

By ANNE DONNELL

My grandchildren and I were watching The Wizard of Oz recently. The scene in which Dorothy, The Tin Woodsman, the Scarecrow, and the Cowardly Lion have just arrived in Emerald City caught my attention with the "horse of a different color" pulling the carriage and changing color repeatedly. What is the origin of that phrase? Thank you, and sign me. -A Blessed Grandmother

What a truly pleasant scene, generations together for a great classic movie. **L. (for Lyman)**

Frank Baum

(1856-1919, American) wrote The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (later shortened to The Wizard of Oz) which was first published in May of 1900. He would write 17 [an 18th, attributed to him after he died, is thought to be the work of

Ruth Plumly Thompson

(1891-1976), who wrote 20 other Oz books. My father read them all, Baum's and Thompson's, to me twice. My mother and older brother were Winnie the Pooh people – certainly finished sooner.]. Oz books are still being written. The International Wizard of Oz Club has existed since 1957.

The movie was released in 1939. Some changes were made to Baum's work; for example, the famous ruby slippers of the movie are silver in the book.

The movie lost the Academy Award for Best Picture to *Gone with the Wind*, but did win two other Oscars, one for the song, "Over the Rainbow," that became the signature of the young lady singing it in the movie as she played the lead role of Dorothy Gale from Kansas – **Judy Garland**

Garland

Perhaps no one can sing it the way she did. How great to be in an age in which such performances are preserved.

SO what about "horse of a different color"? Clever as Baum was to embellish his stories with touches like this, he didn't originate the phrase. It's first recorded in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, (1601-1602?), a comedy with a tangled plot featuring mistaken identity and misleading information. (Wow, just like American presidential politics!) But, the origin of the phrase could go back to the chalk downs of Berkshire, England, and the famous two-acre white horse outline. The white horse was the emblem of the Saxons, so perhaps this expression dates to them. The

Saxons were North Germanic tribes who came to England in the Middle Ages (loosely dated 5th to 15th centuries).

The White Horse of Berkshire changes color from green to white as locals clear the grass and weeds away.

Another explanation comes from medieval tournaments where knights, covered in armor, were most easily recognized by the colors of their horses. A favored contender's loss might be understood by noting that first place has gone to a knight on "a horse of a different color."

We love the expression, even when emptied of meaning. I ran it on the Internet (I don't yet care to use Google as a verb, but I'm getting there) and found lots of pictures and little horse figurines.

The meaning of the phrase? Something is a separate issue, another matter altogether.

ONLINE DEPARTMENT "The Naked Truth: Useless Advice" (Thanks, J.A.) *A patient was waiting nervously in the examination room of a famous specialist. "So who did you see before coming to me?" asked the doctor. "My local general practitioner," answered the patient. "Your GP?" scoffed the doctor. "What a waste of time. Tell me, what sort of useless advice did he give you?" "He told me to come and see you," replied the patient.*

MORE ONLINE "Today's Chuckle: Health Message" (Thanks, P.W.) *As I was lying in bed pondering the problems of the world, I rapidly realized that I don't really care. It's the tortoise life for me! 1. If walking is good for your health, the postman would be immortal. 2. A whale swims all day, only eats fish, drinks water, and is fat. 3. A rabbit runs and hops and only lives 15 years. 4. A tortoise doesn't run and does nothing, yet it lives for 450 years. And you tell me to exercise? I don't think so. I'm retired. Go around me.*

EVEN MORE – MAYBE THE FUN WILL NEVER END "Bob Hope Quotes" (Thanks, A.A.) *ON TURNING 70 I still chase women, but only downhill. ON TURNING 80 That's the time of your life when even your birthday suit needs pressing. ON TURNING 90 You know you're getting old, when the candles cost more than the cake ON TURNING 100 I don't feel old. In fact, I don't feel*

anything until noon . Then it's time for my nap. ON GIVING UP HIS EARLY CAREER, BOXING I ruined my hands in the ring. The referee kept stepping on them. ON GOLF Golf is my profession. Show business is just to pay the greens fees. ON PRESIDENTS I have performed for 12 presidents and entertained only six. ON RECEIVING THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL I feel very humble, but I think I have the strength of character to fight it. ON HIS FAMILY'S EARLY POVERTY Four of us slept in the one bed. When it got cold, mother threw on another brother. ON HIS SIX BROTHERS That's how I learned to dance. Waiting for the bathroom. ON HIS EARLY FAILURES I would not have had anything to eat if it wasn't for the stuff the audience threw at me. ON GOING TO HEAVEN I've done benefits for ALL religions. I'd hate to blow the hereafter on a technicality.□