

# Dear Friend

*by* K. A. Laity

Dear Friend:

As a visitor to Wonderland in the past, you are truly among our most treasured friends. It is the enthusiasm for whimsy such as yours that spurs us to continue to provide perplexing chaos for which we are so widely esteemed, the better to introduce the young (and the no longer young) to the myriad joys of nonsense.

As we review our budget and look forward to the coming year, I would like to invite you to become an important part of the Wonderland experience. "Friends of Wonderland" is a new program designed to give supporters more intimate access to the unseen life of our little world. "Friends" will receive advance notice of special events and access to benefits heretofore available to few outside the royal family. Haven't you always longed to stroll through the White Rabbit's house at leisure or to try your hand at peppering the soup? You can have your own "backstage pass" to the ongoing productions all over Wonderland that best suit your own interests.

While our land of fancy and delight may seem perpetually anarchic and disordered, it actually takes a great deal of planning and organization to keep the madness running smoothly (albeit in our normal "dysfunctional" way!). Imagine the sorrow of a young girl arriving at the bottom of the rabbit hole to find no cakes and no bottle labeled "Drink me," or trying to play a croquet game when the flamingos have flown off. An incredible amount of time and resources must be expended behind the scenes to keep the Wonderland we all know and love operating in its usual off-kilter manner.

You may not be aware of all the hidden costs required to make Wonderland function. In a single month the Mad Tea Party consumes 300 gallons of Earl Grey tea, 150 gallons of treacle, 12 pounds of butter and over 400 loaves of bread. Seasonal winterizing of the pack of cards runs into the thousands. The addition of an RSPCA representative on the croquet grounds to observe the handling of

flamingos and hedgehogs has required an outlay of £12,000 annually. While sales of our Wonderland Tarts through Marks & Spencers and our new website have offset some of our baking costs, they have done nothing to address the increasing expense of maintaining livestock and producing designer mushrooms. Most visitors are unaware that in addition to a crack team of tart chefs, we also have a full time mycologist on staff with a graduate certificate from Cambridge.

There are a number of different levels of support to accommodate the wide range of visitors to our subterranean world. At the modest end of the scale, we have the Tarts at only £5, for which you receive an annual "Heart Tart" card and our bi-annual newsletter. For those with more copious reserves, we encourage you to consider donating at the Dormouse level (£100) or Mad Hatter level (£500), which give you additional access to private areas of the domestic residences (see the enclosed brochure for details). The generous donors at the Duchess or Queen level (£1000 and £5000 respectively) receive additional gifts and party invitations available only to the select few. For the ultimate experience, consider donating at the Alice level (£10,000) to receive your own crown and access to the court (at least while the Queen is away). As a fully registered charity organization, your gifts to us are, of course, tax-deductible.

Please feel free to contact the White Rabbit directly with any questions you may have regarding the various levels of membership; you can do this most easily by leaving your note in a bottle which you may place in the hollow of a nearby tree. Our staff of postal mice will retrieve your missive and deliver it swiftly to the Rabbit. You can expect a response from our manager of members within a fortnight. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing you tumble down a hole very soon.

