

# *Parthian Shot*

**350th Edition**

**July-August 2024**

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Phil Brown

Mark Reed

Leighton Rawlings

Phil Smith

Steve Simpson

Howard Percival

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**The Editor**

**P.O. Box 3066**

**Bendigo Mail Centre. Vic. 3554**

**Telephone: 03 5443 6315**

**Fax: 03 5441 6595**

**Email: [gccabendigo@gmail.com](mailto:gccabendigo@gmail.com)**

**Website: [www.collectorsbendigo.com.au](http://www.collectorsbendigo.com.au)**

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Approved Collector Status as per Section 28 (2) 1996 Firearms Act.  
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## MISSION STATEMENT

To work in a responsible and constructive manner with Government and the Community to explore innovative ways to achieve the Association's Aims and Objectives

- To promote and encourage a responsible preservation of collections of historical and antique artefacts for future generations.
- To foster and promote a public awareness and importance to preserve our heritage and history for all times.
- To preserve and promote a responsible maintenance and collection of Australian military memorabilia in particular and associated items in general.
- To encourage responsible collectors to maintain and preserve historical and antique firearms.
- To explore innovative ways of assisting collectors in the maintenance of their interests for the future.

Meetings are held on the 2nd. Tuesday of each month at the Quarry Hill Community Hall, Hamlet St., Bendigo from 7.30 pm for 8pm start  
New Members and Visitors welcome.

## EXECUTIVE

President	Greg Penna	0427 400 930
Vice-President	Chris Jolme	0408 037 936
Secretary	John Stephens	0407 684 110
Assist. Secretary	Peter Vucinic	0418 509 023
Treasurer	Nathan Dunstone	0409 946 370
Membership Sec.	Richard Penna	0408 324 590
Newsletter Editor	Sue Rawlings	0407 436 311

## Presidents Report July-August 2024

Hi Troops,

2024 Annual show, dun and dusted. Post show - what an event, broke door record numbers on Saturday, positive feedback from Traders, in other words, a mighty success.

For those who contributed in any way, thank you for your efforts and contribution, as without this input and volunteering, it would not have been the success it was. The feedback and comments were positive and encouraging and has placed the GCCA in high esteem with all who attended, be it displayers or traders and patrons. You should all be proud of your input and that you and your club achieved recognition for its success and recognition for a sound, dedicated and highly functional club.

A mighty special mention MUST go to Sue Rawlings, as her tight control and organizational skills were very professional and were the major reason for its success. Thank you, Sue! Must mention that Sue is going into Hospital the Wednesday after the Show for a total knee replacement which will make it impossible for her to mow my lawns after. Her upcoming surgery did not distract her from the monumental task needed to pull this show administratively together, and reflects her character, skills and her stamina. I am sure we will all be thinking of you Sue and thank you to Leighton who I am sure will be a great support and be there for her.

Along with that was all and every volunteer, helping with setup, running, security, parking, CCTV and breakdown, the efficiency, enthusiasm and energy displayed all weekend was a credit to each personally, and a credit to the club for having members and helpers of your caliber, so willing to contribute.

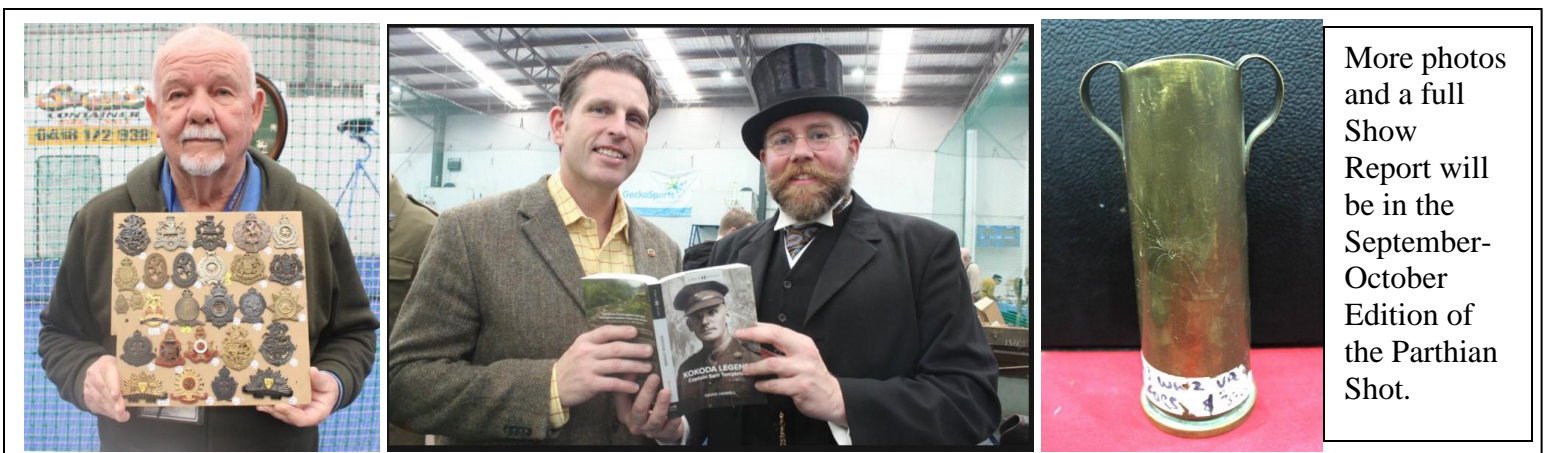
Nathan as Treasurer, John as Secretary and Chris as Security will give us a breakdown of a post show report at the General Meeting. Sue's report will have to wait until the next issue of the Parthian Shot as mentioned above, she will be out of action for a while.

Sadly, in July we lost one of our valued members in Don Pryor. Sue has included a Club Profile from the past about Don. Several members attended his funeral and couldn't help having a chuckle at the fact that his daughters had recorded him telling a couple of jokes, so he had the last word.

Our scheduled shoot on September 15<sup>th</sup> should be a goer so members may be enthusiastic to maybe try a new acquisition, so liaise with Mark to tell him you will be attending.

Again, leave this with you in collecting

Gee Pee

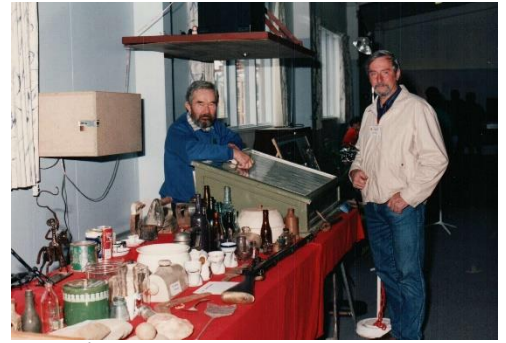




## CLUB PROFILE - DON PRYOR

Today, when members think of Don Pryor, they think of his extraordinary way of imparting a good joke on General Meeting nights, but there is so much more to Don, both as a person, and as a member of the Golden City Collectors Assoc. Inc.

Don joined the Club in 1988, the same year as his good mate Jim Murtagh. Right from the word go, Don has always been an active member, putting on displays at Club events, whether it be old tools or firearms, both of which he is very passionate about. (Pictured right at YMCA Eaglehawk Fair in 1994)



Don and his wife Anne (pictured left with Jim Murtagh at a GCCA Xmas event) lived in Melbourne and but in 1960 chose Bendigo for their honeymoon. Many years later, when it was time for Don to finish his working life, they decided that Bendigo was the place they wished to retire to. Don who was a carpenter by trade, had done the extra study required to become a Trade Instructor at Essendon Technical College, while Anne who worked in Medical Records; but in the late 1980s they decided to make the move to Bendigo. Anne initially remained in Melbourne, while Don came ahead to build their home in Junortoun.

Although Don grew up in Footscray and lived in Melbourne during his working life, his love of shooting and hunting meant he spent many happy hours in the country. He enjoyed hunting rather than target shooting due to his love of the bush.

Don is a member of the Sporting Shooters and the Deerstalkers, although according to daughter Amanda, although he went deer hunting every year, he never shot a deer, something she and her sister were happy to hear as one of their favourite movies was "Bambi".

Don however, was very successful when it came to shooting rabbits. He always said "If it's good enough to shoot, it's good enough to eat", and the family enjoyed many a rabbit based recipe!

Don Pryor has always been an avid 'student of arms'. He was self-taught when it came to the case-hardening of the lock mechanisms on guns.



In the early 1970s Don made a flintlock pistol and a muzzle loading rifle. He entered the rifle (pictured left) in the Royal Melbourne show and won 1<sup>st</sup> Prize in his division. He made it functional after displaying it at the Show, and has been tinkering with firearms ever since!

Amanda remembers there were always firearms in their lives, but she said sadly for Don, neither of his girls were interested in guns. They were however, very proud of their father's skills when it came to tinkering with and displaying those same firearms, and enjoyed seeing him get the pleasure he always has when it comes to his two collecting passions - firearms and old tools.



ADVERTORIAL

# Collectables show preserves heritage and history

THE Golden City Collectors Association Militaria & Collectables Show is well established in the Central Victorian Calendar, this being their thirty-ninth annual event.

GCCA's aim is to promote and encourage the responsible preservation of collections of historical and antique artefacts for future generations, promoting a public awareness of the importance of preserving our heritage and history.

Enhancing this year's event will be singer Suzanne O'Brien whose War era tributes presented by in her WAAAF uniform complement the Militaria theme of our show.

The Blue & Grey Civil War Re-enactors have been regular participants each year, as have the Shenandoah Crew with their historic Naval display, with members of both groups dressed in period costume.

David Howell, Kokoda tour guide and historian specialising in the history of wartime New Guinea will be selling his book *Kokoda Legend Captain Sam Templeton* and will be happy to share information with anyone interested in participating in walking the famous Kokoda Track.

A feature will be a fabulous extensive display of Victoria Cross memorabilia honouring the individuals who sacrificed their lives in extraordinary acts of bravery during both world wars. There will be displays exhibited by the Bendigo Modellers with anything from individually



Shenandoah crew and Blue and Grey Civil War reenactors.

created models to a diorama of Star Wars!

Traders will have wares ranging from books, medals, military uniforms, sporting goods, hunting, fishing, and shooting related items, custom made knives, battlefield relics, 3D battle art, antique firearms, toy trains and soldiers, model kits and various curios.

The Show will be held over two days, Saturday 24 August from 9am until 5pm, and Sunday 25 August 22 from 9am until 3pm.



Richard's VC display.



**ADF People** **Royal Australian Air Force** **CAPTION:** *Australia Day Award recipient Sergeant Justin Kurban, an aviation technician with 37 Squadron, RAAF Base Richmond. Story by Corporal Jacob Joseph*  
Decade of aviation innovation honoured  
26/01/2024 Posted by Mike Hughes 35 Squadron, Air Mobility Group's (AMG), Australia Day Honours, No. 37 Squadron, RAAF Richmond



Feel free to share this post

An avionics technician who developed bespoke secure communications for C-27J Spartan aircraft and rapidly assembled a Hercules maintenance crew for deployment to assist in evacuating Afghan civilians was among those honoured this Australia Day.

Sergeant Justin Kurban received a Medal of the Order of Australia for his work at 35 Squadron and 37 Squadron over almost a decade, including technical achievements and new ways of managing personnel to improve efficiency. He implemented a system to track flying hours of maintenance crew, who are often required on board when a plane leaves on task.

“We’ve had people running about 300 flying hours in the year,” Sergeant Kurban said.

“A moderate-flying pilot might do around 450 to 500.”

For Sergeant Kurban, who has clocked hundreds of hours in the air, passing over deserts and snow-capped mountains, the mission was reward enough.

“With fast jets it was a lot of training flights and bombing camps,” he said.

“In Air Mobility Group, I’ve been on countless humanitarian tasks and helped lots of people.

“That’s been a driving factor to make the platforms a better capability and made my work feel more worthwhile — but never in my wildest dreams did I think someone would nominate me for an award.”

Sergeant Kurban switched from fast jets to cargo planes almost a decade ago, working with Flight Sergeant Chris Winser ever since and more recently Sergeant Gavin Jefferis, who both put his name forward for the award.

“He’s an expert technician and computer programmer who has enhanced C-27J and C-130J capability,” Flight Sergeant Winser said.

“He is an utmost professional who consistently goes above and beyond. When you think about all the things he’s achieved over two squadrons, the OAM is fitting.”

## **Incredible tale of how Nazi ace risked execution to save an American bomber pilot's life - before their secret encounter took another amazing twist**

**Published:** 21:15 AEST, 10 August 2024

The solitary Allied B-17 bomber was an easy target. Down to one working engine and riddled with flak and bullets, the aircraft would struggle to stay in the air over Germany let alone cover the 300 miles back to England.

Cannon fire had blasted away the aircraft's nose cone, causing a 200mph wind to howl through the open fuselage of the plane.

The tail gunner's lifeless body hung from his shattered turret, his blood frozen in icicles over the machine guns and all but one of the crew in the rear were incapacitated by wounds or exposure to the frigid air.

Just when it seemed like things couldn't get any worse for the plane's 21-year-old pilot Charlie Brown, he noticed a Nazi fighter plane readying himself to deal the final, lethal blow to his crippled aircraft.

But what happened next is an extraordinary story of chivalry and mercy from [World War II](#), providing a glimmer of humanitarian light amid the dark tragedy of the conflict.

The German pilot chose to spare his enemy by escorting the damaged plane to the safety of the [English Channel](#).

Then against all odds, a half-century later, the two men became friends and remained close until their deaths less than six months apart.



**Charles Brown (left) was an American pilot whose plane and crew were badly injured during a bombing run on Germany. Instead of dealing the final blow, Franz Stigler (right) a Nazi fighter pilot noticed the dead crewman, and blood-soaked interior of the plane through giant holes that had been blown through its fuselage and decided to escort the aircraft back to the safety of the English Channel. He saluted his Allied enemies and peeled off**

**Over forty years after the incident, the two pilots miraculously reunited and became friends for the remainder of their lives. Charlie Brown (left), Franz Stigler (right)**



**The American crew of the B-17 - nicknamed 'Ye Olde Pub' - before taking off on a bombing mission of a Nazi aircraft factory in Bremen, Germany. It was Lt. Charles Brown's (bottom row, far left) first combat mission as an aircraft commander with the 379th Bomb Group**

It was five days before [Christmas](#) in 1943 when Charlie Brown, a 21-year-old B-17 pilot from West [Virginia](#), took off on a cold, overcast winter day in Britain for his first combat mission over Germany.

The operation had practically been a suicide mission from the start as Brown's unit faced heavy fire from 250 anti-aircraft guns and shelling from 15 German fighter jets during the daylight bombing run of a Nazi munitions factory in Bremen.

Due to mechanical failures and damage to other aircraft, Brown's plane, 'Ye Olde Pub,' had to move ahead in formation making it a prime target for enemy counterattacks.

Before Brown had a chance to drop his payload, the plane was attacked by German anti-aircraft guns.

Cannon fire shattered the plane's nose cone, damaging the oxygen and electrical systems and wiping out three of the four engines.

The tail gunner was killed and all but one of the crew in the rear was incapacitated.

Oxygen starved himself, Brown had been knocked out and regained consciousness just in time to level out his plane from a death spiral less than 1,000 feet from the ground.

By then, the German fighters had vanished. They likely observed the crippled plane belching smoke and flames - sputtering along at 135mph, barely above its stalling speed - and marked it as another kill before returning to base.

After inspecting the blood-spattered interior of the plane, the flight engineer reported, 'we're chewed to pieces, the hydraulics are bleeding, the left stabilizer is all but gone and there are holes in the fuselage big enough to climb through.'

Clinging to the last vestiges of hope, Brown realized his only option was to try and make the 300-mile journey back to England.

But he faced an even graver concern when he glanced out his cockpit and noticed his worst nightmare: a grey German Messerschmitt fighter hovering just three feet off their wingtip.

In the cockpit of the German fighter, his guns primed, was Lt Franz Stigler, a Luftwaffe ace with 29 kills under his belt.



With his leather-gloved hand on the trigger, he was just one kill away from achieving the Knight's Cross, [Germany's](#) highest award for valour.

Stigler, aged 28 at the time, was a veteran airman who had been flying since the start of the war. He was on the ground refuelling and reloading his guns when the lone B-17 had lumbered slowly overhead.

Within minutes, Stigler was up in the air to give chase, but as he drew closer, he noticed the rear gunner's lifeless body hanging from his shattered turret. Another gunner was

unconscious, his fleece collar soaked in red blood.

He saw the rest of the terrified 10-man crew, battered and wounded, desperately tending to one another's injuries.

As Stigler pulled alongside the plane, he was shocked that he could see clean through the middle, where the fuselage had been bombarded by artillery. The tail and the rudder had also been shot off with giant holes on the wings.

It was 'the most heavily damaged aircraft I ever saw that was still flying,' he recalled years later.

In that moment, he remembered the words of an old commanding officer. 'Honor is everything here,' he had told a young Stigler before his first mission.

'If I ever see or hear of you shooting at a man in a parachute. I will shoot you down myself. You follow the rules of war for you — not for your enemy. You fight by rules to keep your humanity.'

To Stigler, the defenceless plane was a parachute, and he was determined to save the men on board.

Believing they had no chance of surviving all the way back to England, Stigler tried to convince Brown to land at a German airfield by frantically gesturing and mouthing words. But their radio had been shot and they could not understand Stigler's signals.

Brown could clearly see the pilot's face, the whites of his eyes. 'What was the bastard up to? He must be toying with them,' he thought.

Finally Brown and his co-pilot shook their heads. They'd rather die in flames than be taken prisoner by the Nazis.

Then to no avail, Stigler motioned to the enemy crew to change course and head east toward neutral Sweden, a 30-minute flight away. They could crash-land there and spend the rest of the war as internees but alive.

Stigler was frustrated. He was already risking his own life as his decision to not finish off the aircraft was a court-martial offense in Nazi Germany and if revealed, could have led to his execution.

If a civilian spotted Stigler's plane next to a B-17 and reported its tail number, he would be in grave danger.

With his attempts at signalling to Ye Olde Pub unsuccessful, Stigler took formation close to the battered bomber, escorting them for several miles back to the English Channel.

In doing so, Stigler stopped anti-aircraft guns from targeting the Allied plane, but he also feared that if he was spotted flying so close to the enemy without engaging, he could be accused — and doubtless found guilty — of treason.

Meanwhile, Lt. Brown remained confused by the situation and instructed his gunners to aim their damaged weapons at the German fighter jet.

In response, Stigler took one final look, mouthed 'Good luck,' saluted the Americans, and peeled away.

'You're in God's hands,' Stigler thought to himself.

Miraculously, the stricken B-17 made it across 250 miles of the North Sea and landed at Seething in Norfolk.

As soon as he landed, Brown told his commanding officer that he and his crew owed their lives to the unknown Luftwaffe pilot. He was ordered to never to speak of the incident for fear that it would humanize the enemy.

For more than 40 years, Brown kept the secret, but he never forgot.

Likewise, the memory of that B-17 stayed with Stigler. He always wondered if the crew he had risked himself to save actually survived. He had no way of knowing.

In the years following, Stigler became disillusioned by what his country had turned into under Hitler and lost any desire for the Knight's Cross.

Though he flew close to 500 combat missions, he simply failed to register his 'victories' and claim what he viewed as a worthless piece of metal.

He emigrated to Canada in 1953 to work as a mechanic in a logging camp.

In time, he bought his own Messerschmitt and would fly in air shows reenactments as the evil Nazi being pursued by vintage American fighters.

Brown continued to serve in the military up until the start of the Vietnam War and eventually settled in Miami, Florida, where he got married and founded an energy and environmental research centre.



Then, in 1985, the retired American soldier mentioned the story of the mysterious Messerschmitt pilot at a veterans' reunion. 'I still don't know who that German was and why he let us go,' he declared, determined now to find out.

Long and fruitless enquiries over the next five years eventually led him to the newsletter of an association of German fighter pilots.

In January 1990, knowing the odds were against him, Brown took out an ad in a newsletter looking for the one 'who saved my life on Dec. 20, 1943.'

He deliberately omitted one crucial detail: the location where the German pilot had abandoned his B-17.



**Brown (right) was ordered by his commanding officer to never to speak of the incident for fear that it would humanize the enemy, but he never forgot. In 1990, against all odds, he took out an ad in a pilot's newsletter looking for the one 'who saved my life on Dec. 20, 1943' and the two former enemies were reunited in an emotional gathering**

**From 1990 until their deaths in 2008, Brown (left) and Stigler (right) were best friends. They went on fishing trips together, flew across the country to visit each other's homes, and took road trips to share their story at schools and veterans' reunions. Their wives, Jackie Brown and Hiya Stigler, also became friends**



**In 1990, Brown (left) and Stigler (right) met for the second time in a Florida hotel lobby. They spoke about their encounter in a light-hearted manner. 'I was too stupid to surrender, and Franz Stigler was too much of a gentleman to destroy us,' Brown recalled in YouTube footage from the gathering**

'I thought there was more chance of winning the lottery than finding him alive,' Brown later said to CNN.

In Vancouver, where he had lived for 37 years, Franz Stigler opened his regular association newsletter, and could not believe his eyes. Suddenly, the missing piece of his life's puzzle was right in front of him.

He responded to Brown with a letter, that read: 'Dear Charles, All these years I wondered what happened to the B-17, did she make it or not?'

Brown was so thrilled that he immediately contacted directory assistance in Vancouver to find a number for Franz Stigler. After dialing the number, Stigler answered.

'My God, it's you!' Brown exclaimed, with tears streaming down his face.



The men arranged a reunion at a hotel lobby in Florida. They spoke about their encounter in a light-hearted manner.

'I was too stupid to surrender, and Franz Stigler was too much of a gentleman to destroy us,' Brown recalled in YouTube footage from the gathering.

When someone asked Stigler what he thought about Brown, Stigler began to fight back tears before he said in heavily accented English: 'I love you, Charlie.'

The war had cost Stigler everything. He lost his brother, his friends and his country - virtually exiled by his own countryman after the conflict. Out of 28,000 pilots who fought in the Wehrmacht, only 1,200 survived.

For Stigler, Charlie Brown was the only good thing that came out of World War II, and was the one thing he could be proud of.

From then on until their deaths, Brown and Stigler became the best of friends.

They went on fishing trips together, flew across the country to visit each other's homes and took road trips to share their story at schools and veterans' reunions. Their wives, Jackie Brown and Hiya Stigler, also became friends.

To express his deep gratitude, Brown organized a reunion for his surviving crew members and their extended families, inviting Stigler as the guest of honour.

A video was played during the event, showing all the faces of the people who now lived – children, grandchildren, relatives – because of Stigler's act of chivalry.

The two men died within six months of each other in 2008, both from heart attacks. Stigler was 92, and Brown was 87.

In 2012, Adam Makos wrote a book detailing their incredible story, titled, 'A Higher Calling.'

Makos told CNN that he first learned of their friendship while rifling through Brown's home library and came across a book on German fighter jets.

Inside was an inscription Stigler had written to Brown: 'In 1940, I lost my only brother as a night fighter. On the 20th of December, 4 days before Christmas, I had the chance to save a B-17 from her destruction, a plane damaged so badly it was wonder that she was still flying.

The pilot, Charlie Brown, is for me, as precious as my brother was.

Thanks Charlie.

Your Brother, Franz.'

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Members brought along some interesting items to display and share at the July General Meeting!



**THE FINAL INSTALMENT FROM THE ‘HOLLYWOOD GUNS FOR SALE’ SERIES – A PISTOL BELONG TO COMEDIAN JERRY LEWIS.**

Jerry Lewis started as a Borscht Belt comedian before teaming with Dean Martin in 1946 that led to television appearances and several movies together before they fizzled out in 1956. Lewis would go on to perform in Las Vegas and make television appearances before breaking into films, becoming the highest paid talent in Hollywood with a 1959 Paramount contract that paid \$10 million plus 60 percent of profits from 14 films over 10 years. In later years “the King of Comedy” was best known for being the host of the Muscular Dystrophy Association’s Labor Day Telethon that he led from 1966 to 2010. He died in 2017 at the age of 91.

Lewis’s pistol is an engraved Beretta Model 21A. In 1994, it was revealed that a man had been stalking Lewis and his family. He was convicted and served four years in prison. Along with the gun is Lewis’s 2009 Las Vegas registration card for the pistol and a nylon holster.



*This Beretta Model 21A owned by comedy legend Jerry Lewis has scroll coverage with a punch-dot background and smooth walnut grips, with the left side laser engraved with the comedian’s signature and cartoon caricature of his head.*