedly suggested that his opponent simply enjoyed war for its own sake. This claim went unanswered by Russell's pseudonymous opponent, as a similar claim against Podhoretz almost certainly would. (Russell's contributions to the exchange appear in Volume 13 of the *CPBR*.) In the end, Russell would no doubt agree with Anthony Lewis' assessment of Podhoretz, which took the form of a quote from Walter Lippmann: "I don't agree with people who think that we have got to go out and shed a little blood to prove we're virile men...I don't think old men ought to promote wars for young men to fight. I don't like warlike old men" (Quoted in the November 7, 1983 issue of the *New York Times*).

In politics, philosophy, and of course religion, Russell was what Eakin describes as an "evidentialist." Evidentialists "accept the Enlightenment doctrine that a belief is justified only when evidence can be found for it outside the believer's own mind." Or, to borrow another line from Russell, they believe "that it is undesirable to believe a proposition when there is no ground whatever for supposing it true" (*Sceptical Essays*). Oddly enough, Swinburne also considers himself an evidentialist as well. Personally, I'll take Russell's version any day of the week.

One final note. This issue of the *BRSQ* is my last as editor. I have enjoyed being editor, but duty calls (not to mention a tenure-track job, which will soon consume all my spare time). Beginning with the next issue, the co-editors will be Rosalind Carey and John Ongley. To submit materials for the *BRSQ*, or to make inquiries, please contact Rosalind Carey, Philosophy Department, 360 Carmen Hall, Lehman College-CUNY, 250 Bedford Park Blvd West, Bronx, NY 10468 USA, 914-682-7439.

My thanks to Alan Bock, Giovanni de Carvalho, & Thom Weidlich for directing my attention to the sources used in this editorial.

Letter to the Editor

15 May 2003

Dear Editor,

I was distressed to discover from reading the latest issue of the *Bertrand Russell Society Quarterly* that I and my political friends are as non-existent as unicorns and minotaurs. For I have for thirty or more years been a member of the Conservative Party (of the UK) and I do not see my self or my fellow members as conspicuously less compassionate than my fellow members.

Yours,

Antony Flew

Professor Flew is an Honorary Member of the BRS.

Are You on BRS-List?

BRS-List is the BRS's official listserv, used to send members information about Society activities and to discuss Society business. The listserv is open only to members of the BRS, and all members are encouraged to join. Just visit <http://mailman.mcmaster.ca/mailman/listinfo/brs-list> and fill out the form. Alternatively send the message "subscribe" to brs-list-request@mailman.mcmaster.ca.

Any questions regarding BRS-List can be directed to the listserv's owner, Ken Blackwell, at blackwk@mcmaster.ca.

New and Improved BRS Membership Form

The hardworking folk at the *BRSQ* have dramatically revised and improved the Society's membership form. We're so proud of our work that we're including a copy of it at the center of this issue.

If you're a member, and you're receiving this issue, you've already renewed for 2003, so you don't need to send us the form at this time (although you're certainly welcome to renew early for 2004—remember that all contributions to the BRS are tax-deductible, so give generously). Your mailing label should say either 2003 (meaning you've paid through this year), or 7777, 8888, or 9999 (meaning that you're a Life Member, Honorary Member, or receiving the *BRSQ* as a courtesy). If you don't have a mailing label, that means you're not yet a member. So why not join today? Just fill out the membership form and send it to the address listed on it. It's that easy! Questions can be directed to our treasurer, Dennis Darland, at djdarland@qconline.com.

As our diligent efforts on the membership form prove, the BRS is constantly looking for ways we can make it easier for you to keep your membership current. We'd hate to lose any member because of confusion or misunderstanding of any sort. If you have any suggestions to help us improve the process, please drop the *BRSQ* a line.

Wanna Bust of Bertie?

A sculptor named V.M. Heyfron has produced a bust of Bertrand Russell. It's about 11 inches (30 cm) tall, and can be viewed online at <http://www.portraitsculptures.com/>. At the moment, Heyfron does not have any left in stock, and would have to recast the mould in order to make more. However, he is willing to do this if there is sufficient interest. That's where we come in.

The price for a single bust of Bertie is US \$550. The per-unit price of multiple busts, however, will be lower. The more orders placed, the lower the cost.

BRS Vice President Ray Perkins is currently seeking expressions of interest in the bust. At the moment, all that is desired is an expression of interest—there's no obligation to buy. Once Ray has a head count, he can discover what the cost per bust will be. Ray can be reached at 854 Battle Street, Webster, NH 03303, USA, perkrk@earthlink.net.

Call for Nominations BRS Board of Directors

This fall, the Bertrand Russell Society will be holding elections to fill 8 of the 24 positions on its Board of Directors. The time has come for nominations for those positions. Members are encouraged to send their nominations to **Chad Trainer**, BRS Secretary, 1006 Davids Run, Phoenixville, PA 19460, stratoflampsacus@aol.com.

Please note that **the deadline for nominations is October 1**. The ballots will be sent out in the November issue of the *BRSQ*. Any member of the BRS may run for a seat on the Board. The 8 members of the Board with expiring terms may be renominated and reelected. Members may nominate themselves; if you do this, please include a short (1 paragraph) statement about yourself and why you should be on the Board. A complete list of current Board Members is included below; please don't nominate any current Board member whose term does not expire this year.

Directors of the BRS

Officers of the BRS, elected annually, serve *ex officio* on the Board of Directors.

3 Year Term, Jan. 1, 2001- Dec. 31, 2003: Kenneth Blackwell, Dennis Darland, John R. Lenz, Stephen Reinhardt, David Rodier, Tom Stanley, Laurie Endicott Thomas, David White

3 Year Term, Jan. 1, 2002-Dec. 31, 2004: Kevin Brodie, Rosalind Carey, Tim Madigan, Ray Perkins, Alan Schwerin, Warren Allen Smith, Chad Trainer, Thom Weidlich

3 Year Term, Jan. 1, 2003 - Dec. 31, 2005: Andrew Bone, David Goldman, Nicholas Griffin, Justin Leiber, Chandrakala Padia, Cara Rice, Peter Stone, Ruili Ye

New in Russell Studies!

Would you like to find out what's new in Russell Studies? Then visit the "Forthcoming, New and Recent Works in Russell Studies" page at the website of the Bertrand Russell Archives at McMaster University. The page is at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/russdocs/forthnew.htm>.

2004 BRS Award Search Begins Proposals Welcome

The BRS Awards Committee will soon begin its search for a person or organization to receive the 2004 BRS Award. This award is given annually to one or more people or organizations for outstanding achievement in one or more areas of concern to Bertrand Russell. The award may reflect achievements in either the academic or social and political realm, and achievements made in the recent past or over a lifetime. The award may also be given for extraordinary acts that, by the character they display, are particularly reminiscent of Russell at his best.

Members of the BRS are invited to propose individuals or organizations to the BRS Awards Committee to be considered for the 2004 BRS Award. Anyone wishing to make a proposal should contact the Kevin Brodie, BRS Awards Committee Chair, 54 Cedar Swamp Road, Storrs, CT 06268 USA, kevin.brodie@lebanonct.org

The Committee will begin deliberating in the early fall, so please get your proposals to the Committee as soon as possible.

For those interested, the following is a list of previous BRS Award recipients:

1980 Paul Arthur Schilpp	1992 Karl Popper
1981 Steve Allen	1993 Harry Ruja
1982 Henry Kendall	1994 (none)
1983 Joseph Rotblat	1995 Zero Population Growth
1984 Dora Black Russell	1996 W.V.O. Quine
1985 Robert Jay Lifton and Lester Denonn	1997 (none)
1986 People for the American Way	1998 Irving Copi
1987 John Somerville	1999 Henry Morgentaler
1988 Paul Kurtz	2000 Stephen Jay Gould
1989 Paul Edwards	2001 Stephen Toulmin
1990 (none)	2002 Studs Terkel
1991 Planned Parenthood Federation of America	2003 Katha Pollitt

The BRS Needs YOU...at the APA!

The Bertrand Russell Society is recognized by the American Philosophical Association and allowed to participate in their programs, but the BRS is responsible for selecting its own speakers. Members of the BRS who are also members of the APA are urged to get in touch with David White (dwhite@sjfc.edu). We need people to give papers, to comment, to chair sessions, and, most importantly, to fill seats. We are now accepting proposals for the Pacific Division meeting in Pasadena, CA, March 24-28, 2004, and the Central Division meeting in Chicago, IL, April 22-25, 2004. The deadline for proposals is October 1.

Buy a BRS T-Shirt Today!

Don't you be caught without something distinctive to wear! BRS t-shirts always make you stand out in a crowd (except at BRS Annual Meetings, of course). So why not order yours today? The shirts are available for \$10 each plus \$ 3 postage. U.S. funds only, please. Please make checks out to the BRS, and send them to BRS Vice President Ray Perkins, 854 Battle ST, Webster, NH 03303, USA. Please specify size (M,L,XL) and color. Shirts are available in black, yellow, or white. Any questions about the shirts can be directed to Ray at perkrk@earthlink.net.

Our Apologies

The last two cover photographs of the *BRSQ* were given to us courtesy of David Goldman—psychiatrist by day, Russellian photographer by night. David is a member of the BRS Board of Directors as well as the Greater New York City Chapter of the BRS (GNYCCBRS). He continues to provide the *BRSQ* with a variety of pictures—including those from the 2003 BRS Annual Meeting contained in this issue. Unfortunately, the last two cover photos were run without giving David credit for his pictures. We regret our omission.

A Philosophical Tongue Twister

While preparing his presentation on *Wittgenstein's Poker* for the 2003 BRS Annual Meeting, the editor was moved to write the following:

Peter passively pandered to people pondering Popper's poker problem.

Try saying *that* one five times fast.

Promoting BR on the Lecture Circuit

BRSQ Editor Peter Stone has given a number of public lectures this year on the topic of Bertrand Russell. On January 5, he presented a talk entitled "Bertrand Russell and John Dewey" at a breakfast forum held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley, in Bethlehem, PA. This talk was a modified version of the remarks Peter made at the "Legacy of John Dewey" conference held at the Center for Inquiry (Amherst, NY) last year. (See Alan Bock's report on this meeting, "Russell and Dewey at the CFI," *BRSQ* #117, February 2003.)

On March 14, Peter addressed a meeting of the Humanist Association of Toronto. He followed up this talk by addressing the Center for Inquiry-Florida, in Tampa, on May 17 (the day before Russell's birthday). On both occasions, his talk was entitled "Bertrand Russell's Politics and Humanism." He then gave a similar talk on June 22 during a return visit to the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley. This talk was entitled "Bertrand Russell, Skeptic."

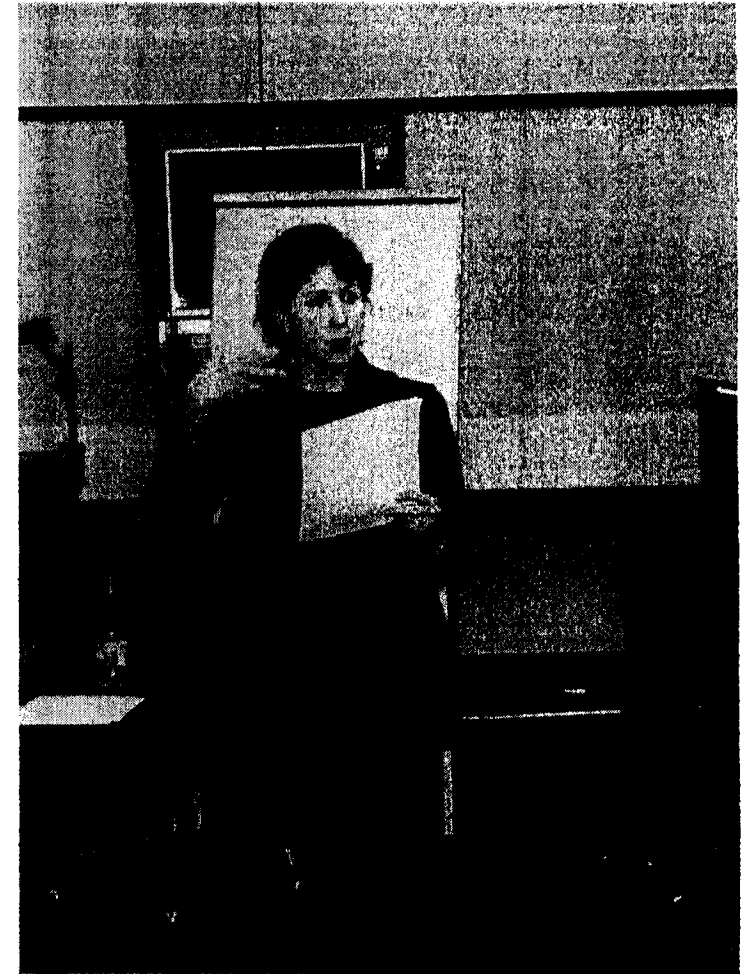
A picture of Peter at the first talk in Bethlehem appears below. A report on the Toronto talk by Alan Bock appears later in this issue. The *BRSQ* would welcome reports (with or without pictures) on other Russell-related events.



The 2003 Annual Meeting of the Bertrand Russell Society

Pictures from the Annual Meeting

(All photographs in this section courtesy of David Goldman)



Rosalind Carey kept the meeting running smoothly.

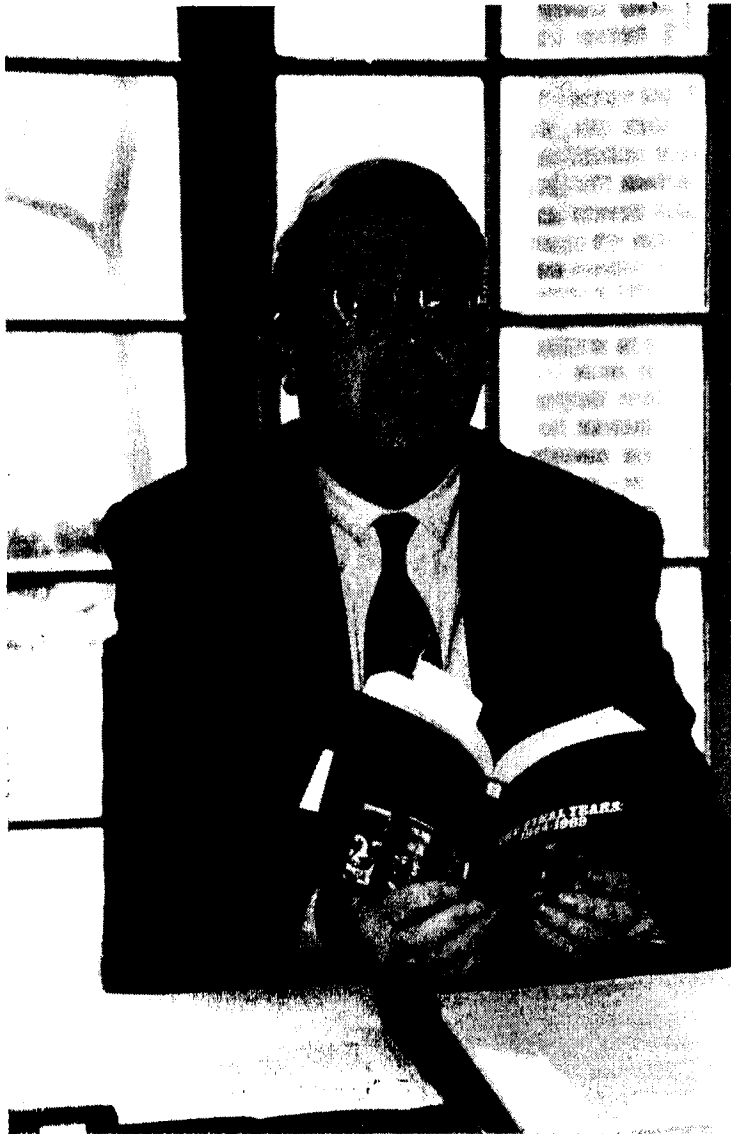
The gang's all here.



The favored beverage of the meeting.



"Russell's pipe was THIIIS big!"



Tim Madigan explains Russell's views on the Warren Report (shortly before mysteriously disappearing).

Quotable Quotes from the Annual Meeting

"How much did Russell weigh?"

"When?"

"Now!"

-Rosalind Carey & Peter Friedman

"Wow, philosophy is alive and well in Iowa."

-Warren Allen Smith

"What's going on with the n-operator?"

-Kevin Klement

"I'm happy that if I talk to you about it some portion of it can be understood."

-Gregory Landini

"2 times 3, we all know, is 6."

-Gregory Landini

"I want my infinity, doggonnit."

-Landini again

"You can charge a lot for syntactic therapy."

-Peter Friedman

"Yeah, I should stop...soon."

-Anthony Anderson

"Let's pick on Frege for a little while."

-Kevin Klement

"I think I have a question, but I think I have to ramble for a minute to get to it."

-Thom Weidlich

"Given three minutes for a potty break, you know what Russell would do?"

-Dave Henehan

Minutes of the 2003 BRS Annual Meeting Chad Trainer, BRS Secretary

The Bertrand Russell Society returned to Lake Forest College in Illinois for its 30th annual meeting. The meeting was from Friday, May 30 2003 to Sunday, June 1. In attendance were Anthony Anderson, Alan Bock, Pat Bock, Rosalind Carey, Dennis Darland, Peter Friedman, Phil Ebersole, David Goldman, David Henehan, Alvin Hofer, Kevin Klement, Gregory Landini, Tim Madigan, Steve Maragides, John Ongley, Stephen Reinhardt, Cara Rice, Warren Allen Smith, Peter Stone, David Taylor, Chad Trainer, Thom Weidlich, David White, and Linda White.

On Friday there was registration and a book table from 4 pm to 6 pm. From 6 pm to 8 pm there was a buffet. This was followed by the BRS board meeting from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm (See "Minutes of the 2003 Annual Meeting of the Bertrand Russell Society Board of Directors.") and then members enjoyed the Greater Rochester Russell Set's hospitality suite/salon.

The Saturday morning program began with Gregory Landini presenting his paper on "Tractarian Logicism," followed by Anthony Anderson's "The Axiom of Infinity in Russellian Intensional Logic," and Kevin Klement's "Russell and Wittgenstein on Type-Theory and Russell's Paradox" was the last paper of the morning.

After lunch, the BRS held its 2003 annual Business Meeting from 1pm to 2pm. David White began the meeting by explaining that he had been elected to serve as president *pro tem* as a result of President Alan Schwerin's absence. The Treasurer's report was mentioned, as well as its having already been reported in the *Bertrand Russell Society Quarterly*. The current balance was said to be \$8,804.18. Warren Allen Smith asked for a clarification of membership loss. Dennis Darland explained that, while more people are renewing their memberships, there is a lower

amount of new members joining. Presently, the Society has approximately a hundred members (discounting about fifty people who are probably renewing); whereas there was once a high of three-hundred members.

Peter Stone mentioned membership forms available in collections of the May *BRS Quarterly (BRSQ)*. On the subject of the *BRSQ*, he asked the presenters to consider submitting to the *BRSQ* versions of the papers being presented that weekend.

David White brought up Ken Blackwell's interest in developing guidelines for the "chapterization" of BRS locals, specifically, the advantages of coming up with a five-step approach that could be of use for those interested in trying to form local chapters of the Society. There was discussion of the base of experienced people in attendance from Rochester and New York City, the fate of the one-time Philippine chapter of the BRS, and the like.

The five-step program then, as outlined and recommended by David White was:

- 1) Stage events with a built-in audience, as part of a program with organizations that already have a following.
- 2) Make joining as easy as possible, and supply new members with a membership kit. (This was done in the past.)
- 3) Keep a record of all activities of the BRS and its chapters in a form that is easy to distribute.
- 4) Make clear to members what your main aims are, e.g., humanitarianism, anti-war movement, philosophical clarity, fellowship, letter-writing, Russell studies, teaching Russell, social drinking. Each chapter should be built about the interests of its members and not try to take on everything at once. Likewise, all members should be clear on what resources are available to them, e.g., Bertrand Russell Archives, Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, BRS Library, other chapters, and other organizations.
- 5) Make as much use as possible of free publicity. Certainly keep sending material to *BRSQ*, but also to bookstores, UU churches, and newspapers.

While no vote was taken, the consensus was that BRS members are free to form "autonomous" chapters and that, except in cases of express permission from the BRS, local chapters are to refrain from speaking on behalf of the Society or in any way entangling the BRS in obligations. David Goldman proposed having meetings of the Greater Rochester Russell Set audio- or videotaped for general distribution.

Next mentioned was the subject of recruiting members for the BRS via the Internet. Thom Weidlich explained that, with different people wanting different things, there would be advantages to a dedicated e-mail list for providing a weekly e-mail with a Russell quote and membership encouragement. Tim Madigan and David White spoke of the need for a website URL simpler than John Lenz's, especially considering that the related costs of such reforms are well within what the President could authorize without further action. Peter Friedman said that, in addition to making the BRS site more "user-friendly," provisions should be considered for both an automated "sign-up" procedure for would-be BRS members and a regular inclusion of BRS related news. The consensus of those present was that John Lenz would probably not be averse to enabling others to manage the site.

The meeting then concluded at 2 pm.

The Saturday afternoon presentations began with Chad Trainer's paper: "Bertrand Russell's Assessments of René Descartes' Philosophy." This was followed by this year's Prize Paper, David Taylor's "Causal Processes: A Realist Approach." The next presenter was Rosalind Carey with "Logic and Psychology in Russell's Doctrine of Belief: An Overview and a Special Case" and then John Ongley's "Russell's Slow Progress to Realism."

After some free time, there was the Red Hackle hour with the eponymous beverage provided courtesy of Don Jackanicz. There was then the banquet where the Bertrand Russell Society's 2003 Award was given in absentia to Katha Pollitt. The Book Award was given to Ray Perkins for the book he edited of Russell's letters to the editor, *Yours Faithfully, Bertrand Russell*, and a statement from Ray Perkins acknowledging the award was read by Rosalind Carey. Warren Allen Smith and Tim Madigan provided some very entertaining "piano comedy" next with Warren Allen Smith acting as Ludwig Wittgenstein and Tim Madigan acting as Bertrand Russell. The evening was then topped off again with the Greater Rochester Russell Set's hospitality suite/salon.

The Sunday morning papers began with Cara E. Rice's "The Beacon Light of Beacon Hill Shines On," followed by Tim Madigan's "Warrant Report: The Philosophical Analysis of 'The Warren Report' by Bertrand Russell, Josiah Thompson, and Richard Popkin." Finally, we concluded with a joint presentation by Peter Stone and David White: "Is This Game Played? A Conversation on *Wittgenstein's Poker*."

Minutes of the 2002 Annual Meeting of the Bertrand Russell Society Board of Directors

Chad Trainer
Secretary, BRS Board of Directors

The annual meeting of the Society's Board of Directors was held on Friday, May 30 at 8 pm. Directors present were Rosalind Carey, Dennis Darland, Peter Friedman, David Goldman, Tim Madigan, Steve Reinhardt, Cara Rice, Warren Allen Smith, Peter Stone, Chad Trainer, Thom Weidlich, and David White. David White called the meeting to order and reviewed the meeting's agenda. Members present who are not Directors were Anthony Anderson, Alan Bock, Pat Bock, Phil Ebersole, David Henehan, Alvin Hofer, Kevin Klement, Gregory Landini, Steve Maragides, and David Taylor.

Election of Officers was taken up first. All incumbents were elected by acclamation:

President: Alan Schwerin (nominated by Chad Trainer and seconded by Peter Stone);

Vice President: Ray Perkins (nominated by Thom Weidlich and seconded by Peter Friedman);

Vice President for Outreach: Peter Friedman (nominated by Warren Allen Smith and seconded by Cara Rice);

Secretary of the Society and Secretary of the Board: Chad Trainer (nominated by Cara Rice and seconded by Thom Weidlich);

Treasurer: Dennis Darland (seconded by Thom Weidlich);

Chairman of the Board: David White (nominated by Warren Allen Smith and seconded by Cara Rice).

The absence of Alan Schwerin from the meeting was noted along with the consequent need to nominate a temporary president for Saturday's "Business" meeting. Thom Weidlich nominated David White who won by acclamation.

After the election of officers, the American Philosophical Association Committee was brought up. The nature and procedures of the APA sessions was explained. A report was given on the BRS's sessions at the APA Eastern meetings (which have been occurring every year), as well as its sessions at the APA's Central, and Pacific meetings (which have not occurred quite as regularly). Attendance at the sessions was described as "sailing pretty closely to the wind" but "sufficient." Success in people

signing up for the BRS at a Central Division meeting was also mentioned. The position of APA Committee Chairman was then brought up for consideration. Thom Weidlich nominated David White for the position and Peter Stone seconded it.

The subject of the Book Award Committee was addressed next. Specifically, the issue raised was whether there should be a third category for books written in languages other than English (in addition to the first category for authors of books written in English and the second category for edited editions of Russell's writings). Furthermore the question was posed whether it is necessary for the Committee to be empowered to apply standards to such books different from those it applies to ones written in English. Steve Maragides said that, while he saw no problem with the Committee being empowered to consider books according to several categories, it would be presumptuous to assume members of the Committee would be in a position to judge books written in foreign languages. Phil Ebersole explained that, as a member of this Committee, he has no way of judging such books that get passed over. While Ebersole said that he was not "wedded" to the idea of a change here, he said it would be "rude" to expressly reserve the terms of the award to books written in English even if that is the nature of the situation by default. There was discussion of whether the only way to be fair to books written in languages other than English is to have a separate category for the Book Award Committee's prize and whether this would simplify the Committee's work. Ed Boedeker remarked that French, German, and English should be the implicit languages of books under consideration and that this implicit criterion, along with the Committee's competence in the award process, should be made as explicit as possible. Thom Weidlich indicated his support for a Foreign Language Award, and Gregory Landini said it was bad public relations for the awarding criteria to be unabashedly confined to books written in English. David White mentioned merits to having ad hoc members and consultants here and made a motion to empower the committee to have this third, "foreign languages" category, should it deem itself competent to judge here. But then Thom Weidlich moved to "shelve" the issue and Peter Stone seconded this motion.

Next on the agenda was the editorship of the *BRS Quarterly* (*BRSQ*). This was a matter to be addressed as a result of Peter Stone's desire to be relieved of this position as a result of his now being on a tenure-track position at Stanford University. It was announced that Rosalind Carey and John Ongley have come forward as willing candidates to co-chair the *BRSQ* Committee. The Board proceeded to appoint Rosalind and John to these positions. Peter Stone was thanked for his excellent work as Editor of

the *BRSQ* and getting the whole cycle of the newsletter's release back on track. The Chair also made reference to a forthcoming three-day celebration of Peter Stone's work along these lines.

The Chair then brought up Ray Perkins' suggestion of a "Promotional Items Committee" of sorts charged with handling the sale and distribution of BRS t-shirts and aided by the creation of a related URL, but attention was also drawn to potential copyright complications in Russell attire. Steve Maragides encouraged the Society to look into Bertrand Russell calendars as well. Peter Friedman moved to create such a committee. Thom Weidlich seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The locus of the 2004 Annual Meeting was the following topic on the docket. Mention was made of Ray Perkins' willingness to host the meeting at Plymouth State College in New Hampshire. California was also cited as a future possibility, especially in light of Peter Stone's upcoming move to the state. However, Stone hastened to stress the busy personal schedule he foresaw for at least the next couple of years. Stephen Reinhardt then made a motion to have New Hampshire as the site of next year's meeting. Peter Stone seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The advisability of seriously considering future sites at least a couple of years ahead was mentioned. Gregory Landini offered the University of Iowa as a candidate where the BRS meeting could be arranged so as to dovetail with the university's annual Wittgenstein/Russell Conference. Chad Trainer countered that previous suggestions of the BRS meetings being held during the academic year had typically eventuated in the specter of less affordable rooming rates for the participants. Rosalind Carey encouraged people to bear in mind the possible perks that can accompany the hosting of conferences and instanced a \$5,000 donation from an alumnus to Lake Forest's Philosophy Department as a consequence of last year's meeting.

A proposal to translate Russell's *A History of Western Philosophy* into Armenian was then addressed. The would-be translator in this case is a man who has already translated into Armenian *Why I Am Not a Christian* and who has a publisher satisfied with and on board for this translation of Russell's *History* but who acknowledges budgetary complications in such an undertaking. David White explained that, while the BRS is hardly in a position to provide financial assistance for this endeavor, genuine possibilities to be considered by the BRS are a letter of support for the translations, a commitment from the Society to purchase a given number of copies, and a donation of space in the Society's quarterly newsletter to advertising the translation. After explanations by Steve Maragides and Dennis Darland of a grant previously made to McMaster University for

Russell-related work, Peter Friedman suggested the utility of corresponding with whatever local chapters of the BRS are to be found in Armenia. Friedman made a motion to have a letter of commendation drafted for the Armenian translation project. Peter Stone then proposed as an amendment to this motion that the Executive Committee be empowered to promote the Armenian translation project provided it does not result in any financial cost to the Society. This amended motion passed unanimously.

Concern with impressing upon the Directors the crisis of declining membership, its causes, and remedies were next on the agenda. David White suggested as a partial solution to membership decline prolonging the membership of those who have not paid in a timely fashion. Dennis Darland argued, instead, for such an approach quite possibly compounding the problem. Peter Stone inquired about the repercussions for membership volume of including membership forms in the quarterly newsletter and Darland indicated that such results were negligible. The possible merits of free memberships were discussed. Friedman stressed the propriety of distinguishing between a financial crisis and a membership crisis. Chad Trainer encouraged the Society to consider membership information that could be provided on something the size of a business card and so presentable to potential members in a fashion less awkward than that involved in trying to give them standard membership forms. Possible new designs for membership forms were considered and then, in response to an inquiry from Thom Weidlich, Darland furnished the Society with a report on membership trends. Friedman pondered the possibilities of book inserts for BRS membership in Routledge's publications. He pointed to Routledge's obviously vested interests in the promotion of Bertrand Russell, as well as the distinct possibility of their interest in Russell-related events. Peter Stone cited the hitherto negative reaction from Routledge on these fronts. There was, however, general discussion of Routledge's catalog possibly including as filler ads for the BRS. Cara Rice and Chad Trainer asked about the possibilities of BRS members volunteering to insert promotional material for the Society at their local corporate bookstores in the stores' relevant books. David White and Peter Stone countered that it was basically unheard of for stores to permit such a thing and White said that opportunities for postings on such stores' bulletin boards are a more realistic area to explore. Peter Stone explained that, generally speaking, *slight* changes to present practices in promoting membership tend to be more realistic and practical than the grandiose, visionary approaches that, while abounding in ideas lack "people attached to the ideas." David Henehan explained what he saw as the shortcomings of the Society's newsletter regularly including renewal forms vis-à-vis

individually mailed dues notices. David White responded that a modification here entails a whole additional realm of activity and so an individual willing to do it. The possibility of having people volunteer to contact those whose membership has lapsed was next discussed and then the advantages of readily reproducible membership forms in the Society's mailings. It was then discussed how extensions of membership for those who are behind on their dues is most appropriately left for an "executive" decision. Dennis Darland mentioned the possibility of advertising the BRS in the *Nation* magazine and around college campuses. Peter Stone explained that it was precisely by means of campus advertisements that he himself got involved in the Society. Peter Friedman mentioned the possibly cheap rate of advertising in the "far-right column" of Google but the possibly minimal rate in the area of \$500 was considered as well. Peter Stone drew attention to the operative role of John Lenz and while not foreseeing a need to put money forth on website developments indicated his willingness to make the relevant inquiries along these lines. Thom Weidlich mentioned the value generally to increased Internet activity for the BRS in making membership more attractive.

Peter Stone then moved to adjourn the meeting. Cara Rice seconded.

The 2003 BRS Award

This year, the BRS Awards Committee decided to give the BRS Award to Katha Pollitt. Kevin Brodie, BRS Awards Committee Chair, offered the following remarks in support of this decision:

Katha Pollitt is an award-winning journalist, who is a regular columnist for the *Nation*. She is the author of several books, including *Reasonable Creatures: Essays on Women and Feminism* (Vintage, 1995) and *Subject to Debate: Sense and Dissents on Women, Politics, and Culture* (Random House, 2001). Throughout her career, she has been an articulate and vociferous champion of those who are disenfranchised and oppressed throughout the world. She has also been one of the foremost spokespersons for feminism and reproductive rights. She has also expressed skepticism regarding religious dogma, and has frequently criticized religious leaders for using their influence to repress freedom, particularly as it relates to women.

Upon learning that she had received the award, Ms. Pollitt proclaimed she was "thrilled to be associated with Bertrand Russell, whom she admired, and was a hero to her parents."

The text of the award reads as follows:

**The 2003 Bertrand Russell Society Award presented to
Ms. Katha Pollitt
for intellectual courage and indubitable wit in the spirit of Bertrand
Russell.**

The 2003 BRS Book Award

The BRS Book Award Committee decided to give the 2003 BRS Book Award to Ray Perkins for his edited collection Yours Faithfully, Bertrand Russell: Lifelong Fight for Peace, Justice, and Truth in Letters to the Editor (Open Court, 2001). (As Awards Committee Chair, Ray abstained completely from the decision-making process this year because his book was a candidate for the award.) Ray Perkins was unable to attend the 2003 Annual Meeting to accept the award in person; however, he did send the following remarks that were read at the meeting:

My collection of Russell's letters to the editor has been a long labor, but truly one of love. As some of you may know, my editorial interest in Russell's letters began back in the early 70s soon after I became aware that Ken Blackwell and Harry Ruja were collecting them for the Archives. But in fact my interest in Russell's letters really goes back to my encounter with his 1967 book *War Crimes in Vietnam* which reprinted his passionate exchange with the editor of the *New York Times* regarding US chemical weapons in South East Asia. What these letters show, and what I think his public letters generally reveal, is the practical wisdom of a great intellect come down from the ivory tower of academia to do battle with the forces of ignorance and cruelty and to infuse public policy with reason and compassion. As we witness the unfolding of the new Pax Americana and the resurgence of the threat of weapons of mass destruction, Russell's public letters, especially those since World War II, take on a renewed relevance, and his example as practical philosopher and public gadfly continues today to teach and inspire us all.

I'd like to thank the Society for honoring me with this prestigious award. It's one of which I am very proud and one which I shall long cherish. And I want to add a special "thank you" to the Bertrand Russell Archives and especially to Ken Blackwell without whose assiduous work over nearly three decades these letters would not have been obtainable. Again, thank you all very much.

Sincerely (or should I say "Yours faithfully"?),

Ray Perkins, Jr.

The Award Plaque that Ray will receive is engraved with the following words:

**The 2003 Bertrand Russell Society Book Award to
Ray Perkins, Jr. for *Yours Faithfully, Bertrand Russell:
A Lifelong Fight for Peace, Justice, and Truth in Letters to the Editor,*
which has deepened our understanding of Russell's life and work.**

Below follows a complete list of all previous BRS Book Award winners:

2002

The Selected Letters of Bertrand Russell: The Public Years, 1914-1970 (Routledge, 2001), ed. by Nicholas Griffin, assisted by Alison Roberts Miculan.

2001

Appointment Denied (Prometheus, 2000), by Thom Weidlich.

2000

Russell on Ethics: Selections from the Writings of Bertrand Russell (Routledge, 1999), ed. by Charles Pigden.

1999

Russell's Hidden Substitutional Theory (Oxford U.P., 1998), by Gregory Landini.

1998

Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell. Volume 10: A Fresh Look at Empiricism, 1927-42. Volume 11: Last Philosophical Testament, 1943-68 (Routledge, 1996, 1997), ed. by John G. Slater and Peter Kollner.

1997

Bertrand Russell: The Spirit of Solitude (Free Press, 1996), by Ray Monk.

1996

Continuity and Change in the Development of Bertrand Russell's Philosophy (Kluwer, 1994), by Paul Hager.

1995

A Bibliography of Bertrand Russell (Routledge, 1994), by Kenneth Blackwell and Harry Ruja.

1994

Bertrand Russell: A Life (Viking, 1993), by Caroline Moorehead.

1993

The Selected Letters of Bertrand Russell, Volume I, 1894-1914 (Houghton Mifflin, 1992), by Nicholas Griffin.

1992

Russell's Idealist Apprenticeship (Oxford U.P., 1991), by Nicholas Griffin.

1991

Russell, Idealism and the Emergence of Analytic Philosophy (Oxford, 1990), by Peter Hylton.

1990

Bertrand Russell's Dialogue with His Contemporaries (Southern Illinois, 1989), by Elizabeth Eames.

1989

Bertrand Russell: A Political Life (Hill and Wang, 1988), by Alan Ryan.

1988

Bertrand Russell (Twayne, 1986), by Paul Kuntz.

1987

The Spinozistic Ethics of Bertrand Russell (Allen & Unwin, 1985), by Kenneth Blackwell.

1985

Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell. Volume I: Cambridge Essays 1888-99 (Allen & Unwin, 1983), ed. by Kenneth Blackwell, Andrew Brink, Nicholas Griffin, Richard A. Rempel, and John G. Slater.

Quiz on Bertrand Russell

The following quiz was offered at the 2003 Annual Meeting of the BRS by meeting organizer Rosalind Carey. The person scoring highest at the meeting was awarded a complimentary lunch at the dining commons at Lake Forest College (total value: \$6.66). The prize was won by Edgar Boedecker. (The *BRSQ* Editor, who was in the running, is a very poor sport, and still has several protests lodged.)

Question #1: What famous statement by Quine about *being* did Russell probably coin?

Question #2: Where does Russell say, "Not only the Bible but even the works of Marx and Engels contain demonstrably false statements. The Bible says that the hare chews the cud, and Engels said that the Austrians would win the war of 1866."

Question #3: What aspect of his first wife first repelled Russell, when he saw her on a bicycle?

Question #4: In what year did Russell first read William James?

Question #5: What gifts did Wittgenstein occasionally bring Russell, when they first knew each other?

Question #6: Who published the first edition of *Principia*?

Question #7: What did Russell say when asked about being rescued from a plane crash?

Tiebreaker Question #1: How old was Bertrand Russell when he first read John Stuart Mill's *Logic*?

Tiebreaker Question #2: Where did Bertrand Russell go the day after the night he and Ottoline Morrell became lovers?

Answers to the quiz can be found on page 42.

Articles:

Russell in Toronto

Alan Bock

More than one hundred people attended the March 2003 meeting of the Humanist Association of Toronto to hear a talk by Peter Stone on "Bertrand Russell's Politics and Humanism."

Stone began his talk by noting that Russell was a prolific writer of English prose, but there are a few lines that really seem to capture what he thinks "in a nutshell." One of these is the opening line of his (3-volume) autobiography—"Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind." There is also the classic line from Russell's essay "What I Believe"—"The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge." That line is the official motto of the Bertrand Russell Society. But for purposes of the talk, Stone concluded, the most appropriate Russell quote summarizing his philosophy appears at the beginning of the first chapter of one of his best-known essay collections, *Skeptical Essays*:

I wish to propose for the reader's favourable consideration a doctrine which may, I fear, appear wildly paradoxical and subversive. The doctrine in question is this: that it is undesirable to believe a proposition when there is no ground whatever for supposing it true.

"I think that the philosophy embodied in this quote," Stone said, "is just as wildly subversive now as it was when he wrote it 75 years ago. [By an extraordinary coincidence, it's the 75th anniversary of the publication of *Skeptical Essays* this year, as this issue's editorial notes—ed.] And it really summarizes BR's ideas on politics and humanism very well. To say that he lived by it—which he did, by and large—is one of the best things that can be said about him, either in his eyes or in our own."

Stone then examined Russell's humanism with this quote in mind. Though Russell did not consider himself a humanist, argued Stone, "Nevertheless, his views regarding religion and the good life are classically those of a humanist. Through those ideas Bertrand Russell expressed his core conviction not to believe without evidence and he did not mince any words."

For example, right at the start of the collection *Why I Am Not A Christian* Russell announces that

I think that all the great religions of the world—Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and Communism—both untrue and harmful.

According to Stone, the primary problem Russell found with religion was that it required faith, and an abandonment of the "wildly subversive" doctrine of not believing without evidence. Russell thought that there was no reason for believing any of the things religions ask us to believe, but he would certainly add that there were, in many cases, no reasons to believe the opposite either. Just because we have no evidence that God exists does not mean we have evidence that God does not exist. Therefore, Russell considered himself technically an agnostic, not an atheist. But he also added that for practical purposes, he was an atheist. For those who think that agnosticism is some sort of concession to the religiously minded, Russell has the following words of advice in his essay "What I Believe":

I do not pretend to be able to prove there is no God. I equally cannot prove that Satan is a fiction. The Christian God may exist; so may the Gods of Olympus, or of ancient Egypt, or of Babylon. But no one of these hypotheses is more probable than any other: they lie outside the region of even probable knowledge, and therefore there is no reason to consider any of them.

So all of the reasons for accepting belief in God (and other traditional religious ideas, like an afterlife) are suspect.

It should be pointed out, Stone hastened to add, that "Russell himself was at an emotional level predisposed to belief in something like God. He really wanted some kind of *certainty*." When, as a teenager, he abandoned belief in religion he did seek a substitute in philosophy. Much of his reputation stemmed from his efforts at finding a rigorous philosophical foundation for mathematics, but ultimately, he decided that mathematics did not offer him absolute truth about the world. This was a real blow for him. "Nevertheless," Stone said, "intellectual honesty was too important for him to believe things simply because they were comforting. Nowhere is this clearer than in what he has to say about life after death." Russell was blunt about this in "What I Believe."

I believe that when I die I shall rot, and nothing of my ego will survive. I am not young, and I love life. But I should scorn to

shiver with terror at the thought of annihilation. Happiness is nonetheless true happiness because it must come to an end, nor do thought and love lose their value because they are not everlasting. Many a man has borne himself proudly on the scaffold; surely the same pride should teach us to think truly about man's place in the world. Even if the open windows of science at first make us shiver after the cosy indoor warmth of traditional humanizing myths, in the end the fresh air brings vigor, and the great spaces have a splendor of their own.

Turning to politics, Stone noted that much of what Russell said is difficult to square with his views about moral judgments. Russell was an emotivist, meaning that, in Stone's words, "statements involving ethics or morality didn't literally say anything" but "simply expressed an emotion on the part of the person speaking them." One would think that this would preclude much of a discussion about ethical and political questions. However, Stone added, "being an emotivist never stopped Russell from expressing moral outrage in the world of politics, from World War I (during which he was imprisoned for an antiwar article he wrote) to the crusade for nuclear disarmament (during which he was also imprisoned, this time for civil disobedience at the age of 89)."

But at other times, Russell displayed an attitude very much like that of Karl Popper in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, a book Russell greatly liked. He wrote an essay on a similar topic himself called "Philosophy and Politics" where he expressed the idea that the enemy in politics, as in religion, is the holding of beliefs without evidence. Russell called it adhering to a fanatical creed. He also saw, in Stone's words, that "the idea of refusing belief without evidence, common to science and philosophy, also underlay all that was good about the western democracies." This skepticism, Stone concluded, was a commodity sorely needed in the present day.

The Humanist Association of Toronto has become a popular venue for BRS members. Warren Allen Smith has advised us that he had previously spoken before this group and had the same large audience as Stone, two of whom are still in e-mail communication with him. At the time of his talk Smith donated a copy of *Who's Who in Hell* and it was auctioned off. The winner, said Smith, had arrived by motorcycle and it was fun to see him riding off with the "Good Book" strapped to his back.

Poetry

The first BRSQ published out of Rochester featured an original poem on Russell. (David White, "Whereof We Cannot Speak," BRSQ #110, May 2001) It seems fitting, then, to include another such poem in the last (for the time being) BRSQ to be published there. May the BRSQ always prove such an accommodating home to the fine arts.

Enlightenment

Kathy Duggan

This story is a little watery round the edges.
It was a study weekend.
In a room, as it were, on his deathbed,
Bertrand Russell. He was naked, though
covered to some extent by a cloth,
larger than life with his feet hanging over
the edge of an empty bath. His talk was in
full flow, as though nothing happened.

I knelt down next to him to be friendly,
take his hand, but ran out of things
to say, so he kindly tried a bit of a joke,
posed a problem. Would it be best
to fill the bath with an Archimedes Screw
or the Hydraulic system, which would bring
a very thin and cooling line of water.
I chose the latter.

Soon the bath, surprisingly, was full
to overflowing and warm. "It's O.K."
I said, "You'll like this." So Bertrand soaked,
turned from monochrome to pink,
stepped out, said: "Death interrupted me,
I have a lot to say, so I'll
see you later, you can follow me
into lecture room A."

Well, two students were having
a spat at the back, it was embarrassing,
I told them to put a sock in it,
Bertie couldn't even begin to speak.

I walked blindly down the theatre,
almost sat on someone's knee,
by mistake—stumbled on,
found myself in the front row where
people in long dresses and long coats
began duelling and dancing.

I wanted to join in, hold hands
with Madame de Stael,
Quesnay and La Rochefoucauld.
My Laura Ashley dress with burgundy
watered silk puff sleeves and
black velvet bodice would have been ideal.

The BRSQ thanks Peter Friedman for finding this poem. His story of its discovery is entertaining enough to be worth reproducing below.

Finding “Enlightenment”
Peter Friedman

One of the UK's top poetry teachers runs an annual seminar, and for each of these seminars he organizes a reading at which the present crop of students could present their work. I was in attendance at The Poetry Society HQ in London on Saturday the 21st of June for one of these readings.

With me was my mother, a professional painter. She had been sketching some portraits of Russell at home, and had met me at the reading in order to give them to me for scanning. Both of us were astonished to hear one of the seminar students read a poem that contained an amusingly surreal fantasy about Russell. The poem generated mirth and applause from a notoriously subdued audience of regular Poetry Society devotees.

Immediately after the reading was over, my mother sprang to her feet, approached the poet, and negotiated an exchange of one of her Russell portraits in return for a copy of a transcript of the poem, which she promptly took home, photocopied, and mailed to me.

Regular Features:

Russell-Related Odds and Ends

- In its March/April 2003 issue, *Book Source* magazine ran a short article entitled “The Lore and Lure of Manhattan’s Historic Book Row.” The article, by Marvin Mondlin and Roy Meador, contains many anecdotes concerning the eclectic assortment of used bookstores that used to clutter around Manhattan’s Fourth Avenue. Among the stories assembled there is the following gem:

Sonja Mirsky, who became a librarian, began venturing to Fourth Avenue in 1939, and soon was spending hours every day browsing at the Strand. In the 1940s, when she was majoring in mathematics at college and with no funds to purchase Bertrand Russell’s *Principia Mathematica*, she began taking the three volumes down from the high shelf at the Strand and using them at the store to do her homework. This behavior was noticed, and she heard a clerk tell founder Ben Bass, “She’s never going to buy those books.” Bass said leave the browser be: “When she has the money she’ll buy them.” [sic] Buy them she did when she graduated in 1948 from City College of New York and received \$50 from an uncle. She offered the money directly to Ben Bass for the \$35 set. Bass examined the books and said, “They’re quite shelf worn. Why don’t we make it \$25.”

Face it—the anecdote just wouldn’t be the same if Mirsky had been a student anywhere but City College.

Source: Peter Stone

- The April 2003 journal of *Ethics* contains a Centenary Symposium on G.E. Moore’s *Principia Ethica*. Anyone spotting Russell references in the symposium should send them to the *BRSQ*.

Source: Peter Stone

- Another review of Carole Seymour-Jones’ book *Painted Shadow: A Life of Vivienne Eliot* has appeared, this time in the April 3, 2003 issue of the *London Review of Books*. The review is entitled “In the Hyacinth Garden,” and is by Richard Poirier. The review discusses Bertie’s relationship with Vivienne extensively, and not too favorably.

(Poirier thinks highly of Ray Monk's treatment of the subject.) Poirier's overall view of the relationship is expressed as follows:

If he [Russell] exploited the Eliots and allowed them to exploit him, it was in the hope that he might thereby repair the losses and emotional damages that had resulted not only from [Ottoline] Morrell's defection but from the loss of two others with whom he had forged an intense intellectual as well as emotional bond: Wittgenstein, who had repudiated Russell's work in philosophy, and D.H. Lawrence, who had become contemptuous both of his writing and of his character.

Source: Tim Madigan

- On April 17, 2003, the Australian newspaper the *Age* ran an article by Mark Mordue entitled "The Forgotten Parent?" The article refers to Ian Samson's book *The Truth about Babies: From A to Z* (Granta Books, 2002) and notes a reference by Samson to Russell as follows:

I read with cautionary distress Sansom's contrasting use of Bertrand Russell's pleased notes on fatherhood in his *Autobiography* (1967-69) with his daughter Katherine Tait's observations later in *My Father Bertrand Russell* (1975): "He played at being a father...and he acted the part to perfection, but his heart was elsewhere and his combination of inner detachment and outer affection caused me much muddled suffering."

The article is at <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/04/17/1050172678763.html>.

Source: David White

- On April 19, 2003, *News Today* (a prominent evening newspaper of southern India) ran an article entitled "Crank's Corner" (apparently an installment of a regular feature) by K. Balakumar. The article dealt with the phenomenon of Short Messenger Service (SMS), and opened with the following grammatically-challenged anecdote:

"The good thing about this SMS is that you cannot read it on your mobile," the mobile beeped and blinked with intriguing insouciance.

It seemed more paradoxical than Bertrand Russell's barber one.

The article is at <http://newstodaynet.com/19apr/ss1.htm>.

Source: David White

- The most creative recent use of a Russell quote probably belongs to Monica Anderson in an article she wrote for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* that appeared on April 20, 2003. In the article, entitled "Boys, Boys, Can I Have My Dreams Back?" Anderson writes the following:

In the words of Bertrand Russell, "Ethical metaphysics is fundamentally an attempt, however disguised, to give legislative force to our own wishes."

I don't have the slightest idea what that means, except maybe I need to go shopping by myself.

The article is at <http://www.dfw.com/mld/startelegram/living/5663839.htm>.

Source: David White

- At <http://www.rnw.nl/special/en/html/030423wmd2.html> there is an article (in English) about a program on the Dutch radio Station "Radio Nederland" called "Weapons of Mass Destruction 2—Russell and Einstein." The program, the second in a series on the history of the very worst of weapons, focuses on Russell's role in sparking the antinuclear movement in the 1950s. It includes extensive interview segments from Joseph Rotblat, of the Pugwash Conferences, and Ken Coates, of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, as well as brief clips of Russell himself speaking on the dangers of nuclear war. There is also a link at the article that allows access to the program itself. The article originally appeared on April 23, 2003.

Source: Peter Friedman

- The Indian website mid-day.com ran an article in which Mahmood Farooqui cites Russell in support of his criticisms of the Israel's continued control over the Occupied Territories. Russell is quoted as saying the following about Israel: "There has been no nation which

won world support so quickly, only to lose it as quickly.” (No source is given for the quote.) The article, entitled, “Why I Am Outraged by this Conflict,” is at <http://web.mid-day.com/news/world/2003/april/51228.htm>. It originally appeared on April 27, 2003.

Of course, were Russell witness to the recent U.S. war against Iraq, he would probably revise his assessment as to who should hold the record for squandering international goodwill.

Source: David White

- The May 5, 2003 issue of the *Guardian* featured an article by Stuart Jeffries entitled “Oh, You Are Awful.” The article reviews a recent 3-part British TV program on the history of the sitcom. In the course of the review, Jeffries discusses a common theme in British sitcoms—the “eternally frustrated desire” on the part of working-class folk to “better” themselves “through some nebulously conceived Culture.” As an example of this, he cites a moment in an early sitcom entitled “Hancock” “in which the eponymous, aspirant hero filled his pipe, put on his smoking jacket and opened a book by Bertrand Russell but was doomed to remain baffled on its first page.” (Presumably, the book wasn’t *A History of the World in Epitome*.) The article is at http://www.guardian.co.uk/tv_and_radio/story/0,3604,949488,00.html.

Source: David White

- The May 8, 2003 issue of the *Japan Times* ran an article by Rowan Hooper on recent debates surrounding the moral status of stem cells—debates situated in a longer philosophical argument about the question of “what it means to be human.” The article, entitled “Ethicists Bid to Unscramble Egg Argument,” opens as follows:

It’s often been said that philosophy lags behind science. Bertrand Russell’s *The ABC of Relativity*, for example, was published in 1926, 21 years after Einstein published his Special Theory of Relativity.

We’ll give them a break, those poor philosophers. It must be hard to come up with the philosophical implications of, say, quantum mechanics, when only a specialized handful of physicists themselves can understand it.

Hooper goes on to suggest that philosophers should have an easier time on the stem cell debate, as the argument about “what it means to be human” has been going on for millennia. It is still doubtful, however, that anyone will be coming out with *The ABC of Human Life* any time soon.

The article is online at <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.pl5?fe20030508rh.htm>.

Source: David White

- An article that appeared in the *Guardian* on May 26, 2003 contained the following Russell reference:

Back in the 1920s, the *Guardian* editor CP Scott feared the worst when he heard the name chosen for the new invention. “Television? No good will come of this device. The word is half Greek and half Latin.” While Bertrand Russell reportedly warned Grace Wyndham Goldie, a radio pioneer who was preparing to move to television, “It will be of no importance in your lifetime or mine.” She survived until 1986, but long before that Russell should have been eating his words.

The article was entitled “Get a Grip on Reality” and was written by Nick Clarke. It is available online at <http://media.guardian.co.uk/mediaguardian/story/0,7558,963361,00.html>.

Source: Peter Friedman

- *FrontPage Magazine*, online journal of lunatic right-winger David Horowitz (formerly of the New Left) recently featured an article mentioning Russell. The article, a rather shrill diatribe by Rafe Champion, is entitled “George Orwell, Economic Illiterate.” Before proceeding to attack Orwell, Champion begins his article with the following paragraph:

As we celebrate the anniversary of one of the most honest and courageous men of the 20th century it is important to temper our praise with the recognition that he had a very serious limitation. He was an economic illiterate. In company with many other intelligent anti-totalitarians of his time, like Bertrand Russell (to

the age of 90) and Leonard Woolf, he called himself a socialist. In their eyes, all that could be expected of “unfettered competition” were boom and bust cycles, monopolies, exploitation of the workers and unemployment. (In fairness to Bertrand Russell, his first serious engagement in politics was to defend free trade from opponents in the British Liberal Party, circa 1905.)

The article appeared on July 3, 2003, and is available at <http://frontpagemag.com/articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=8738>.

Source: Peter Friedman & Ken Blackwell

- In an interview for the *Guardian*, philosopher Bryan Magee described Bertrand Russell as “the most impressive individual he met.” He believed this, Magee said, “because of his extraordinary intelligence. Anything you say about it will sound like a cliché, but it was extraordinary.” Karl Popper, BRS Honorary Member, was also acknowledged as a major influence. In discussing Popper, however, Magee adds that “I hugely valued my relationship with him, but to be honest I never really liked him.” The interview, entitled “I Think, Therefore I Write,” was conducted by Nicholas Wroe, and appeared on June 7, 2003. It is online at <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/interviews/story/0,11660,972650,00.html>.

Source: Peter Friedman

- The June 20, 2003 issue of *Forward* noted that the 2003 Jerusalem Prize had been awarded to playwright Arthur Miller. The Jerusalem Prize, notes the article, is “Israel’s only international literary award,” and “honors an author whose works best express the idea of the freedom of the individual in society.” The article, by Elli Wohlgelemler, also noted several previous winners of the prize, including Bertrand Russell, who won in 1963. The article can be found at <http://www.forward.com/issues/2003/03.06.20/news13.html>.

Source: Peter Friedman

- A recent two-part radio documentary was broadcast by the BBC entitled “From This Moment On.” The documentary, narrated by Nigel Wrench, “examines two seminal moments from the 1960s and ’70s”—the shooting of antiwar demonstrators at Kent State and

the formation of the Committee of 100 by Bertrand Russell and Ralph Schoenman. The segment on the second event bears the title “When the Philosopher Sat Down.” Included in the documentary are excerpts from Russell’s famous “Man’s Peril” speech and an interview with Schoenman. (He claims to have been inspired with the idea for the Committee by reading about the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, who made use of similar committees.) The documentary is at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/news/thismoment.shtml>.

Source: Tom Stanley

- Sadly, the recent biography of Nikita Khrushchev by William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (Norton, 2003) does not mention Russell in its index at all. (Any member who finds mention of Russell in the text should send them to the *BRSQ*.)

Source: Peter Stone

- Those interested in Russell’s former secretary Ralph Schoenman should visit <http://www.wbaifree.org/takingaim/>, the website of the radio show “Taking Aim.” This show airs on WBAI (99.5 FM) in New York City every Tuesday from 5-6 PM, and is co-hosted by Schoenman and Mya Shone. The site provides information about the show as well as an archive of past shows. There is also an order form through which one can order shows as well as books by Schoenman, such as *Death & Pillage in the Congo* and *The Hidden History of Zionism*. (The text of the latter is also available.) Oddly, Schoenman’s relationship with Russell is mentioned only once in passing.

Source: David Goldman

- For more on Schoenman, visit the website of “Cloak & Dagger: Talk Radio for SPIES!” This show airs on Thursdays at 11 PM on Mojo Radio (640 AM). Schoenman has appeared as a guest on the show numerous times, and so the show’s website features a brief biography of him, along with downloadable audio files for the shows on which he appeared. Along with the biography, the site features a picture of Schoenman marching with Bertie and Edith in the 1960 Hiroshima Vigil March held in London. The show’s website is at http://www.cloakanddagger.ca/guests/ralph_schoenman.asp.

Source: Tom Stanley

- Shakespeare & Company (a theatrical troupe based in Lenox, MA) recently performed a play entitled *The Fly Bottle*, by David Egan. This play in seven scenes features an ongoing philosophical debate between Karl Popper, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Bertrand Russell. It begins with the famous 1946 encounter between Popper and Wittgenstein—the one chronicled in the recent book *Wittgenstein's Poker* (Ecco, 2001)—and proceeds forwards and backwards (through flashbacks) from there. The play ran from May 16 (two days before Russell's birthday) to August 24.

At least three reviews of the play have appeared. The first, by Frances Benn Hall, claims that "Russell brings a welcome note of levity into the play with his assertions concerning the importance of sex in philosophy." It appeared in [newberkshire.com](http://www.newberkshire.com), an online magazine dealing with "arts, entertainment, & the Berkshires," at <http://www.newberkshire.com/reviews/03/sco-fly.html>. The second, by Elyse Sommer, claims that "Russell emotionally abused his children and grandchildren." It appeared in CurtainUp™, "The Internet Theater Magazine of Reviews, Features, Annotated Listings," at <http://www.curtainup.com/flybottle.html>. The third review, by James Yeara, bears the creative title "Philosophy by Force." It features the following exchange between Popper and Russell:

"I think a good book is worth several Panzer divisions if it gets to the right people," Popper states, to which Russell replies, "Not if the Panzer division gets there first."

Yeara's review appeared in Metroland Online, "The Alternative Newsweekly of New York's Capital Region." The address is <http://www.metroland.net/theater.html>.

Source: Peter Friedman

- A short story on the web entitled "Bringing down the House" features the following exchange concerning Russell:

The evening arrived, and everyone piled into Helen's SUV for the ride to Temple Ahavat Israel.

"Now listen, Daria...please don't make wisecracks through the service. I know you just love to humiliate me, but this is very important to me." asked Quinn, a whine in her voice.

"Don't worry. I brought reading material, and if worse comes to worse I'll get a nap in."

"I hope you didn't bring one of your books on serial killers to read...that would be so embarrassing..."

"Nope, I've got a book of essays by Bertrand Russell right here in my bag."

"That wouldn't be *Why I Am Not A Christian*, would it?"

"I'm sure that wouldn't be looked at askance amongst Jews, who have their own axe to grind against Christianity. But no, it's the Portable Bertrand Russell. Your new-found interest in philosophy and other scholarly matters is interesting to say the least."

The story is at <http://www.msgeek.com/fanfic/bringdownhouse.html>. For the record, there is no known book with the title *The Portable Bertrand Russell* (but there should be).

Source: Omar Rumi & Russell-1

- There is a British online exhibition of documentary sources on World War I entitled "The First World War: Sources for History." It is at <http://www.pro.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/index.htm>. The exhibition is offered through a partnership between the Public Record Office (the National Archives) and the Imperial War Museum, and funded by the New Opportunities Fund. Among other resources available at the site is a collection of materials relating to the antiwar movement. This collection includes a letter Bertrand Russell wrote to his brother Frank while imprisoned for his antiwar work. There is both a reproduction of the original letter and a transcription.

Source: Ken Blackwell

- A website dedicated to Graham Whettam, a British composer, indicates that Whettam dedicated his *Sinfonia Contra Timore*, originally known as Symphony No. 4, "to Bertrand Russell and all other people who suffer imprisonment or other injustice for the expression of their beliefs or the convenience of politicians and bureaucracies." The dedication apparently kept the symphony, first

- Freethinkers in the New York City area may wish to check out “Equal Time for Freethought,” a radio show aimed at getting out the freethinker’s point of view. It airs on WBAI (99.5 FM) every Sunday at 6:30 PM for half an hour. It features news, analysis, and interviews. It’s online at <http://www.foody.org/freethoughtradio.html>. One can listen to the show live online at this site, or listen to a variety of past broadcasts. The *BRSQ* thanks David Goldman for bringing the show to its attention.

Updates on Awards and Honorary Members

- In June 2003, *Harper’s Magazine* ran a review of Stephen Jay Gould’s *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory* (Belknap Press, 2002). The reviewer, David Quammen, began his review with the following Russell reference:

Not long before publishing his first book, the young Bertrand Russell received some advice about literary technique. It came from his future brother-in-law, Logan Pearsall Smith, the aesthetic and slightly loopy brother of Alys Pearsall Smith, who became Russell’s first wife. Seven years older than Bertrand, Logan had studied the classics at Balliol and hung with artists in Paris; he was an imposing if dubious source of postures and opinions. Years afterward, in an essay entitled “How I Write,” Russell recollected that Alys’s brother “was at that time exclusively interested in style as opposed to matter,” and although Russell had opposite priorities, he was impressionable. Logan confidently offered various rules, of which Russell mentioned only a few: Place a comma after every four words; never use “and” except at the beginning of a sentence. “His most emphatic advice was that one must always rewrite,” Russell remembered. “I consciously tried this, but found that my first draft was almost always better than my second. This discovery has saved me an immense amount of time.” With experience, Russell found his own congenial literary methods, partly grounded in his devotion to mathematics and his early determination “to say everything in the smallest number of words in which it could be said clearly.” Perfect clarity was the ultimate style. A sentence should be as lean as an equation. He would correct mistakes of substance, recasting entire passages, but never second-guess a first draft on grounds that were merely stylistic. In 1945, after half a century of steady literary output, he published *A History of Western Philosophy*, his

romping survey of thinkers from Thales to himself, a book that’s witty and terse at 836 pages. Five years later he won the Nobel Prize for literature. So much for a brother-in-law’s advice.

Quammen goes on to compare Russell’s writing technique with that of Gould, who also avoided rewrites, and demonstrates how the technique served Gould well—at first. Unfortunately, Quammen argues, it failed Gould by the time he wrote the 1433-page *Structure*. Best line of the review, which is entitled “The Man Who Knew Too Much?” “What sort of person writes a gigantic book, filled with history and biology and cultural arcane, staking his personal claim to be the Second Coming of Charles Darwin, and then congratulates *himself* in the dedication? Well, there is no such ‘sort’ of person. Stephen Jay Gould was like nobody else.” Gould received the 2000 BRS Award, largely because of his Russellian ability to popularize technical ideas through writing.

Rustlings Gerry Wildenberg

“Rustlings” presents a simple substitution cipher based on the writings of Bertrand Russell. In the coded quote below, each letter stands for another letter. For example BERTRAND RUSSELL could be coded as OREGENAQ EHFRRYY, O=B, R=E, et cetera. The quotes below use different codes.

In the cipher below I have made the puzzle harder by disguising the word separations and removing any punctuation. The grouping into 5 letter “words” is meant only to help readability and does not relate to the actual quote. (I have had to change one hyphenated word to the more contemporary, nonhyphenated spelling.)

BIZJB ZPZZK JKSZT RNKJW RXSBZ EJABO ZWATZ IKJFM
 IKMHR TMGZB RXXOZ
 TZBKT FZFMi KMNTR SZBRX XOZPI ABJJA MMAQK LKJFM
 IKMMI ZIZTA RJZKX
 BKLPW KGXMX ZPPXL FTZPP ZFRJP QRMZA WRJNT ZFROX
 ZMTRO GXKMR AJPBR
 XXZSZ TVZIK QQRXL MAXRW ZXAJV OXRPP BRMIM IZIZT A

Russell on the Web

- Those interested in the writings of Russell's (first) mother-in-law, Hannah Whitall Smith, can find some of them online at the "Christian Classics Ethereal Library" at http://www.ccel.org/s/smith_hw/. As the site name suggests, Russell and his mother-in-law did not see eye to eye on matters of theology.

Source: David White

- Yet another attack on Bertrand Russell by Lyndon LaRouche's political machine can be found at the website of the "American Almanac." This site features articles originally published in the "American Almanac" insert of the *New Federalist*, a LaRouche-controlled newspaper. The website features a lengthy piece by Carol White entitled "H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, Mackinder, Rhodes—Britain's Plot to Destroy Civilization: The New Dark Ages Conspiracy." (Conspiracy theorists love lengthy titles.) The article consists of excerpts of chapter one of White's book *Britain's Plot To Destroy Civilization: The New Dark Ages Conspiracy* (Ben Franklin Booksellers, 1980). (Amazon.com has the two parts of the title—before and after the colon—switched, but does it really matter?) The excerpts were published on June 20, 1994. The chapter is entitled "Russell Walks Out," a reference to Russell's decision to leave the "Coefficients," a liberal British political club. View it at http://members.tripod.com/~american_almanac/newdark.htm.

Source: Peter Friedman

- There are a number of references online to the 1967 Indian film *Aman*, directed by Mohan Kumar and starring Rajinder Kumar, Saira Banu—and Bertrand Russell, who plays himself. Kumar plays a doctor who, horrified by the health dangers of atomic weapons, asks Russell for advice. Russell provides it. *Aman's* plot is summarized at <http://us.imdb.com/Plot?0233193> and its director is interviewed at <http://in.news.yahoo.com/020529/57/1p3c1.html>. A DVD version of the film was apparently put out by Worldwide Entertainment Group in 1999, although it is currently unavailable.

Source: Peter Friedman

BRS Business and Chapter News:

The Greater New York City Chapter of the Bertrand Russell Society (GNYCCBRS)



The GNYCCBRS's latest happening occurred at the Ben Ash & Roxy Deli (857 Seventh Avenue) on Sunday, June 29. At this meeting, out-of-towners were feted with very large sandwiches. The gathering included (clockwise around the table, from left) David Goldman, Tim Madigan (from the GRRS), John Lenz, Peter Stone (also from the GRRS), Thom Weidlich, Warren Allen Smith, and Frank Stone (Peter's dad). The *BRSQ* thanks Tim Madigan for this picture immortalizing the event.

Bertrand Russell Society, Inc.
2nd Quarter Treasurer's Report
Cash Flow, 4/1/03 Through 6/30/03

Compiled 7/10/03 by Dennis J. Darland,
 BRS Treasurer (djdardland@qconline.com)

Category Description		
BALANCE 3/31/03		8,904.49
INFLOWS		
Contributions		
Contrib-BRS		70.00
TOTAL Contributions		70.00
Dues		
New Members		200.90
Renewals		719.85
TOTAL Dues		920.75
Meeting Income		50.00
Other Income		10.00
TOTAL INFLOWS		1,050.75
OUTFLOWS		
Bank Charges		10.93
BRS Paper Award		223.44
Library Expenses		16.66
Meeting Expenses		58.30
Newsletter		785.72
Other Expenses		15.00
TOTAL OUTFLOWS		1,110.05
OVERALL TOTAL		-59.30
BALANCE 6/30/03		8,845.19

Greater Rochester Russell Set

Celebrating Six Years of Monthly Russell
 Meetings Open to the Public

GRRS Inspires Poetry (of a Sort)

For several months now, the GRRS's monthly meeting has been followed by a poetry forum called Pure Kona Poetry. Some of the poets arrive early, and have taken an interest in Russell. In fact, two of the poets were sufficiently inspired to call their new act the Urknee and Bjurton Russell Show. They've even produced a CD of their poetry set to music; it's a hoot.

2003 Program

- Aug. 14 *Selected Letters of Bertrand Russell: The Private Years, 1884-1914*
- Sept. 11 *Selected Letters of Bertrand Russell: The Public Years, 1914-1970*
- Oct. 9 The Bertrand Russell Research Centre
Guest Speaker: Nicholas Griffin
- Nov. 13 "Nice People" (by Bertrand Russell)
- Dec. 11 Lord John Russell

All meetings are held at **Daily Perks Coffee House**, 389 Gregory Street, Rochester, NY, at **6:30 PM. Note New Meeting Time!**

All dates and topics are subject to change. For information call Tim Madigan at 585-424-3184 or write tmadigan@rochester.rr.com or visit http://sun1.sjfc.edu/~wildenbe/grrs/russell_poster.html.

Solution to *Rustlings* Puzzle, May 2003

"Ethics differs from science in the fact that its fundamental data are feelings and emotions, not percepts."

Bertrand Russell, in *Human Society in Ethics and Politics*.