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Editorial

Dear Members and Friends,

With the fourth issue of the *Journal of the Pipe Club of Lebanon*, we are happy to announce two major pieces of news, the first one of importance to the international pipesmoking community, the second to our members and readers.

The International Pipesmoking Day is now a new day to add to every smoker's agenda, and February 20 of every year is set to become the day when every pipesmoker celebrates a long and honourable tradition of tolerance, peace, and understanding. In this fourth issue we will be presenting the details of this momentous achievement, how we, at the PCoLeb, celebrated it, and also a history of the genesis of that day.

The other event that will undoubtedly please our members, friends, and reading public, is that we have acquired an ISSN number, now

displayed, as it should be, on the upper right-hand corner of the journal cover.

This issue's theme is about the uniqueness of pipesmoking as compared to other various smoking types, such as the cigarette, cigar, nargileh, and so on. With the International Pipesmoking Day now a reality, it is all the more important to recognize what makes us, pipesmokers, different from other smokers.

A novelty of the PCoLeb has been the creation of a very comprehensive "Tobacco Sampling Sheet" which covers as many aspects of the smoking experience as possible, from the moment the tobacco pouch/tin/can is opened, to the pouring out of the ashes from the pipe bowl. The sheet can be downloaded separately on our page in the Publications section. In this issue we discuss the real importance of such sheets to pipesmokers.

A detailed essay by Christian Schneider on pipe shops in Ro-

mania and Austria is included, as well as photos of the PCoLeb's annual dinner.

Our feature story is White Pipe's Meerschaum products, which we have had the pleasure of trying (after buying them!). The story behind our experience with Ahmet Büyükçopur and his pipes, as well as exclusive photos of the carvers, are displayed for you to enjoy. A special FAQ on meerschaums has been specially written for the occasion.

As always, your feedback is not only welcome, but also necessary, as we strongly believe that this journal is not only for the members and friends, but for all the honourable pipesmoking community!

Smoke in
Peace,

Paul
Jahshan



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The PCoLeb Acquires an ISSN

The *Journal of the Pipe Club of Lebanon* has now an official ISSN number and is therefore recorded permanently in the ISSN register as follows:

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Some details about the ISSN and about its application to online publications from the ISSN International Centre (<http://www.issn.org/2-22636-All-about-ISSN.php>):

The ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) is an eight-digit number which identifies periodical publications as such, including electronic serials.

The ISSN is a numeric code which is used as an identifier: it has no signification in itself and does not contain in itself any information referring to the origin or contents of the publication.

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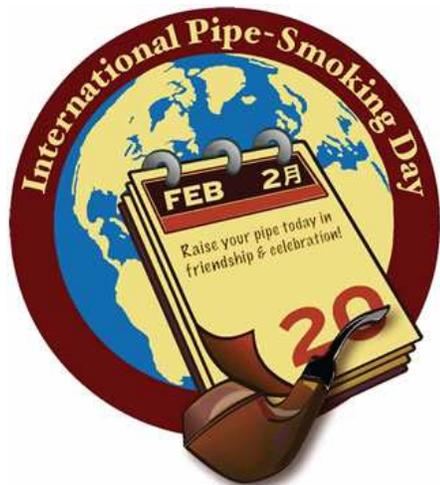
We are also listed in Ulrich's Periodicals Directory (<http://www.ulrichsweb.com/ulrichsweb/default.asp?navPage=4&>):

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The entry for the PCoLeb is found, as of the writing of this issue, under the heading "Tobacco" at http://www.ulrichsweb.com/ulrichsweb/ulrichsweb_news/uu/newTitles.asp?uuMonthlyFile=uu200805/new_titles.txt&Letter=T&navPage=9&

Paul Jahshan

The International Pipe Smoking Day



As most pipesmokers now know, the International Pipe Smoking Day falls on February 20 of every year, and is a day for all pipesmokers to light their pipe in a symbolic show of unity and remembrance. A web page was created early in February 2008 (<http://www.ipsd.eu/>) which, among other things, contains the IPSD's manifesto, drafted by the four groups who founded the IPSD, namely, the Pipe Club of Lebanon, the Smokers Forum, the Vancouver Pipe Club, and the Global Pipe Smokers Forum. Here is the manifesto:

WE ENVISION A WORLDWIDE COMMUNION

of pipe-smokers that is bound together by a shared love for pipe-smoking, mutual respect, and goodwill • We envision a society that respects the informed choice and adult use of smoking tobacco • We envision a world where governments act in good faith and integrity, and have the political will and personal courage to express their values appropriately through legislative means • This means that as a group we are united and strong in our beliefs, have understanding, patience, wisdom, enjoy the philosophical aspect of pipe-smoking, and seek to promote pipe-smoking as part of a lifestyle that can be thoroughly enjoyable to adults through the responsible use of tobacco.

MISSION

To foster links across the globe in honor of friendship, benevolence, and tranquility; and to celebrate the fraternity of pipe-smokers across all borders.

PURPOSE

On this day we will take a breather and celebrate the noble art of pipe-smoking and the noble spirit which pervades the brother/sisterhood of the briar. We will put into practice the time-honored and ancestral traditions of raising our pipes in toast to each other in the evening in unison and, thus, share a bowl together.

PHILOSOPHY

Today's hectic environment almost dictates that we run on full efficiency, have total involvement in our work, our families and in every aspect of what we do to survive and achieve in a world set at high speed. • With ever-changing values it is the intent that The International Pipe-Smoking Day will allow us, the Brothers and Sisters of the Briar to step back and appreciate our rich historical value. • For pipe-smokers and pipe-smoking everywhere the day will be emblematic of our shared values, history, traditions, and aspirations.

And indeed, on Saturday, February 23, 2008, drinks and dinner were served at Paul's house in celebration of the first-ever IPSD. Pipes were then promptly removed from their boxes and leather cases, and heavy tobacco smoke, ranging from English mixtures to sweet aromatics, soon filled the sitting room. A brand new box of W.O. Larsen's "Old Fashioned Pipe Tobacco" was bought by Elie Seif and received appreciative comments.

Pipes were raised to the pipesmoking brother/sisterhood of the briar, wherever they may be, and new projects were discussed, among them a book (details are still kept secret!) and upcoming brochures. All members wished their best to all pipesmokers and looked forward to next year's celebration!



From left to right: Tarek, Oliver, Salim, Marc, Jihad, Elie, Paul, Fares, Richard, and Gihad.

The History of the IPSD

As human beings, and more so as pipesmokers, we love to know about origins. Below is a chronological rundown of the events leading to the creation of the International Pipe Smoking Day. As some of the online archives are now no longer available, some errors or inaccuracies may have crept in, so do email us if you find any!

June 24, 2007

The PCoLeb receives a package from Ted Haviland (member of the PCoLeb) containing a few pipes and some tobacco. The idea of generously sharing pipe-related items in the best of pipesmoking traditions begins to emerge, and an urgent meeting of PCoLeb founders is held to discuss options.

June 26

Paul Jahshan emails Ted about setting up an international “pipe-raising day” and posts it on Ted’s forum, the Global Pipesmoker’s forum (<http://com4.runboard.com/btheglobalpipesmokersforum>); emails are sent to PCoLeb members for ideas and suggestions:

International Pipe-Raising Day: A Proposal

The Pipe Club of Lebanon, in conjunction with Ted T-Bear Haviland (who is also a member of the PCoLeb) is proud to propose the creation of the "International Pipe-Raising Day," one day in the year dedicated to the brother/sisterhood of the pipe.

As far as we know, no such event exists or has been proposed, despite the long and rich tradition and lore of pipesmoking. With international days for almost anything, we thought it would only be fair to create a day for the noble art of pipesmoking and for the noble spirit which pervades the brother/sisterhood of the briar.

Like the traditional giving of tobacco practiced all over the world by pipesmokers when they meet, this day will be a symbolic gesture transcending the distances and making pipesmokers real brethren, not only in theory, but also in practice.

Much has been said and written about our brother/sisterhood, and we all know that most of it is true and well founded. However, setting up one day in the year to commemorate this brother/sisterhood would, in our opinion, strengthen this notion and infuse it with much needed ethos, especially now that the battle against smokers of all kinds is raging (for those of you who don't know it yet, the UK national pipesmoking competition held its last meeting a few days ago. New regulations will forbid the event to publicly take place again in Great Britain).

The "International Pipe-Raising Day" will be held—the date is a suggestion to be discussed—on the last Friday of June every year.

The main reason is historical: it will commemorate T-Bear's [Ted] sending to the PcoLeb a symbolic tobacco-and-pipe package and the subsequent raising of our pipes to him on Friday, June 29, during our club meeting. T-Bear's quick response was to call his fellow pipesmokers to raise their pipes as well. This unique act of brother/sisterhood (unique not to T-Bear and us, of course, but unique to the pipesmoking tradition) exemplifies the two "ancestral" gestures of raising a pipe as a toast, and of offering a pinch of tobacco as a sign of belonging to the pipesmoking community.

The end of June is also nicely situated in the middle of the year, when it is neither too hot nor too cold to smoke, and when smoking outside is also pleasant. Friday, for those who have finished their working week, is also a good day.

We would like to get as much feedback as possible on the above before we announce it to the pipesmoking community, so please do share your thoughts and help us (all of us) keep pipesmoking at the forefront of noble human activities which, not only do not unduly endanger health but, on the contrary, greatly benefit the spirit.

A few preliminary ideas to work with (please add as necessary):

1. The last Friday of June of every year, all pipesmokers in the world would raise their best pipes, filled with their best tobacco, in honor of the pipesmoking tradition of friendship, benevolence, and world peace.
2. Symbolic gifts (mainly tobacco) would be sent to as-distant-as-possible pipesmoking acquaintances in order to foster links across the globe.
3. A committee would be set up to investigate and document, in scholarly fashion, the cultural, social, and spiritual precedents of the tradition of exchanging pinches of tobacco between pipesmokers meeting each other, and explore the ramifications of the gesture and its meaning(s).

June 26

Ted's response: "I love the idea of an "International Pipe-Raising Day"

June 29

Responses from PCoLeb members and friends start flowing in from all parts of the world

July 2

Paul moves the announcement to the Smokers Forum (<http://www.smokersforums.co.uk/>)

July 19

Paul and Ted discover that the idea of an international pipe smoking/raising day had been suggested on Smokers Forum about a

month before by the Vancouver Pipe Club. The proposal, however, had not met with practical implementation steps and had remained in the realm of ideas (just like the PCoLeb's initial suggestion before) until both proposals energized each other into motion.

July 26

Doug "Jagsdriver" from SF, the person with the original idea for a pipe day, and Paul and Ted begin the process of forming a committee to oversee the preparation for the event (the potential suggestions, the final proposal, etc.).

From August 2007 to February 2008

The committee, made up of members from the Pipe Club of Lebanon, the Smokers Forum, the Vancouver Pipe Club, and the Global Pipe Smokers Forum, diligently work on the IPSD manifesto, draft contact lists of clubs and pipe/tobacco manufacturers, and come up with the announcement on February 3, 2008, about the grand, international day, on February 20.

...

And the rest is history! With the other clubs/forums involved in the IPSD writing their own genesis of the events leading to the February 3rd ground-breaking announcement, the circle will have been completed.

Paul Jahshan

Smoking Wisely is what Really Matters

To the Lovers of Tobacco,

I tried all the common ways of smoking in our country, the legal ones I mean. I tried them well and with proficiency. There are four choices and I guess most smokers in the world have tried at least two of them.

There is the cigarette, the cigar, the pipe and the nargileh or water pipe.

The first thing I smoked was a pipe. You know my opinion about the pipe: it is the less health-damaging of all the others, because when you smoke a pipe you smoke only tobacco, and not a roll of paper that holds the tobacco. And pipe tobacco is more natural than others as there are no chemicals in it. In addition, you don't inhale the smoke, because the joy of pipe smoking is also in the taste and we, humans, taste with our mouth/tongue, not with our lungs; but if you do it, it is not the right way to smoke a pipe, *with all due respect to all who inhale pipe tobacco smoke*. And the pipe is your friend, your silent friend who can bear all your problems and secrets, keeping them for you as a deep old well is kept full with mysteries.

The cigarette is the most popular way by far, the fastest, the easiest and the cheapest. We go to the shop and buy a pack, open it, and begin to smoke, whatever we are doing: driving, studying, working, anything. I smoke cigarettes and I am not proud of myself, because I know the syndromes and the chemical materials included with the tobacco and the paper. And not just the chemicals: I have a friend who works in a cigarette tobacco factory; he told me how they make cigarettes. They have several big barrels where they put the tobacco leaves in and there are no covers for these barrels, and you can imagine the things falling or flying in, and I say flying because there are some insects falling down into the barrels before they begin cutting the tobacco.

Anyway, we smoke an unknown, deadly material, wrapped in sulphur-lined paper to help the cigarette burn on its own. There are some people in Lebanon who prefer to roll their own cigarettes by hand; it may be less dangerous but I still consider cigarette tobacco as bad.

As for the cigar in Lebanon, *most cigar smokers* smoke for prestige; you give them an “unmarked” cigar that costs one dollar and another that costs twenty dollars and they wouldn’t know the difference. They just care for holding something big between their fingers rather than enjoy it in their mouth.

I smoke a cigar on average once a week, and as with the pipe tobacco, you can put your trust in the cigar’s tobacco leaves. No chemicals nor strange materials, just tobacco leaves wrapped on top of others to give you a good smoke.

I have been smoking Cuban cigars, but lately I started to smoke the Dominican ones. Every kind has his own taste and flavor. I realized that the Cuban cigar is stronger than the Dominican. And sometimes we can find some Cuban cigars that are hard to smoke because they are rolled too tight. The Dominicans have been using machines to automatically check their cigars’ draw, and this is an excellent idea which should be quickly adopted by the Cubans.

The nargileh, also known as the water pipe, if you have tried or tasted it, has a lovely taste and many kinds of flavors. There is one kind of tobacco we call in Arabic “ajamy” (Persian): it’s strong, safer than the aromatic, hard to find, and expensive. We can find aromatic tobacco in most fruit flavors, from the apple, the most famous in Lebanon, to the watermelon. You can smell the tobacco before you open the box, and when you open it you see the tobacco leaves actually dipped with a heavy fruity sauce.

Most people think that the nargileh is healthier than others. Why? We only smoke one head (a little pierced bowl made of pottery where the tobacco is placed) in a day but one head equals twenty cigarettes and the sauce that gives the flavor is made from sugar, a dip from the fruit and other chemical materials. Imagine when you are preparing yourself a smoke, your hands look like your have washed them in blood and even after washing them with soap the color goes but the smell stays in your hands, not from the tobacco but from the unknown goo-like aromatic materials. And you can’t enjoy the nargileh if you don’t inhale the smoke so you are obliged to inhale it, and inhale it deeply!

In the end I prefer the pipe and its tobacco, and you may prefer something else, or none at all. We must not take things to their limit and smoke like machines. All kinds of tobacco have their style, but if we smoke wisely, my good friends, we help protect our health!

Fares Irani



Father of All

Pipe smoking is very distinguished amongst all kinds of smoking; it is my preferred as it will be shown below in my opinion about the most known kinds of smoking.

Pipe smoking is much more than a means to smoke tobacco; it is a route to happiness and the tranquility of the mind. It combines a good taste, a perfect shape and smoke color, an everlasting bond with the pipe, and an excellent pastime.

Cigarettes are not tasteful, the only thing that binds the smoker to them is the biological effect of nicotine; in other words, addiction. If a person just puffs a cigarette and does not inhale, he/she will not be addicted to it and will most probably find it disgusting; he/she will only feel its bad taste, the bad breath it gives, and the bad odor where smoking took place.

Moreover, for persons who like meditation and the search for calmness and serenity, cigarettes are not the right material; they don’t last long, since every few minutes the smoker has to light a new one, unlike pipe smoking which provides the required time for a commendable reflection using the same bowl.

If I have to choose between cigarettes and cigars, I will certainly choose cigars. A good cigar along with a glass of good wine on a chilly night is, like we say in Lebanon, a “doctor’s prescription.” Cigars, like pipe smoking, have a special aroma and a good taste, but still they lack the bond provided by the pipe with the smoker.

As for the hubble-bubble, I will just say that it is a machine for the production of intense smoke which can fill a room to its fullest extent. It cannot be compared to pipe smoking.

In addition, although all of the above-mentioned types of smoking can damage health, pipe smoking is considered to cause the least dangers amongst the others due to the fact that the smoker does not inhale the smoke; it does not contain paper or sulphur lines like in cigarettes; and the lips are not in direct contact with the tobacco when smoking.

Finally, pipe smoking, to me, is the spiritual father of all kinds of smoking; it is Zeus compared to the other Olympian Gods.

Salim Khoury



The Pleasure of Ritual

You will hardly enjoy tobacco outside of a pipe. Following this, a lot of smokers have slowly but surely reached the conclusion that the best tobacco can only be enjoyed in a pipe.

All the ritual necessary for enjoying a good pipe is, in the final analysis, a predisposition to enjoyment.

After a long day's work, you come home, find your pipes, search among them for the one which, on that particular day, seems to beckon to you, calling for your attention. You put it in your hand and feel the quality of the briar and, as you caress its forms, proceed to solve the next great problem: "What tobacco to smoke?"

When this is resolved, you sit down and slowly put the tobacco inside the pipe. At this moment, a lot of the problems encountered during the day are beginning to lag behind, and you start to feel more relaxed and calmer.

Then comes the lighting, then the first puffs, then the enjoyment of the pipe until the end.

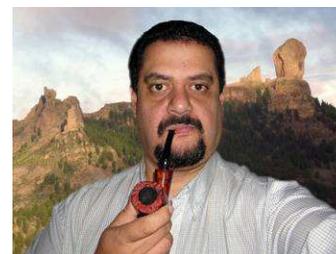
These sensations, at least to me, are not found in a Havana and even less in a cigarette.

The cigarette is the object through which you vent your anxiety. It is a spontaneous act which lasts for the few minutes until the white cylinder ends at its filter.

Without doubt, the pipe is the medium through which one can enjoy tobacco. From the gods of antiquity to the mortals of the age of the microchip, what we have discovered is the way of the pipe.

We, pipesmokers, know this.

Pedro Romero-Auyanet



Pipes, Cigars, and Cigarettes

To me, the difference between a pipe and other means of smoking is this:

First, smoking a pipe allows me to ease the tension accumulated during the day's work and this is why I appreciate my pipe more at night.

Second, a cigarette means absolutely nothing to me, since one can smoke a cigarette every five minutes with no or minimal enjoyment; cigarettes also contain more harmful substances (the sulphur-lined paper and the filter) and also less "real," good quality tobacco. Most of it is "dust" tobacco.

Third, with pipe tobacco, you are able to know what enters into your smoke, and choose accordingly; there are different ways to cure tobacco, and different (thousands?) flavours.

Fourth, pipe smoke is seldom inhaled (except accidentally or as a habit from cigarette smoking) and is thus less harmful to the body and lungs.

The difference between pipesmoking and cigar smoking is not that big, though. As with a pipe, one can't smoke "too many" cigars during the day, as they fill the system quite quickly. Another difference is the draw: with a pipe, one has to pay more attention to keeping it alight and one can vary the strength of the draw accordingly; with a cigar, a mild draw is generally sufficient, although the cigar, like the pipe, is vexed by lack of attention and will also go out. So, my preferences go for pipe and cigar, as they provide the smoker with more pleasure for less damage!



Tarek Khalaf

The Magic of Smoke

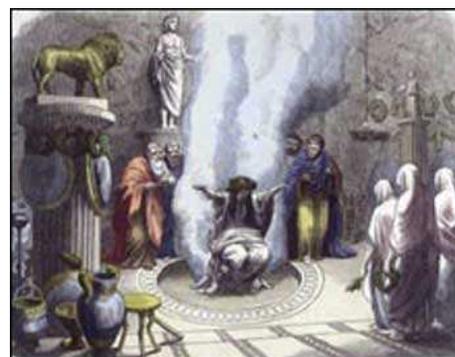
So what's the big deal about pipesmoking and pipesmokers?

We have all heard and read that cigarettes are for the quick-and-dirty nicotine rush, that cigars are for the posh, social image we would like to transmit to others, and that pipes are for the armchair philosopher or, paradoxically maybe, for the outdoors hunter. What truth is there in this and how do we, pipesmokers, situate ourselves in the universal tobacco smoking tradition?

Humans have smoked for ever, this is a fact of history, and there is no doubt that smoke fascinates the human animal (if you have a cat or a dog, show them the smoke of your pipe/cigar/cigarette and watch them dreamily—or boisterously, depending on their mood at the time—follow the bluish swirls as they morph and gracefully fly up).

Alfred Dunhill, in his 1924 *The Pipe Book*, writes in the opening page:

The story runs that when the tomb of the half-divine Callisto was removed to Paris, the immortal nymph wandered nightly through the gay quarters of the city seeking diversion. Chancing to enter the flat of a fashionable young Parisian, she lamented to him that in all the centuries that had elapsed since her former life mankind had devised not one new pleasure. Sighing assent, the young man idly handed her a cigarette, only to find, when he had shown her the use of the dainty tube of white and gold, that, quite inadvertently, he had given her what she craved, a new, and indeed exquisite, pleasure. (1)



Pythia, the Oracle at Delphi, Greece

More seriously, Dunhill writes a few pages later: “Perhaps we have solved the mystery of the widespread popularity of tobacco when we consider that it is the sole narcotic that can be employed repeatedly and even continuously without bringing in its train either physical discomfort or other ill effects” (3). Dunhill’s book, indeed, is a wonderful account of how humans have ingeniously devised, throughout the centuries, means to inhale, or at least to put in their mouths, all kinds of smoke.

That smoking is, in its earlier form, related to fire is a fact readily obvious to smokers of all kinds, but more acutely to us pipesmokers: the cigarette smoker usually lights her/his cigarette once and the sulphur-lined wrapper does the rest. The initial fire-giving gesture is soon forgotten, at least until the next one. Cigar smokers have a closer relationship with fire: the “toasting” of the cigar has to be done thoroughly, preferably twice, and then ulterior applications of fire are commonplace. The water-pipe (also known as “hubbly-bubbly,” “narghileh,” “arghile,” or “shishah” in Egypt) does not require its officiant to use fire at all: coal is heated and charcoal pieces are put on top of the arghile head, coming into more or less contact with the tobacco. What arghile smokers see and feel is the heat of the coal embers, but not fire itself.

Perhaps unique among most smokers, the pipe aficionado has a particular and direct relationship with fire. A lighter and/or a box of matches are the indispensable tools which accompany the pipesmoker everywhere. Not only at the initial double-lighting, but also almost always throughout the smoking session is fire needed to relight a dying bowl.

Count Corti, writing his famous book *A History of Smoking* in 1931, noted the importance of fire:

Fire, for instance, which was probably first revealed to man in the lightning’s stroke, became a sacred mystery; so soon as he [primitive man] found out how to kindle it and use it for his own purposes he at once set up a cult for the worship of fire in the abstract. (21)

The move from fire to smoke is obvious. Corti adds:

As he watched the curling tongues of flame and the dense clouds of smoke soar upward primitive man conceived the idea of worshipping the sun with offerings of holy fire and holy smoke. As time went on the priests, whose lives were spent in the service of the altar, found the smoke from the sacrifice injurious to their breathing, and in consequence endeavoured to mitigate the harmful effects of the acrid fumes by burning sweet herbs and odoriferous gums; this led to the discovery of incense. (21)

Since the earliest times, Greek and Roman oracles (the most famous was Pythia, the priestess of the oracle of Apollo at Delphi) used smoke or, some say, vapours rising from the ground, to impart to their announcement mystery and sacredness, and modern-day conjurers, magicians, and theater prestidigitators employ chemical smoke to, on the one hand, deceive their audiences and, on the other hand, add this mysterious atmosphere associated with the upward-going curls of smoke.

Putting aside legends, sacrifice, and divination, we as humans still carry, if not within our genes at least in our collective unconscious, the primeval attraction to fire and smoke. When the two elements of wood (the briar) and water (tobacco juices and saliva) are added to fire and air (the smoker’s breath), the four elements are united, “as if by magic,” in the palm of every hand holding a pipe. Not only that; the four elements also unite inside and outside the body in a unique osmosis between them and the pipesmoker.

Without falling into Dunhill’s—understandable at the time—mistake of describing smoking as free from any ills and discomforts, one should also pay attention not to fall into the equally extremist position of ascribing almost all ills to smoking. As Europe and the United States are slowly entering into the “Dark Ages” of smoking, and smokers are ostracized, hounded, and parked in isolation spaces like criminals, and as the *apartheid* touching smokers is taking its toll on moderate, mature, and free individuals, we should go back to the roots of smoking and examine the ancestral (dare we say biological?) need of humans to behold, in a ritual best performed with a good pipe and fragrant tobacco, the very roots and emblems of creation.

If such ritual gives us back a little of our psychological balance, poise, and serenity; if, mostly, it gives us back some *space of reflexion*, then the (probably very real) physical dangers can be accepted as forming the double-sided image of everything else we do in life.

Paul Jahshan

Meerschaum Pipes from Turkey

We have all heard of meerschaum pipes, the famed “écume de mer” or “sea foam” (variously called the “Venus of the Sea” and “Sepiolite”) discovered, some sources say almost by mistake, in Europe in the 18th century. Meerschaum is unique among pipe materials in that it is not made of wood, nor is it made of fancy stuff like porcelain, glass, or plain metal. Meerschaum is a soft mineral, a hydrous magnesium silicate (for those interested, the formula is $H_4Mg_2Si_3O_{10}$) mostly found in Asia Minor but mainly in Turkey, and specifically in the region of Eskezehir.

The uniqueness of meerschaum does not rest only on its being a mineral. It is extra light, it slowly colours from pure white to yellow to orange to deep amber to red and, more importantly for pipesmokers, it does not alter the taste, flavour, and smell of the tobacco it is used with.



Of the many pipe factories in Turkey, one deserves special attention: Ahmet Hamdi Büyükçopur’s White Pipe (<http://www.whitepipe.com/>). As stated on his homepage, they use “only the best natural blocks of meerschaum for the carving of our perfect pipes. Our pipes are not a product of a ‘mass-production’.” In addition, orders “shall be custom carved by our ‘professional craftsmen’.” There are many sizes on offer, and a bewildering variety of shapes and carvings, ranging from the simple to the ultra-sophisticated (those one would rather display than smoke!).



Why am I mentioning Ahmet’s pipes? The Journal of the Pipe Club of Lebanon does not do advertisements, does not receive payments for such services, and is not affiliated to any pipe shop. Yet when we come across good pipes priced very reasonably by pipe artisans and lovers, it is a shame not to point our readers to them.

Back in December 2007, Salim and I decided to get ourselves a decent meerschaum and, after scouring the internet, went to “White Pipe,” with whom we have shared links for quite some time.

Communicating with Ahmet is easy and straight to the point. Ahmet answered our queries quickly,

provided advice, and gave us excellent prices. Shipping was free, and we got an extra mouthpiece as a gift. If you look at the top photo above, you will see my pick, a beautiful Calabash with an amber-like mouthpiece and the gift black one, and Salim’s choice below, an amazing Eagle’s Claw. Both ship, of course, in their custom-made leather box.

Once the deal was made and payment received, Ahmet immediately shipped the two pipes which arrived about a week later in pristine condition. The pipes are of the extra-large size, and can take quite a lot of tobacco in their bowl! The screw-in piece fits the shank first, and then the tenon is snugly pushed and twisted inside the mortise. Alignment is perfect, and once you

have your pipe set, it's a robust, one-piece thing ready to hold your tobacco of choice.

Ahmet also sends a full set of directions on how to use and take care of the pipe, from which I quote the following:

"In general it is the same as with briar pipes. Please pay attention to the following points: Do not smoke the same pipe twice in a short time. To get the best smoking taste, you should smoke the same pipe a few days later. Filling the tobacco in the bowl and lighting it are the same as with briar pipes. Cleaning: with a soft and dry cotton-material. To take the mouthpiece out or in, do it always by turning the mouthpiece to the right, "clockwise." If the mouthpiece is in the wrong position, then keep turning clockwise. Otherwise, by turning to the left you can get the meerschaum-shank screw connector out. This is not recommended, as the screw grooves on the meerschaum can break down (meerschaum is very soft). Do not drop out. To remove the ash, gently use a normal pipe friend; do not knock hard on the ashtray. Do not hold and handle the pipe with dirty and/or wet fingers." *[editor's note: see our FAQ on page 17 for more info on meerschaum use]*



Ahmet also kindly sent us the following photos from the pipe carvers working on White Pipe's products. One can only marvel at the artisanship and simplicity involved. This is a far cry from mass production indeed!

Paul Jahshan



Pipe Shops in Romania and Austria

Introduction

Hello, my name is Christian and I live in the south of Vienna, the capital of Austria. Besides pipesmoking, my hobbies are computers and Internet and the Romanian language. So, in August 2007 I traveled to Romania to meet all my friends from Bucharest, the capital. I have been smoking pipes since 1987 and have many books in German about pipesmoking, so I am quite experienced!

Here in Bucharest I have got an old Apple laptop, a Macintosh PowerBook 170 from 1991/92 as a donation from my friend Dr. Florin Radulescu, and I thought why not start an article just now! I didn't take one of my eleven laptops with me. I have lightened a pipe and started to think...

Romania

In Romania in general pipesmoking has no tradition and in the dark communist era it was regarded as "non-proletarian" and "bourgeois." Till now, pipe tobacco is very expensive due to the high taxes and this good is considered as a luxury one (on the other hand cigarettes are very cheap). In public you will never see a pipesmoker. I know only two friends of mine, Mr. Marius Popescu and Mr. Bogdan Rechi, who smoke the pipe. For the rest: nothing! Marius smokes without filter and Bogdan with a 9mm filter. In the shops you can find filter pipes and non-filter pipes as well. The prices of pipes are average. In Romania, as far as I know, there are no pipe clubs.

In the provinces it's very hard to find pipes, tobacco and accessories, so when you go to Romania take all what you need with you. In the capital Bucharest the situation is much better. All that which will please the pipesmoker's heart is concentrated on one single street, the *Calea Victoriei* (Victory Way).

The best tobacconist you will find is, when you go by Underground to *Piata Victoriei* (Victory place) where *Calea Victoriei* begins, to walk on it to the south: there is on the left hand a building of the Romanian Petrol Company, then there is a shop with luxury goods and then the tobacconist's shop "JPB." Here you find all accessories like cleaners, filters, and a relatively good selection of pipe tobacco. As far as I have seen, they carry only aromatic tobacco and don't have English types. A large amount of quality pipes with and without 9mm filter is on show, protected by a glass-wall. They have Stanwell, Danske Club, Brebbia and so on from the middle and higher price segment. They have Meerschaum-pipes too (the only place where I found them in Romania) obviously from Turkish production. The quality of the pipes is good and the prices reasonable.

Then you can walk down *Calea Victoriei* - it's a long way and as far as I have seen there is no public transport! - to *Magazinul Victoria*, a shopping-mall. On the ground floor there is a small department of smoking articles. Here you can find cleaners, lighters, filters and so on. They have a small selection of pipe tobacco too. This is the only place where I have found *University Flake*, all other tobaccos are of the American or Danish type. They have a handful of 9mm pipes from Dutch production but the quality is not the best; if you are not experienced, don't buy here. Sometimes some goods are sold out. In general, in both shops the vendors are ladies who have no idea of pipesmoking and they are not able to give you advice or suggestions.

Austria

In Austria the situation is much better. We have an old tradition of pipesmoking but here also you will rarely see a pipesmoker in public. We have several clubs, two in Vienna, the best guided by Mr. Thomas Schober. You can find tobacco and pipes everywhere, and also in small towns. The tobacconist's shops are of a number limited by the government and are called *Tak-Trafik* or simply *Trafik*. They are the only places where you will find tobacco. The price of pipe tobacco is much lower than in Romania, about 7 Euro a pouch of 50g. The prices are the same in every *Trafik*. As in Germany, many smokers use 9mm filter pipes but there are pipes without filters as well. Most restaurants have non-smoking areas and in railway and underground stations you are not allowed to smoke.

You can find pipes everywhere but the "first" pipe-shop in Vienna is Ostermann in the southern part of the square *Am Hof*. It's a paradise for pipe-smokers; they have a very large selection of pipes, inclusive Narghiles, and a wide selection of acces-

sories. Alas, the prices are very high but they provide you with first-class pipes made by famous pipemakers too. Mostly tourists buy from here. They don't have tobacco but very close to the pipe shop there is a "Trafik" where you can buy tobacco and pipes too. Go by underground to the Herrengasse station .

The second pipe-shop—the one I prefer—is Mr. Thomas Schober's Trafik on Thaliastrasse. You can go by underground U6 to the Thaliastrasse station and go a few minutes on the left of this street to the west. Mr. Schober is in his shop every day after 3-4 o'clock p.m. and will give you friendly advice. He is an experienced pipesmoker. You will find almost every pipe tobacco which is available in Austria here. A large amount of pipes are on show in a wide range of prices. There are luxury-pipes as well as very cheap ones. Also old models and unsmoked vintage pipes are available. Smoking is allowed and the prices are reasonable.



When you go to Europe you should visit these two interesting countries!

Christian Schneider

The PCoLeb's Tobacco Sampling Sheet

Why, you will ask, another tobacco sampling sheet? Aren't pipesmokers nice, life-loving, leisurely people who, of all things, would shun sheets and checklists? Why interrupt our comfortable smoking session to jot down seemingly futile observations and tick off innumerable items bearing little relation to the tactile, gustative, and olfactory experience of the moment?

What's more, what is there to do with these sheets once we're through with them? Surely, there must be some benefit somewhere, and we at the PCoLeb have poured over the problem for many weeks (well, maybe many days...) and produced one of the most extensive checklists for pipe tobacco sampling.

The question above, however, still needs an answer.

The sheet, really, is of little value in the short run, and will probably be filed away once it is completed unless, of course, the smoker needs to go back to this or that item if needed. The long-term value, however, is much more subtle. As we accustom ourselves to see the *parts* of the pipesmoking process, especially as it relates to the tobacco, our awareness of what is happening can only be heightened.

If I may use the analogy of reading, it is not the books we read *per se* which have value—although they undoubtedly do, as far as knowledge is concerned—but rather the thinking process which finds itself elevated and nourished by such readings. Likewise, it is not the little scribbles, checkings, ticks and notes about a specific tobacco which add value to our smoking experience, but rather the overall mindfulness of the experience and the education of our critical smoking abilities.

If pipesmoking is "properly an intellectual exercise," the PCoLeb's "Tobacco Sampling Sheet" may play a role in helping us raise a *consciousness* of the present moment which the pipe so skillfully invites us to practice.

[If you haven't done so, check the "Tobacco Sampling Sheet" online on the PCoLeb's page under "Publications"]

Paul Jahshan

The PCoLeb's Annual New Year Dinner 2007-2008

As has been the habit since the founding of the Pipe Club of Lebanon, all members, their families, and friends meet on or around New Year to celebrate.

The venue last year was the Manuela restaurant, in Maameltein, on the beautiful Lebanese coast.

Prices, as usual, were competitive (full members, as usual, don't pay for themselves, as the annual dinner costs are taken from membership fees) and food and drinks were, also as usual, Gargantuan. Starting at 20:00, most of the members and their families left at around 2:00 a.m. feeling very happy, and very full. Toasts were raised to the PCoLeb and to their overseas Friends and brethren.



Jihad, Fares, and Rick



Gihad and Lina

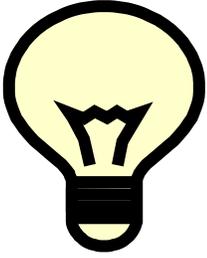


Raymonda and Inaya



**Tarek,
Paul,
and
Paula**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



Because of our featured meerschaum topic, this FAQ will focus on the white pipe's issues.

Q: How do I fit in and take my meerschaum pipe apart?

A: You will notice that most, if not all, meerschaum pipes have three fitting pieces instead of two: the bowl ending in its shank, a plastic screw piece, and the mouthpiece. If the screw is not fitted yet, twist it in gently clockwise inside the mortise (the hole inside the shank) then, when it is properly in place, push in the tenon (the jutting part of the mouthpiece which enters inside the mortise in the shank) while at the same time turning it clockwise.

For all purposes, try to leave the screw piece inside the mortise at all times. In fact, forget about it altogether and imagine it is part of the shank and you will be spared the disagreeable event of cracking your meerschaum shank.

Remember that the white pipe, although a mineral, is actually very soft (you can check this by gently applying your nail or any other object onto the surface of the pipe and seeing the immediate effect), and the less we apply pressure to it the better. Any continuous torque-like movement and/or screwing and unscrewing inside the shank is bound to destroy your pipe's screw grooves in the long run.

So, once you have your screw in place, forget about it unless you need to replace the screw itself or you receive a new, spare mouthpiece for the same pipe. This new mouthpiece should, ideally, come with a fitting screw in case the existing one does not accommodate the new mouthpiece.

Another important thing to remember is that to remove the mouthpiece you have to also gently twist it **CLOCKWISE** in an upward and unscrewing movement. Why both in and out in the same direction? The reason is simple and follows from the explanation above: by screwing and unscrewing in the same direction, the screw piece in the shank is not put under stress as much as when opposite movements are applied. The plastic screw will always re-

main in place, snugly fitting in the shank.

Email us your questions and we will try to answer them!

Q: Do I have to "break in" my meerschaum pipe the same as I do with my non-precarbonized briars?

A: No. Meerschaums don't need a protective carbon layer and, as such, don't build a layer which needs to be eventually reamed.

Q: What's the story about wearing gloves in order not to stain my beautiful meerschaum?

A: The short answer to this is that in the past, many meerschaum pipes were done without a protective outer layer and were thus very porous, almost like chalk, so that any dirt (on average, people were less hygienic than they are today!) and/or sweat on the fingers would tend to be immediately and, almost irremediably, suck in by the pipe, leaving dark, ugly blotches. The tradition of wearing gloves (some went as far as recommending which material the gloves should be made of) was thus born.

However, nowadays most meerschaum artisans take care to apply a more or less permanent kind of polishing wax which will protect your pipe from minor traces of dirt and sweat.

Yet, it is always recommended to wash one's hands before holding the pipe and to stay in a more or less quiet place as the white pipe is also very fragile and will break without prior notice!

Q: What about the famous colouring of meerschaum pipes?

A: Well, not to disappoint you, you have to be quite patient to witness the slow absorption of nicotine through the meerschaum bowl move from snow white to off-white to ivory to yellow to orange to reddish up to the much sought-after ultimate colour, dark cherry! My own experience with meerschaum is that you need **YEARS** of constant and cautious smoking to reach the coveted dark red, but the result is well worth the effort!

Paul Jahshan

Announcements and PCoLeb Meeting Schedule

Announcements:

- The PCoLeb welcomes our new members in the “Friends of the Pipe Club of Lebanon” section. Greetings to **Christian Schneider** from Austria, **Oliver Franiel** from Germany, and **Walter Paterno** from Argentina!
- **Oliver Franiel** is the first Friend living outside of Lebanon to have actually been “initiated” *in situ*, here in Lebanon. Oliver attended our monthly meeting in person and answered the viva voce examination conducted by the president of the PCoLeb and two founding members. After an exchange of highly philosophical questions and answers, Oliver passed with flying colours.
- As usual, photos and short bios of all Friends and Members are to be found online.

Welcome to all!

On the PCoLeb’s Schedule:

The PCoLeb’s schedule for the coming three months (Oct.-Dec.) is as follows:

- First week of October: Club Meeting “Arghile Secrets,” and preparations for the PCoLeb’s **Annual Pipesmoking Competition** to be held the same month.
- First week of November: Club Meeting “Dunhill Tobaccos: Past, Present, and Future.”
- First week of December: Club Meeting “English and Irish Pipes,” and preparations for the **Annual New Year Dinner**.

Coming Soon from The Pipe Club of Lebanon:

Keep checking our page for the following brochures:

- **The Absolute No-Nos of Pipesmoking**
- **The PCoLeb’s Pipesmoking Ranking System**
- **The “Arghile,” Lebanon’s National Water-Pipe System**

**Become a
member!**



About the Pipe Club of Lebanon: We are the premier pipe club in Lebanon and, probably, the first club of its kind in the Middle East. Our aim is threefold:

We want to become the rallying point for serious pipesmokers in Lebanon and in the Middle East.

We aspire to provide knowledgeable information about pipesmoking, about pipes, and about tobaccos to amateurs and professionals alike.

We are dedicated, as is clear in our motto, to eagerly investigate ways in which pipesmoking is “properly an intellectual exercise.”

Serious pipesmokers, be they beginners or veterans, are welcome to join us and share in our quest for the perfect pipe and the perfect smoke.

Visit us at www.pipecluboflebanon.org !

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