

# Chelm's Scientific Journal

by Philip Fishl Kutner

No, this is not an oxymoron. There was a single issue published by the now defunct Chelm Scientific Society of Inventors and Discoverers. How and why the society was founded and who were its members is a long, long mayse most of which has been lost in the great fire that engulfed the Chelm Laboratory and the shed that contained its minutes, records and all known copies of the Chelm Scientific Journal.

Before going into the history of the Journal and the Society, let me tell you how it got its name Di Nayas.

One day Itsik the chairman of the Chelm Inventor's SIG (Special Interest Group) was going to shul when he met Dovid the chairman of the Chelm Discoverer's SIG who was out trying to find his glasses that he had lost the day before.

"Gut morgn" says Itsik.

"The same to you" says Dovid.

"Vos iz nayas?" asks Itsik.

"Di nayas iz nayas!" and with that response the seeds were sown for the name of the Chelm Scientific Journal—affectionately known as the CSJ or the ches, sameckh, zhurnal. This was many years ago.

At first there were two groups—Dovid's Der Khelm Oyfdekn Klub and Itsik's Der Khelm Oysgefinen Klub. Members of the clubs were called oyfdeknern and oysgefinern respectively. They joined to form The Chelm Scientific Society.

## Di Oyfdeknern

Membership in Dovid's club was limited to married Chelemer, over the age of 13, who lost something and found it without the help of anyone, especially his wife. The prospective oyfdeknern's wife was called before the rabbi and had to swear on her children's lives that her husband had lost something and found it without her help. The most unusual was when Shimon had too much shnaps, lost his senses and when awoke the next morning, he found them.

## Di Oysgefinern

Membership in Itsik's club was more difficult. Oysgefinern truly had to invent something new. Itsik had invented a new and unusual pair of shleykes (suspenders). Instead of using regular buttons on the pants and putting the button through a loop in the suspenders, he used a metal button and sewed a

magnet to the shleykes. He said now the pants are truly suspended by the suspenders. This invention made him the most brilliant scientist in Chelm.

## The Chelm Scientific Journal: Di Nayas

Every professional society, especially a science-oriented society must have a professional journal, and The Chelm Scientific Society was no exception. The problem was that not a single member had ever seen a journal of any kind let alone a science journal. In fact not a single member had ever written a science article. In fact not a single member had ever written any kind of article.

One day Itsik came up with an idea to solve the problem. He would write to the editor of the Lublin Laboratory Society made up of people who were lab assistants at the Lublin Scientific Institute. Perhaps their editor would be willing to proofread the articles that would go into Di Nayas.

At the next meeting of the Society, Itsik asked for volunteers to write articles for the very first issue of The Chelm Scientific Journal. Everyone raised his hand and kept it up until Itsik asked them what the title of the article would be. Everyone looked perplexed and all hands came down.

Sensing that this was a crisis in the Society, he said, "Okay I will write the first article and then you can see how easy it is. So Itsik wrote all about his invention—di magnetish shleykes, and included a very detailed set of sketches. This was then sent off to Lublin for evaluation.

A month later the carrier hand delivered the letter from Lublin with the original copy all marked up. On the bottom in large red letter it said *vu zenen di bibliogaye un di heores* (footnotes).

When Itsik read the corrections, he was at first angry, then perplexed and finally his feelings were hurt. To save face he read this statement at the following meeting of the Society.

"We all know that Chelemerers are smarter than any Lubliner. To prove it let me ask you. Isn't it true that we know how to write a handnote, but who heard of a footnote?" All laughed and it was published in Vol. 1 No. 1 the only issue of Di Nayas.

Only a single copy remains today in the defunct Society's archives collection of mislaid files. Anyone wishing a copy may send a request to Itsik in Chelm.