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From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

12/15/99

Nostrum Rises in Protest

The latest episode of Nostrum, the high school debate soap opera, is now available at nostrum.web.com For a free subscription, sign up at nostrum.listbot.com. And visit our sister site, Good Guys/Bad Guys at goodguysbadguys.web.com.

We would have made it last week, but a political issue intervened. Talk about permanent depression!

Here's the deal. For longer than we can remember, we have been posting *Nostrum* episodes on our web site on a weekly basis, except during times of extreme stress, vacations, and when we couldn't come up with any plot lines. To publicize this venture, and to entice new subscribers, we have used the Lincoln-Douglas listserver, familiarly referred to as the LD-L, and the Policy listserver, familiarly referred to as the CX-L. Although we are seemingly breaking Dr. Johnson's maxim about only writing for money, we believe that some day we will come up with a plot line so intriguing that readers will simply have to have it, and will be willing to pay any amount for it, at which time we will lower the fiscal boom and reap our just financial rewards. Until then, however, we create these episodes as either a public service or public nuisance, depending upon your point of view. To insure that the service, or nuisance, is effected, we send a weekly missive to both the LD-L and the CX-L when episodes are published. Interestingly enough, in the years we have been writing *Nostrum*, we have received exactly two complaints about these missives, neither of which, by the way, coming from people who had spent any time actually reading *Nostrum*. We would have been rather dispirited if we had failed to click with out intended audience, but we could hardly get too worked up over simply annoying random people on a regular basis; what else is the Internet for?

During the recent stress of our field trip to Mite Manor for the Thanksgiving holiday, we were marginally following the action on the LD-L, where members were tossing verbal brickbats like jugglers on methadrine, and the whole tone of the enterprise was getting rather gamy, with vulgar language and name-calling and all the usual raw-underbelly-of-listserver type folderol. In a fit of pique (or maybe it was a pit of figue), the major domo of the listserver put his foot down and expelled the offenders. We applauded his action, or at least applauded it as much as we could while trying to find where Pecksniff the Cross-eyed Nostrumian Applehead was hiding in the Manor (no easy task in a building that could use the Taj Mahal as a gate house). (The Nostrumutt, by the way, is not exactly the bloodhound some people think he was cracked up to be. But we digress.)

But then, a funny thing happened. Our messages stopped appearing on the LD-L. We could draw only one conclusion. The *Nostrum* baby had been thrown out with the LD-L bathwater.

The horror!

We were beside ourselves, which, since there are now four of us, is pretty much our normal state. We divided the tasks. The Nostrumite was given the job of creating slogans, like **NOSTRUMIANS OF THE WORLD UNITE** and **NOSTRUM IN OUR TIME** and **READ A NOSTRUM, DEBATE A CASE, GET A COLOSTOMY BAG IN PLACE. BURMA SHAVE.** The Falutin sisters were charged with inking the signs for our planned protest march, and making random telephone calls throughout the community to bring forth all the *Nostrum* backers who have hitherto remained silent. My job was to perform the final tests on the LD-L to make sure our fears were founded. Meanwhile, by the way, the CX-L continued with our messages unabated, thus proving in our minds that Policy is ever so much better than LD, and what were those Philips Petroleum people thinking lo these many years ago?

My first test message to the LD-L was a simple "Peep." As in, I didn't think I'd hear a peep out of them. I didn't. Except I did see a response to my test message. An interesting response, in which the sender thought that the single word peep was the funniest thing he or she had ever read. We marveled at this for a while, but then again, it was in the context of the LD-L, so maybe the response was not all that ill-founded. We tried again. A very long message. And lo and behold, as Nabokov might say, there it was in the NostrumRUs mailbox. We were shocked, albeit pleasantly. We had not been expelled after all. It was simply a technical malfunction. Of course, now we had to call off the marches and some of the professional rabble-rousers we had hired from Yale (rabble-rousers from Connecticut come a lot cheaper than the Massachusettsians), and we had to cancel the sky-writer, not to mention our irate letter to the *Times*. But we were content ultimately that we were not considered vulgar trash by the custodians of the LD-L morality, and that, as the Nostrumite put it, "Although we may be vulgar trash, we're vulgar trash on our own terms." What more could anyone ask for?

So Nostrum is back, doing its best to bring light into the dark crevasses of forensics, not to mention the dark crevices. We apologize for the break in service, and promise that it won't happen again (until after next week, when we take our annual Christmas vacation).

J.



[E-mail Jules & the Nostrumite](#)

[Back to the Nostrum Home Page](#)



Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

12/22/99

We Are Out of Our Depth

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the fact that everything we said last week is not true. We still cannot see our messages on the LD-L. The path ahead is clear. We will spend the holiday break getting to the bottom of this. We will use every tool at our disposal: socket wrenches, litotes, melatonin, Pecksniff the Cross-eyed Nostrumian Applehead, even -- dare we say it -- irony and sarcasm. We will not take this lying down (except for the fact that we are now taking a three-week lie-down).

Happy holidays to all, and if there is life past Y2K, we will see you in January.

J.



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Back to the Nostrum Home Page



Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

1/19/00

Nostrum Survives Y2K. Dozens Cheer.

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We're ready to get back to business. Or as ready as we'll ever be. Fans of tournament food (now there's a small, elite group) should devour the latest episode.

Despite the long school-break hiatus, we almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the failure of what he referred to as "the greatest commercial idea since the Beatles Reunion." During the weeks before Christmas he found himself in a sea of opera supergroups: the Three Tenors, the Three Irish Tenors, the Four Tenors (when three just won't do the job), the Three Sopranos. "Every record producer from Manhattan to Malibu is grabbing at the udders of kitsch to try their hand at milking the American public," he complained. Not that he's that big a TT fan to begin with; I've seen his ears turn white at the sound of their inimitable "Singin' in the Rain," but then again, whose haven't? Anyhow, according to him, the most beautiful singing ever is lost to the modern world, and his plan was to create a new supergroup called the Three Castrati. "Sopranos, schmapranos," he sniffed as he started surfing the Internet to find the necessary resources to bring his plan to fruition. Much of this musical entrepreneurship took place at Mite Manor, and the lad enlisted the services of the ever-capable Manor major domo, Shrubb, but even the Jeeves of Upper Chappaqua couldn't find one castrato, much less three. Lord knows he tried. "I don't think this operation has the popularity it once commanded," our man Shrubb explained to the Mite, who did get a line on a couple of record producers who had yet to find their own boffo opera combo. The Nostrumite could envision bags of money winging off into nothingness. "Nowadays young singers draw the line at rhinoplasty," Shrubb continued. Can't say as I blame them, myself, but the Nostrumite was happy with none of this, and returned to Cambridge with less than a hundred percent of his get-up-and-go, which in the immortal words of Barney Rubble, had apparently got up and went. If this wasn't bad enough, the Falutin sisters are involved in one of their perennial religious battles, and dragging the two of us into it. High, still going full Episcopalian, sees a fairly endless road of study ahead of her at HDS, while Low, the Unitarian, will pretty much be finished at the end of this semester. "It's not my fault I don't have any dogma textbook," she says smugly, while poor High is one commandment short of taking over when Cardinal O'Connor hangs up his miter. Since their parents are, in fact, both Catholic, they're used to this sort of holy war, but the Mite and I are finding the sniping less than conducive to a productive academic atmosphere. On the positive side, both Pecksniff the Cross-eyed Nostrumian Applehead and Unix the Cocker Nostrumutt (who is, at best, a baritone barker despite his castrato credentials) are in fine fettle, and Mr. Manpa (or Mr. Ma 'N Pa, as he is familiarly known) has called to enlist our aid in a new Internet startup he's

putting together, e-haircut.com. Since no one has yet to lose money floating new Internet stock issues, Mr. Ma 'N Pa is thinking he might log on to the profit bandwagon himself, and bring us along with him.

Just take a little off the top and we're out of here.

Next week, we start to dissect tournament housing.

J.



[E-mail Jules & the Nostrumite](#)

[Back to the Nostrum Home Page](#)



Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

1/26/00

Is this the end of Nostrum?

The latest episode of Nostrum, the high school debate soap opera, is now available at nostrum.web.com For a free subscription, sign up at nostrum.listbot.com. And visit our sister site, Good Guys/Bad Guys at goodguysbadguys.web.com.

In this episode, we begin to find beds for an awful lot of people.

We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over what seems now to definitely be the banning of *Nostrum* from the Lincoln-Douglas Listserv. We have sent message after message, and whenever the message has promoted an episode, it has not appeared. While we find the legerdemain that allows our test messages to survive and our actual messages to evaporate to be, to put it mildly, baffling, we believe it nonetheless exists. While the Policy CX-L listserv proudly (blindly?) publishes us every week come hell or high water (or, this being Policy, nuclear holocaust), the LD-L considers us pariahs. Our message cannot be sent to the tender ears of LDers, who are apparently too wrapped up in applying the social contract to everything from Cher to juvenile justice. "We are not being given our fair due," the Mite declaims. "This is not justice. We are being hidden behind a veil of ignorance, deontologically banished to a corner of the Internet that is nasty, brutish and short. We have read the LD-L, and we are far from the dumbest thing on it. Very, very far." Well, he's right there. But are we the babies thrown out with the bath water, or are we the bath water? That is the question.

We can do nothing but turn to our loyal subscribers. There are quite a lot of you, surprisingly enough. Your struggle for truth in forensics fiction is not being fought alone, but it may ultimately be a losing one. If *Nostrum* cannot continue to grow, to reach out to the forensics community with its firm right hand of inane nonsense, then what is the point of going on? We can't afford a forty-million-dollar advertising budget. We're never going to make a zillion-dollar IPO. And the Policicians cannot carry the burden alone; there's no more room in those tubs. It is up to you, dear friend.

So what can you do, you ask? First, have you done everything in your power to get everyone on your team to read *Nostrum*? No, you haven't. Admit it. We know you like a book. You've been reading it all by yourself and thinking that your teammates aren't good enough for it. Well, that has gone far enough. It is your job to get them all on board. *Nostrum* is fairly addictive, and it is free, but users have to have that first introduction. Give it to them. And next, present subscribers to the LD-L can petition the listserv muckamuck directly and demand that *Nostrum* be given its place in the LD universe. A world without *Nostrum* is like a bicycle without a fish. Do you want to live in such a world? We don't intend to give up yet, but we will have to give up eventually if *Nostrum* isn't given the podium it needs to survive in this dog eat

dot.com world

J.



E-mail Jules & the Nostrumite

Back to the Nostrum Home Page



Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

2/2/00

Nostrum Side-Swiped by Evil Webmaster

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the results of our declaration of snit last week against the LD listserver. For reasons that make little or no sense to us, and which might have been clearer if the Mite hadn't done a blanket delete of everything in my mailbox when I wasn't looking (needless to say, I immediately changed my AOL password after that particular fiasco, so no matter how many times he types the word "chthonic" in there, nothing is going to happen), we were suddenly and unexpectedly signed up as members of the LD-L at my JulieCBS@aol.com account. Is nothing sacred? I do have two AOL accounts, which is rather parsimonious these days, especially since AOL version 5 offers up to seven accounts (one for each dwarf?), but how many people do I have to be? Twenty-four hours a day as Jules O'Shaughnessy is enough for anyone, except maybe the Mite, who spends at least that long being himself, which I wouldn't wish on anyone. Anyhow, his feeling is that the EW, or Evil Webmaster, as he refers to the nefarious padrone of the LD-L, is wreaking his vengeance on us in a most subtle way, but the thing is, we've been subscribed to the LD-L for about 43 years now at our shared NostrumRUs@aol.com account. That is, after all, the official Nostrum mailbox. And into that mailbox, some LD bushwa falls on a daily basis (although we admit to subscribing there only to the digest version of the beast, on the assumption that five e-mails a day are better than five hundred, an axiom we defy anyone to deny). So we highly doubt that using this address rather than the NostrumRUs address will do any good, but we're willing to try anything once. If this doesn't work, we'll call up our Cuban grandmothers and ask them to intercede for us (we've come to believe that everyone needs a couple of Cuban grandmothers on their side). Needless to say, all this insanity has distracted us from the more important events of the day, such as the New Jersey appellate ruling against golf mulligans. The Falutins were especially upset at this turn of events after their summer proselytizing in Myrtle Beach. "Without mulligans," High said, "the number of golfers achieving damnation will quadruple. Look at Bill Clinton!" Look at Bill Clinton, indeed. And then there's NIN and the mosh pit and all that other Republican stuff -- it's been a busy week. Too busy for this LD-L tomfoolery.

If this message does get posted on the LD-L, presumably the snit will be over. If it doesn't, all heck will break loose.

J.



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Back to the Nostrum Home Page



Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

2/9/00

Nostrum Gives Up

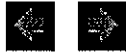
The latest episode of Nostrum, the high school debate soap opera, is now available at nostrum.web.com For a free subscription, sign up at nostrum.listbot.com. And visit our sister site, Good Guys/Bad Guys at goodguysbadguys.web.com.

We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the fact that we are obviously completely barred from the LD listserver. There is no mistaking it. We are personae non grata. (Or is that non gratae. Whatever.) The Mite has spent the last week pacing the apartment, trying to come to terms with this cybernetic Elba. "Banned in Boston!" he cries. "And everywhere else! And why? Have we ever done anything, other than attempt to provide a little comic relief to the poor working stiffs of debaterdom? Fie!" His eyes tend to widen when he says fie. Most people's eyes probably tend to widen when they say fie. Fie is an eye-widening kind of word. "So what are we going to do?" I asked him over and over. And the answer, unfortunately, boils down to, nothing. What can we do? If the LD-L wants to bar us, then barred we must be. The new subscription in the JulieCBS screenname proved worthless, except as another means to get the same old LD-L mail. Those of you who have ever read LD-L mail know how undesirable multiple subscriptions can be. For that matter, many people feel that a single subscription is undesirable, but we refuse to sink to the LD-L's level of nattering negativity. Except to say, Fie! And, oh yeah, to point out that we always did like Policy people better than LDers.

So, folks, if we can no longer advertise on the LD-L, we must rely on you to spread the word. Every minute of your waking existence should be spent telling your debate friends and colleagues about us. Or, at least, say, five minutes a week. We need to keep appealing to new people, or there isn't much point in going on. We've been writing *Nostrum* for a while now, but we could just as easily be spending our time more productively, helping Mr. Ma 'N Pa develop his on-line haircut web site (now there's an IPO we don't want to miss), for instance, or helping the Falutin sisters resolve their deep religious controversies. But instead, we devote ourselves tirelessly to you. I mean, it's not like we get paid or anything. Or that we get any reward at all, for that matter. Are we idiots or what? Jeesh!

Help us grow. Keep annoying the LD-L. Keep pushing us to your teammates. Make your coach read us. (What else is the old coot doing to pass the time, after all? Research? Strategy analysis? Give us a break!) Introduce us to non-forensicians (you don't have to be Jewish to like Levy's, as the old ad used to go). Whatever. Our fate is in your hands. Be kind. Keep *Nostrum* alive.

J.



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Back to the Nostrum Home Page



Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

2/23/00

Who Wants to Marry a Multinostrumite

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the impending close of *Cats*. "So much for forever," he mutters. Not that he's a particular fan of Lloyd Webber (or Lord Lloyd-Webber as they call him when he is at his official duties and can claim the noble hyphen, or When-are-you-going-to-write-another-hit-Andy as his producer calls him with all the hyphens in the world at his disposal), but he hates to see another New York institution bite the dust. "First the Hippodrome, now this," he says. "What are the tourists going to do after they're finished shopping at the Disney Store?" Needless to say, the lad is not a particular fan of what has been happening lately to Times Square. "It used to be, a sailor knew where to go for a good time. Now... A man in bell bottoms is lucky to find a *Lion King* tee shirt."

Of course, the never-ending battle with the Evil Webmaster continues, despite our threat to end it all. The EW keeps telling us that there is no prohibition against Nostrum on the LD-L, but there's yes yes in his beady webmaster eyes (at least we're assuming he has beady webmaster eyes). "Does this Pajamas Wexler person actually exist," the Mite asks, "or is it some bizarre pseudonym? I hate pseudonyms with a passion!" he exclaims. We do have some ideas for clearing up the mystery of the disappearing LD-L messages, but until the problem is cleared up, we continue to urge our myrmidons (that's you) to proselytize for us. Spread the word! Without you, there is no us.

J.



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[Back to the Nostrum Home Page](#)



Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

3/1/00

Nostrum Sends Unexpected Warning to Taiwan



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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the end of the LD-L EW skirmish, as he no longer has anything really important to complain about. "Count your blessings," High Falutin told him (as a divinity student, where all the math courses are indeed dedicated to blessing-counting, this is easy advice for her to give). "Must you always look at the world through rose-colored glasses?" he responded. "Must the two of you spend all your verbal conversation time rattling cliches at each other?" Low Falutin interjected. So much for that exercise in Restoration drama. Anyhow, things are pretty quiet around here. The Falutins are planning another trip to Myrtle Beach, their ministry away from home, as the new season of golfers are arriving down there now, "and they need us more than the average bear," as High says (jeez -- she does talk entirely in cliches). They're planning on leaving this weekend. Mr. Ma 'N Pa's haircut.com venture isn't proving out too well: someone else beat him to the punch on the URL, mirabile dictu, not to mention that he hasn't figured out how to give on-line haircuts yet. The Mite is murmuring about toddling off to England to see the dome, and has petitioned Shrub, the major domo of Mite Manor, to see what he can do about wrangling some accommodations. Since the lad has intimated that he might be taking me along, I haven't complained. I'm as interested in Millennium Domes as the next person. So maybe our next missive will be from the UK. There are worse places to e-mail from.

J.



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Back to the Nostrum Home Page



Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

3/8/00

Nostrum Attempts to Rejoin Nobility



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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the fact that his ancestor who came over on the Mayflower (or, to be honest, the one that came over on BOAC Flight 243 in the early 1960s) renounced his British citizenship, ceding the noble mantle to his brother, the Mite's Uncle Ian. Uncle Ian subsequently died in battle during the hard fighting of the Falklands War, leaving the Mite's cousin to become the Duke of Beauchamp-Cockburn, a position that would otherwise have been the Nostrumite's. (I may not have all this Duke-Dolphin stuff straight - I don't know a poohbah from a pontoon -- but that's about the gist of it.)

As you've probably guessed, Major Domo Shrubb whisked the lad and I off to England as he said he might. Our goal, it turned out, was to check up on B-C Manor (which, if you're any good at these things, you immediately recognized as being pronounced Beechum-Coburn, a linguistic taradiddle that eluded me completely until I finally asked Shrubb and the lad to write it down for me: Beauchamp-Cockburn indeed!). Shrubb was concerned that His Grace was selling off some of the family heirlooms to pay for what apparently is his tattooing habit; Beauchamp-Cockburn is about nineteen years old with the social conscience of an Oscar Wilde character with a painting in the attic. Apparently the Mite and His Grace had spent some time together as children, and while they acted as if this was some sort of bizarre family reunion, mostly it was Shrubb running his own Antiques Roadshow and trying to make sure that all the goods weren't liquidated without at least someone from the family on hand to watch it. Shrubb is the only one who really cares, however. The Mite and His Grace did turn out to be fast friends once the Viscount or the Espadrille or whatever he is showed the lad all three of his body piercings; they started getting along as if they had never parted for these many years ago. Shrubb meanwhile managed to put aside a few of the choicer items, including a portrait of the First Duke, a relic from the Restoration era that looks exactly like the Nostrumite in a Captain Hook costume. Of course, the bottom line to all of this is that the Mite himself could have been the Dauphin if his father hadn't skedaddled right about the time of the Beatles. Not that Mite Senior is by any means poor, if you get my drift, but you wouldn't suspect there's a Brit bone in him, much less in his scion. Beauchamp-Cockburn, on the other hand, is more British than the Queen (who, B-C reminds me, is actually German, but maybe that was just that tattoos and the

tongue stud talking).

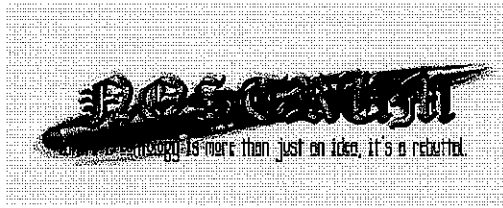
Anyhow, all of this is in aid of nothing in particular, except that somehow we are managing to post an episode on the wrong side of the ocean. Tomorrow Shrubbs is taking us in to see the Millennium Dome, and then it's back to Cambridge (in Massachusetts, that is). It's been an interesting whirlwind. I can only hope that the Falutins have been as successful converting golfers as we have, so to speak.

J.



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[Back to the Nostrum Home Page](#)

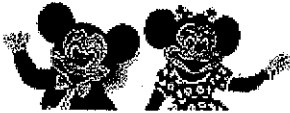


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From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

3/15/00

Nostrum Pleads for Forgiveness for 2000 Years of Debate Soap Operas



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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over having to leave the UK to return to the city where everyone is a college student, or wants to be a college student, or used to be a college student, or at the very least is in the business of selling overpriced coffee products to college students. Of course, there is some good news in that His Grace, the Duke of Beauchamp-Cockburn came back with us, but we'll get to that in a minute. As we had planned we did visit the Millennium Dome, and as the Nostrumite put it, "If Tony Blair can survive this, he can survive anything." There were one or two high points, including a Ford exhibit on transportation that promised us that in the future we'd all own private hovercraft and fly into the city to work, which His Grace, a big World's Fair buff, claims is the sine qua non of any successful exhibition. "If they ain't talking' hovercraft," he declaims, "they ain't talkin' future. Every exhibition since the Crystal Palace has had hovercraft." Maybe so. In any case, most of the acreage was taken over by fairly simplistic exhibits that probably appealed to all the grammar school kids in their nifty little uniforms that made them look like children's book illustrations, various versions of Madeline both male and female, Tom Brown and Uncle Ralph and all that, but as for the adults, there wasn't much to do except make heads or tails out of the extravaganza in the middle ring where all these Cirque de Soleil types bounce down from the ceiling in an athletic pseudomythological gavotte to the strains of a Peter Gabriel song that proves beyond a doubt that Genesis was as boring as you think they were. The Mite did stock up on souvenirs, however. "You never know when the price of Dome keychains will go through the roof," he explained. Actually, I think I do know, and the date is tied up somewhat in on-demand ice cubes from you-know-where.

In any case, as I said, His Grace returned with us, because he claims to be interested in dabbling in some American education. Despite his noble lineage, he looks more than a little like your common junkie, but he claims it's merely fashion, and he'd be happy to switch to chinos and oxford buttondown shirts "like you Americans" if we could only hook him up with an L.L. Bean catalog. Shrubbs has volunteered to take on the task of civilizing cousin B-C, so after we landed the major domo took the nobleman down to Mite Manor to visit the rest of his American relatives and to get a bit organized in his search for college. As for liquidating the Beauchamp-Cockburn estate, he was only selling off a few choice items, and most of it will

remain intact for his triumphant return, eventually, as an educated human being. Perhaps. He'll be joining us up here next week, at which point the Falutins will be back as well, so it should be something of a grand reunion all around. What the twins will make of the Duke is beyond me, but it should be interesting. They'll probably immediately dive into saving his soul as a homework assignment for extra credit. If they can do it, they'll deserve it.

J.



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[Back to the Nostrum Home Page](#)



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From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

3/22/00

Nostrum's Oscar found in Dumpster



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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the fact that his cousin, the Duke of Beauchamp-Cockburn, has arrived fresh from his Americanization at Mite Manor, and he doesn't seem any different than he did back in the UK. His Grace is still gung-ho on getting an American education, and it seems as if he's settled on Harvard as the school most deserving of his special talents. "I hear it's a bloody good place," he says, "and I'd hate to do anything second rate." I'm afraid the duke is in for a rude awakening about one thing, though. He heard that the acceptance letters were just starting to be mailed, so he assumed that there was still time for him to matriculate this coming Fall. He has an appointment with the admissions people next week, at which time maybe he'll start believing what we've been telling him about Harvard being, well, a trifle selective. "If they don't select me, who would they select?" he responded. Perhaps. Except, of course, Harvard really doesn't need another shaved-head tattooed multiple-stud wearer. (Sometimes I feel that Cambridge is nothing but extras from failed pilots for MTV reality shows. At least the duke looks like he belongs here.)

The Falutins have been fairly mum on the subject of the Nostrumite's noble kinsman. They too are back, full of the strength only a good proselytization can bring, having saved souls left and right from Tidewater to Bilgewater up and down the Carolina coast, and also having dabbled a bit for the first time in the game of aged Scots themselves. If nothing else, they share this newfound love of golf with B-C, who claims to have been junior club champion three years running. "Although not on any of your American type courses, don't you know. English golf is the true test of the game." To which Low Falutin replied under her breath that obviously his worship doesn't have much of a long game, at which point the gauntlet was thrown down, and the girls and the dolphin are now planning their first outing, as soon as the ice melts on the Charles.

Through it all, the Nostrumite seems to be fuming in a rather strong, silent way, which is unusual for the person who is to whining what John Wayne is to oaters. There's definitely a dynamic at work between the cousins that keeps things brewing mightily right below the surface. I'll keep you posted if any fireworks develop.

J.



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Back to the Nostrum Home Page

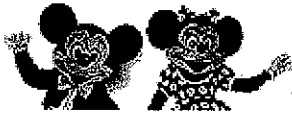


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From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

3/29/00

Nostrum Goes Broke at Gas Pump



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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the unexpected exit of his cousin, the Duke of Beauchamp-Cockburn. Just as it seemed as if was here for the duration, his meeting with the admissions people at Harvard apparently was too much for him, and he's gone back to England where he will be resuming his studies at his original school, the University at Sexestershire on Wye (to which I always want to add "with Mustard," but that's too lame even for me). The idea that His Grace would not be welcomed with open arms by the Crimson was hardly a surprise to the rest of us, but you know how those dukes and dolphins are, always poobahing it over the rest of us left and right and noblesse obliging and honi soiting and the like. I'll miss the little neo-punk, to tell you the truth. I was looking forward to hearing more about how Americans know nothing about tea, coffee, wine, women, poetry, music, animal husbandry, halon purges, nutrition, haberdashery and maya, among other things. He was, to put it simply, the Nostrumite as a nobleman, and one noble Mite is enough for anyone.

Meanwhile, the Nostrumite doesn't seem to miss his closest living collateral relative. All the while B-C was here, the Mite was as mute as a Manx, as if the precious bodily fluids had been sucked out of him by his kinsman. Now that His Grace is back on the old sod, or back busting the old sod, or back sodding the old buster, or whatever, the Mite is becoming more his old self again. He's even taken up where the Rajah took off, carrying through on the promise to go golfing with the Falutins as soon as the golf courses open. He's even taken to visiting Mr. Ma 'N Pa to discuss possible Internet startups now that Mr. MNP's online haircut idea has fizzled.

It's great to see the lad acting his old self again. I think.

J.



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[Back to the Nostrum Home Page](#)



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From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:

3/29/00

Nostrum Refuses to Settle; Nostrum Stock Tumbles Precipitously as a Result



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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over his inability to come up with a decent dot com opportunity for Mr. Ma 'N Pa. Mr. M has given up on online haircuts (I can't imagine why) and come up with nothing to replace them, and the Nostrumite, whom Mr. M has hired as his New Media Advisor, has been no help whatsoever. They have begun the process of Webifying Mr. M's various extant businesses, including the video store, the shoe store and the restaurant, but neither man nor lad feel that any of these offer the possibility of an IPO and a multimillion dollar buyout. The problem is, the Mite complains, that all the good domain names are already taken. He and Mr. M sit at the computer for hours at a time entering possibilities, and the only one they've come up with so far that's available is nunonabun.com. Unfortunately, at the present time it is hard to see how one can merchandise nuns on a bun, and there's the rub.

Still, they continue to go at it, and I wish them well. Now that Microsoft is going to be broken up into Minimicrosofts, or whatever, there are going to be a lot of new opportunities on the horizon. Or so the two think. By me, I'll stick to content providing, if you get my drift.

J.



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[Back to the Nostrum Home Page](#)