

# KNOTHOLE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE

## CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

## KNOTHOLE ASSOCIATION

September—2003



### Christopher Darlington Morley's Scholarly Background by John Kiyasu

The renowned poet and author, Christopher Morley, came from an interesting background. His father, Frank Sr. was born in Surrey, England and was a child prodigy in the game of chess. As a youngster, he traveled to various adjoining villages and would play their best adults, always winning or trouncing the opposition.

Christopher, otherwise known as young Chip, was also gifted with tremendous mental abilities. As a youngster in Haverford, Pennsylvania where his father was a professor of mathematics, Chip memorized the entire Oxford edition of the English Dictionary retaining their meaning and proper usage. This tremendous ability served him well in both writing poetry and

prose, a hobby he started at age fourteen.

Upon graduating Haverford College Cum Laude and class valedictorian, he was elected a Rhodes scholar and attended Oxford College for a second degree in History. His siblings Felix and Frank, Jr. also became Rhodes scholars upon obtaining their Baccalaureate Degrees. Such was the scholarly and academic background of the remarkable Morley family.

When C.D. Morley returned to the States after his studies abroad, he promptly entered the "publishing" business joining Nelson Doubleday's Country Life Press. Shortly thereafter he joined the editorial



CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

staff of the Ladies Home Journal in Philadelphia and wrote many articles. Some of his short stories coalesced into novels, and he began publishing a number of novels through Country Life Press.

*From The Middle Kingdom  
By Christopher Morley*

#### Postcard

*"Don't go Hunting  
for ideas.  
Ideas are in the air  
Hunting for you."*

#### Inside this Edition:

- Christopher Morley's Scholarly Background
- A New Portrait
- Membership Dues
- Readings in the Library

### A New Portrait Illustrates Morley in Youth

By the age of thirty Morley became a prolific writer and made many, many friends with his outgoing manner. The new portrait of Christopher Darlington Morley created by the seasoned illustrator Harry Gill of Roslyn Heights, depicts Morley with the very sparse and funny reddish beard he tried to grow when he was still in Philadelphia.

His brothers Felix and Frank Jr. teased him about this and he promptly shaved it off. It was during this time in his younger career, which this portrait depicts this fun loving, free spirited and whimsical nature as how we like to remember Christopher Morley.

Some twenty years later, Morley regrew his beard,

which now matched his head as both were thoroughly gray. Unfortunately, by now he was so sensitive to the terms by which he was often described as "whimsical" that he always posed either for portraits or pictures as a somewhat gruff man, which he wasn't. He also put on a great deal of girth as he delighted in rich gourmet food.

#### Officers

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Fall—2003

## MEMBERSHIP DUES—SCHOLARSHIP DONATION 2003—2004

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Christopher Morley Knot hole

Association

c/o Bryant Library

Paper Mill Rd.

Roslyn, NY 11576

Enclosed my check for the amount of  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the appropriate category

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\$10 Student    \$20 Individual

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\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Knothole Restoration

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Dues and donations from our members support the Association's projects and reading contests. Please complete this membership form and include your check for the appropriate category as follows and mail in the self-addressed envelope to:



*Helen Oakley, former president of the CMKA along with her daughter Valerie accepting the portrait of Morley by Harry Gill*

## Readings in the Library

The 16th. Annual Student Reading Scholarship Competition was held last year on February 27, 2002. The student readers were invited from high schools in Glen Cove, Hericks, Locust Valley, Mineola, North Shore, Port Washington, Roslyn, Syosset and Wheatly.

The participants, in the order they presented, were, 1. Betsy Edeasery, North Shore High Lord of the Flies, 2. David Burros, Roslyn High School, Lord of the Flies, 3. Seema Golestaneh, North Shore High School,

Scarlet Letter, 4. Nora Sidoti, North Shore, Emily Dickinson: Poems, 5. Rachel Vigneaux, Roslyn High School, Ragtime, 6. Breck Archer, North Shore High School, Heart of Darkness, 7. Edward Willie, Locust Valley High School, Brave New World. After the competition the winners received their scholarship prize money in the mail, and all readers received commendation letters.

Jennifer Berger and her team at the CMKA added a second list of books to the competition for students. The "100 Best

*"The 100 Best Books of the 21st Century", which was popular toward the end of 1999...*

*includes many notable authors with more diversity..."*

Books of the 21st Century" which was popular toward the end of 1999. The longer list includes many notable authors with more diversity that wrote after Morley's death.

## Obituaries of C.M.K.A. Members

**Helen Oakley** died in January of 2003. She had been one of the founding members of the Association and one of the early presidents. She wrote a biography of Christopher Morley titled "Three Hours For Lunch"



*Dr. Jack Schwartzman*

**Jack Schwartzman** passed away late in 2001. He earned two doctorates, Ph.D. (N.Y.U.) and J.S.D. (Brooklyn Law School). He taught English at Nassau Community College for thirty years. He was editor-in-chief of *Fragments* and international individualist magazine that often ran articles by and about all three Morley brothers.

**Blythe Brennan** passed away in mid-2002. She was one of Christopher Morley's daughters. Growing up on Long Island in the Morley's Roslyn house hold, she offered many stories of the Knothole and of the people who visited. Over the years Blythe supported the Association and the scholarship programs that were offered.