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Volume II, Number 7

Hey, like, wow, it's been a long haul, yeah? Three months of no COSTA? How did you ever survive?

Well, I'm certainly glad you did. Now let's tell you all why you had to. (Players already know most of this; the rest of you need to know.)

You've all been told already, all save our very newest subscriber, and a hearty welcome to Jacques Bélanger. I am a recovering alcoholic. Well, alcoholics tend to take up heavy drinking as an escape from problems; the troubles may well be minor, but once drunken binges take over they quickly magnify. Moreover, additional problems may develop after the addiction takes hold, as a way of (misguidedly, and foggily) escaping from the first problems and/or from the effects of the liquor.

Each of us individualizes our responses. Some drunks gamble; some turn to incessant sex; some get violent and hurt people; some just wither and disappear into the skid-row environment, never again to surface. But my version of aggression was to spend money. Lots of money. Practically all of our money. Some went to COSTA, but virtually all of it didn't. It went instead to "ridiculous" things (in the context of my income): Lots of expensive lunches and dinners, donations to charity, too many new records and books, superfluous or useless household items (to give you a small, but very silly example, in my garage at this moment is enough paint to cover the exterior of the house three times - and I have yet to finish doing the work even once; who can paint the eaves when one is too drunk to climb a ladder?). And a vast - truly vast - amount of money was squandered in ways that I am no longer able to identify. I haven't the slightest idea where it went. I know only that it went there. And finally, the biggest single chunk went to pad a stamp collection far and away beyond my income, my needs, my actual wants, or even my ability to keep up with it.

When all is said and done, I estimate roughly that I wasted forty thousand dollars. In two years. Put another way: In the time that it took me to earn 200% of my gross annual salary, I spent 115% of it. This was accomplished by raiding the family savings, Ross' college trust fund, and by the development of a string of credit accounts that quickly blossomed to a big fat Medusa. Toward the end, I actually got a new credit card solely for the purpose of taking cash advances to make payments on all the other credit cards! And by the time I finally quit, that one was fully loaded too.

Last December, after nine - no, ten - months' sobriety and the feeling that it was time to move beyond repairing me and start repairing the world around me, I took an inventory. I was, to say the least, appalled. It took a little longer to get up the nerve, but finally I dumped it all on Jean and offered a plan - involving my no longer having control of any funds in this household, and a home-equity loan

to lump all the debts together in manageable form - to get us out of the muck. I'm amazed she didn't simply pack and move, but to her credit (?) she didn't. So there is where we now stand.

However, one condition that had to be included (along with such things as auctioning the stamps, selling some of the records, etc.) was that COSTA either had to pay its own way or go. For the last two months I've been pondering this, meanwhile running the games by flyer. And I finally resolved to put together one last, smashing issue (for which several people offered subsidies), retire, and stick with cheap one-page game reports.

Then came three friends. Simon Billness was the one who provided the most succinct, stirring advice I've ever had, and it was so patently obvious (to everyone else, albeit not to me) that it is classic: Print what you want to print, and charge for it what it costs. Bruce Linsey, somewhere down in the middle of his offer to help pay for the last 'big' issue, suggested essentially the same thing - actually, he was even a bit more brutal than even realistic young Simon ("Cut all trades! Stop giving comps!"). And then came Doug Brown; his advice paralleled the others', but he added one codicil that carried a wavering Uncleennis into his camp forever. He not only told me what to do, he offered to do it.

He wrote this up as a two-page proposal and asked me to print it. I would if it were a matter for discussion or debate, but since I have decided to accept it in toto, there's no need to take the space for his paragraphs intended mainly to persuade me.

The plan is this. From this point on, I am the editor and publisher of COSTA (and presumably the game master now and then), but I am not going to deal with the bookkeeping any longer. Doug is. He will receive all money, disburse it to me on an actual-cost basis upon the presentation of valid receipts, and in all other operative ways relieve me of the opportunity to screw up COSTA for financial reasons again.

In turn, I am proceeding as follows: (1) Doug will have shortly the full sub list. (2) The sub rate is, from now unto eternity, the actual cost to print and mail each issue (postage and printing; let's not get silly about 1/117th of a bottle of white-out). (3) All trades and complimentary copies (save five of the latter - we'll get to them) are herewith out. Slowly, I shall undertake a few mutual (or perhaps unilateral) subs, at first mainly with journals in whose games I am a player. (4) I will, to the extent that my finances improve in time, attempt to rectify all lingering sub balances with Doug. For now, I cannot. (5) There are a few exceptions, like John Crosby and Joan Extrom and Jacques Bélanger and Doug Brown himself and two or three others who sent cheques after that point in December when I decided to settle down and deal with the problem; your moneys are fully accounted for and will be credited with Doug. If you're in this category - there are three more besides the above, Bless You Bob O'Donnell and David Anderson and Michael Pustilnik - you will somehow find out. Maybe I'll even print your names. (6) ALL OTHER PUBLISHERS are hereby advised that I will be more than happy to send sample copies to anybody who wants one, and if you wish to advertise that fact, I'd be pleased. But I specifically request that you note that (a) samples cost \$1, no exceptions (I promise to send a good one), and (b) subs are at cost; you must deposit with Doug and he will disburse your money until you run out. He will also gladly give you an accounting on receipt of a pre-stamped return envelope. In about three issues, I will be in a position to give you an accounting as well, in the form of a 'credit code' on your computerized address label.

THE HAYDN SYMPHONIES ON CASSETTE: I've recently come to a point in my project to record all the Haydn symphonies, on cassette tape, for Robin apCynan, that I can finally tell you what's involved: The total is 33 tapes, of which the first 17 are 90-minute and the rest 60-minute. This includes the 'Sinfonia Concertante' and about a dozen opera and oratorio overtures in symphonic form.

Total cost in blank cassettes: \$96. Postage: about \$60. To go out and buy the only two complete symphony sets on the market (Marsdenorfer's or Dorati's) would run roughly \$250 retail. And that's without the overtures and 'concertante.' And furthermore, the postage quotation is for air to England; in the US it would be rather less. And finally, my tapes include comprehensive commentary by me, using the major sources of Haydn literature (Landon, Bartha, Soufai, Deutsch, Larsen, Geiringer, Hoboken) as references. My tapes involve thirty-seven conductors and utilize discs made from 1949 to the present.

Sample commentary:

SYMPHONY #30 in G. Composed 1765, recorded 1952. Chamber Orchestra of the Vienna State Academy of Music, cond. Wilhelm Leibner. Known as the 'Alleluia' symphony because of its use of an old Gregorian melody in the second movement. The work is distinguished by a unification of levels of sonority that form one of the most complete 'packages' in all Haydn; throughout, the oboes and horns contribute a wonderfully Baroque infusion, and the strings respond with what I suppose ought to be called 'progressive post-Baroque' figuration. If all this sounds like technical mush, listen to the result: Strings running incessantly through their themes, never letting you off the hook; and winds punctuating, and on occasion reinforcing and even screaming above the proceedings. Never more than here, it is easy to see why Haydn dedicated most of his works to God.

SYMPHONY #66 in B-Flat. Philharmonia Hungarica, Antal Dorati. Composed c.1778 (London). This one, for all its melodic charm, verges on pure trash.

SYMPHONY #98 in B-Flat. Vienna Symphony, Hermann Scherchen cond. Composed 1792, recorded 1959. It is an established historical fact that, in 1785, Franz Josef Haydn - Austria's greatest composer - stated to Leopold Mozart (father of Wolfgang Amadeus): "I tell you before God and as an honest man that your son is the greatest composer known to me in person or by reputation." Haydn really believed that; so much so that, when approached to write an opera for the stage in Prague in 1789, Haydn referred the princely patron to Mozart. And when, in early 1792, Haydn learned of the death of his young friend the prior December, he was utterly devastated. In the midst of a commission for six symphonies for audiences in London, Haydn took the time to compose one of the most tender and stirring tributes ever given us.

Prof. Scherchen has captured Haydn's intent in this memorial slow movement as no conductor before or since; despite the primitive sonics of the disc, there is no moment quite like this moment in all Haydn. Yes, the first movement is reorchestrated; yes, the finale lacks the wonderful harpsichord solo. You can get all those things with Karajan, Bernstein or Jochum. What you can NOT get is Scherchen's slow movement, and if I were asked to name a single greatest moment in all Haydn, this would be my choice. I have owned this recording for thirty years. I have yet to leave this movement with a dry eye.

FROM MELINDA HOLLEY:

January 1987 marked the 50th anniversary of The Great Flood of 1937. You always capitalize it because there had never been anything like it. Because of The Great Flood, Huntington built a floodwall system along the Ohio River. Everyone from the Director of the Floodwall System to the US Corps of Engineers says there will never be another Great Flood. People who lived through The Great Flood ignore them. They saw how Mother Nature thumbed her nose at humanity and know she'll do it again.

December of 1936 had been very mild. There had been no snow and the temperatures really hadn't gone much below 32 degrees (F). However, January is when we usually get hit with snow so everyone was surprized when January arrived and no snow developed.

Huntington in 1936 was just beginning to recover from The Great Depression (which we're told will never happen again...people who lived through that disagree as well). My father was working for the C&O Railroad and had just been promoted to full time truck driver. The increase in pay meant that my mother could stop her work (wallpapering people's houses...which she hated to do) and go back to seeing about her own house. My older sister was in the first grade and I hadn't even been considered.

On January 17th it started raining. Most people shuddered believing that it would turn to sleet and snow. But the temperatures stayed in the upper 40's and the rain continued...and continued...and continued. My dad, whose name was Noah, took a lot of ribbing about his name. My mom was totally ticked off at my sister who'd played in the rain while coming home from school and had started running a fever.

And the rains continued. The river began rising. Reports from up-river indicated flooding. No one really panicked yet because the riverbank is lower up-river. Then came the pictures of flooding in Poweroy, Ohio. The entire town was underwater. People took refuge inland. The twin towns of Pt. Pleasant, WV and Gallipolis, Ohio were flooded. The river brushed the deck of the bridge connecting the two towns. The Ohio and Kanawha Rivers connect at Pt. Pleasant and the entire area disappeared...sort of like Atlantis.

Now the panic set in. Residents in Huntington realized the waters of the Ohio were not receding. Everyone and everything that could be evacuated away from the river was hurriedly removed from the area. Sandbagging didn't help; there wasn't that much sand in the entire world. Businesses in the downtown area (3 blocks from the river) optimistically assumed the waters wouldn't reach the 2nd floors of their stores. Water reached the 5th floor of the West Virginia Building. Many people were ruined; their inventory destroyed; their buildings ravaged.

The only way to get around was by rowboat. My father and two other men spent 36 hours getting medical supplies from various hospitals in town to local clinics and doctors' offices. At that time the C&O Railroad was the largest employer in the area. They put all their people working on evacuations and emergency runs. And still the rain continued...sometimes a drizzle, sometimes a complete downpour...but it continued.

The rain stopped on January 30th. The next day the sun appeared. As the water slowly receded, the threat of illness occurred. Sewage lay in the streets. Doctors feared typhoid and polio. Hundreds of people received tetanus shots as they worked to salvage whatever they could. Some people, like my parents were lucky. The floodwaters only came to the front yard. Other people, living closer to the river or in lower-lying areas, lost everything including their homes as foundations (in some cases) were washed away.

In March of 1936 a system of floodwalls was proposed to the Huntington City Council. Designed by the US Corps of Engineers, it was designed to prevent any future flooding. Surprisingly, many people didn't want a floodwall. The ugly gray concrete slabs would spoil the beauty of the riverfront. (I'll agree with that.) These people argued that such flooding hardly ever occurred. The Floodwall Proposal (as it was called) went on the ballot that November and was overwhelmingly passed. Practicality (and fear) won out over aesthetics.

To this day, people buying houses will ask, "Was this area under water during The Great Flood of 1937?" If the answer is yes, it will be difficult to sell the house. When the Huntington Civic Center was first proposed, the architects wanted to follow the lead of Cincinnati and develop the complex right on the bank of the Ohio River. They proposed to tear down the floodwall along the proposed Riverfront Park for development. The bond issue failed twice. Suddenly somebody at City Hall got the bright idea of asking people why they were voting against it since almost everyone was in favor the the Riverfront Park and Civic Center. The answer? People remembered The Great Flood of 1937. They didn't see paying for a Park and Civic Center that could be washed out. Never mind about Cincinnati's Riverfront Stadium. If those idiots want to see their stadium washed down the Ohio River, that's their business. So the Civic Center was redesigned to be built on the inside of the floodwall. Again practicality (and fear) won out over aesthetics.

The Riverfront Park is located on the banks of the Ohio River. Last year the Ohio River overflowed it's banks and the Riverfront Park disappeared. The river crested 6" below flood stage (the point where the floodwall doors would be closed). The irony here is that the Riverfront Park's official name is "The David Harris Riverfront Park". In 1936 David Harris led the fight to build the Huntington Floodwall System.

Despite the almost-flood of last year, petitions are again being circulated proposing to remove the floodwall system. According to the the people circulating the petitions, the residents are being taxed for "no good reason". By eliminating the floodwall, part of our local taxes will be eliminated. The so-called educated guess is that the petitioners will not get enough signatures to get the proposal on the ballot. One of the petitioners asked my mother to sign the petition and explained all the reasons why she should sign it. My mom told this earnest young man that she'd lived through The Great Flood of 1937 and wanted to keep the floodwalls. When he persisted, my mother replied, "Personally, I'd rather not piss off Mother Nature by daring her to flood us again."

((You may recall that I had specifically asked Melinda to do some more writing for COSTA, because I am particularly fond of her style and her wealth of interesting stories/experiences, and because several readers have expressed enjoyment as well. I have at least one other wonderful piece from her on hand, and we'll get it next issue. After that? Well, I certainly hope she has time now and again to fiddle up a few more. And the present article inspires me; in an issue or two, you're going to get a piece from me on San Diego's own Great Flood (1912), which is a particularly sore point among some locals because the lessons it taught have been patently ignored by contemporary developers. San Diego's two major central shopping malls are sitting ducks for the next massive rain....))

FROM MARK BENCH, re: my comments on drug abuse and my Austrian stamp with an anti-drug slogan: "You say, 'Here is a message which needs broadcasting,' and you go on to give it: 'The top ((stamp)) inscription reads 'Stop! Drugs are suicide!' Yes, I'd say that's an accurate comment.'

I'd say it's not, and I think such wildly inaccurate statements are such more part of the problem than part of the solution. Which drugs? Morphine? Aspirin? Alcohol? Tobacco? All suicide? Really?

Oh, perhaps you mean the illegal ones? But when it comes to suicide, the two major LEGAL ones - tobacco and booze - have killed far more people than all the illegal ones combined.

And even the illegal ones - let's see. My brother-in-law has been on and off morphine for several months, by virtue of losing part of his leg in a motorcycle accident. All legit, but still, morphine is morphine. And laws change. A drug can be legal in one country but not another (marijuana), legal in one year but not the next (LSD), legal in one form but not another (cocaine). It's not a useful distinction when you are trying to talk about what is suicide and what is not.

You drink booze, right? ((Well - not any more.)) And booze is a drug, so are you doing suicide? ((I was.)) For some people, booze is a suicide drug, and for some people it is not. But a message like that lumps everything together.

San Diego kids in school are 'generally being subjected to anti-drug propaganda.' If that didn't work in the 50s, 60s and 70s, why should the 80s be any different?

If you tell a kid that marijuana is suicide, he soon learns that you are lying to him, and your credibility is out the window. So when you tell him that PCP is suicide - and it really is suicide - there's a good chance that he'll think, "Sure, just like marijuana is suicide...."

For drugs differ, and people differ, and that's the critical point in drug education that's washed out with such slogans. If you treat all drugs as being the same, don't be surprised when kids do too; and then they say, fine, you've got your Valium, I've got my coke...."

((You do latch onto one strongly valid point, namely the semantic one that the word 'drug' can have more than one meaning, and of course not all 'drugs' are bad drugs. Most retail pharmacies are commonly called "Drug Stores," but I have yet to find one where you can walk in and pick up a bottle of PCP or crack. They sell prescription medications, patent medicines, and surgical/hospital supplies, and a billion unrelated things too. These days, at least in urban areas, "drug stores" are really Woolworth's with a pharmacist on duty....

((Perhaps it would be useful if we could somehow crack the semantics barrier, and learn to call 'legitimate' drugs "medicine" (which is mainly true) and 'illegitimate' drugs "drugs" (which is also largely true). This still fails to treat with the issues of alcohol and tobacco, or with the

substances that have both 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' uses (Valium, morphine, etc.), but it does serve as a foundation for clarifying the issue.

((The big problem with your argument, it seems to me, is that you treat my slogan, and Austria's postal propaganda, as an all-encompassing end unto itself. It is no such thing. It's an attention-grabber; having claimed the attention, there must be a follow-up, namely a thorough explication of the proper distinction between appropriate and inappropriate use of 'drugs.')

((There is no black-and-white answer, you and I agree on this, and I suspect many others will as well. Despite its legality, running even to government subsidy of its growing, I think we are finally at the level where we accept tobacco as a 'bad' drug - well, nicotine, actually, or maybe the so-called tar, but still....I am not aware that tobacco has any other use than the manufacture of smoking materials. As such, I consider it an 'inappropriate' drug, despite the hypocrisy of the fact that I smoke two packs a day. Alcohol? There is nothing inherently bad here. And for the first twenty-two years of my adult life, there was nothing bad for me either. But for the past three years, alcohol has become a 'bad' drug for me (two years drunk, one recovering). Because of my A.A. membership, I know far more drunks than most of my readers do; still, I also know far more people for whom alcohol is not, never has been, and probably never will be a problem. Valium? I've taken it, and it has helped me. I know others who have abused it, and run into trouble. Morphine? You cite an excellent example of 'appropriate' use, and my father served as another example (in his case, the synthetic substitute Dilaudid) during his last few months as a bone-cancer patient. We could go on.

((My point, which I feel your letter misses, is that, while you and I agree in substance on your operative points, you presume that I am committing an end unto itself, whereas I was merely offering a beginning statement intended to be appropriately expanded. Eloganeering can never be a whole answer; it is useful only as a focus. What must follow is depth. And this, I believe, is the reason current drug education programs for youth are having more success than those of preceding decades. In the 60s, for instance, eloganeering was undertaken but left at that; it was assumed that enough propaganda would change a million young minds. But it obviously did no such thing; so this time around, slogans are being used as introductory materials, followed up by comprehensive programs of education and explanation. For instance: The San Diego school system is being very careful to distinguish between drugs prescribed by the child's doctor, and accepted and endorsed by his parents, and drugs offered on the sidewalk by a stranger without the parents' knowledge. Distinctions such as this are extremely important, because without them we will end up exactly where you suggest we will: Lumping everything together into one big pile which then lacks credibility because some of it is pure hogwash.

((But please keep in mind, if you will, the context in which my slogan-mongering was carried out. COSTA has a fairly sophisticated audience, and I cannot imagine any reader taking my admittedly brief statement as an end-all, useful unto itself without appropriate follow-up. Had I presented my explication to a first-grade class, and expected it by itself to have a useful effect, I'd say you were dead right in your critique. But under the circumstances, I think you're short-changing both me and my readers.))

THE NEXT SEVERAL PAGES will be devoted to a lengthy essay on the Runestone Pill by Bruce Linzey. Though this appears quite a bit later than intended, it just happens to be entirely appropriate right now, because the current pill is now under way (ballot & blurbs are enclosed).

Bruce Before I get to specifics, I want to make a general point about hobby
 Linsey projects and the people who use them (or don't, as the case may be).

There is no hobby project which couldn't legitimately be run in any of several different ways, and you'll never get everyone to agree on which way is best. There will always be people who don't quite get their druthers, but most hobbyists seem to understand this and cooperate with their custodians despite various procedural disagreements. Thus I cringe when I read comments along the lines of "he's not doing it my way, so I won't participate." This is intolerant and counterproductive. If everybody reacted this way, no hobby project could ever succeed.

You'll forgive me then when I say I've got little sympathy for someone who says, "I won't vote in the Runestone Poll because I don't agree with policy XXX." Far more constructive would be the approach, "It's a good project and I'll vote, but I think it might be improved by doing the following...". No need to name names here; just please bear in mind that custodians work hard enough as it is. Their tasks would be impossible if they had to please everyone.

Down now to some specific issues. Conrad, I still don't buy your arguments for leaving Diplomacy World out of the Poll. You say that it "stands apart from others in both intent and execution," but so do some other zines, Dip Digest for instance. You say that it is as 'professional' a magazine as the hobby has, it was established as a 'flagship', and its current staff is trying to re-establish this position. Gee, if I (or you, or anyone else) start up a zine, give it a professional look, and announce that it's going to try and be a 'flagship', does it get to be exempt from the Poll too? You say, "let us give our standard-bearer the same status as larger hobbies give their paramount writings," but DW is not universally regarded as our 'standard-bearer', and there's really no point in pretending otherwise. (Would a hobby 'standard-bearer' have a history of being extremely late in a hobby where promptness is a prized virtue? Of defaulting on sub monies in a hobby where meeting financial obligations is of paramount importance?) You can't just arbitrarily force something onto a pedestal and suddenly have everyone else automatically worship it. DW is DW: a very good zine (in my opinion, that is) among many other zines, some of which are also very good. Yeah, it's got a somewhat professional look and definitely professional sub rates. But that's about it.

And before anyone jumps on me for the above, I'm not trying to run down DW -- I have an immense amount of respect for the zine, and consider myself one of its strong supporters. But let us not declare that it is more than it really is.

Steve Langley wants to see a discussion of purpose (though interestingly he runs a poll too, so he must have some idea of the purpose of one). I will agree that the Runestone Poll is not as essential a project as, say, the Orphan Service or the Novice Packets. My own feeling is that the Poll has three major purposes:

1. It is fun. There are an awful lot of people who enjoy this sort of thing, and what are we here for if not for fun? By nature, we gamers are a competitive bunch anyway; rankings, statistics and awards interest a lot of us. The Runestone Poll (or any poll, and there have been plenty of 'silly' ones ("Hobby Vegetable"?) over the years) appeals to that interest. If it didn't, it would fail for lack of support.

2. It gives publishers and GMs some feedback on how the hobby views their work. It's already been pointed out that this has limitations: the Poll isn't a good vehicle for detailed analysis. Still, as an instrument for establishing an overall ranking, the Runestone Poll is outstandingly successful.

3. It gives hobbyists, especially novices, information about how the hobby as a whole views its zines and GMs. The limitation is the same as above; people cannot look at the Poll results and determine what's in a zine (that's the purpose of the Zine Register). But one of the questions I am asked fairly often by novices is which zines and GMs are the best. If people are asking me this question, there must be others who want to know. The Runestone Poll tells people

which since and GMs the hobby regards as its best (which is certainly much more meaningful than my own opinion, or that of any other individual), and thanks to its high degree of participation it does so quite accurately.

Dick Martin alleges that a segment of the hobby has been disenfranchised. This serious charge apparently arises from Dick's not knowing the meaning of the word. "Disenfranchise" means to deprive of the right to vote, and the Runestone Poll has always, since the day it was founded, been open to any hobbyist. What Dick seems to mean is that a certain group of people has chosen not to vote due to their personal feelings towards me, but that is their right, and they aren't "disenfranchised".

Next we get to his claim that the trustworthiness of the pollster is an issue. Outside of this same small group of people, I doubt that this is the case. But lest anyone doubt the accuracy of my reported results, we have Nelson Heintzman as an independent check (his letter of verification is available on request from either me or him). Nelson is not as controversial as I am (in fact, he's not controversial at all) and I know of nobody -- not even my worst enemies -- who professes any doubt of his integrity.

Dick questions whether I should be privy to sensitive information. I question whether I should even bother... answering bilge like this, but I challenge him to show that I have ever revealed (or otherwise misused) any ballot sent me to me. And voters can always vote through Nelson if they'd rather I didn't know the contents of their ballots.

Dick has also repeated Bruce McIntyre's suggestion of last year that all the ballots be made public. But the purpose of a secret ballot, whether it's for the Runestone Poll or a Presidential Election, is to allow the citizen to express his viewpoint privately and without fear of offending anyone. It is this privacy which lets people vote as they really feel, and I do regard it as a sacred ingredient of the democratic process. The suggestion that all ballots be published is a legitimate one, however, and not totally without merit. I've not the slightest doubt that it would add a great deal of interest to the Poll, for example. But I think it would decrease the meaningfulness of the results -- and the overall level of participation -- too much.

Incidentally, one has to wonder about a guy who questions whether his zero was from an unhappy subscriber or just a grudge vote, when this same person asks his own readers to vote him a zero! Why is it that some people feel compelled to try and pervert the serious efforts of others?

Turning now to Fred Davis's suggestion that zines which folded prior to Feb. 1 of the polling year not be eligible: the more I think about this, the better I like it (although for simplicity I'd move that cutoff back by a month and make it simply any zine which folded before the current year...). The results have always included a number of long-folded zines; this is a problem. The flip side is that for a zine which folds in (say) November, the next Runestone Poll is its last chance for a final hurrah. Also, for many zines there's the question of when exactly did they fold (or even whether they did); this can be a long and drawn-out process with no well-defined date. While I am leaning now towards implementing Fred's suggestion, I'd first like to see more discussion on this question.

Mark Larselere is right, of course, in saying that "defeated" and "lost to" aren't 100% accurate in describing what the preference matrix tells us. But I do go to some lengths in The Cream Shall Rise! to explain exactly how I apply these terms. To recap, if Zine A has "defeated" Zine B, that simply means that (considering only those ballots containing votes for both) Zine A was voted higher than Zine B on more ballots than the other way around. "Lost to" means it was voted lower on more ballots. If there is a way to present these results in an easily readable form (rather than a sea of numbers) while improving on the accuracy of what is being said, I'd consider using it. But I don't think that "defeated" and "lost to" are too difficult to understand in this context --

certainly I'm willing to explicitly state in TCSR! that mines aren't generally published for the purpose of competing against one another, if Mark or anyone else thinks this should be emphasized more.

Mark's other point is that I should subdivide the voting into 'best reading' and 'best playing' categories. This is roughly the same suggestion that Jim Burgess made, and it highlights the fact that many different qualities make mines what they are. And again I'll point out that the Runestone Poll is not a good vehicle for getting into such distinctions -- these can be obtained in other ways. (However, the question of which mines are best to play in is dealt with largely by the GM Poll. Anybody looking at the last two years' results is going to recognize that Appalling Grand, for example, is a great mine for playing based on Mark's high rankings in the GM Poll.)

I think most hobbyists realize that a low score does not necessarily mean a bad mine -- it may simply indicate that there's less material of general interest there than in some others. However, I also realize that it's easy enough for me to sit here in this ivory tower and say that sort of thing while some publishers (like Mark Larzelere) chug out mines that accomplish their intended purpose to near-perfection but by their nature get low scores. I must be sensitive to the feelings of these people too. Perhaps I should make more of a point of stating in the poll results that many different factors can contribute to a low placing, and that some of these aren't negative at all. If this is a concern -- and I gather it is -- I'll try to emphasize this point starting with the next Poll.

Andy Lischett writes that he doesn't feel a voter list should be published, and adds that he hasn't voted for the past two years because one was. Well, I've already stated my feelings about people's total non-participation due to disagreements with the details of how a project is run. But Andy does appear to have a legitimate point of concern, that the votes are not confidential if the voters are identified; to a limited extent this is true. That is, publishers are more likely to be able to guess at some people's votes if they know who voted. Is this a serious problem? I don't think so -- after all, these guesses are exactly that, and I was able to make some pretty educated guesses myself back when I was publishing and Randolph was running the Poll without listing the voters. As Andy points out, the problem is strongest when we're considering low-circulation mines with only one subber voting. But for my money, the best solution to this is not to eradicate the voter list entirely, but to use the compromise I suggested -- allowing people to explicitly request that they not be listed as having voted. The voter list adds interest to the Poll, and more importantly it allows people to see that yes, people from every nook and cranny of the hobby do vote. That is important so long as a few holdouts are still trying to spread the impression that only a certain segment of the hobby participates. Novices see their new friends and co-players voting; they see some of their favorite writers and publishers voting, and they are likely to be encouraged to vote too. In 1985 (admittedly an exceptional year) one of the unfairest criticisms I received was that it was only my own friends casting the ballots. (I've got many friends out there, but 265 of them?) By reading the list of voters, people could see that this was not the case.

Mark Berch has suggested that I ask several additional questions of the voters. This is something that I hesitate to do, for the same reason that I don't want to complicate the voting procedure itself: it makes the voter's task harder, and that decreases turnout. Questions like "How many games are you in?" or "Do you think mines are priced correctly?" belong in surveys like Lew Pulsipher's, not the Runestone Poll. I wouldn't mind reporting a few extra stats, as Mark also suggests, though the average number of mines (submines, GMs) per ballot is easy enough to calculate since I already report the number of people voting in each category and the total number of votes. Mark is also curious about the percentage of people using pre-printed ballots. In 1985, I'd estimate this at

about 90% (not counting phoned votes). In '86, I can think of only one person who did not use a pre-printed ballot, so the figure is over 99%. That's why I urge publishers to run the ballot as an insert rather than just printing instructions or putting the ballot in the zine proper. Practically nobody rips a page out of a zine in order to vote!

Turning now to the question of changing pollsters, there are a few circumstances under which I'd pass the Poll on to someone else. If the hobby at large were to show a preference for a new pollster, I'd abide by this and pass it on -- it's the hobby's poll, after all. But at present I have no indication whatsoever that any significant number of hobbyists want a change of pollsters.

If I were to lose interest or otherwise become unable to do a good job with the Poll, it would be incumbent upon me to pass it along to someone else too. But I don't foresee such an event happening, at least not soon. So for the time being, we'll keep the status quo -- I'll continue running the Poll. Indeed, I'm excited about the prospect of managing it through its most dynamic period since its inception. When the time comes to choose another pollster, I will do so carefully and with the best interests of the hobby in mind. That is the final responsibility of any hobby custodian.

My final topic concerns Bruce McIntyre's letter. Bruce's research revealed that the pref matrix rankings correlate much more closely with the final ones than do the modified mean rankings. There is a mathematical explanation for this. The pref scores by their nature tend to be close to uniformly distributed from 0 to 10, with only a somewhat higher probability density for numbers near 5.000, thus:



On the other hand, the modified means have a sharply curved and negatively skewed density function with a well-defined modal region near 7.000, thus:



The standard deviation of the pref scores, then, is going to be greater than that of the modified means (that is, an individual pref score tends to be farther away from the mean value of all pref scores (5.000) than an individual modified mean will be from the mean value of all modified mean scores (about 7.000)). This in turn gives rise to the phenomenon of the pref scores tending to influence the final rankings somewhat more than the modified means do, pref scores being more extreme than the modified means. Thus, the higher correlation that McBruce remarked upon.

There is an easy way to correct for this: if I weight the two scores appropriately before averaging them, the pref scores will then have the same amount of influence as the modified means and the correlations will be closer to equal. Specifically, the modified means should be multiplied by the standard deviation of the pref scores, and vice versa. In symbolic terms, what I've done up till now is this:

$$f = \frac{m + p}{2}, \text{ where } f = \text{final score, } m = \text{modified mean, and } p = \text{pref score.}$$

And what I could do to account for the different distributions is this:

$$f = \frac{m\sigma_p + p\sigma_m}{\sigma_m + \sigma_p}, \text{ where } \sigma_m \text{ and } \sigma_p \text{ are the standard deviations of the modified means and pref scores respectively.}$$

This would produce a final ranking list with a 0 to 10 range which correlates equally well with its two component lists.

HOWEVER. This formula is a bit too complicated for my tastes. There may be an easy way to simplify it. Let's suppose that the standard deviation of the pref scores is about twice that of the modified means. Then a good approximation of the above formula would be to weight the modified mean twice as strongly as the pref score, thus:

$$f = \frac{2m + p}{3}.$$

This, then, may be the formula I'll use in the future. But I haven't yet done the calculations and discovered whether 2 is a reasonable coefficient by which to multiply the modified mean (I would guess it's about right). Maybe McBruce would like to run through the final scores that would have resulted had I done this in 1985 and 1986, and see whether the correlations would have been more in line with each other? Or perhaps I'll figure up the standard deviations from the lists in those two years and find their ratio. Comments from McBruce? From anyone else out there?

((It goes without saying that this letter has been hanging about in my file for some while; for example, Bruce has long since (in effect) implemented the Fred Davis proposal by requiring eligible 'sines to have published at least one issue in the current year. (Note please that it is therefore only via the present issue that COSTA becomes eligible.)

((My own feeling is that, by virtue of this overwhelming exposition, Bruce has succeeded in prising himself out of the market - that is, he asks for further discussion, but what really is there to add? Technical interpretation of his matrices? Further idiocy about whether Bruce is an honest pollster? Well, the mathematical geniuses in our midst can rail about the former until they're blue in the face (and the rest of us are green); and on the latter point, I suggest that last year's tally of total ballots pretty well says what needs saying about whether Bruce ought to be in charge of things.

((I do, however, have one strong comment. Andy Lisohett's point about keeping the voters' names a secret rings home very strongly. I do not honestly see the point in so listing them. Perhaps Bruce is still overly sensitive to various criticisms levelled at him in days gone by; but I do not feel that a 200+ participation requires any sort of list to prove broad-spectrum participation; there isn't a hobby 'faction' around, and never has been, that has that many adherents.

In early 1946, the civilian Austrian government decided to make a statement of its postwar philocephic orientation. Though in 1938 vast numbers of Austrians were highly receptive to Hitler and Nazism, by 1945 - partly because of the ravages of war and partly because of the realities of Hitlerian oppression - those who were still alive were quite thoroughly disillusioned. And the postwar government reflected this mood.

One of Austria's major engravers, Prof. Anton Chmelikowski, was commissioned to produce a set of postage stamps graphically depicting the Austrian escape and recovery from Nazism. Prof. Chmelikowski fulfilled his commission superbly, creating the requested eight different designs illustrating (in most cases, by striking allegory) various aspects of Austria's (and, in extension, all Europe's) suffering and redemption. His proposed designs were duly presented to the Allied Military Council for approval, which it was presumed would be automatic.

In his memoirs, Austria's greatest stamp designer, Prof. Anton Pilch, tells us that Prof. Chmelikowski was absolutely astounded at the result of the Allied review. As Pilch tells it, "...he knew that one or two of his designs would be rejected, or ordered modified, but he was convinced that the reason given would be insufficiency of their anti-Fascist symbolism; he readily admitted that not all of his ideas were as clear to the Allies as they would be to the Austrian people. And the Council did in fact reject two designs, but he was amazed when their rejections took the form of the two designs which he felt were his best and strongest statements. Of course he proceeded to replace the two rejected items, but he remained unconvinced for the rest of his life that the Allies had acted with good sense...."

Chmelikowski - and Pilch - were right. None of the accepted designs is really 'vague' or 'obscure,' but some will be relevant only to Austrians. The two rejected designs, however, are quite clear to anyone: They have come to be known as "Blitz" and "Totenkranz" ('Lightning' and 'Death-Mask') and are astonishingly effective as statements of the horror of Hitler and the postwar rejection that Austria was trying to illustrate. The records show that the Hitler design was vetoed by the British, who felt that any depiction of the man's face would merely rekindle the old adulation of the diarchae; and the lightning design was vetoed by the Russians, who objected to the use of such a well-known Nazi symbol. (Curiously, the British argued to accept the Lightning design, whereas the Russians fought very hard to keep the Hitler stamp. But, as the terms of the Allied Powers' Council gave each party a firm veto - the U.S. voted to keep all eight original designs; the French were not a part of the Council in Austria - when a negative vote was cast and not withdrawn, the veto was absolute. Neither Prof. Pilch's memoirs, nor Austrian postal records, make clear which of the eight final designs were the replacements for these rejected items.

Through the courtesy of my friend Eugene Sanger of Dallas, this issue's cover is able to illustrate all ten designs. The eight stamps which were finally released are quite cheap to obtain: A full set costs less than \$2. But the two rejected designs, which exist today only in the form of a few trial prints, are among the great rarities of Austrian stamp collecting. A pair of the 'Blitz' and 'Totenkranz' will cost you roughly \$1200. It is therefore with great pleasure, and with deepest thanks to Gene, that I am able to show you these two rarities.

These stamps remain relevant today. As I write this, there is a trial underway in Israel, of a former American immigrant named John Demjanjuk. He is accused of atrocities at one of the concentration camps; and, of course, it was only last year that the mystery of the best-known still-missing war criminal, Josef Mengele, was finally clarified by an exhumation in Brazil.

3. Thanks to Craig Mills, on whom another heap of blessings (do you notice how many friends I've made through this purchase?), I've accessed a vast storehouse of public-domain software for cheap.

4. Thanks to Doug Beyerlein - hey, we're getting positively **GENERIC** with this heaping-of-praise bit! - for about ten thousand dollars' worth of advice on system purchase and configuration in advance of my selection. Without Doug, I'd probably have been suckered into buying a Klunk 98.6 incompatible non-clone....

5. And thanks to Bill deMalignon, who knows mainframes, PCs, programming, and how my mind works. Without him, I'd still be stuck playing space-war. Bill (husband of my musical accompanist, and best man at my wedding) is an absolute genius when it comes to computers; his main interest is on mainframes with Turbo-Pascal, but he can analyze a problem in any system and fire back an answer in about nineteen seconds flat. And, if anybody's interested, I'll gladly copy his 'Haugman' program (MS-DOS 2.0 only) and leave you the glorious pleasure of playing a very fun game. (Bill and I are now up to 14,000 possible words in the database.)

REVIEW TIME: Although I have not bought the computer for the purpose of playing games, the fact remains that I do have several game discs that I've used for (a) fun and (b) experience. And I thought you might enjoy some comments on the games I've tried. I have them in their IBM versions, of course, but in most cases they are also available for Apple, Mac or Commodore.

SILENT SERVICE: Sub warfare in the Pacific, 1942-5. Written originally for Apple, it works on keyboard but is best with a joystick or mouse. The simulation is excellent, and the historical accuracy is second to none. Such things as angle-of-approach take a bit of getting used to, but the game has 'training' scenarios built in that (if you're patient with them) let you get used to the technical details.

INFOSOM: This isn't the name of a game, it's the name of a manufacturer of a whole series of "adventures" which they call "interactive fiction." Be advised at the outset that we are dealing here with text only; no graphics. The idea here is to think. Situations will be presented; you must respond with questions, commands, etc., designed to analyze those situations and explore the ramifications presented by them. My personal favourite is 'Trinity,' which - despite its "standard level" designation - is really tough! The most famous Infosom games are the three versions of 'York.' There are a couple of dozen others; but, be prepared to work with words, not pictures; and be prepared to spend many long hours straining your brain. Infosom games have one extremely notable distinction: You never get squished by a totally random monster springing out of the woodwork; there are many surprises, but they are never arbitrary.

KING'S QUEST. There are three different games in this series; I have two. They are apparently immensely popular, but I'm sorry, I don't find them all that terribly thrilling. Yes, the graphics are neat. But the documentation is quite poor, and I find the interaction pretty repetitious. I also have a strong objection to copy-protected discs....

STARFLIGHT: Oops. I goofed. I bought this goddamn thing, and now I'm stuck with it. \$50 retail. 256K required, plus graphics adapter. I saw a review of this thing in one of the journals recently, and they describe it as "an imaginative outer-space adventure for someone with 200-400 hours to spare." Bull! There is no way in the world that 400 hours will get you even a third of the way through this incredibly complex,

ever-changing adventure. You start from a planet ('Starport') called AMTH. You have a space-ship, and can select a six-member crew made up of your choice of five galactic races plus androids. Then, you have to go explore a huge, far-reaching galaxy - there are over 800 planets (though this total is deceptive because about 15% of them are inaccessible), mine raw elements, contact and/or capture life-forms, avert fatal clashes with alien space-fleets, and somehow get your materials back to Starport and earn money. And you'd better hurry, because there will come a point where the Starport solar system will go nova and suddenly you are left without a home base, doomed to wander endlessly in the galaxy - unless you've been fortunate enough to find and recommend a planet for the relocation of Star-base. But watch it! Recommend an uninhabitable planet, and you have serious troubles!

The game alternates between radio-buttons and arrow keys; there are no commands to type. I suppose it isn't for everyone; for one thing, certain aspects of the game move quite slowly no matter what size your RAM (e.g. landing and launching from planets). For my part, I currently have twenty-four floppies devoted to various incarnations of this game, and have spent at least 400 hours on it - and I have read the documentation, studied the starmap enclosed, and gone blithely on my way to a great deal of fun - and yet it was only LAST NIGHT that I suddenly discovered that not all the possible planets are shown on the star-map. A good example: in the margin of the starmap is a system dubbed "The Four Seedlings." I challenge you to find it on the main map (it ain't there!); see how long it takes you to find out where it really is! (It took me three months!)

Mysteries I still haven't solved: (1) How to approach the Great Egg without having the ship blow to pieces; (2) How to get any useful information out of the omnipresent Spemia; (3) How to manage to land on the home planet of the Thryna. (For that matter, where is it??)

This game - have you discerned that I'm utterly addicted yet? - could prove endless. I suppose you could open a file on a blank diskette and start a catalogue of the planets; eventually, you'd have the thing down to a mere exercise. But what fun is that? It's a real blast landing on a planet and suddenly remembering, "I've been here before - haven't I?"

This game is made by Electronic Arts, and they are to be commended and/or installed in the Software Hall of Fame. Each time you beat the game, you are greeted with the names of the programmers/developers, and well they deserve the publicity: Rod McConnell, Greg Johnson, Alex Keresz, Bob Gonsalves and T.G. Lee. I suggest to you that these five geniuses are to bytes what Pournelle, Heinlein, Niven, Clarke, etc., etc. are to the written word.

IT'S TIME ONCE AGAIN FOR

THE RUNESTONE
poll

THE RUNESTONE POLL is with us again, thank goodness, in its annual survey of the publisher and game-master preferences of this hobby of ours. It is purely a preference poll, of course; it doesn't "prove" anything; but it is a lot of fun, and can be very useful to us publishers in assessing how our efforts are received, and what we ought to be doing to improve our product. Personal letters are even better, but editors don't always get floods of these - usually because most of the readers are such busy people that they endorse the magazine by subscribing and letting it go at that; but on the other hand, we desktop publishers tend to be a mite insecure, and I have rarely run across one of our rank who considers his efforts (or her efforts, for that matter) as good as they really are.

The Runestone Poll is commonly "won" by one of the big, high-circulation efforts. Last year it was COSTA. The now-defunct but immense VOICE OF DOOM, and the reliable and always superb EUROPA EXPRESS have been other recent winners. This year, I rather suspect one of the so-called "new-comers" is going to walk away with it, or maybe - just maybe - two old standards of extremely high quality and consistency: HOUSE OF LORDS (recently revived after an absence) and/or HAGUE. The 'newcomer' contenders I have in mind are PRAXIS, IT'S A TRAP, and BLOWN INSTRUMENTS. I would think that the three past winners are not in contention, really; VOICE OF DOOM of course not, it's gone now; EUROPA EXPRESS remains quite fine but has gone roughly quarterly (though it will definitely finish high); and COSTA, of course, with its near-fold, has killed itself.

Other strong contenders worth mentioning: CANADIAN DIPLOMAT, which simply must gain the award for most-improved (it is a beautiful product); OVER THERE, a newcomer and probably not a No. One yet, but well on its way; PERKLANDRA, one of my favourite gems, again recently salvaged from a near-fold; THE 'SINE REGISTER, which is the only 'service' publication I've seen since Ned Walker's day that actually had a personality (well, no, Jim Burgess' works do too, but they are small-circ things); and the one I keep hoping will win some year (but, because of its nature, probably won't): DIPLOMACY DIGEST. And then there's BUSHWACKER - if only it were more mainstream (but thank God it isn't!)....

Enclosed with this issue you will find a ballot. Please use it. Note also the inclusion of a second flyer, evidencing one of the more brilliant ideas I've seen in a long time: This year, you have the opportunity not only to vote and participate in a hobby event, you can also make a difference in Real Life. My son's school, every year, has 'marathons' to raise funds; the kids get pledges, run a race, and collect money based on the number of laps run. The concept is quite common, and very popular. Well, this year, the Lord seems to have struck Bruce with a bolt of particularly brilliant lightning, because he has geared the poll toward collecting pledges of money for the American Cancer Society - you pledge (e.g.) a dime per ballot received in the poll, and then make a donation based on the final tally. Linda Courtemanche is collecting the pledges, and will handle the funds when it's over. I've sent a 10c-per-ballot pledge; I hope you too will consider adding your name to this list of contributors. (Rough guess, allowing about 10% error margin: Look for roughly 250 ballots to be cast.)

Basing my hopes and estimates on a wide variety of things, including wild speculation, I would like to see this hobby collect upwards of \$1000 for the cause. I certainly hope so; that would be a very nice statement of support for a necessary cause from this hobby.

Note also the contest to win a West German diplomacy set. As if we needed another bonus.... WOW! PLEASE VOTE NOW!!!

THE 1987 (and thereafter) DIPLOMACY CENSUS

Recently, I took my mailing list and put it on my computer. The point was to be able to print address labels and save myself a lot of time and writer's cramp, and the result will be visible on your issues next time. But in the process, several ideas raced through my head, among them (a) how easy it was to enter/delete/correct names and addresses in this diskette file, and (b) how badly we needed a new Diplomacy census and/or master mailing list, readily available at low cost to anyone who might find a use for such data (new publishers, survey-takers, etc.). The last such census that I know anything about was completed in 1984 by Dick Martin; it was a brilliant effort, and it deserves a continuation. I've recently discussed the topic of an updated census with Dick; he tells me that, while he has given some thought to doing it again this summer, he will be perfectly happy to let me do it in his stead. And since I want to, I shall.

Note: When you get on into this issue and we start talking about the problems COSTA is having, please keep in mind that these problems are strictly and purely financial. They have nothing to do with loss of interest, laziness, burnout, etc. Given that there is no major financial commitment in a census (at least the way I plan to do it) - only a time expenditure - it need not be inferred that the troubles in one of my houses will impact upon the other.

The plan is this: I will solicit, from every known Diplomacy-related publisher in the world, copies of current mailing lists. I will, as I receive them, input these lists into my computer files. Periodically, I will also solicit updates (deletions/corrections/additions) from those publishers whose lists I have received. This process will be a continuing one, and the result will be a continuing, constantly-corrected data base of our hobby participants.

Once established, this listing will be available at any time to any interested party. I will charge exactly what it costs me to produce a print of the list - as a practical matter, this translates to the current postage rate, 22c for the first 500 names and 17c for each additional 500. Or, I will sell copies of the actual diskettes (MS-DOS 2.0) at 88c and you can do as you please with them. Backup diskettes will be on file with at least two other people, against the possibility that I should die, drop out, have a destructive home fire, or whatever.

The result of this project will be a fairly comprehensive listing, continuously updated, of current hobbyists, and available at any time to any interested party at rock-bottom rates.

Note that this is not intended as competition for other existing listing efforts, e.g. the 'Black and Blue Book.' As I see it, there are two principal values to my proposed list: (1) Statistical ("How many hobby members are there in Wyoming?") and (2) Informational ("I need subscribers for my new magazine; where do I get a mailing list?" or "I want to set up a telephone game in Washington D.C. Can you send me the names of all hobbyists with ZIP codes beginning 200 through 214?").

Comments are more than welcome - also suggestions. And especially, current mailing lists. Incidentally, each submitted mailing list will be individually stored as well as merged in the main database, and that way I can occasionally print copies of your original submission, return them to you, and request corrections and updates.

Interested?

Dear Conrad:

I hope this will be a brief (you should only be so lucky!) reaction to Doug Baker's letter in the last COSTA. I don't believe I misinterpreted Doug's initial remarks some issues before. If you are going to state that you're "coming from" the opinions or teachings of another person, it's germane to question whether that person in fact has an opinion or teaching about the subject at hand. If you assume that Jesus is concerned morals (private behavior) as opposed to ethics (interpersonal behavior), then it's probably reasonable to extrapolate an unexpressed negative teaching. That point of view can be argued, but as a whole the sources show Jesus as concerned with ethics rather than morals. Doug can, of course, argue that where he's coming from is the general teaching of the Church, which would be true, and the Church considers itself as the spokesman for Jesus—but frankly it's not accurate to confuse the two. They are, regrettably, universes apart.

The "divorce" question is something else again. Doug suggests I feel "that Jesus cannot really mean what he says about divorce". *Au contraire*, I feel he meant exactly what he said. The real question is, what exactly did he say? My contention is that the statement must be understood within its context, and its context is missing & must be reconstructed. The Church would rather take this simplistic saying at "face value", which suits its moralistic purposes.

When I say the context is missing, I mean this: When he's not speaking in parables (in the Synoptics), Jesus is usually represented as speaking in aphorisms. These are clearly the pithier and more easily remembered parts of longer discourses. Trying to get a contextual view of these sayings is like trying to get a rounded view of any author by going to Bartlett's. Alas, however, we can't get a copy of "The Collected Sermons of Jesus H. Christ" or whatever. We get a whole collection of sayings and aphorisms presented as a "sermon" ("on the mount"); in another instance (in the infamous John), we get a connected discourse, or sermon, which was written by a Greek pseudo-Gnostic mystic, not by a Jewish rabbi. Anyway, it's often very difficult to put Jesus' aphorisms in an accurate context.

The "divorce" teaching is a good case in point. Why is Jesus, whose contempt for the unreasonable strictures of the Law everywhere apparent, suddenly trying to out-Moses Moses on this particular point? It would appear that what Jesus is in fact saying is not "divorce is wrong" but that "the Law on divorce is wrong". That is the only way to make the "divorce teaching" square with the Second Commandment.

If, then, we were to translate that saying into a more modern context, we'd have to understand what it originally meant. In Jesus' time, marriage was in some ways much more difficult than divorce. There were negotiations, contracts, and payments. There was the betrothal, which was not merely an engagement but a relationship almost as binding as marriage itself. Theoretically, if the couple were not suited to each other, that could be found out before the final knot was tied. . .so that later divorce should be a question that never arose. In practice, however, the Law allowed divorce, and rabbinical/scrabal tradition allowed a man to divorce his wife virtually at whim. Divorce is hard enough even when equitable, but in Jesus' time women could be, and were, thrown out of their homes and back upon the resources of often begrudging families. ¶ Nowadays, marriage and divorce are both easy in a technical sense, but divorce is extremely traumatic for one or both parties. Jesus would have had to cover the ground quite differently. ¶ But even in his own time, it was not uncommon for mature men to betroth themselves to girls and marry them for all sorts of reasons unconnected with the suitability or potential permanence of the match --and then sometimes divorce them just as hastily. It is the whole callous trade in marital flesh that is the context of what Jesus said. If we take it as the Church does (wrongly), we would have here a stricture unique in Jesus' teachings for its inhuman harshness. The Church, which couldn't give a damn about human feelings, but opposes divorce as part of its own antihumanistic program, wants to insist on the literal, but wholly incongruous, interpretation.

The Bible, my friend, lies too much at the root of Western civilization and literature to be ignored. I'm glad you're reading it. But the thing is also a boobytrap. What it says, and what the Church says it says are two different things, and it's full of difficult passages and internal contradictions & other problems. [As a for-instance, the Church sees one "nativity story"; in fact, there are 2, and they are wholly contradictory.] I'd like to suggest a few books which might be good to read in tandem with the Bible. The problem with this is that a lot that's involved in dealing with the Bible's difficulties is technical and long-winded--not your normal light evening

material. Another problem is that many (most) books written about the Bible are apologetic or devotional in nature. (Apologetics is a branch of theology which consists of explaining & justifying Christian beliefs to nonbelievers; devotional literature does the same thing for believers and tends to be infinitely more smarmy.) An intelligent student of the Bible avoids these things like the plague in most cases--every once in a while an apologetic book is really interesting, informative, and well-written. If you don't mind, Conrad, let's append here a list of books that I've found useful or interesting (not an exhaustive list by any means), excluding my collection of atlases.

The Anchor Bible. This isn't a single book but a whole shelf of them. Doubleday is putting out the Bible in a standard format, 1 or more volumes per book, including extensive introductions, section-by-section translations, notes, and commentary. I own Genesis, Matthew, and Acts, and I've read John and Luke. The new Mark is just out. It's created quite a stir by arguing that Mark isn't the oldest Gospel (but on, as it seems from the reviews, rather flimsy grounds). Each volume is by a different scholar or team, so there's no imposed conceptual unity to the series, which makes it that much more useful. These are invaluable study/learning tools, and while the authors are generally believers, they are nondenominational and nondoctrinaire.

Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, Hebrew Myths. This is an examination of the myths that lie at the root of Genesis, presented as Graves does his Greek Myths. Very heavily researched & extremely informative -- the story of "the cursing of Ham", for instance, is a bowdlerized version of a common ancient castration myth.

Isaac Asimov, Asimov's Guide to the Bible. A good source for getting explanations of passages whose present wording may confuse the modern reader.

Michael Grant, The History of Ancient Israel. Absolutely the best, most literate, most interesting, and most informative general history available. First-rate scholarship.

H. H. Rowley, The Growth of the Old Testament. Short, general text on the sources and manipulations which produced the present texts. Much less detail than in Anchor, but a nice quick reference.

Dead Sea Scrolls. These finds have cast important light on the milieu in which Jesus was born and in which the early Church came to be formed. There are so many correspondences between the Dead Sea community and the early church that many scholars feel that they may have been the actual founders of the Church (or among them). See: Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English; Danielou, The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity; Pfeiffer, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible; LaSor, Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Faith; among many others.

Raymond E. Brown, The Birth of the Messiah. Brown is a Catholic theologian and writes in the European manner. That is, this is a dull book. But it covers nearly every aspect of thinking about Jesus' birth as narrated in Matthew and Luke. Ponderous but informative.

John L. McKenzie, The New Testament Without Illusion. Another Catholic writer, not only of sensitivity and intelligence (as above), but of great clarity and strength. This is a good bit of apologetics. He admits (as the silly Fundamentalists don't) the New Testament is a tissue of compounded difficulties, and argues that it is still a realistic basis of faith. Grossly oversimplified in many places, yes; but still the best thing of this sort I've ever read.

Marcello Craveri, The Life of Jesus. An Italian freethinker, Craveri writes a devastating critique of the traditional notions about Jesus.

Edward Schillebeeckx, Jesus. This will reward the huge effort of wading through it. Schillebeeckx's style of thinking is best summed up by the fact that the Pope has had to order him to shut up. The prose is murky, but it sheds wonderful light. This is best summed up as a closely-argued thesis about what the "Jesus experience" was really about. It's couched in terms designed to keep him from being excommunicated, but the points are still clear.

A.J.B. Higgins, Jesus and the Son of Man. "Son of Man" is a technical term very badly understood in most churches. Schillebeeckx's discussion is better, but this is more detailed. Curiously, Higgins' discussion leads to an improbable conclusion. But interesting.

Desmond Stewart, The Forager. Stewart starts with the alleged "sojourn in Egypt" (which was probably a literary device rather than an historical reality) and builds a grand case for Jesus having been raised almost to maturity outside of Judea.

Gary R. Habermas, Ancient Evidence for the Life of Jesus. Another apologetic which isn't

too bad. This is a summary and discussion of all evidence for Jesus' life outside the Bible. If it has a flaw it's that, written by a believer, it's not sufficiently critical of the sources. But the writer appears pretty even-handed, actually.

Michael Grant, Jesus. Subtitled, "An Historian's Review of the Gospels". A remarkably brief and extremely illuminating analysis of the Gospels as historical sources. First-rate.

Hugh Schonfeld, The Authentic New Testament. Very hard to get, by the way, as it's long out of print. But worth it. A tremendous rendering into modern, even colloquial, English (with all sorts of notes) by an outstanding scholar.

Hugh Schonfeld, The Passover Plot. An indispensable book. You may not agree with the author's contention that Jesus tried to arrange a faked death in order to be "resurrected", but failed (owing to an overzealous Roman with a spear). But otherwise this is a work of first-rate scholarship and thinking, a perceptive analysis of the milieu in which Jesus appeared and the ways in which the story of his life reached us.

Joel Carmichael, The Death of Jesus. One of many Jesus-as-Zealot-revolutionary books, but not badly written and presenting a provocative theory unfamiliar to many readers.

Diane Pike & Scott Kennedy, The Wilderness Revolt. Another; based on the notes of Bishop Pike before his death. Interesting but, for me, unconvincing.

Robert Graves, King Jesus. An historical treatise disguised as a novel. Here, Jesus is raised up by the forces of the Old (goddess) Religion in order to restore the Davidic line. He defeats them by stage-managing his own judicial murder. Graves is a powerful intellect and he weaves a compelling case. In the end, though,

Hugh Schonfeld, Those Incredible Christians. The best analysis I know of the origins of the early Church. Schonfeld pulls no punches in laying bare the internal warfare between the church's factions and the role of the Roman-Jewish War in reviving the almost-defunct Paulist faction.

Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels. The Gnostics bid fair to become the Christian Church at one point. This book analyzes why, and shows how "catholic" Christianity was able to defeat them. A real eye-opener about early Christianity.

Robert Grant, The Secret Sayings of Jesus. A translation and in-depth analysis of the "Gospel of Thomas", a Gnostic book based on earlier (now lost) collections of Jesus' aphorisms (logia). Aside from insights into Gnostic thinking, the text of "Thomas" shows us a later version of the sort of material the canonical gospels were based on, and may also preserve some authentic words of Jesus not found in the Bible.

Morton Smith, Jesus the Magician. Presents the thesis that Jesus wasn't a rabbi, but an oriental magician engaging in practices typical of that occupation. He makes a good case in some ways, but in the final analysis he has to ignore too much in the sources.

Jean Doresse, The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics. If you want to know a lot about the Gnostics, here's another very thorough source, including another complete text of "Thomas" & extensive quotations from others of the Chenoboskion texts.

Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus. This 1910 classic traces the development of scholarship about Jesus through 2 centuries. Schweitzer has his own viewpoint about the "historical" Jesus, a view which was being outdated by other scholars even as he penned it. But his main point--that the Jesus of Church tradition is a fiction and that we must instead seek to relocate the man who walked the roads of Judea--remains as valid today as it was then, if not more so.

This list could easily be extended...Elton Trueblood, The Humor of Christ; Wm. E. Phipps, Was Jesus Married?; S.G.F. Brandon, The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth; Charles C. Anderson, The Historical Jesus; Geza Vermes, Jesus the Jew; and so on and on. If the reader starts with Schonfeld, Grant, Schillebeeckx, and Schweitzer, and goes on to whatever other books he locates, he'll quickly become alert to less worthy tomes. No two people, however, are going to draw the exact same conclusions from the sources and analyses. The real heart of the matter, for those who can brave the dense and soporific prose, is in Schillebeeckx. It's not easy to catch his drift, but once you do, you know it is truly revolutionary and absolutely true -- and the churches won't like it.

Best,

(Red Walker)



Hello, Conrad!

You really have opened the floodgates to us in your comments on Doug's letter; I hope you won't regret it. It is unusual to have even a brief open forum on religion. The tensions of the topic tend to frighten us to such an extent that we are driven into isolated discussions with those who share similar views to our own. This is tragic, and fills the air with stereotypes. So I'm enjoying the opportunity to interact with Rod; a chance I might never have had outside COSTAGUANA.

There's a lot of material in Rod's reply, but to keep my comments within printable limits let me fasten onto two "digressions". (By this time we've already moved somewhat afield from Suzanne's piece, so let me just complete the transition). I pick those two to follow Doug's course of "showing you where I'm coming from". By passing along my ideas on some basic issues, I'm hoping that I can give a better understanding of how traditionalist/fundamentalist or whatever-other-label-is-useful Christians come by their strange notions of things.

Rod has raised a central issue in Christian faith: the reliability of its documents. In judging any case, we have to evaluate the evidence, and it's obvious that two people with differing views on the quality of the evidence are going to have all kinds of trouble communicating on an issue. This kind of conflict is also confusing. It is one thing if two people agree on the evidence but choose to disagree on the conclusions drawn from that evidence. They have a common ground for their debate and we can usually all join in and follow their logic and evaluate the issue for ourselves. But arguments on the reliability of evidence tend to get muddled in detail, require "expert" opinions that most of us can't fathom, and bystanders tend to wander away after a while shaking their heads and damning both sides for fools and obscurantists. That said, I have to sally forth into the quagmire and say what must be obvious: I simply don't accept the "impossibility" of taking the Bible at face value.

Let me admit from the start that the firmness of my belief in the reliability of the documents comes from my prior belief in the reliability of God. I accept the Bible as God's communication to man and if it is not, my trust is misplaced. I have not always held this view. I became a Christian in my college days, and prior to that point I was a "pious doubter" of the Bible's full trustworthiness. But currently, this is my position. I also have come to believe that the view of reality

expressed in the Bible best fits the reality I have experienced. Further, attempts at criticism of the documents have notoriously at the task of reconstruction after their destructive work has been done. I believe the Bible as it stands has a unique message and understanding of the world. But what is left after the Bible is "cleaned up" by modern analysis is usually sterile and lacking in power and originality. Typically, it has been forced into our age's mold and not allowed to speak other than what we think is acceptable.

But beyond this more or less subjective reasoning, I must also say I haven't encountered a convincing attack against the Bible's reliability. Now my religious training has been balanced towards history more than theology, and I certainly have not been exposed to every position. But I have been exposed to some critics of the material, notably of the Old Testament, and I have noticed a pattern in the criticisms that has robbed them of their sting for my faith. Let me explain:

I expect a scholar, a least if he expects to persuade me with the outcome of his investigations, to begin them with at least an effort to keep an open mind. If he follows a procedure that I can deem honest in this regard and his researches drive him to conclusions differing from mine, I am prepared to at least honor his conclusions. Otherwise, they become a curiosity, more a look into his own mind than a reflection of his topic. Now I recognize I am not an expert on languages or middle eastern cultures or whatever other details my education may have overlooked (which are legion). But when a scholar starts with an assumption that is external to the evidence and then builds his conclusion on the particular pair of spectacles he is wearing, I at least demand equal time! It's an old truism of argumentation that there is no reason for me to give in to a series arguments if I can attack the premise on which it is built.

Some scholars go pretty far afield in their assumptions. Wellhausen, who popularized the JEDP theory (a theory that denies the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch: the first 5 books of the Bible), was to a great extent dependent on a theory of cultural evolution and believed that the material of the Bible had to be reevaluated and redated because it did not fit into his expected pattern of development. Although that theory of cultural evolution has been abandoned, JEDP has not, and today the Pentateuch has been assumed to have been recited numerous times over the years and therefore historically inaccurate. But no two scholars seem to be able to agree on just who wrote what when, and the whole process leads to the artificial fragmenting of the text so that even parts of a single sentence can be broken up and attributed to different editors. The basis and the result of the process are ludicrous. Gerhard von Rad, a more recent name, developed an intriguing theory about the development of the Hebrew religion from various isolated traditions that were harmonized in the text only when Israel came to need a unified national identity.

Interesting idea, but totally fanciful...there is no particular historical reason to believe this construction over any other. But once again we are called upon to reconstruct the Bible on the basis of this theory. G. E. Wright insists that internal evidence in the early books of the Old Testament clearly establishes that we have to break up the Mosaic portions and attribute them to much later times. This is based on the fact that the passages he refers to talk about events that had not happened at the time they claim to have been written. Fine, but each of those passages he points to are clearly marked out as prophecies by the context. So the conclusion only holds up if you assume prophecy is impossible.

To deal with the New Testament, a theory that was current around the turn of the century based a late dating of the books of the New Testament on the assumption that there was a conflict between the Jewish and Gentile versions of Christianity that had to be harmonized over generations before some of the material could possibly have been written. Again, the evidence for this assumption in the material available is scanty at best and even it depends on the assumption that certain biblical passages that would settle the issue are "unreliable". (J.G. Machen argues for the identity of the religion of Paul {Gentile Christianity} and the religion of Jesus {Hebrew Christianity} in a book I read many years ago I believe named something like "the Religion of Paul". Quite good and gives a brief survey of some of these theories that were current at the time.)

So, from my standpoint, I have seen many attacks on the reliability of the Bible assume its guilt from nearly the start, while to be convinced I would rather someone argue from the standpoint of "innocent until proven guilty". If you think you have found one, recommend it to me and I'll try my "ax" on it and see how it comes out.

My real argument for the reliability of the Bible comes, though, from my earlier statement of faith. Rod's advice is excellent: read it, think about it. This is how I ended up changing my mind in college. If, as I have claimed, this is God speaking to us, he will do it for you in his way and time. There is, in the end, no other way to settle the issue. I do my best to be honest in my faith as I trust Rod is in his doubts, but I figure that if we are evenly matched we'll convince no one. I need another voice to second my opinion if it is to mean anything. Otherwise, I am willing to let the matter rest.

The second issue I'd like to deal with is Rod's image of Christianity. I hate to place myself in the position of defending the Church. After all who can doubt that terrible things have been done in the name of Christ (as indeed of Allah, Marx, or a few hundred great ideals). The problem is that Christianity, even in theory, opens itself up for problems by welcoming the sinner rather than excluding all but the righteous. There is no minimum I.Q., no social rank requirement, no screening process in Christianity at its best (!

Cor 1:26-31, Matt 22:8,9), so is it surprising that it has problems? "Love is a feeling to be learned" as one book title has it, and some never do adequately. Further, while anyone can call oneself a Christian, generally it is the heart condition that is accepted as the final arbiter of one's actual condition. Therefore, not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" at the last judgement will be saved (Luke 6:46, Matt 7:21-23). Unfortunately, we ain't so good at separating the wheat from the chaff.

But certainly even at face value Rod's evaluation of Christian upbringing is unfair and overstated. Christianity's hold over the history of the world and the hearts and minds of men has not been universal enough to make the statement "the most depraved and violent of humans are found to have fundamentalist/traditionalist backgrounds". In our defense I must point out that certainly no other tradition or philosophy holds a better record for crime. In the light of what I've said above, I would say that in many places evil motives hide behind a fair face (Satan as an angel of Light, etc.) One might also point out the bright lights of kindness and peace and justice among those who call themselves Christians. So perhaps, since the bag is so mixed and the pattern a bit common to what is happening elsewhere we should look to something other than the teaching as the root of the problem of the horror in human actions. Maybe, as the Bible suggests, it is to found in the nature of Man himself.

But I cannot ignore the problem that at some times in history legitimate Christians have take up arms in war, have imposed their will on others, have been less than gentle in their dealings with others. This really raises a problem dealing with all ideals. Christians have done this sort of thing not only because they believed they were right, but because they believed that it was of supreme importance. The question is, is it ever right to "fight for a cause" (whatever "fighting" may mean)? Can there be an ideal so important that action of some sort must be taken? If so how do we judge the priorities of differing values---what must be sacrificed to achieve other goals? If not, do we sacrifice ideals and values and become thoroughgoing skeptics? Do we give up believing, feeling, and doing because it's dangerous? It can be rather easy to judge a Christian of the 16th-17th centuries for believing that religion was something worth fighting for. But can we really evaluate our time better than theirs because we are less willing to fight for what we believe is right? I admit I'm a natural coward, but I'm afraid I find myself a little cautious when I think about making those kind of judgements.

Shalom,

Craig

Craig

(Craig Mills)

CONRAD'S LIST OF BOOKS RECENTLY READ/STUDIED (excluding computer)

David Norman, "Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Dinosaurs." Intended as a big bit with Eric, it achieved that goal in ways that even I never expected! Eric took this book, marvelled at it, and then (after a week of looking at the pictures), informed me that he suddenly wanted very much to learn to read so he could read this very book all by himself. And he is doing it! Obviously he hasn't gotten to the level of this thing yet, but he is now reading, and - I swear this is true - he comes home from school at least twice a week, picks up this book, and searches it for at least half an hour to find any new words he's now learned. And he will get there....

Eric adds, this is a truly momentous piece of work. A serious review appears later in this issue, in Rod Walker's EREHWON.

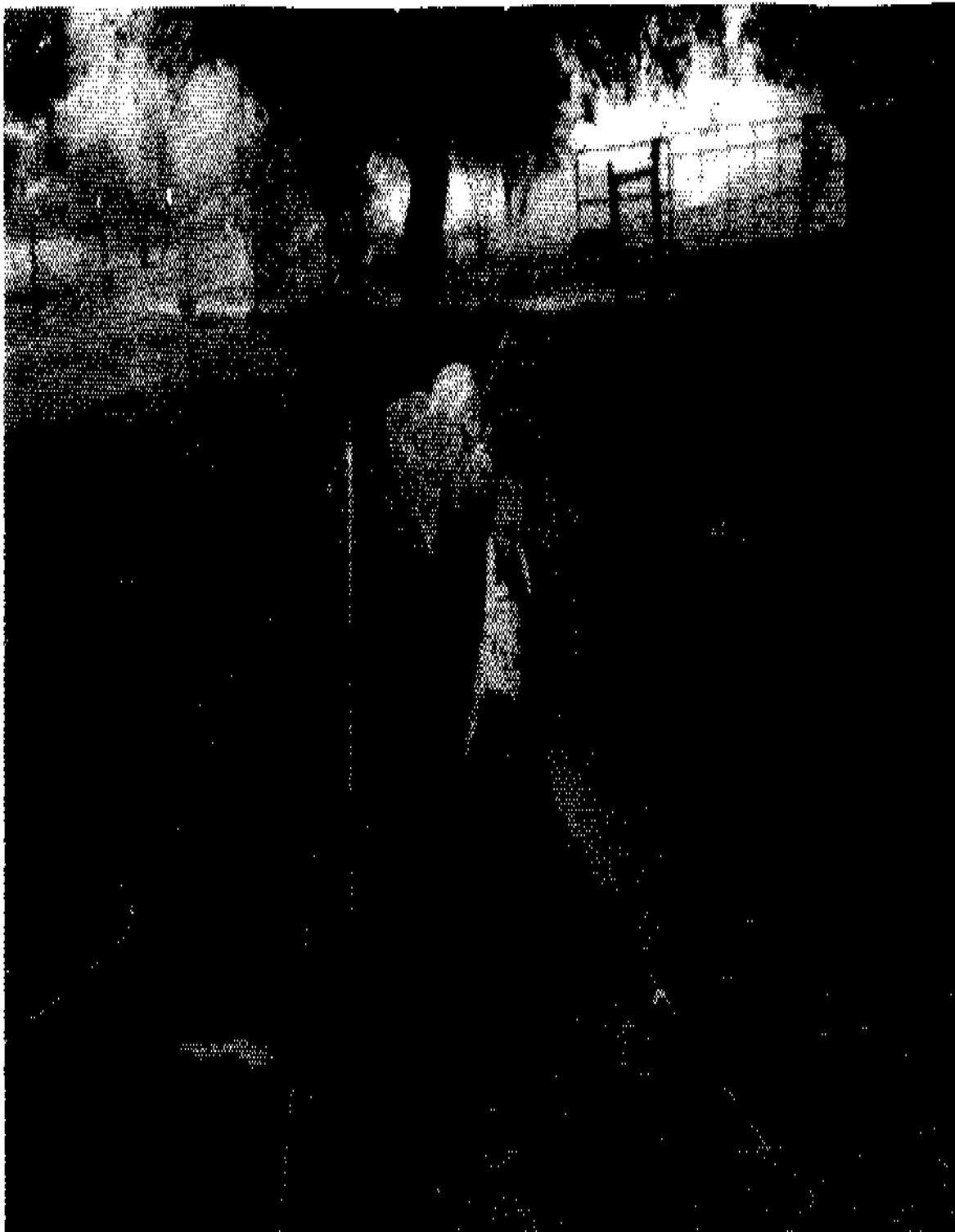
Norman Lebrecht, "The Book of Musical Anecdotes." A tremendous bit of fun for any classical music buff. Note please that 'anecdote' is meant in its true sense - '...a biographical incident; a minute passage of private life.' (Samuel Johnson)

The book is based on the style suggested by Joseph Haydn in his London diaries, wherein that famous composer recorded his day-to-day observations by way of 'anecdote.' His entries range from long, flowing discussions of English life (not necessarily musical), to recordings of his financial success, to such wonderful cryptic notes as, "Carpani had his concert tonight at Ranelagh Gardens. He played like a pig."

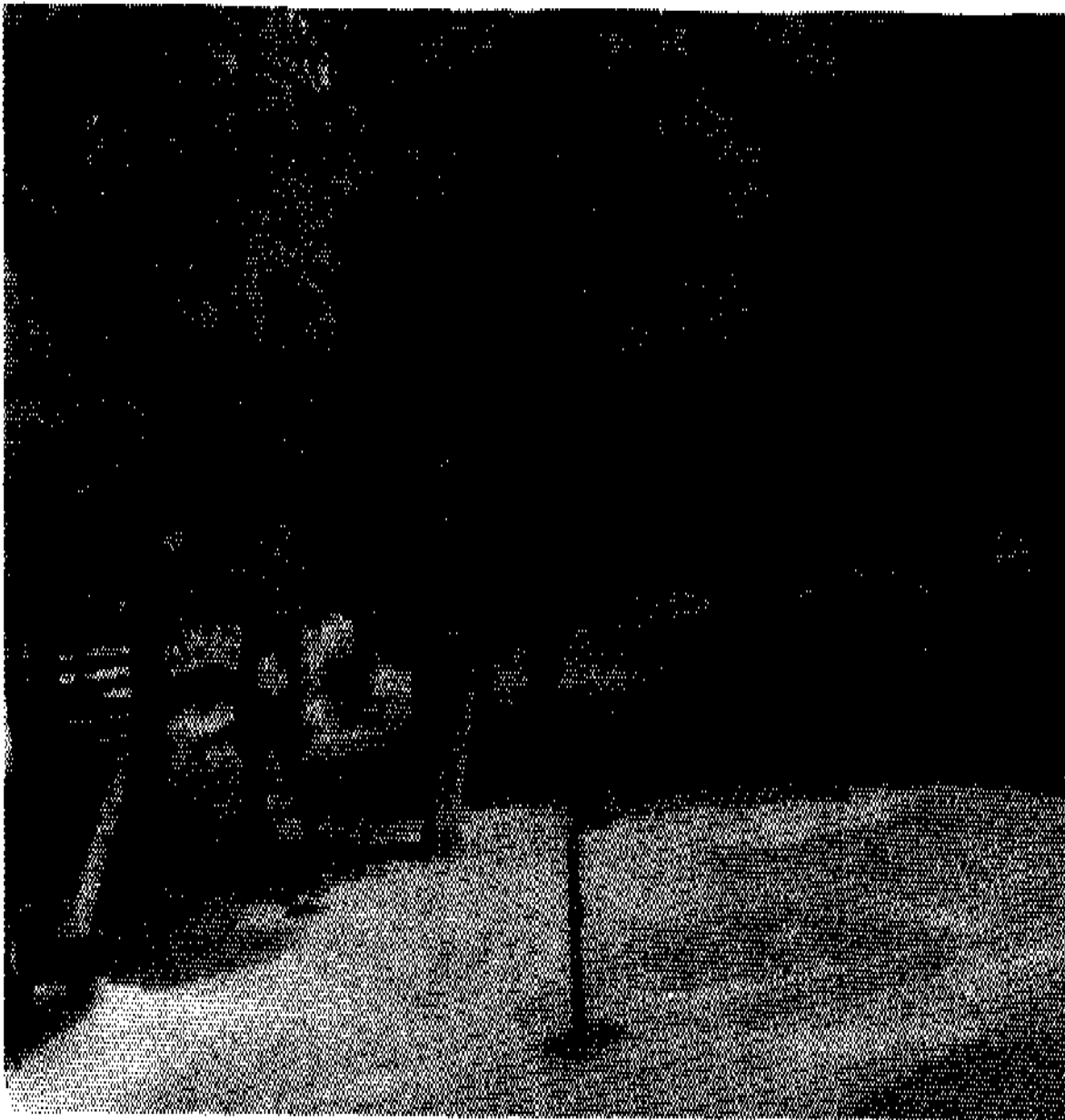
Anecdotes - and these are no exception - are not necessarily funny. They are historical and personal insights, and wonderfully intriguing. But there are a few real howlers; my own favourite of all comes from Leonard Bernstein, who, addressing a particularly dense singer in a rehearsal in Vienna, bellowed: "I knew it's the historical prerogative of the tenor to be stupid, but you, sir, have abused that privilege!"

H.P.R. Finberg, "The Formation of England 550-1042." The so-called 'Dark Ages' in English history form one of the most obscure and most controversial periods in the past of an otherwise well-documented nation. Prof. Finberg starts out by admitting that he has no plans to settle any controversies; rather, he is attempting to interpret and explain contradictions using more modern evidence and more studied consideration of older theories. He then proceeds to give us an eminently narrative, thoroughly-researched discussion of this most difficult half-millennium. I have no competence to determine Finberg's qualifications or accuracy; I do know that he was held in high repute by his colleagues, and held a prominent historian's chair at Leicester before his death in 1974. Reviews of this small tome by Finberg's successors lead me to think that it will be an unlikelihood that we shall have a better discussion of a scantily-documented era.

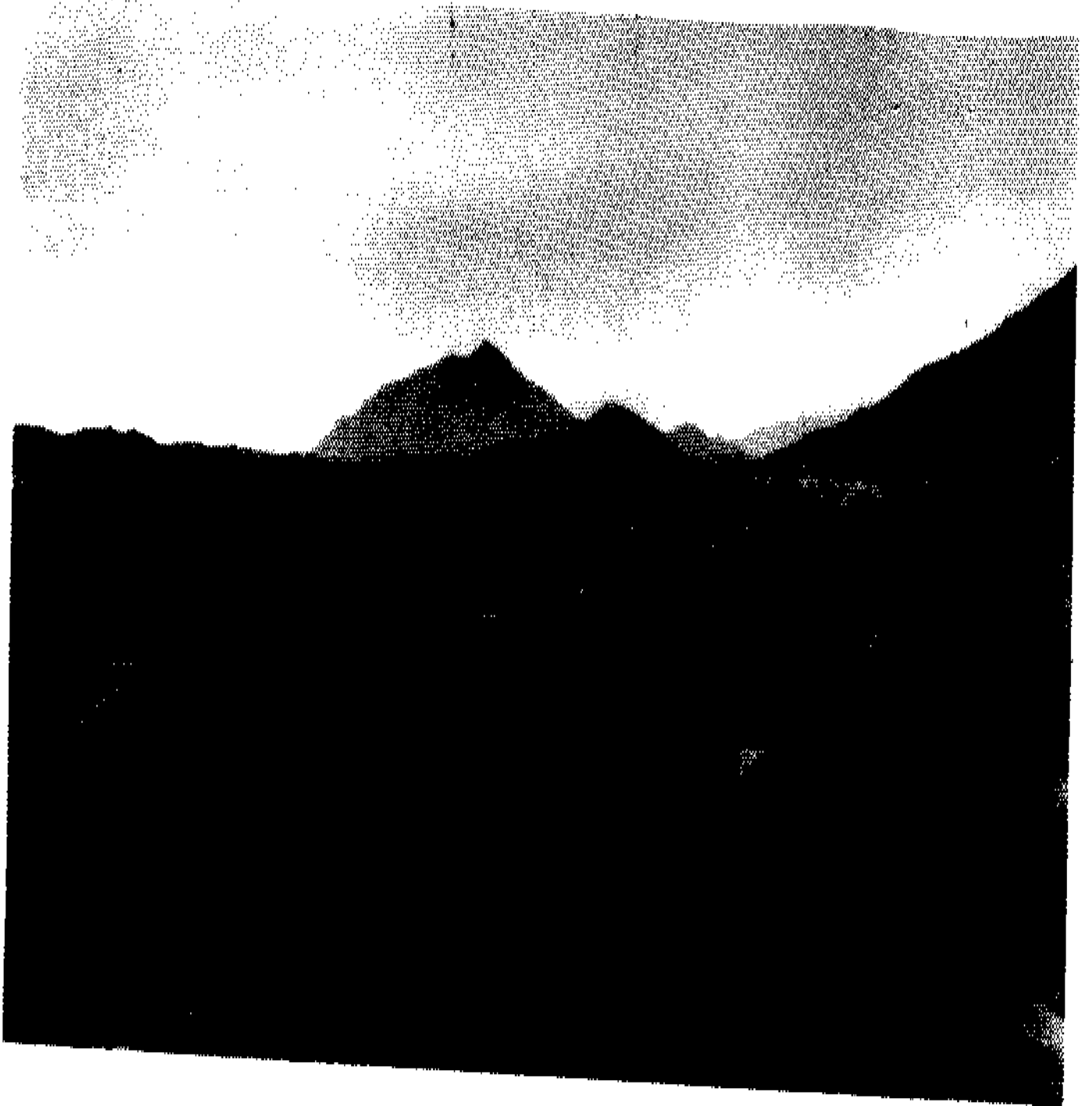
Richmond Lattimore, 'The Four Gospels and the Revelation.' Coming on the heels of the continuing discussion of Jesus and the Bible in COSTA, this is a truly astounding addition. Prof. Lattimore is not a theologian, nor is he a scholar of the Bible - for all I know, he isn't even a Christian. What he is, is America's most eminent and most recognized authority on the ancient Greek language, and he presents us here with an authoritative translation from the original Greek documents. No interpretation is attempted, no comment offered; merely the best-made translation in to the most accurate modern English of which this scholar is capable. It is a brilliant, and widely-heralded effort. This work is in straight prose; no attempt at poetic license, no versification.



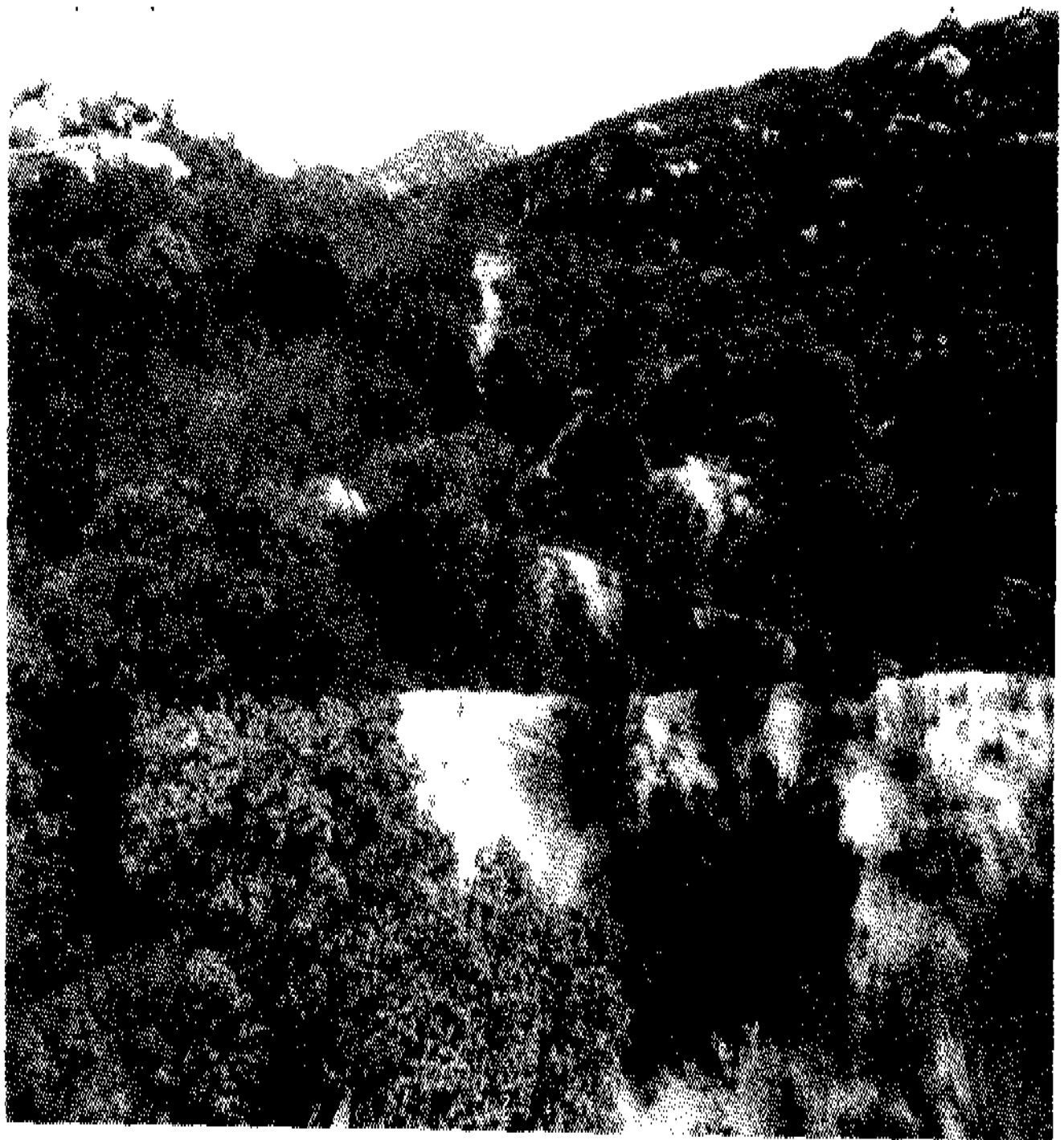
ROSS VON METZKE: Holding aloft his collection of acorns, one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World. Note warm, attractive sleeping quarters in background....



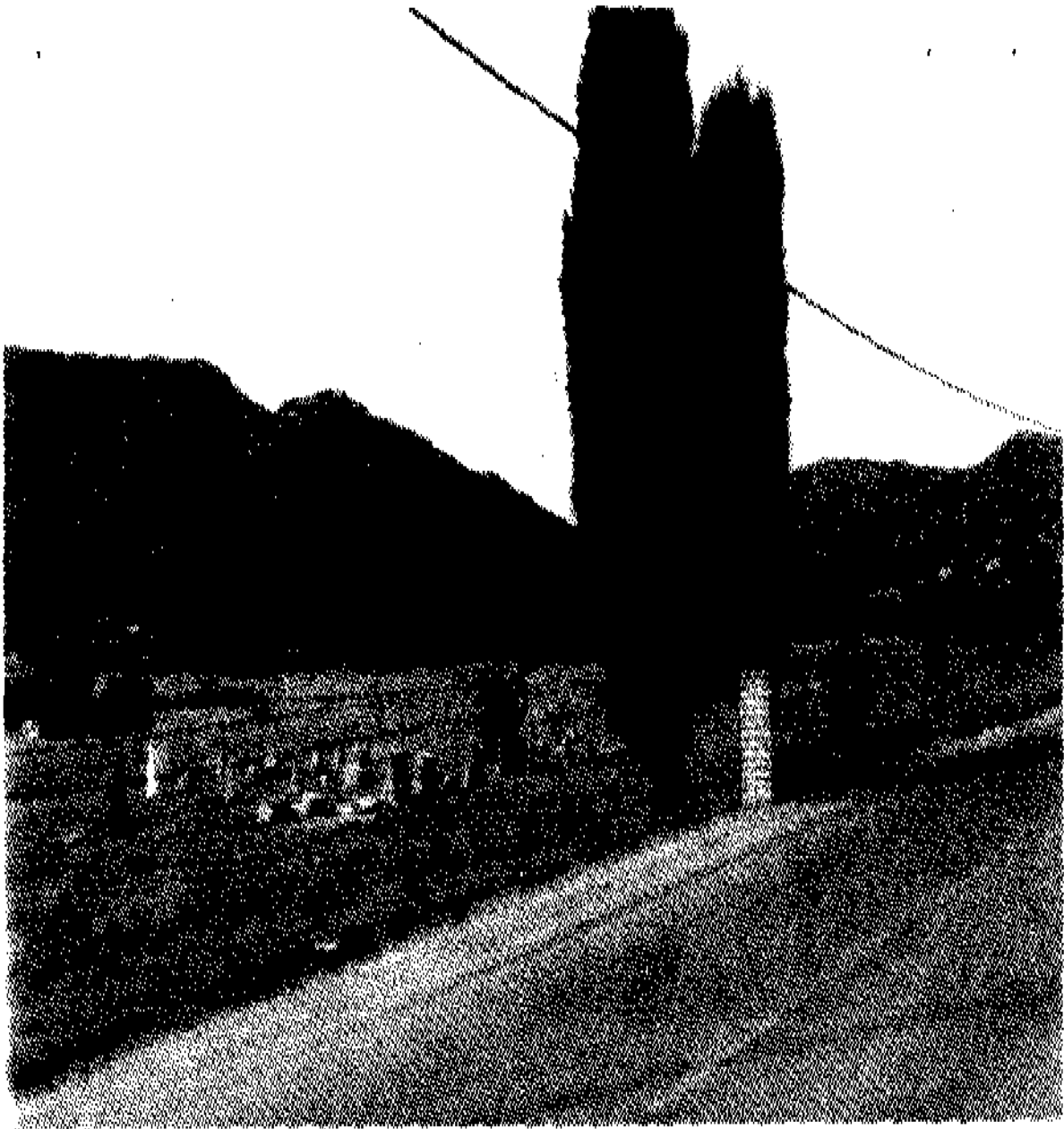
COUNTY PARK PLAYGROUND, Potrero, CA. Children are free to clamber about these and numerous similar structures, thus freeing parents to drink themselves into utter oblivion....



TO THE WEST of the campground, sheer peaks line the horizon.
Through passes in crags of this nature we have come, to set
our tent and enjoy a few hours in an unnatural oasis....



ONE HOUR after commencing our 'gentle' hike up from the campground, we still have a massive climb ahead of us. At this point, in deference to Eric ("Daddy, I'm tired!"), we struggle back down - to hear Eric ask, "Can we go play?"



THE CEMETERY AT POTRERO: Established in 1887, it still has fewer than one hundred grave-sites - a moment of austere and gentle peace in a gorgeous valley



SEEN FROM POTRERO PARK, the hiking trail wends its way into forbidding and scrub-encrusted badlands. The hike is quite moderate, but several adults and a canteen are suggested....



TYPICAL CAMPSITE AT POTRERO, CA. Note fire ring (source of all hot food), table (place of eating of all hot food) and small tent in background (place of sleeping off hot food).



ERIC VON METZKE: Typical pose of greedy younger son, eating all available food brought by everyone in the camping party.

PLAYLIST FOR THIS ISSUE ("Connie's Rock Education")

DR. HOOK REVISITED. ((A whole batch of fun and bounce.))

BILLY JOEL, 'The Bridge.' ((Hey - this guy's good....))

SIMPLY RED, 'Picture Book.' ((They won't displace 'Survivor' as my favorite group, but they're coming close.))

PETER GABRIEL LIVE. ((If there is a better solo performer active today, I trust and hope you'll put me on to him/her. You know me. Rock, to me, is very much a secondary musical attraction. But Peter Gabriel stands out as a real genius in his work; I suspect we will view him, in years to come, as the logical - and worthy - successor to Dylan. I now own four of his tapes. I will trade you absolutely NOTHING for any one of them.))

ELVIS COSTELLO, 'Punch the Clock.' ((Another of my new-found favorites. I still can't find "Imperial Bedroom," which is supposed to be his best, but this is a damned fine substitute.))

JOHANN MICHAEL HAYDN, 'The Complete Symphonies,' Vols. 1-4. Bourneouth Sinfonietta, cond. Harold Farberman. Franz Josef's younger brother was a powerful writer in his own right; best known for his religious choral works, but awfully fine in his 42 symphonies as well. Farberman does a spectacular job with the eleven symphonies essayed thus far in this (hopefully to-be-continued) series.

ANDREAS VOLLENWIEDER, 'Down to the Moon.' ((I'm not sure how to classify this. It isn't rock. It isn't pop. It isn't jazz. I dunno what it is. The image that crosses my mind first, loon that I am, is of an instrumental grafting of Don Mc and Kraftwerk. Very strange...yet, compelling.))

NOTE NOW I DON'T REALLY TELL YOU ANYTHING? That's 'cos I still don't know much of anything....

.....

It is of great importance to me to get this issue in the mail as soon as I can. Therefore, I'm stopping the chat right here - a bit more will come at the end, as we even out the pagination - but, at this point, I need to do the games and get the heck out. Material held over lol, these many moons, will appear next round, if still relevant.

MOTHER GOOSE & QUINN

Mike Peters



((On second thought, I definitely want the following letter in here. It dates from last December, but is an absolute gem.

((Also, after the game moves, we we have more material on the Holocaust, because that is something I intend to hit hard on from this point on. Ben Ben-Israel has a big letter which will close this issue, along with a bit more. But - now to Craig Mills.))

Hello, Conrad!

I promised you three writing projects. Two follow and the other, which is complete will go with the Jihad move, whenever that transpires.

MATT...

Matt is now a little over 10 months, experiencing a bit of the awe of his first Christmas. It was fun, the night we set up the tree, to turn off the lights, plug in the Christmas tree lights, and sit with him looking at them with wide eyes and that hand-reaching-out gesture that all kids seem to have. Although he's not talking yet (I'm a bit too cautious to call his rambling "da-da-da..." a meaningful object name.) he is very expressive, with face and gestures and noise expressing a wide variety of, as yet for us barely decipherable, states and ideas. That night he gabbed up a storm, I'm sure telling me all about the tree, as we watched the lights. He does have a few recognizable sounds: "uh-ma" means something like Mama, but is really a general "come here" sound; for thanksgiving he put on a show saying "oh-boy" over and over, though with no apparent meaning; "ba" is his generic word for everything but it has been especially attached to certain objects around the house--a Christmas stocking with teddy bears sew on it, a set of sleighbells we have attached to our door, a ball, and a stuffed lamb that makes a "bah" sound. He understands the locations of these objects and will look or point to them when we ask him where they are. You will appreciate his taste in music, Conrad. The other day, my wife and I were driving home from somewhere listening to our more conservative local Christian station (we have 3 contemporary/rock oriented Christian stations in the area--I usually only listen to the conservative one at Christmas time, when they play a lot of Christmas music). Now, I have to explain that every Evangelical or fundamentalist church that has any kind of choir has "got to put on a Cantata" at Christmas time. It's become a tradition. The publishers have caught on to this, and every year hordes of stuff is generated. Most of it is pot-boiler material: syrupy, unimaginative, dull no matter what the style is. We were listening to a section that was so bad we both got to talking about it. At some point I said something to the effect of "give me Back!". In response, Matthew broke out in a rousing chant of "Ba-ba-ba-ba" that had us both bursting with laughter.

Matthew is a Ham. He saves his big "firsts" for Company. He began walking at eight months, just in time for a grandmother's visit, and he move right along now. And he really began "talking" on a Thanksgiving trip to one of his Great-Grandmothers that was more of a family reunion. He is very active and loves to move. He already has chasing Daddy and being chased down pretty well. Any barrier is an obstacle to be overcome, and no as yet "no" is by intent not a meaningful sound. He loves to climb over Daddy, if he happens to be down on the floor with him, and he has just picked up climbing on the furniture (which gives us heart attacks because he doesn't understand "too high" or "how far down" yet. One day I was twiddling with our VCR and turned around to find he had climbed onto a cat cage we have in the living room trying to masquerade as an end table and was trying from that perch to play the "Big" piano. (Note: he now has a piano of his own, which he can reach from the relative safety of the floor.)

As you might expect, Matt is into everything. We have tried to relegate one cabinet in the kitchen as "his" cabinet. Its full of Tupperware and other non-dangerous, seldom used stuff (due to the cheap construction of our apartment, we aren't really able to use all those fancy child-proofing gadgets available today. We just do our best to keep an eye on him). Once the wonder toned down, the Christmas tree wasn't safe, and usually he has the bottom 2 or 3 limbs cleared within 5 minutes of noticing the tree. We haven't dared but the presents out yet (we've figured that we've received about 14 gifts for this Christmas...guess who has the lion's share. But even I will tell you, it's a lot more fun to shop for a child than it ever was for an adult).

Matt is also very sociable. His early life was marked by many babysitters as both of us were working full time and his bills kept it that way as long as we could stand it. At any rate, he warms right up to people and has everybody charmed with his big grin. He loves to laugh and giggle, and in this way takes after his Daddy, who is rather infamous for his laugh. Truthfully, the way he fits in is one of the amazing elements of our story. Matt, in personality and features, could have been our own child. Many have commented that they can't believe he is adopted. And for us now that hardly enters our minds. We have not, and never will, make any attempt to hide his adoption from him. But as far as we are concerned, he couldn't have been more loved if we had borne him.

ONGOING BIBLICAL DISCUSSION...

I think you're on the right track in your comments on my letter in the last issue. There is a tension in Christian thought being the responsibility of behaving in a right and just manner and the "Good News" that we are unconditionally accepted in God's love and forgiveness. If I give the impression of trying to live in two worlds when I talk of moral issues, its because I'm trying to balance out these two elements in my

faith. God's offer of forgiveness is the great theme of the New Testament, but actually the larger portion of the New Testament writings is not evangelistic material. It is mostly letters written to relatively new believers exhorting them in their new faith and teaching them how to live it out. So we receive the message of God's love in a context of our responsibility to act in a certain fashion.

But I am convinced that if we try to understand the New Testament primarily from the standpoint of a moral teaching to pursue, however vainly, then we've missed the boat. The behavioral teachings of the New Testament call upon us to try to act in a certain way because of something that has already happened, rather than to get somewhere because of it. Right action is a form of thanksgiving offered to someone who has done something quite special for us, rather than a means to gain his favor. As John puts it, "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 John 3:10,11)

At the calling of my son's namesake, the apostle Matthew, Jesus gave this poignant summary of the intent of his ministry:

"While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax-collectors and 'sinners' came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matthew 9:12-13)

Jesus here is speaking to the foremost representatives of "righteous" living in his day. They were scandalized by his association with the dregs of society. By implication he rejects the Pharisees as being outside the scope of his healing ministry, at least as long as they maintained their attitude about themselves. He has come to heal those who are sick and can only heal those who know they are sick (the unloving attitude of the Pharisees towards those that Jesus is with is a clear indication that their "righteousness" is only skin deep).

The nature of the disease "Sin" and how it is to be treated is essential to understanding Christianity as a religion. Up until now I've used words like "failure" & "sickness" in referring to it, and have also talked about striving to reach impossible goals and about mercy and forgiveness when dealing with it. All this gives a subjective, psychological air to the term "sin". If you look at sin only from this angle, it is easy to come to the conclusion that trying hard enough and conscientious enough to be good would be good enough for God.

But "Sin" in the Bible is also considered a criminal act or condition, a violation of God's creation and person. Just as we

used to talk about criminal's "Debt to society", each sinner's fault has it's penalty to be paid. The only problem is, no matter how hard we try, we fall short even when we are trying to do good. So our debt will always be greater than our ability to pay!

Every sin is considered a crime against God, even if it is directed against another human being (Psalm 51:4). After all, it is his creation we are destroying, his beloved creature we are hurting, (even if the damage is done to ourselves) so we are attacking his own! Further God is perfect and the world to come is to be perfect, so sin cannot survive in that context--it must be excluded and destroyed, just as we might seek to destroy some deadly plague that entered our country. From these two examples you can get an idea of the seriousness with which the crime is treated in the Bible. Only one response can be appropriate to these situations, the death of the intruder. (Now you see the problem of paying our debts!)

So you have the dilemma that the Bible faces. Sin is an objective crime that must be "atoned" for. Man is called upon to overcome it, but it is too great a task for him to do so. God understands this and wishes to forgive, but the demands of justice must be met as well, for he is perfect in all aspects. So what does he do?

You'll hear the words over and over again in the Messiah as it is performed this Season. They are the words of Isaiah 53, spoken to a people with a strong sacrificial tradition:

"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was pierced for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all..." (Isaiah 53:4-6)

I know I've raised more questions than I've answered. This is the most crucial and most controversial part of the Christian message. I don't want to get in much deeper for fear of overstaying my welcome, but would be glad to follow whatever path this leads your thoughts into.

Shalom,

Craig

Craig

((I apologize for configuring the Christian letters in a lousy sequence, but I suppose those of you who are really intrigued will sort out nicely.))



**Eintritt: Erwachsene S 30,— Gruppen (ab 10 Personen) S 20,— Senioren S 15,—
Schüler, Studenten, Militär S 10,— Führungskarte S 10,—, für Schulklassen S 5,— pro Person**

**Anmeldungen für Führung: 02742/67 1 71 (Synagoge) oder
02742/25 32, Kl. 419 DW (Stadtmuseum St. Pölten)**

((Announcement of a special exhibition on Austrian Jewish culture, held in the rebuilt Synagogue in St.Pölten, and turned into a postal souvenir by affixing an Austrian commemorative stamp (150th anniversary of the Vienna Synagogue) and having it cancelled with a special marking to commemorate the reopening in St.Pölten.))

"PIMMALIONE" (Game US 487C) - Build Round 4

I don't suppose anybody cares to venture a guess on the name of the George Bernard Shaw play after which this game name (= Cherubini opera) 'Pimallione' was not named?

Two flubs last time, and in the process a new system of adjudication to prevent such sloppiness in future:

1. Hoboken was not credited with 6 for Duluth; his score is actually 50, not the printed 44.

2. Somehow I mis-referenced a few hexes and Hoboken wound up in the wrong place. If you plot his stated moves literally, they are impossible. The correct Hoboken moves last time were: 1. (Minn) - Duluth; (G55) - G54. 2. (G54) - Butte - E52. 3. (E52) - G51.

Inasmuch as these comparatively minor corrections did not appear to influence anyone else's strategy, I have not bothered with a special correction sheet or a delay in deadline or any such.

ROUND FOUR - Throws 5-5-6

HOBOKEN HOBO HOMES (Doug Brown, brown): a. (G51) - G50 - Spokane - D48 - C49. b. (C49) - B48 - Portland. c. (Portland) - C45 - D44 - E43 - Seattle.

DENVER GREAT WESTERN (David Watts, mauvish-aqua): a. (T12) - T7. b. (Q27) - Q29; (Q28) - T29. c. (Q29) - Q33 (two shorts!).

ACHTUNG (Brian Longstaff, red): a. (Santa F4) - K17 - K16; (New Orleans) - D38. b. (K16) - K13. c. (K13) - K11 - L10 - L9. ((NOTE: One additional order, (D38) - E38, exceeds the allotted credit this time.))

D.O.C.T.O.R. (Don Del Grande, black): a. (E34) - Q35 - St.Louis; (V15) - U15 - U14. b. (U14) - S.L.C. - P11. c. (P11) - M10 - M9.

HOG WILD RAILWAYS (Paul Gardner, green): a. (Houston) - E31; (G9) - G8. b. (G8) - San Diego ((Hi, Paul!)) - Los Angeles. c. (E31) - Dallas - J28 - K29.

REVENUE THIS TIME: HOBOKEN, 50 +6 (Spokane) +6 (Portland) +6 (Seattle) = 68. D.O.W., 39. ACHTUNG 31. DOCTOR 38. HOG WILD 44 +6 (San Diego) +6 (L.A.) = 56.

It is worth mentioning that, only on this past turn did poor Brian discover - the hard way - that all this while he's been playing on the wrong map! I'm not quite clear on what map he was using, but there's no question that it wasn't this one. That is truly sad, I'd say; it's not Brian's fault, he thought he had it right, and my inexperience did not lead me to catch the error beforehand. Well...I'm sorry, my friend. Perhaps the new game starts I'm buying you (be prepared for an announcement from Don Del Grande and Rip Gooch) will help apologise....

DAVID'S NOTES: The rest will probably expect me to head for Sacramento, so having reached the option point of T7, I'll anchor my eastern end to Omaha, K.C. and St.Louis, or as close as I can get to them. DOCTOR will need careful watching - not a wrong hex so far! Note the turn to U15, where most new players would go to U15. ((I'm not surprised; Don is a supremely bright young man.)) DEUTSCH's moves again surprised me; what will he do this time? ((How do you understand his 'surprises'?) HOG WILD and HOBOKEN are also building nice long straight main lines in territories where they

ITALY (Pat Jensen): a wun s TUR sil-bar. a tyc a wun. a spa s war-gas.
a war-gas. a ven-pie. f nap-rom. f naf-mid. f wen a naf-mid.
f lya s spa.

RUSSIA (Conrad Minshall): f awa s FRE por ((sic)).

TURKEY (Michael Pustilnik): a gal-boh. a sil-bar. a pru s sil-bar.
a bud-gal. a nos-stp. a lya s nos-stp. a rum h. a ukr-war.
a sev-ukr. f bla snarls st awa. f tyn h.

Retreats: ENG a gas to bur or par; ENG f mid to eng, 1ri, or nat;
ITA a wun to bur or sil. Fall moves may be conditional. Naturally,
"off the board" is also an option in each case.

Fall 1909 retreats and moves are due Saturday, 9 May 1987.

I have proposals to vote on with the moves: (1) E-T draw, (2) F-R
draw, (3) E-I-F draw, (4) T concession. In the event more than one passes,
the one with the fewest participants (or, if again tied, the greatest
number of units) takes precedence. One 'nay' kills a proposal; in the
absence of nays, one 'yea' will pass it.

ENGLAND TO FRANCE: You have been a worthy enemy.

FRANCE TO JANUL: I've never known anyone to defend Air Supply like you.

JANUL TO FRANCE: Call me sometime, I'll let you talk to Ross. But they
really don't need a defence; I accept them for what they are and go no
farther. What they are, is (a) superb musicians, (b) performers of great
warmth and gentleness, (c) melodic - for a change, (d) a hell of a lot
of fun, (e) exciting and constantly changing, and (f) extremely popular.
The last one may not actually mean anything, but then again....

ENGLAND TO ITALY: By making the corner, you will force Turkey to stab you
and go for the win. WAKE UP!

Note: Kevin also mentions some press that I seem to have printed
twice (!) and some other press that I've missed altogether. I'm sorry,
I don't find the latter, though I really think you should feel pleased
that I favoured your writings enough to give them a re-run.

|||||

GAME 1985EE - The Delirious Dik-Dik - Spring 1907

The draw proposals were vetted - one of them by a whicker, three hours
before deadline....

AUSTRIA (John Walker): a bul-gra. a ara s rum-sev. a rum-sev. a gal-boh.
a enk-com. a tri-tyc. a ukr s war-nos. a vie s tri-tyc. a war-was.
a bud-tri. f con-bia.

ENGLAND (Simon Billenness): a hol s edi-bel. a lon h. a edi-bel.

f kie s aka-den. f eng s edi-bel. f nth o edi-bel. f aka-den.

FRANCE (Bob Acheson): a gas s war-bur. a war-bur. a bur-wun. f bra-mid.
f spa so h.

GERMANY (Dan Gorham): a ruh s hel-hol. f hel-hol.

ITALY (Pat Jensen): a tyc-tri. a ven s tyc-tri. f tyn-ion. f ion-veg.

RUSSIA (Larry Botimer): a pru-war. a nos s pru-war. f sev-rum.
f bal s ENG kie.

ROME: General Robert (Mussolini) Greier, standing with what he thought was the magic sword, was amazed to see the real Ne-Man appear upon a French frigate. "All this time I thought he was fibbing," the general muttered. "Course, if he moves for Rome, he's actually Skeletor!"

AUSTRIA TO TURKEY: What a guessing game this one turned out to be! Hope you lost. This, and many more....

FRANCE TO TURKEY: Hah! Methinks England doesn't know you well enough to be nervous. Me, I know better.

FRANCE TO ENGLAND: What do you mean, 'toad?' It's 'TOADY,' and unless you belong to Millificent, Spacey or Delicious Daf, it's not worth it.

JANUL: Gee. I thought I was a mainstay of this hobby. But I sure as hell don't know Millificent or Spacey! (Delicious Daf, however, is quite clear to me; she's a hell of a lady.)

ISAB TO JANUL: Writing orders is easy when your forces are few and far between.

JANUL: True, but you've just suffered a 33% increase in difficulty.

LONDON TO BERLIN: "Far away across the seas, the crying of the dying souls, calls to mind the hopeless plots, that the Germans have in their tighter minds." ((Difficult handwriting, and I don't know the quote; that may have a few errors which will be my fault.))

RUSSIA TO ENGLAND: Bob, St.Pete's yours. But stay the hell out of Moscow.

JANUL: Now, how can you give up a city that bears your name?

CONSTANTINOPLE TO ROME: Uh, 'magic sword?' Maybe that's what the Frenchman sent me.

JANUL: You know, youngster, if I were inclined to blatant sexual filth, I could have a field day making puns on your one-liners. Fortunately, I respect your integrity, and my own. (3000 miles makes that easy....)

ITALY TO AUSTRIA: At least you're back to home centers; now we can start again.

JANUL: Oh, you're giving Tunis away to Qaddafi?

FRANCE TO ITALY: I don't really want to go to Naples. Too many ugly Italian women. Tunis, now, that's a different story; all those lovely blue-eyed Arab women peeking over their veils at me.

FRANCE TO GERMANY: God save the King!

RUSSIA: Life is so easy when you're a toad. Hop, hop, slurp the bug....

JANUL: Um, yummy! How about "bug-slurp pizza?"

FRANCE TO JANUL: Take a look at a map sometime. Mt.Rood is in Oregon and the Space Needle is in Seattle. Now, if Mt.Rainier blows, it won't matter since there won't be a Space Needle - or a Washington State, for that matter.

JANUL: Cops. Did I mumble the wrong mountain? Sorry - and strange, too, since I've never been in Oregon and don't have much knowledge of Mt.Rood. Rainier, on the other hand, I have seen. It looks very much like a bunch of clouds blocking what might have been a joyous view....

GAME 1986arb32 - 'Schuyler Colfax' - Fall 1906

ENGLAND: a ave s nth-den. a ~~stp~~-~~con~~. a hol a hel-kie. f edi-nth. f iri-aid.
f eng a iri-aid. f hel-kie. f nth-den. f hol a edi-nth.
FRANCE: a gas s bre-par. a bur-mun. a bre-par. f spa so - mid. f pic-brs.
ITALY: a par-brs. a vis a tri. a tri a vis. a ven a tri. f tyn a lon.
f lon a alb-adr. f alb-adr. f mid a par-brs.
RUSSIA: a ~~con~~-~~stp~~. a ~~all~~-~~mun~~. a kie a ~~all~~-~~mun~~. f den h.
TURKEY: a gal-vis. a ser-tri. a bud a gal-vis. f seg-~~lon~~. f adr a ser-tri.
f sev h. f gre a seg-~~lon~~. f say-~~aaa~~.

Ah - my senses tell me that I failed to remark the retreat prior to this season. It was: ITA a bud - vis. Briefly....

Retreats this time: RUS a kie - rub, bar. ITA a par - pic. ITA a vis - boh, tyn. RUS f den - aka, bal. ITA f mid - nat, por, ven, naf. In each case the option "off the board" also exists.

CENTRES:

E: 10: lon, lvp, edi, nwy, den, ave, stp, kie, hel, hol. Build one.
F: 6: par, bre, mar, spa, por, mun. Build one.
I: 5: ven, rom, nap, tri, tun. Remove (gaspl) three.
R: 3: con, war, bar. Remove one.
T: 10: con, say, ank, sev, run, bal, ser, gre, bud, vis. Build two.

One hell of a lot of retreats and adjustments this round - we call it "flux" - and so let's hold the next requirements to Winter 1906, which are due Saturday, 9 May 1987.

ENGLAND TO WESTERN EUROPE: English Channel tried to support Irish to Mid-Atlantic. Let me explain. I thought that if this move succeeded, Mid would likely retreat to a French supply center. With the addition of a French army in Burgundy, they cannot help but take Paris...if they really try. I'm leaving Belgium unprotected in the hopes they go after Paris with everything they've got. The French fleet Picardy has three more options: He can attack or support into Belgium; he can attack the English Channel; or he can attack or support into Brest. Choice One would be a disaster for me. Two wouldn't help me one bit. But I'm banking he'll do the dumbest thing possible, and go to Brest.

Okay, Janul, now give us your infallible hindsight.

JANUL: Well, he seems to have had three options: Attack or support into Belgium; attack the

ITALY TO JANUL: I have the feeling something's gone wrong here....

JANUL TO ITALY: Depends on your point of view. I betcha Turkey thinks it's gone right!

FRANCE TO ENGLAND: Now see, I am (at heart) a nice guy. I didn't retreat to Wales, so you don't have to kill me, even if nice guys do finish last!

TURKEY TO RUSSIA: I'll support you when I can.

JANUL: Fine, but will that still be when he can?

Hi ! My name is Roberto Della - Sala, and once again I'm on a tour of the United States of America. As well as visiting the usual tourist hot spots and so called tourist traps, I've found a convenient little spot in until now , a relatively unexplored part of the U.S.A., apparently known as COSTAGUANA.

I am going to spend the next few pages reliving some of the experiences that I have encountered so far in my stay, and if you are interested I hope you will hop on aboard and join the freedom express across continental U.S. of A. with me.

What I am about to describe next is not so much a vacation as a masochistic intent on self-destruction, and no doubt everything will become clear as I progress !!

The so-called vacation (in inverted commas would seem appropriate) started on a cold Tuesday morning on the 24th of March 1987. The date is totally irrelevant but no doubt someone somewhere will be interested.

Flight TW703 left the swirling fogs of London (British readers please note that I know and you know that there are no swirling fogs in London, but Americans seem to think that there are, so this is more for their benefit than it is for yours or mine) and was soon heading west across the pond and over the ice-packs surrounding Greenland or whatever that insignificant isl and is called.

For the first time in three previous visits my (well I refer to the plane as mine, but it in fact belongs to Trans World Airlines (c) (r) (e) etc.....) plane arrived at the (in)famous John F Kennedy airport on New Yorks periphery on time !!

The deal then was to stay on flight TW703 to Washington National leaving JFK (deceased) an hour or so later., but that would have been too easy so we all de-planed (a term that I learned only after my 8th flight in ten days) and went through the formalities of immigration.

Now I am in the fortunate / unfortunate position of being in possession of an indeffinate Visitors Visa.

It is fortunate in that it means I never have to apply for a Visa again, however it is unfortunate in that when my passport expires I have to carry two passports with me, the new one and the one with the visa in. No problem really except that U.S. immigration are ignorant of the fact that their embassy in the U.K./Britain/Great Britain/England adopt this policy !

Having explained the procedure to the official, and got through on sheer sweat and uncontrolled self-control (are you still with me ?) I happened to glance across at the baggage carousel to see my suitcase taking a spin.

This is normal practice if (a) your baggage is not supposedly checked through to Washington National/Dulles/B.W.I. (To my travel agent I dedicate this sentence who after four attempts managed to get me to the correct airport!) or (b) you thought your baggage was still on the plane.

Benumbed but not totally stupified I re-checked my baggage, and went in search of the T.W.A. terminal and then checked myself in, the time by now being 4p.m. and my flight due to take off at 4.10p.m. (16.10 if you are European). Having literally (spelt with an a instead of an e) run all the way there, we were boarded onto a bus and taken to the original terminal and plane with the same crew, only now that much fitter!

I know of at least two people who missed that flight, and would dearly love to have someone tell me the point of this charade.

Nine air hours later and five hours younger than I was when I started I arrived in Davis country.

Thursday 26th March still 1987 and I was on part two of my journey from Washington Dulles to Little Rock, via St. Louis (please mentally record the name St. Louis since it features several times in this epic), and lost another hour of my life to someone up there who should not only know better but also who should seriously think about giving me a break!! My plans on leaving good ole' Blighty were to spend 7 days gauging at a charming young lady by the name of Celese (measurements: top class secret only known to me!). However on the evening of Saturday, just before getting drunk illegally in a nice little bar by the name of the Saw Mill in Hot Springs, where an exciting day involves counting how many times you had thought about doing nasty things to Celese's body, I had a telephone call from Cindy, the sister of Celese, a little older than Celese and that much more experienced in certain fields akin to the adventures of Susanne as only reported exclusively in the wholly remarkable sine to which I am not only honoured to be allowed to write in, but also be-humbled, COSTAGUANA.

Fifteen hours later I was sitting in a modern self contained Condo (To British readers please note that a Condo and a Condom are two totally separate items, though the two may be used in line with each other.) in Houston Texas.

To get there though was a miracle. I had to fly from Little Rock to St. Louis wait five hours for a connecting flight, and then fly to Houston passing back over my original location, Little Rock. Alas no one told me that there were two airports in Houston, Hobby and Intercontinental. I invariably arrived at Inter, the one 1.5hours away from Houston!

To survive 6 flights in as many days it must have cost me an arm and a leg (metaphysically of course) in black coffee.

Anyhow MI solution to surviving is as follows ---- p.t.o. if European
over if American

When the invariably blue eyed, blonde haired T.W.A. stewardess comes round asking what you would like to drink answer as follows. State you would like a black coffee with sugar and a glass of orange juice.

It is important that the order is placed exactly as above since should you only order the coffee and not the juice, you could have a long wait on your hands !

The idea of the coffee is to keep you awake, and the idea of the juice is to get rid of the disgusting plastic sludge that is left in your mouth after having consumed the coffee, hereafter referred to as specimen A.

As for the sugar, it helps ... it helps do something it helps you believe you are still on planet earth since it will be the only thing the airlines have yet to get their grubby little paws on and that my dear fellow traveller is reassuring !!!!!

If by any chance you happen to be dead/psychotic/neurotic/or just plain stupid enough to enjoy Specimen tasting then you are probably in one of the afore - mentioned categories.

But enough of the coffee, and onto the brighter things in life like sex, violence and A.I.D.S., O.K. that's it you bunch of perverts !!

Houston is a MUST MUST MUST for any tourist - it's clean, it's beautiful and it's the third biggest city in the U.S.A.. It also happens to have a N.A.S.A. base there, though I don't recommend you take the 246 Bay Area Bus there since though the Visitors Advice Centre/center assures me it does exist I dear reader can assure you that it does NOT. However I concede that on paper it exists since on several occasions I saw wher it is supposed to stop, and intrigued at having located this piece of evidence, returned on two occasions when this bus was supposed to materialise.... alas it didn't ! After 5 days of sightseeing I was on my way again, this time to the abode of the 1986 Runestone Poll winner, and all time hobby hero, CvM in San Diego. To get from Houston , one must fly back to St.Louis, and therefore in the opposite direction to San Diego, to get a flight to San Diego.

It is my belief that the advent of the technological revolution threw common sense out of the window, since it is totally illogical.

(Incidentally, the correct word to describe the process by which you throw something out of the window is known as defenestration).

So having taken 8 flights in 10 days and lost 8 hours of my life to some unknown entity, and about to lose another hour when daylight saving time begins tomorrow morning (4-5-87) I know the answer to my continued sanity is the black coffee (shaken not stirred) followed immediately by the glass of juice !

In the next 7 days I shall be testing for further evidence of coffee addiction whilst en route to the Grand Canyon, San Francisco, and Los Angeles by Gray

Hound bus. And then its back to New York, from San Diego, via, yes you guessed it, St. Louis !

Before I end, a note to the British readers. I have of course taken the advise of Edwinna Curry, Junior Minister for Health, and constrained my sexual development to just holding hands, though I do clearly recall that she did not mention the location of where this practise should occur.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the following people :

Celesa for having a body worth dying for

Gindy for having a body worth living for

Fred, Inga and Kevin Davis for their hospitality

Conrad, Jeanne, Ross and Eric for being who they are

T.W.A. for making it all possible

To my employer for paying me far too much so that I could do this

To my mother for bearing me and conceiving me

To my father for having thought of the idea in marrying my mum

To my suitcase for being what it is

To the officials at JFK who took so much effort in thinking of my physical well being

To my heart and circulatory systems for keeping me alive

To anybody/thing I may have omitted to mention.

Issue Two of A Britons Guide to Airline Coffee will be out sometime in October, when I return from a trip to Egypt, so till then, take care, and see you real soon. And now over to the man who made this all possible CvM.....

Roberto Della-Sala

Roberto Della - Sala (4-4-87)

FRANK AND ERNEST



Bob Thaves

"Alas", thought Goodguif, as he contemplated the distant spikey crags, nasty smokes, and kinky stinks of the land of the Enemy. "It's a shame the boggies have to go to that foul place and never see the Sty again. Well, as long as they don't run out of potato salad, they probably won't notice much difference." Then, aloud, he announced, "Onward, me hearties! onward to the Foul Land of

EREHWON 131

EREHWON IS AN IRREGULAR SUBZINE WHICH IS INFLICTED UPON THE READERS OF COSTAGNIA AND POSSIBLY OTHER 'ZINES WHICH ALSO HAVE UTTERLY NO TASTE. THIS IS PANDEMONIUM PUBLICATION #898, EDITED BY ROD WALKER, 1273 CREST DR., ENCINITAS CA 92024. LETTERS ON SUBJECTS DISCUSSED HEREIN ARE WELCOME, AS WELL AS INTERESTING TIDBITS.

This will be something of a potpourri issue. Pending the publication of the Carbon-14 test results, a discussion of the Shroud of Turin is still in the works. Nextish will probably be a long-awaited (by me, anyway) discussion of one of the Great Things of the Universe: the Limerick. Part I, probably. I had begun to sponsor a limerick contest before ERE folded, and will start it up here. There will be prizes. \$\$ Still no letters--although in Connie's letter column we seem to be getting some action. Don't want to encourage me in this folly, eh?

MORE ABOUT DINOSAURS

I've just purchased a new book which, as Conrad can confirm, is a truly remarkable tome. It is David Norman, The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Dinosaurs (1985). The book's been remaindered and seems to be available at Crown for about \$12.95 (and must have sold originally for about \$30 or so). You'll recognize it from the cover: a mama Triceratops and her baby. Note that the dust jacket forms a wrap-around panorama with the inside cover illus...clever! Anyway, this book treats dinosaurs by families; for each group it gives color (guesstwork, of course) illus of major species, skeletal drawings, silhouettes showing comparative sizes with that of homo sapiens, photos of actual fossils and other goodies, a map showing where specimens were found, a detailed & informative text, and so on. A most excellent and thorough book! The author is, however, quite conservative in his approach to the subject. He still treats the dinosaurs as "reptiles", regards the seagoing dinosaurs (mosasaurs, plesiosaurs, ichthyosaurs, &c.) and the flying (non-bird) dinosaurs (pterosaurs) as separate groups altogether, and so on. He does discuss recent thinking in a chapter entitled "Controversies". His treatment of pros & cons is pretty even-handed. However, you'll want to read Robert Bakker's 1986 book (discussed in ERE 130), since there he deals with the "con" arguments and shows just how strong the case for warm-bloodedness, e.g., really is.

If you want to own only one book about dinosaurs, this is it! There is simply nothing else on the market which is so thorough, so beautifully illustrated (color on every page), so detailed (& yet non-technical in jargon) in discussion, and so generally informative. The language is for adults rather than children, but with a bit of explanation from an adult, any child can appreciate this book and learn from it (Conrad says Eric is thrilled!). At only \$13, it's a steal!

OTHER BOOKS RECENTLY GLOMMED ONTO

1 MACCABEES (Anchor Bible). Because the Protestants rather stupidly decided this book wasn't "inspired" (whatever that is), it got left out of the Bible read by a majority of Americans. That's too bad, because one of the most fascinating periods of Judean history is thus unfamiliar to a lot of people. There are 4 "books of Maccabees", of which the first 2 appear in the Catholic Bible. You needn't bother about 3 & 4 Maccabees, which are only of interest to specialists in the development of Jewish mysticism, and 2 Maccabees is much less useful as an historical text than 1. Like any book of the Bible, though, 1 Maccabees is hard to understand properly without some expert guidance. The Anchor Bible gives a great translation and lots of background material and notes. If you're interested in the Maccabean monarchy, this is a fantastic source. These books aren't easy to find, and I wait for them to show up in used copies. But you can buy them new from Doubleday.

[Aside from New Testament books, I'm accumulating a library on other sections of the Bible. I hope to have found a literary niche for myself by doing a series of historical novels on Biblical

subjects. Currently in the works is a novelized bio of Jesus, title uncertain. Also in the works is a huge (250K words) set mostly in 12th Dynasty Egypt (Gods Have No Mercy), but which also has several chapters set in Palestine with Abraham, Lot, and that crowd. Also planned is a (presently untitled) novel about King Saul (who was, in my opinion, a far better man than the amoral opportunist who succeeded him). Another planned is Witch of Witches (tentative title), a novel about the Queen of Sheba with a lot of fun with supernatural stuff. I had originally planned a novel-bio about Paul of Tarsus, but instead will probably use that material in my hoped-for sequel to the Jesus novel. Finally, there are several important people in the Maccabean period who'd make excellent novel subjects, and getting 1 Maccabees is a first step toward figuring out what I want to do and whom I want to do it to. Suggestions would be helpful....]

Michael Page (text) & Robert Ingpen (artwork), Encyclopedia of Things That Never Were. A bargain at its flat price of \$19.95, and certain to be remaindered by next year if you want to wait. An oversized all-color book about things of myth, legend, and literature. Nothing recent there: the newest works used seem to have been She and Wind in the Willows. The sources for mythical and legendary entries are particularly wide-ranging, however: they encompass all the usual stuff plus Australian, Japanese, and Amerind materials. There are 6 main sections about: the Cosmos; the Ground & Underground; Wonderland (fictional places); Magic, Science, and Invention; Water, Sky, and Air; the Night. There is a bibliography and an index; in all, 240 pp. This book owes a lot of its concept to Manguel & Gussakoff, The Dictionary of Imaginary Places (an interesting book with useful text & references, and really terrible & inaccurate maps). That is, the entries very pleasantly take their subjects seriously. On the other hand, the entries aren't always far-ranging enough. An article on "Drawings, Paintings, Portraits, etc" spends 12 of its 13 paragraphs on "The Portrait of Dorian Gray", to the exclusion of any other subject under that general heading. Too much, too much. The illus are very well done, probably more suited to general reading than to use as a reference. But at this price, worth getting, and worth waiting for if you'd like to buy a remaindered copy (which will probably be at the \$9-12 range, I'd guess). By the way, be sure to note that the dust-jacket is essential. The actual binding is completely blank, without even a title on the spine.

Atlas of the Bible (Reader's Digest, 1981). There is no completely satisfactory Bible atlas, but this one comes close, despite its populist origins and sometimes smarmy text. It is lavishly illustrated and the numerous maps are clear and informative. The book is possibly out of print now but copies often find their way into used stores. There are times when the maps seem to avoid showing political boundaries unnecessarily (although those of ancient states are notoriously uncertain). Those who like their maps more informative in that regard can use C.S. Hammond & Co.'s Atlas of the Bible Lands (a slim oversize paperbound) or Rand McNally's Historical Atlas of the Holy Land. Those who'd like the epitome of scholarly accuracy can turn to the Oxford Bible Atlas, now in its 3rd edition (I have the 2nd presently). I believe Joseph Rhymer's Atlas of the Biblical World can still be found remaindered at Crown. It's a little short on maps for its size, but it has interesting text & illus, a unique system for showing chronology, and good maps. Some maps are virtually unique, such as Egypt during the 22nd-23rd Dynasties and Josiah's kingdom at its greatest extent. But for an over-all reference for the general user, I'd recommend the Reader's Digest Atlas as the better source.

Donald Swann (music) & J. R. R. Tolkien (poems), The Road Goes Ever On. This song cycle published by Houghton Mifflin is probably no big news to Tolkien buffs. Less well-known, perhaps, is the fact that there is a Second Edition. It certainly caught me by surprise when I encountered it, remaindered, at Crown. The Second Edition has a new Foreword and even a dust jacket this time, but most importantly it has a new song (8th, last, in the cycle). This is "Bilbo's Last Song", a previously unpublished poem which Tolkien had given to his secretary, Joy Hill. It is in many ways Tolkien's own valedictory as well as the old hobbit's. This is a lovely book and well worth getting even if you have the First Edition. ¶ By the way, Caedmon Records has recorded the First Edition cycle on disc, with Tolkien doing some readings on the flip side. Alas, JRR isn't the most compelling reader in the world, but hearing the songs with the composer at the piano is a wonderful experience.

FRANZ VON PAPEN - Michael Puatilik

Franz von Papen came from a Westphalian landed family. His aristocratic background and personal charm made him very popular with President Hindenberg, who made him Chancellor of Germany for a few months in 1932. But no German Chancellor was ever chosen more frivolously.

Papen had been a minor politician for the moderate Catholic Center party, until a guy named Schleicher manipulated Brüning (who was the Chancellor from 1930-1932 and was also a member of the Catholic Center party) out of office and Papen in. Papen immediately proceeded to pick a cabinet of arch-conservatives. There hadn't been so many barons in the cabinet since the time of the Kaiser.

Papen wanted to appease the Nazis, so one of his first actions was to lift the ban on the S.A. and the S.S. Street fighting between the Nazis and the Communists resumed. Papen then used the army to crush the state government of Prussia in an illegal coup, on the grounds that Prussia was unable to keep order! Prussia had been the last bastion of democracy in the Weimar Republic.

The Catholic Center party got mad at Brüning's abrupt dismissal, and expelled Papen from their ranks. The only party that still supported Papen was the monarchist Nationalist party, giving him about 10% of the votes in the Reichstag.

This was obviously not enough to govern, so he asked President Hindenberg to dissolve the Reichstag and call for new elections. The elections were a landslide victory for the Nazis. Herman Göring became the Speaker of the Reichstag, and Nazi members of the Reichstag continually jeered at Papen. So Papen asked Hindenberg to dissolve the Reichstag and call for new elections again. Hindenberg signed the dissolution order and gave it to Papen. Papen was about to show it to the Reichstag when he realized that he had left it in his office. So he ran back to get it. When he returned to the Reichstag, Göring was introducing a motion of no confidence in Papen to kick him out of the Chancellorship. Papen stood up and waved the dissolution order to get Göring's attention, but Göring stared at the other corner of the Reichstag and ignored him. The motion of no confidence passed because the Communists voted with the Nazis.

It really made no difference, since the dissolution order had been signed before the motion of no confidence was passed. But Schleicher finally realized that Papen was incompetent, and got Hindenberg to remove him. Hindenberg then appointed Schleicher Chancellor, which he didn't want to be. Nevertheless, Schleicher tried his best to save the Weimar democracy.

He had a chance because the Nazis had lost 2 million votes in the second election. Also, the constant elections had bankrupted the Nazis. But Papen allied with Hitler, and persuaded Hindenberg to make Hitler Chancellor and Papen Vice-Chancellor. Hitler used his position as Chancellor to transform the country into a dictatorship in six months.

"ONLY THE DEAD CAN FORGIVE...."

That line has been used often in connection with the Holocaust. It was used again these past few days by Chaim Herzog; the Israeli leader spoke them on his return to the site of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, forty-two years after Herzog had been a member of the British Army unit which liberated it.

And so it seems as good a time as any, now that we're finally entering our own version of Holocaust Remembrance, to hear some words from a former Israeli; though too young to be a Holocaust survivor, he has undoubtedly known many of them. In any event, he certainly has some knowledge worth imparting.

RAM BEN-ISRAEL: "In Joe Zizek's letter ((from several issues past)), he wrote, 'Israel has proven that indiscriminate bombing is ineffective as a deterrent measure; if anything, it seems to intensify terrorist activity.' You, Conrad, added: 'The example of Israel is a good one, and utterly relevant.'"

"First of all, Israel does not do indiscriminate bombing. The Israelis always go out of their way to avoid civilian casualties, even if it means more military ones ((for them)). I can argue the point that if it weren't for this high regard for innocent civilians, the Israeli casualties in Lebanon would have been halved at least. The Air Force bombs specific targets, doing their best to miss civilian centres. Which is sometimes hard, since the terrorists purposely put their camps as close as possible to civilian centres.

"Second of all, if Israel did not hit terrorist centres, whether in retaliation or pre-emptive strike, terrorist activity would be far greater today than it is.

"Now, on to you, Conrad. You made a list of 'moderate' Arab/Moslem states. I guess you can call them moderates if you compare them to Libya or Syria. Compare them to the Western world, and they are radical. It is just that the degrees of radical vary. You are forgetting that some of the States listed are deeply religious. Every day in these countries the Koran is read, and reminds the people that the Jews and Christians are inferior to the Moslems. Hence there is a reinforcement of the hatred for a Jewish State that dares to compete with, and outperform, the Moslem ones. Their deserts are still barren; Israel has blossomed.

"You mentioned the Palestinians. I believe that Israel has done more (except maybe the Jordanians) to help the Palestinians than any Arab state has. To the Arabs, the Palestinians are a weapon to use against Israel and to be discarded when they are no longer of any use. Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia all fear an independent Palestinian State as much as, if not more than, Israel."

((Well-said, sir. I would state first in reply that I can't speak for Joe Zizek, but I do think that perhaps the term 'indiscriminate bombing' might better have been put as 'excessive bombing,' or something like that. It is possible to argue that Israel has reacted, or pre-empted 'excessively,' this is a matter of opinion. But I agree with Ram that 'indiscriminate' is not an appropriate term, and I'm sorry I didn't catch the distinction in the first place. 'Indiscriminate' means to me 'without regard for either the target or the result,' i.e., the U.S. napalm assaults in Vietnam or the firebombing of Dresden in W.W.II. (Or, to be fair, the current Soviet activities in Afghanistan.) 'Excessive' means to me 'more than essential.' Whether Israel needs to react militarily as they have, and to the extent

that they have, is a question which will be debated as long as there is a Moslem-Israeli confrontation. I suggest that we just don't know the answer. Han states that, if Israel didn't react with retaliatory and/or pre-emptive strikes, terrorism would be far more active. Maybe. And maybe not. To me, this is the classic Robert Frost "road not taken" syndrome; we've only had it one way, so how can we possibly know what would have happened the other way? Decide this one for yourselves. I would suggest only one thing to perhaps guide your judgment: There is only one Israel; there are at least twenty-five Arab and/or Moslem countries with the stated aim to eradicate the Jewish state. Now, it is certainly true that some of these countries (e.g. Ras-al-Khaima and Bahrain) are insignificant; it is also true that several others (e.g. Oman, Brunei and Morocco) breathe the fiery 'party line' but do absolutely nothing to back it up, probably on purpose. Still, they still breathe. And in any event there are plenty of nations that back up their bellowing, from the insanely radical (Libya and Iran) to the radical but otherwise pre-occupied (Iraq) to the so-called 'moderate' (Jordan and Saudi Arabia) and so on and so on. It is well worth noting that, to this day, only three countries have made any efforts to deal with, or make accommodation for, the Israeli State: Egypt (the Great One), Tunisia (which did so indirectly, by breaking relations with Libya for a variety of reasons that included 'military over-reaction to a negotiable problem' - Israel), and Oman (which broadcast its opposition to Israel and at the same moment acquiesced to the maintenance of U.S. military bases to defend Israel). Three other nations have waffled on the matter: Chad (which is of no importance, and in any case may be reacting to the Libyan invasion), Lebanon (which is in too much chaos to count), and the immensely significant Jordan. Still, there are a lot of unresolved problems that would make me skittish too if I were an Israeli. And so I suggest this: Before you criticize Israel for 'over-reaction,' what would you do in the present configuration?

((My list of 'moderate' Moslem nations was intended exactly as you perceived it: IN comparison. We know that some Moslem nations have leaders and/or policies that are absolutely insane, viz. Libya, Iran and South Yemen. But many others, for all their daily Koran-reading and implied vociferousness, have expressed (cautiously) a willingness to be rational. It strikes me that Israel would benefit from a willingness to listen to, and perhaps make some compromise accommodation with, the likes of King Hussein and Hassan, President Mubarak, Sultans Qaboos and Hassanali, and others of the similar stripe.

((As to the Palestinians, I suspect you're right; they've become a false issue. Israel has made amazing efforts to deal with them; some will cry "not enough," but I might point out that, as you say, only Jordan has seemed willing to make any efforts to help out. For the rest, the Palestine problem has become more of a weapon than a legitimate problem. No way around it, the displaced Palestinians have a problem; but, wouldn't it be nice if other States would approach the problem as "How can we solve it?" rather than "How can we use it?" The U.N. resolution on Palestine of a few years ago was commonly perceived, and exploited, as a condemnation of Israeli policy. IN FACT, it stated quite clearly that the concern was with the PEOPLE involved; it made absolutely no mention of the cause of those peoples' problems. Israel has in fact made some serious efforts to help the displaced Palestinians. Anybody else care to claim credit? Jordan and Egypt, take a bow; you've made major contributions. Morocco and Brunei, stand alongside; you've made useful proposals.

((Anybody else?))

HEAVEN AND HELL.

There was once a man. He had lived a good life and had been a kind man, so when he died he went to Heaven. There, he met God. But there was something that troubled him. So he said to God, "Please, God, could I see what Hell is like?" "Very well, my son," God said, "As you wish."

Instantly the man was in another place. He was in a beautiful field, and there was a slight breeze blowing. He walked through the field and came upon a forest. The forest, like the field, was also beautiful. It was tall and majestic. He walked through the forest and came upon a small house on a hill. The hill, like the field and forest, was extremely beautiful. The man walked up the hill, thinking to himself that surely this could not be Hell. It was far too beautiful and peaceful. The man opened the door to the house. He peered inside. The house consisted only in one small room. Most of the space within the room was taken up by a long dining table. Seated around the table was a variety of people. None seemed content or happy. In front of each person was a place-setting with plates, cups, bowls and all the other usual things. The only oddity was that all the utensils were extremely large, about three feet long. The man waited and watched for a while. He noticed that, whatever type of food the person wished for, it appeared on his plate. The room was so small, though, that each person had to shove the people on either side of him, and across from him, to be able to use his large utensils. In this way, a shoving fight would develop because everyone would try to eat at the same time. Eventually, the food would suddenly disappear and the fighting would stop. The man watched for a long time, but it seemed to him that no-one got even one bite of his food.

Finally, the man said to God, "God, I have seen enough misery. Please send me to Heaven." Instantly, the man was in the beautiful field again. He walked through the beautiful field and came upon the same majestic forest. He walked through the forest and came upon the same house on the same hill. He thought to himself how strange things were. Surely he must still be in Hell. He opened the door and peered in. The inside was exactly the same as before, except that the people were different and they all looked very content. He decided once again to watch the people. Eventually, the food appeared, and as it did, each person picked up his spoon, scooped some of the food on his plate, and slowly fed his neighbor.

- Nhan Vu

I AM REMINDED, somewhere in the the midst of my sensation that Nhan has overwhelmed my emotions with his astonishingly brilliant prose, of the following:

"Perched sideways on the circular wall bordering the well, in the full blaze of the midday sun, the rover of the distant seas and the fisherman of the lagoon, sharing between them a most surprising secret, had the air of two men conferring in the dark. The first word that Peyrol said was, 'Well?'

'All quiet,' said the other.

'Have you fastened the cabin door properly?'

'You know what the fastenings are like.'

On the other hand, there is a very fine basic communications software package, called ProCom, which is in the public domain and can be had for very little. It is significant, I think, that my local Radio Shack (Tandy) computer expert recommended it over his own house-brand (\$50) VideoTex. He told me where to get it, too, but I haven't had the chance yet; he says the only cost is the price of the disk. If and when I get it and use it, if it seems worth it, I'll offer it up here.

//////
 AND TO CLOSE UP SHOP FOR NOW, an exclusive 'scoop.' Roberto Della-Sala has been wandering the length and breadth of the United States these past three weeks, and he has one more to go. He has enjoyed most of it, and for our parts, we've enjoyed the hell out of the time he's spent with us; in particular, he has charmed the pants off the boys, and Ross especially (because of the intellectual attraction; the two have had some fine moments studying maps together, talking camping, etc.) has missed him every time he's gone on one of his side-trips from our house. (As I type this, Roberto is probably just about arriving at the Grand Canyon; he'll be back day after tomorrow for the last time this trip.)

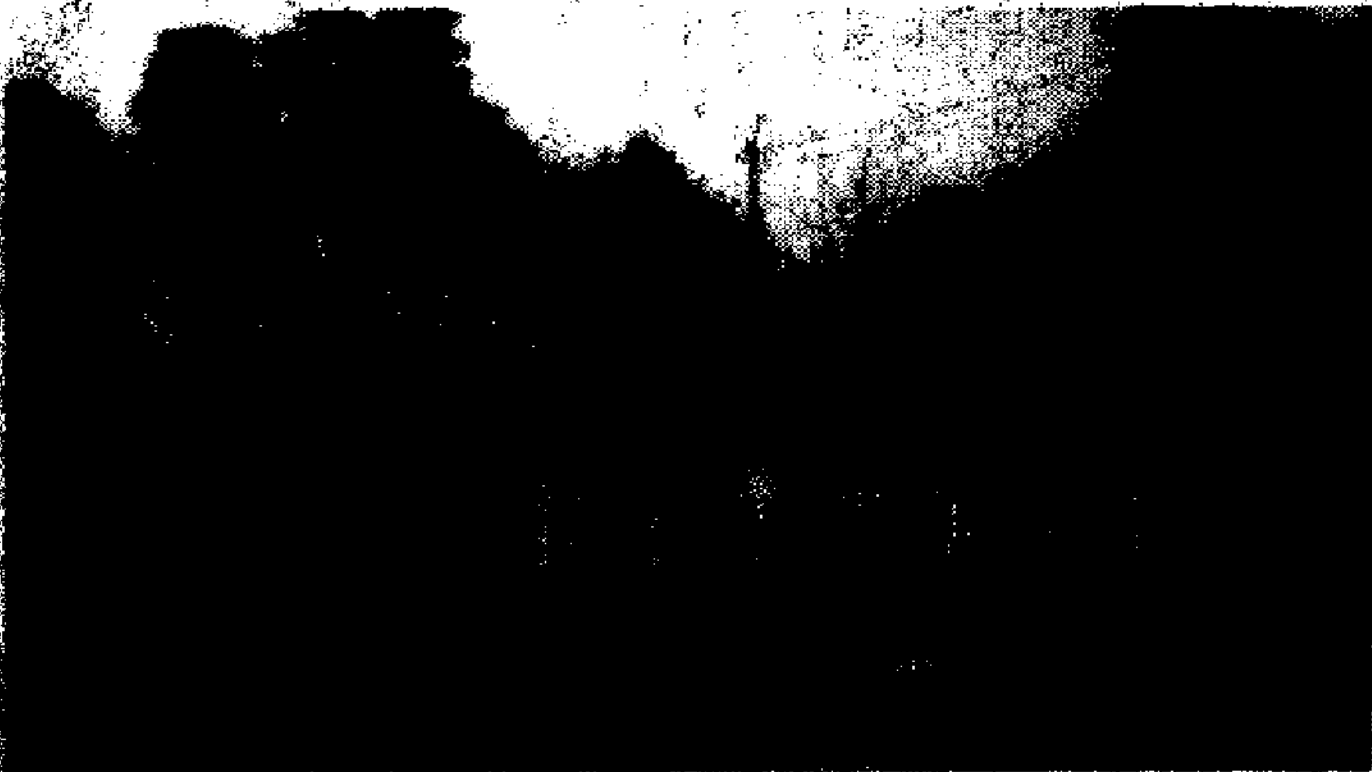
However, I'd like to tell you briefly of one very unfortunate experience which, as an American and a San Diegan, embarrasses the hell out of me and makes me almost as angry as Roberto is.

Three days ago Roberto hopped a Grayhound bus, bound for San Francisco. One hour out of San Diego, the bus routinely stopped at an Immigration Service checkpoint which is ostensibly set up to snare illegal Mexicans. Roberto had left his passport with us for safe-keeping, and when the officer learned this, he hustled Roberto off the bus, took him to a holding area. The bus driver said he'd wait; he told Roberto these things were quite routine, and it only took about three minutes to verify things with Immigration's New York computer. Fine so far, but then the immigration officer got nasty. He informed Roberto - without even having bothered to take his name or any other information - that the call would only be placed 'when it was convenient,' sent the bus on, and kept Roberto waiting for almost two hours, refusing all requests either to place a 'phone call or to let Roberto place one. Finally, just in time for the next bus north, the officer put down the magazine he had been reading the entire time, asked Roberto's name, rang New York, and three minutes later looked up and said, without any further explanation, "You're free to go."

I believe I know Roberto well enough to know he is not the kind to tell wild, embellished stories. Therefore, I am furious. It is one thing to enforce the law; it is quite another to flaunt power over a comparatively helpless tourist without explanation, discussion or apparent logic. And I'm sure the officer knew full well that Roberto has no real recourse, lacking witnesses and time in the country to pursue it, from a case of what might well be unlawful detention. However, letters of protest will be forthcoming - as soon as Roberto is safely back home - to the U.S. Embassy in London and to Congressmen Ron Packard, Bill Lowery and Jim Bates of San Diego. There is a substantial difference between 'upholding the law' and 'treating guests as pigs.'

In a sense, though, Roberto had the last laugh. He missed his bus in L.A. and had to take a later one; but the later one was an express, and Roberto wound up getting to S.F. two hours ahead of schedule!

until next time, love ya all....



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UNITED STATES POST OFFICE
Potrero, California 92062

Population of Potrero: ca. 250.

Location of Potrero: 40 miles E.S.E. of San Diego

Major features of Potrero:

NOTE: Potrero consists in exactly two (count them, two) actual buildings. The other one is a combination restaurant / gas station / general store. It is not exciting either.

THE SENDER OF THIS ROT IS

C. Friesner 'Uncle Greep' von Metzke
4374 Donald Avenue
San Diego, CA 92117-3813
USA



Carl Schurz

4c

USA



USA
25c

Jack London



FIRST

CLASS

GAMEFINDER:

You is playing? In game?
Goodie. You is looking
hence, as follows:

CASSOWARY	40
COLFAX	42
CRESCENDO	37
DIK-DIK	39
HOTELLERIE	37
NILGAI	38
PIMMALIONE	36

all other games
follow separately

THE RECIPIENT OF THIS ROT IS

Steve Knight
2732 Grand Ave. S, #302
Minneapolis MN 55408