

10 Largest Lakes in the World

Name (Continent)	Area square miles
Caspian (Asia-Europe)	39,464
Superior (North America)	31,700
Victoria (Africa)	26,828
Aral Sea (Asia)	24,904
Huron (North America)	23,000
Michigan (North America)	22,300
Tanganyika (Africa)	12,700
Baykal (Asia)	12,162
Great Bear (North America)	12,092
Malawi (Africa)	11,150

Source: World Almanac

NEA GRAPHICS

Though called the Caspian Sea, this landlocked body of salt water shared by the Soviet Union and Iran is actually the world's largest lake. It is over four times the size of the world's second largest lake — Lake Superior.

Where is Disney's Jungle Book now?

ASK DICK KLEINER



DICK KLEINER

Q. Could you tell me what happened to the Walt Disney film "Jungle Book"? Will it ever be released for home video? — D.M., Bluff City, Tenn.

A. The Disney Studio has a basic policy of re-releasing its feature films every seven years, and they tell me "Jungle Book" is ready for another round of showings in a year or so. After that, it will probably be released on videocassette.

Q. I just read Elspeth Huxley's "The Mottled Lizard" about her young girlhood in what was then British East Africa. It was a follow-up to her book about her childhood there, "The Flame Trees of Thika." That was a series on, I believe, PBS. Was it Patty Duke who played the mother? And will "The Mottled Lizard" be filmed? — L.W.S., Titusville, Pa.

A. "The Flame Trees of Thika" was a wonderful series on PBS, with Hayley Mills as the mother and Holly Aird as the girl, Elspeth. I have not heard of any plans by anyone to film "The Mottled Lizard."

Q. Re: Ruby Keeler, the old-time dancer. How old is she and where does she live? Her father was my paternal grandmother's brother. What is Ruby to me? — B.O., Hollywood, Fla.

A. Ruby, now 79, lives in Ranch Mirage, Calif. You can call her Grandpa Ruby, if you ever meet.

Q. In one of your columns, you were asked to name the movies Nelson Eddy and Jeannette MacDonald made together. You failed to mention "San Francisco." — J.A., Houston.

A. I failed to mention it because Eddy wasn't in it. MacDonald was, but it was Eddyless.

Q. Around 15 or 20 years ago, there was a TV spoof of Cinderella, with a mostly black cast. It was very funny. Can you tell me the title and who were some of the actors who were in it? — R.M., Coatesville, Pa.

A. That was "Cindy," from 1978. I was not exactly a spoof, but a musical

version of the story with a Harlem setting. The stars were Clifton Davis, Charlene Woodward, Scooby Mitchell and Neil Carter.

Q. Who starred in "The Flying Nun"? My husband says it was Sandy Duncan, but I say Sally Field. — C.D., Grand Rapids, Mich.

A. You win this one. It was Sally Field in that TV series, which ran from 1967 until 1970.

Q. Which came first "I Love Lucy" or "My Three Sons"? And what years did each run? — K.R., Kerrwood, Mich.



Clifton Davis



Sally Field

A. "I Love Lucy" was first. It premiered on Nov. 15, 1951, and ran, originally, until 1961. "My Three Sons" premiered on Sept. 29, 1960, and ran until 1972.

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WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

'Mrs. Presumed Dead' is lively 'cozy'

By Peter Robertson

Mrs. Presumed Dead. By Simon Brett. Scribner's. 248 pages. \$16.95.

Simon Brett is one of the most successful and prolific practitioners of the "English mystery." It's sometimes referred to as "the cozy," for its closed sets, limited suspects, quaint collection of thoroughly British characters and expertly underplayed subtexts of droll wit and social satire.

Brett was educated at Oxford, and was employed for many years in production of "light" BBC entertainment. He has enjoyed acclaim for his "Charles Paris" series of whodunits.

The author's most recent novel, "Mrs. Presumed Dead," is the second volume in a new crime series. In these works, the sleuthing chores are handled by Melita Pargeter, a widow with time on her hands, money in the bank and some highly unusual contacts.

I spoke to Brett during a recent visit to Chicago. We discussed his work and the current state of the mystery on both sides of the Atlantic.

Pargeter first appeared in "A Nice Class of Corpse." Her assuming center stage was largely an accident. "I never intended her to be a series character, but she hijacked the first book," Brett explains.

Melita is in her 60s, and seldom appears without her minks, high heels

and elegant silk dresses. The source of her wealth and wardrobe is the suspicious legacy of the late Mr. Pargeter. A man of possibly unlawful leanings, he also bequeathed his widow an address book filled with the names of well-meaning criminal types, all anxious to aid the widow in her sleuthing.

Mrs. Pargeter's advanced age and canny intellect have prompted comparisons with Agatha Christie's Miss Marple. The author finds such comparisons flattering if somewhat fanciful. Brett says: "Where there is a comparison is that there's a lady, on her own, sleuthing in a fairly unobtrusive way. Mrs. Pargeter's style is much more mischievous. She has a great sense of fun."

In "Mrs. Presumed Dead," the fun-loving widow finds herself deep in the heart of upper-class English suburbia. The house she is thinking of buying comes with a secret: the whereabouts of the previous owners. Within the aloof ranks of her neighbors lurks a killer housewife.

While the author adheres to the traditional solvability of the whodunit ("I think you should play fair with the reader"), his novels also explore aspects of social comedy. Brett sees no conflict in this: "I think the mystery element has become less important. Writers are writing about human life and human interest."

In addition to crime novels, Brett scripts "After Henry," a British sit-

com that enjoys the unusual distinction of being broadcast on both radio and television. One of his earlier psychological thrillers, "A Shock to the System," is scheduled for film production, starring Michael Caine.

In "Mrs. Presumed Dead" the kill occurs in the first chapter. This is a common formula in the "cozy," and Brett sees it as deliberate. He refers to it as "the English strength, where the death's importance is as a starting point for an intellectual exercise, rather than where blood and brains become scattered all over the furniture."

Brett isn't being a prude. An admirer of Hammett, Chandler ("I can't think of a crime novel that reaches the heights of literary fiction, except for Chandler's") and the hardboiled school of American writers, he cites the flexibility of the American language as a possible cause for the clear superiority of American writers in this subcategory.

The author, by his own admission, sets out to "seduce and mislead the reader at the same time." He is breathtakingly adept at both.

Unlike Ms. Marple, Brett's Melita is a refreshingly strident soul, less reluctant to ruffle feathers, a born scrapper rather than a distant observer.

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OUR LANGUAGE

by Jeffrey McQuain

A sister or brother is a sibling. Share this word with your brothers and sisters, or it may lead to a sibling rivalry.

Appease calms or tries to bring peace. Parents will spot peas in this verb, but few kids will eat their peas to appease.

Q. Here in Texas, I hear the word tremendous a lot. I know it means "big," but what else can it mean?

A. No wonder you're hearing this word — Texas is tremendous! I'm using the adjective not in the original sense from Latin of "dreadful" or "causing to tremble," but in the newer senses of "astounding in size" and

'extraordinary in excellence.' After seeing Texas, I can attest to both of the newer meanings of tremendous.

Flounce moves around with exaggerated or jerky motions. Here's a lightweight clue: spell the end of flounce the same as ounce.

Someone petulant seems rudely impatient or touchy. If anyone says you've misused this adjective, please don't become petulant.

Q. A friend was telling me that nothing "phases" her. What does that mean?

A. As a verb, phase involves planning or scheduling. Your friend was using the verb faze, which is pronounced like phase, but means "to disturb or disconcert." I've noticed that some people who say nothing fazes them are the first to complain about errors involving phase and faze.

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