



...Spittoon Ends Domino Session

THE IDLE AMERICAN

Waterford Dominoes?...

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

Column #1,107 for Release Week of September 1, 2024

It was an absolute accident that likely couldn't be duplicated, even with the most fastidious planning.

My uncle Mort and three of his buddies playing dominoes at the general store in the thicket were caught up in the most bizarre circumstance that may forever alter the game. In the future, perhaps only wooden dominoes will be used. Or maybe cast iron.

One of the guys bragged about a new set of dominoes birthday-gifted by his granddaughter. He proudly showed off his shiny crystal dominoes, then started shuffling them. Alas, one fell from the table. They realized simultaneously that the word "Waterford" embossed on each piece should have been fair warning that these dominoes were to be seen, but not shuffled....

The game crashed quickly, not to be resumed on this strange day.

They gazed as the lone domino descended, floating in slow motion. It hit squarely on the rim of a brass spittoon, halving what formerly had been the double six.

One end with six dots fell to the floor next to the oft-used spittoon, but the other, well let's just say it didn't fall outside the spittoon....

They were stunned, particularly the duffer who faced explaining to his granddaughter what happened to her precious gift.

With no game to play, they shifted to spinning stories, all of which dealt serious blows to any semblance of truth.

For them, there were no rules. Truth was out the window; everything was fair game....

Soon, they were talking about prized possessions. My Uncle Mort blathered about what my old mother would call a “terminological inexactitude.” (To most of us, the term is “lawyer talk” for lies.)

Mort said he had a memento found following a rainstorm when he visited Stratford-on-Avon in 1966. Standing at the grave of William Shakespeare 350 years after the Avon bard’s death, he noticed something poking through the topsoil. It appeared to be the pointed end of two pencils.

“They were wrapped in parchment, on which Shakespeare had written: ‘I always chose to write in ink, because I couldn’t decide between pencils; 2b or not 2b was always the question’.”....

When the laughter abated, one of the men told about an accident that occurred recently on the nearby state highway. He said an 18-wheeler--loaded with several tons of Roget’s thesauruses--went airborne when a tire blew out.

“It was sumthin’ to see,” the old geezer said. “Books flew everywhere. There must have been enough to pave 20 miles of dirt road.”

Had my mother heard him, she would have called him a “24-carat windjammer.” His closing words would have strengthened her suspicion. “I was stunned, startled, aghast, taken aback, stupefied, confused, shocked, flabbergasted, astounded, amazed, confounded, astonished, overwhelmed, horrified, numbed, speechless and perplexed.”....

A third member of the foursome told about a creative Wisconsin man who won the National Liars’ Contest several years ago.

“The winner must have had time on his hands, because a lie such as his isn’t simply ‘blurted out’; it is carefully honed before it is shared.”

He described a hunter who invented a duck call so

effective that it attracted decoys....

Only the “birthday duffer” was left to tell his tale. However, he chose to remain silent. One day, he hoped it might be possible for him to tearlessly describe the time one of his crystal dominoes escaped from the shuffle. He’d recount its descent, and how a spittoon got in the way. But on this sad day, he had no words.

Slowly bending over, he picked up the end of the double six that one would expect him to keep. Perhaps he could place it in a shadowbox. It was, after all, the thought that counts.

Soon, they left the general store, none aware that the crystal dominoes were a “close-out” special with replacements pieces available for pennies on the dollar--even for the domino with a dozen spots on it....

Dr. Newbury, longtime university president, continues to speak and write. The Idle American, begun in 2003, is one of the nation’s longest-running syndicated humor columns. Contact: 817-447-3872. Email: newbury@speakerdoc.com. Website: www.speakerdoc.com.