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# the Cast Net

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**SONG OF LOVE**—I thought this article would be fitting, considering February is a month to show special love (14<sup>th</sup>). I trust this will point you to the One who is "love".

The fisher folk who live along the shores of the Adriatic Sea have a custom, that when the shadows of twilight are gathering, the families of the fishermen who are out at sea gather on the beach, build huge fires of driftwood, and sing their old folk songs round the fire. Thus the fishermen, returning through the dusk, weary with their long day's toil, are guided by the fires and inspired by the songs of those they love, and they toil a little harder at the oars until they are safely home.

The story is told that many years ago a young man and his sweetheart came down to such a beach in the evening to say their farewells. Riding at anchor out in the bay was a ship on which he would be sailing at break of day, hoping to find his fortune in a far-off land. Then he would return and take her for his bride.

Gathering driftwood, they built a fire, stood beside it and talked of their plans, and then he asked her to sing a love song that was dear to them both. As they plighted their vows anew, promising that each would be faithful and wait for the day when he would return, he asked her to sing the song once more.

He said, "I will come back for you, and then I will take you to a beautiful home in that wonderland to which I am going. Promise me that every evening you will come to this beach, build a fire and sing the song you have sung for me tonight. When I see your fire and hear your song, I shall know that you have been true and are waiting."

Sadly the girl promised, and then with a last goodbye, he stepped into his boat and rowed away to the ship. The next evening, true to her promise, the girl was at the beach, standing by her fire, singing her song, thinking fondly of the one who was now far out to sea. Night after night found her keeping her promise. Months slipped by, and then years, but still she watched beside her fire in the twilight and sang her song of love. Friends advised her to turn aside and find another, insisting that her lover had forgotten his promise and would never return. But her faith in him would not waver. He had promised, therefore he would come back for her.

One evening, more discouraged than usual, she came to her appointed place in the twilight. Hope seemed almost gone, but still she knew she must be true. The fire flickered in the wind, and she gathered wood for it a second time. She sang again the song she had sung so many times. As she was about to return to her home, she heard the sound of oars out in the bay. Perhaps it was some late fisherman. But loving is not giving up easily, and she kindled her fire anew, and sang her song once more. Then he was

*"...a net...cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind." Matthew 13:47*

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there, taking her in his arms and telling her about the wonderful home he had built for her beyond the sea. "I waited to see your fire and hear your song," he said. "Then I knew you had been faithful and were waiting."

This reminds us of a special promise given by Jesus in John 14:2b, 3, *"...I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* I choose to believe this promise, waiting by the shore of life, listening for the sound of the oars of His coming. What about you?

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand  
And cast a wishful eye,  
To Canaan's fair and happy land  
Where my possessions lie.

--AWM (2002)

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**WHAT DO SEABIRDS DRINK?**—Many seabirds (such as albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters) spend months and even years at sea soaring over the world's oceans without ever approaching any land mass. So the question naturally arises, "What do seabirds drink?" The answer is "seawater". The next question that naturally arises is, "How then do they survive?"

Seawater has a much higher concentration of salt than that found in the body fluids of most animals, including mammals and birds; therefore when seawater is ingested, the osmotic balance of these animals is upset. Mammalian kidneys, in order to flush the body of excess salt, must use one and one-half times as much fresh water as the amount of ingested seawater. Without fresh water, dehydration of body tissues ensures, and in most cases, death follows. Avian kidneys, being much less efficient than mammalian kidneys, must use an even greater amount of fresh water to rid the body of seawater. But seabirds have their own desalination systems to deal with excess salt taken in by drinking seawater and feeding in the ocean, in the form of glands that lie in shallow depressions in or above the eye sockets. Salt glands in birds are also called supraorbital or nasal glands and their function was not discovered until 1957-58 when Knut Schmidt-Nielsen and co-workers found that these glands in the Doubled-crested Cormorant excreted sodium chloride (NaCl) in concentrated solution. For most seabirds, the excess salt excreted from the blood by these glands passes as a concentrated solution through ducts into the nasal cavity and is eliminated in liquid form through the nostrils, often accompanied by vigorous shaking of the bird's head or forced "sneezing".

Given the complexity of the functioning of avian salt glands, their existence by design can hardly be denied. The evidence for design that is obvious in the avian salt gland suggests a Designer who not only

created the gland, but the entire animal, the earth, and the entire universe. *“But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind”* (Job 12:7-10).  
—ICR

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**MERCHANT CAPTAIN**—One of the world’s most famous merchant captains died, having long been admired by his crew and fellow officers. They remained puzzled over a strange ritual he performed daily. While at sea he would lock himself in his cabin and open a small safe, take out an envelope with a note inside and read it. After locking the paper back in the safe, he would return to his duties.

For years this went on, and his crew became very curious. Was it a treasure map? Was it a letter from a long lost love? Everyone speculated about the contents of the strange envelope.

After laying the captain’s body to rest, the first mate led the entire crew back to the ship and into the captain’s quarters. He opened the safe, got the envelope and read the words to an astonished crew:

PORT: Left

STARBOARD: Right

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**DID YOU KNOW?**—I thought you might like the following missionary facts. Every book in the New Testament was written by a foreign missionary. Every epistle in the New Testament was written to a foreign missionary church. Every letter in the New Testament that was written to an individual was written to a convert of a foreign missionary. The one book of prophecy in the New Testament was written to the seven foreign missionary churches in Asia. The disciples were called Christians first in a foreign missionary community. The language of the books of the New Testament is the missionary’s language. The map of the early Christian world is the tracing of the missionary journeys of the apostles. The problems which arose in the early Church were largely questions of missionary procedures. Of the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus, every apostle except one became a missionary. The only man among them who did not become a missionary became a traitor—Judas.  
—The Expositor

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**IDA LEWIS, KEEPER OF THE LIGHT**—Lewis earned her reputation during the sixty+ years she spent at Lime Rock Light in Rhode Island’s Narragansett Bay. The daughter of the official keeper, she began assuming some of her father’s duties after he suffered a stroke in 1857. What brought her fame, however, was not the ships but the lives she saved. A strong rower and accomplished swimmer, Lewis pulled eighteen people from the bay over the course of her career.

She was only fifteen the first time she rowed out to the rescue, somehow managing to haul into her own boat four young men who had capsized their yawl and could not swim. On another occasion she brought three drowning shepherds safely to shore,

then rowed out again and towed their sheep to safety. Although these feats were heralded locally, Lewis did not win wider recognition until 1869, when a New York reporter wrote a gripping account of her rescue of two soldiers whose sailboat foundered in a gale. The story was eagerly read all across the nation.

Tourists soon flocked to see the newly famous heroine. The city of Newport presented her with a skiff, the *Rescue*. Financier Jim Fisk had a boathouse built for it, and other gifts and honors flowed in. A feature on Lewis in *Harper’s Weekly* pondered the knotty question of whether it was proper for a woman to do the things she did, then came down heartily in her favor, declaring only a “donkey” would consider the saving of lives “unfeminine”. Suffragettes also took proud note of her competence in their journal *Revolution*.

In 1879, seven years after her father’s death, Congress belatedly recognized her service by giving her a gold medal and an official commission as lighthouse keeper. She performed her last rescue at 65 and died at her post three years later in 1911.

For all their lonely hours of vigilance manning the beacons that keep ships safe, few lighthouse keepers have ever been widely known by name with the exception of Idawalley Zorada Lewis.

Dedication to duty—what a missing trait today, missing even in Christianity! 1 Corinthians 15:58, *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”* Fulfill this verse and maybe somebody will remember you!

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**FISHY QUESTION**—December’s question asked what kind of lights Noah used on the ark; the answer was flood lights! Figure out this edition’s riddle—during what month do people sleep the least/why?

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**FISHY HICCUPS**—When Mark Henderson went fishing Tuesday, the only thing he caught was himself. Henderson said he was holding a three-pronged fish hook in his mouth so he wouldn’t drop it when he got the hiccups and swallowed the hook. He drove himself to the hospital with the hook lodged in his stomach. Two doctors at the hospital fished the hook out without any major surgery.

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#### FISHY HUMOR

--I don’t like to brag about expensive trips, but I just returned from the gas station.

--I’m not old; I’m a classic.

--Sometimes I talk to myself and then we both laugh.

--I had a hen who could count her own eggs; she was a mathemachicken.

--It’s weird being the same age as old people.

--Am I working from home or living at work?

--An apron is just a cape on backwards.

--I’m not arguing; I’m explaining why I am right.

--Send a text when you arrive; no need to knock and involve the dog.

--An engineer solves problems you didn’t know you had in ways you can’t understand. (This one is for my son and grandsons! 😊)  
--Editor