

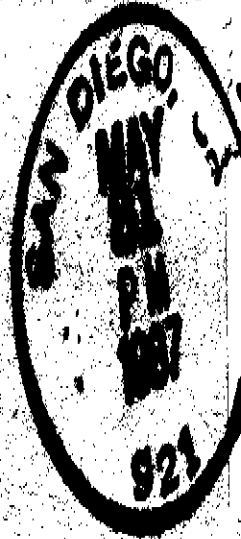
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RUMOR HAS IT THAT
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FIRST
CLASS

AND THAT'S TRUE!

TO:

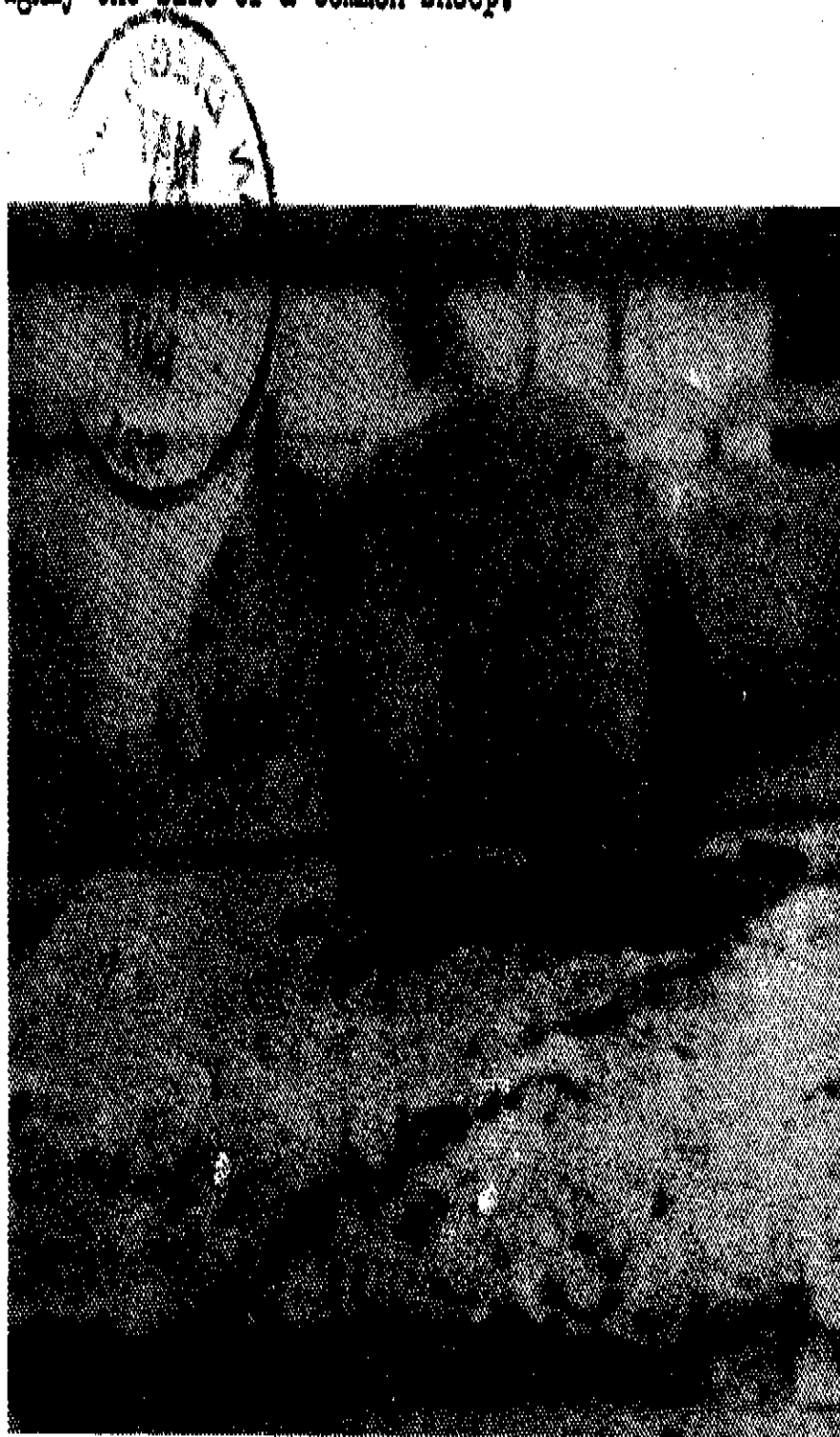
Larry Perry

PO Box 8416

San Diego CA 92102

(June is Bug Mark Berch Month. During that time, please send him a slogan.)

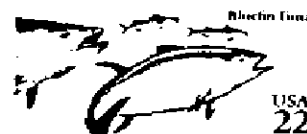
ONCE, LONG AGO, the San Diego Zoo had a wombat. COSTAGUANA once had a wombat game, too. But the game long since ended, and the zoo's exhibit long since died, and all we have left is this photo, taken about 1960 by my uncle Dwight. A wombat is roughly the size of a common sheep.



SPECIAL EDITOR-ATTACKED-BY-ROBOT EDITION!



COSTA
GUANA



Volume 11, Number 8

May 16, 1987

Yes, friends, your humble and gentle Editor, recently the victim of a vicious and unprovoked attack by an 850-pound robot, is really quite fortunate still to be alive, not to say unscathed. (Well, actually, I was very slightly scathed; I stepped on my own foot getting out of the way.) And as a way of celebrating my salvation, I give you herewith the first COSTAGUANA in quite some while that is not late.

And indeed, this is COSTAGUANA, a journal of postal gaming and perfunctory pontification, rendered unto the masses by Conrad Friesner "Uncle Connie" von Metzke, 4374 Donald Avenue, San Diego, CA 92117-3813, USA. This journal is published, insofar as possible, every four weeks, and is available only by subscription. The sub system works this way: You deposit some money with one of my agents. They in turn will deduct the actual cost of production and mailing of each issue from your balance, and keep the books. You'll get issues until your balance drops below the cost of one issue, at which point you either renew or send a fare-well card. I prefer the former course. Approximate cost per issue \$1.50, though it may vary according to pagination.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL SUBSCRIPTION MONEY BE SENT TO THE EDITOR. I have three agents, and money must go to one of them:

Doug Brown, PO Box 584, Penngrove, CA 94951-0584 (USA)
Mark Weidmark, 12 East Avenue, Brockville, Ontario K6V 2M7 (Canada)
Robin apCynan, Pen Parc, Gwynedd, Holyhead LL65 1PH (Europe)

From this issue forward, all address labels will contain your sub balance after mailing of the current issue. If ever that balance is below about \$1.50, you know it's time to renew.

The Editor's address is as above, and all moves (unless otherwise noted) and editorial material must come to him. Uncle Connie can be accessed by 'phone at home at (619) 276-2937, or at the office at (619) 273-4830 or 273-1208. You are welcome to 'phone moves, but I make no guarantees that I'll be available. As but one example, I have been spending a great deal of time lately with the 'phone on "disconnect" as I run my modem; while that's happening, you can't call in.

Incidentally, I will be glad to accept moves by computer; if you have a modem and want to send things through my modem, I'm game. I support MS-DOS, 300 baud, and you'll need to specify the time you plan to call and the configuration (parity, stop bits, etc.) you plan to use.

LAST ISSUE'S "DOOMSDAY" ESSAY proved, in some respects, premature, and I have taken pains to notify most of you of the alterations. For the general public, I now advise the revisions.

1. Owing to assistance supplied by my mother, bless her doddering old heart, I am now in a position to honor all existing sub credits NOW. Nobody has to wait. The new price (actual cost) is in force as from this issue, and deductions will be made from your old balance until it runs

out; then, and only then, will any funds you may recently have sent to one of my new agents be tapped.

2. As concerns players in COSTA games, under no circumstances need anyone feel compelled to resign merely because he/she declines to pump more money into a sub. At the very least, I guarantee to supply all players who do not otherwise receive the magazine with game report sheets until the conclusion of their game(s) - at no additional cost. If you'd like to sub, great! - I'd love to have you. But if all you want to do is finish off your game(s) and get the heck out, then you do have that option, and it won't cost you one cent more.

--| --| --| --| --| --| --| --| --| --| --| --| --| --|

THE RUNESTONE POLL is nearly over. If you haven't sent a ballot yet, do so now, please. Likewise the Cancer Society pledge that is running in tandem with the Poll. If you cannot locate a ballot or pledge sheet, fire off a note and I'll have one to you immediately. Note also: If you have already voted or pledged, but wish to revise your vote or upgrade the pledge, these actions are permissible also. I have ballots/pledge sheets available at a moment's notice for either action.

PREDICTION FOR PLEDGES: Sadly, I've noticed that quite a few publishers have sent out ballots but have not included pledge sheets. That makes me think that the total raised won't be anywhere near what I'd hoped (I was thinking in terms of \$1000). I now drop my prediction to \$600 - but I sure hope I was right the first time.

You know - if you haven't yet pledged, but would be willing to do so, you really don't have to use the 'form' supplied with the last issue. Just write a note. Specify the amount you're willing to pledge per ballot cast in the Poll (and think in terms of about 250 ballots or so cast), and then PLEASE be prepared to honor your pledge. Personally, I sent a pledge of 10c per ballot cast, meaning that if my prediction of 250 received holds, I'll owe \$25. But please - think of the cause, and the urgency, and pledge something according to your budget. If all you can afford is a penny a ballot, fine! That's about \$2.50, and that is considerably better than nothing. Pledges should be sent to Linda Courtemanche (one of the great ladies of the Western world, if you ask me), 1021 Penn Circle, Apt. E-402, King of Prussia, PA 19406-1159.

PREDICTION FOR THE POLL: You know, somehow I never get this right, but I'm going to try anyway. I never learn, I guess.

1. Blunt Instruments
2. Praxis
3. House of Lords
4. Magus
5. Europa Express
6. 'Zine Register
7. Bushwacker
8. Diplomacy Digest
9. Over There
10. Excelsior

This is not necessarily the order in which I want them placed; it is merely what I anticipate. Note that I have intentionally excluded COSTA (and also DIPLOMACY WORLD), both of which will probably make the top ten, but neither of which - in my opinion - ought to. Note also the omission of several superior efforts: PERELANDRA, FEUILLITONIST'S FORUM, CANADIAN DIPLOMAT, POLITESSE - there are others I could list.

I suggest they will miss the 'top' list owing to limited circulations, specialty interest, or (in PERELANDRA's case) accidental omission from the ballot.

Did you notice that one of last year's big winners, IT'S A TRAP, is nowhere mentioned? That was intentional. I cannot say why, but I have a "gut" feeling that - just as DIPLOMACY WORLD is going to get undeserved kudos - IT'S A TRAP is going to get undeserved short-shrift. Remember, this is a feeling; I cannot list a batch of logical feelings for it, and I certainly hope I'm wrong, since I love the thing. There's just some little bug that keeps telling me that a 'zine running a soccer league is going to lose votes in this Poll merely because of the association. Too bad. But then again, maybe (I hope) I'm wrong, because Steve's product is an unqualified gem.

Two final notes: (1) I note that Dick Martin has the same predictions as I for the first-place finisher. BLUNT INSTRUMENTS, which appeared out of nowhere a few months ago, is quite probably the most astonishing thing ever seen in this hobby. The editor imparts a wide range of interests, and writes about them with sophistication and impeccable literacy. The physical appearance is darned close to professional (which is to say, utterly gorgeous). And the editor, one Mieczyslaw Geryk, is a bloody IMMIGRANT - a young gent who, for the first 2/3 of his life, didn't even speak English! I mean, I'm sorry, I know I put my heart and soul into COSTA, and I know a lot of other people treat their own productions with the same loving intensity - but, my God!, we cannot possibly match such a phenomenon! (2) For my predictions for Places 2, 3 and 4, I have sorted them quite randomly. Each is a towering giant with a special personality unmatched by anything else in the hobby. HOUSE OF LORDS, a 'zine without games, has on the one hand the finest graphics ever put forth in this hobby, and on the other hand the most vital, interactive readership exchange seen in years. MAGUS may lack the graphics perfection, but it's still a real beauty, and it represents the ultimate in shared personality - not just the two young editors, but the readers, the guest-GMs (Don Williams does the funniest subzine in history!) - this isn't a 'zine, it's a happening. I only regret that it doesn't happen more often. And then there is PRAXIS. (Thank God!, there is PRAXIS!) I struggle at this moment for appropriate clichés - but even were I to find them, they would remain merely that - clichés. It is not possible to impart a sense of PRAXIS in a third-party manner. One must experience the mind of the editor, the literacy, the overwhelming breadth of interests, the instinct that turns a mere phrase to an event....

If one were to subscribe to any of these gems, and later express disappointment, I would brand said one an idiot. BUT. In all three cases, one must want to read. These are not 'zines for people who have to look in the 'phone book for the location of the nearest public library. They are only for people who have active brains, and comprehend multi-syllabic words, and concomitantly suffer from that rare but powerful malady known as 'humanity.'

BLUNT INSTRUMENTS: Bruce Geryk, 5748 S. Blackstone Ave., #206,
Chicago, IL 60637

HOUSE OF LORDS: Dick Martin, 26 Orchard Way N., Rockville, MD
20854

THE HOBBY ACROSS THE POND

As many of you know, I'm very fond of British 'zines. So are some others among us, and one person who particularly piqued my interest was Derwood Bowen, who related his struggles to get even one copy of one of the better British efforts. So, several months ago, I packaged up some older issues and sent them on, and asked if he'd care to review them. He responded (last November!) with the following first installment of what I hope will prove to be a series - and I promise, Derwood, I won't push you into the wings again!

I should note in advance that, among the things I sent were copies of MAD POLICY, my own long-time favourite. Unfortunately, I sent him copies produced when the Editor was going through some severe personal trials, thus they were drastically reduced in size and content. Things are better now, but when Derwood wrote this, he didn't know that.

Okay. Your turn, Der.

Mad Policy by Richard Walkerdine 13 Otley Road, Hitchin Herts SG5 2AZ

Conrad raved about this one. So I thought I'd check it out. Now, I must admit that I expected a world beater. Costaguana is the standard by which I was judging this. If Uncle Connie says it is good, I am expecting something along the lines of Costaguana. I was disappointed. If I had just received a copy or two of the darn thing, I certainly would not have had such high expectations. But, unfortunately for Mad Policy, I expected a British Costaguana. Having said all this, I shall try to review the thing as it is, and not as I expected it to be.

The British hobby, like the American hobby, has its share of inside material. There are things in Mad Policy (indeed in the other British zines as well) that refer to people or events which are assumed to be common knowledge. I am sure that as I follow the British hobby I will pick these things up. But right now, some of the stuff is lost on me. This is not a complaint. I am only stating a fact which anyone who is interested in participating in the British hobby might want to be aware of.

Now the zine itself. Richard has a good sense of humor and is actually a good writer. The latest issue has a humorous little piece done as a take off on Lord of the Rings. The letter column is quite good. They discuss various and sundry issues (computers, the Gladys Poll). There are lots of games. He did a review of a concert in one of his issues (Queen, Status Quo, and INXS). If you are looking for good letters, some humorous writing, and games, give this one a try. I have signed on for a sub, so I'll be in for the next several issues.

Denver (Glen) Glover Rogerson, 51 Cornwall Rd. Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8L5

Glover Rogerson is one of Cathy Ozog's favorites, so I am glad that Conrad included two of his in the packet he sent me. His style of writing is unique. He has his own expressions, and uses slang unfamiliar to me. I expect that I would eventually catch on. I like this one. Glover is into music, and there are discussions about various and sundry groups and artists here. There is a portion of inside stuff here, too, but I expect I can catch on. I am going to sub to this one myself.

((As I said, I'm sorry Derwood's first impression of MAD POLICY was a weak one, and that's entirely my fault. I suspect he's much happier with the issues from his sub than with those samples I sent....))

((Next time, I hope we'll have more (Der?) - I'd like to see his impressions of such giants as WAR AND PEACE, C'EST MAGNIFIQUE, etc.))

.. .. .

RECENT EXCHANGES on computer with a new friend, John Francis, have led me to the following Best Versions of the Bruckner Symphonies list:

F Minor (Study-Symphony): London Sym., Schönzeler +

Symphony #0 - Concertgebouw, Haitink

Symphony #1 - Vienna Symphony, Adler (Vienna version) %
 Vienna Symphony, Andreae (Linz version) %

Symphony #2 - Concertgebouw, Jochum

Symphony #3 - Cleveland Orch., Szell (orig. version)
 - Vienna Symphony, Adler (revised version) %

Symphony #4 - Munich Phil., Inbal (orig. version) +
 - N.Y. Phil., Walter (revised/final version)
 - Vienna Phil., Knappertsbusch (Loewe version) %

Symphony #5 - Philharmonia, Klemperer (orig. version)
 - Vienna Phil., Knappertsbusch (Schalk version)

Symphony #6 - Philharmonia, Klemperer

Symphony #7 - Süddeutsches Rundfunkorch., Rosbaud %

Symphony #8 - Munich Phil., Inbal (orig. version) +
 - Concertgebouw, Van Beinum (revised version) %
 - Munich Phil., Knappertsbusch (Loewe version)

Symphony #9 - N.Y. Phil., Walter (orig. version)
 - Vienna Symphony, Adler (Loewe version) +%

+ - Unique performance

% - Monaural only

PLEASE NOTE that this issue will be rather stream-of-consciousness in order to use everything I want to use, as it comes to my attention from sorting my old boxes of material. Thus, we now switch to

BRIAN LONGSTAFF: "Kurt Waldheim: No proof has ever been offered that he was a participant in Nazi atrocities against Yugoslav partisans. The German paper that claims to have uncovered this information is well known for clinging mud on rumour alone - without proof.

"More frightening is the fact that the National Socialist Party is making a comeback in Germany - and England!!!"

((My point precisely about the resurgence of the Nazi party - if we don't keep hammering away at the truth of the Holocaust, some of these nuts are going to gain a real foot-hold, and then - here we go again! Similar groups have been extant in America for quite some while; there is an American Nazi Party and various neo-fascist white supremacy groups; there is also an institute in Los Angeles, calling itself the Foundation for Historical Accuracy or something equally asinine, which spends its time trying to prove that there never was a Holocaust, that assertions of six million dead Jews is merely Communist propaganda designed to help enslave us all....

((I've no idea how much credence you Brits - or the Germans - place in such nut-groups. Over here, they are almost universally laughed at. They have a few followers, and it is well worth being wary of them, but in the main they are so outrageous in their claims that they attract only the kind of nut-case who would be over the edge anyway.

((As to Pres. Waldheim, the evidence thus far is admittedly circumstantial, but it mounts by the day. Thus far, however, there is nothing conclusive to brand him an actual War Criminal. The biggest problem thus far encountered is the nagging question: If Waldheim's record was a blameless one in atrocities, why did he consider it necessary to lie about it? He claims he was hospitalized for injuries during the period of cited atrocities against Greek and Yugoslav Jews and Partisans. It has now been conclusively proved that he was not in hospital, but was present and active on the staff of the General who was eventually executed for those atrocities - Gen. Alexander Lohr. This still does not make Waldheim a war criminal, but it is a very suspicious series of lies and revelations, and I kind of think that had Dr. Waldheim been honest from the outset, the matter would have died a quick and unceremonious death. Hoisted on his own petard, eh?

((Only once has Waldheim actually been listed as a war criminal. That was in 1947, by the resurgent Yugoslav government, which as a matter of course listed every German known to have been in the country at the time of any conceivable atrocity. Thousands upon thousands of names were on that 1947 list, ranging all the way down to privates and mess orderlies - eventually they were winnowed down to rational proportions, and Waldheim did not appear on the revised lists. Further, it must be noted that Yugoslav authorities knew full well of the presence of his name on the 1947 list at the time Dr. Waldheim was elected U.N. Secretary-General, and chose to ignore the fact; there is absolutely no indication of any hanky-panky in this regard. Yugoslavia knew, felt it was moot, and proceeded to co-sponsor Waldheim's nomination.

((I suggest that the full Waldheim story is a long way from resolution. In the meanwhile, however, it might be instructive to present the following, which my friend Gene Sanger generously gave me. It is reprinted from the newsletter of the Documentation Center of the League of Jewish Survivors of Naziism, dated 31 Jan. 1987, and was written by Simon Wiesenthal:

MY PERSONAL COMMENTS ON THE CASE OF DR. KURT WALDHEIM:

I must presume that my position on the case of Waldheim was not understood by some of my friends. When the "Waldheim Case" was brought up, I did not initiate it; it was the product of a short interplay between a few members of Austria's Socialist Party and representatives of the World Jewish Congress. Thus, the WJC called Dr. Waldheim a war criminal in advance, and presumed that behind the untruth Waldheim told about his military career they would find the proof for crimes committed which they were sure existed. Now the World Jewish Congress was forced to put out its feelers everywhere in order to get proof for Waldheim's guilt, and they really did receive a number of records and documents which had been signed or initialled by Waldheim.

But not a single document has been found in which there is proof of the accusations that Dr. Waldheim committed, ordered or suggested crimes. And Dr. Waldheim lost his credibility because of his assertions that he had known of nothing.

When the World Jewish Congress disclosed that the Yugoslav government had put Dr. Waldheim on the List of Suspected War Criminals which had been deposited at the United Nations end of 1947, I made an appeal to the Yugoslavian government at once to publish all records on Dr. Waldheim still available in Yugoslavia. I repeated this request twice and during a visit in New York I had the opportunity to speak with the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Pérez de Cuellar. He assured me that he, too, would make a request to the Yugoslavian government to publish all available records on Dr. Waldheim. Unfortunately, his intervention remained unsuccessful as well. Yugoslavia refused any such action.

In an interview with the Austrian weekly magazine "Profil," the Director and the Secretary-General of the World Jewish Congress threatened the Austrian people with "Six Years of Bitburg" and all persons carrying Austrian passports trouble ahead in case Dr. Waldheim should be elected. Collective threats are incompatible with Jewish ethics, and they ignore the fact that for 2000 years Jews have been victims of collective threats and collective accusations. This threat by the WJC caused a wave of anti-Semitism which had not been anticipated in New York. After all, today 70% of the Austrian population was born after the war or were little children when the war was over. Thus, we received telephone calls and letters from many young people; they especially could not understand why they were being threatened. Some of them emphasized that their parents had not been Nazis as well. Not only our office, many other Jewish organisations received letters with these questions, and the anti-Semites and neo-Nazis made use of it. I myself was asked about my position on collective threats. Now, anybody familiar with me knows that I believe only in individual guilt, not collective guilt, and I share this opinion with the whole civilised world. When the Viennese Jewish Community alerted the World Jewish Congress on the results of their remarks, they were informed that they and their 7,000 members might as well emigrate from Austria....

(Five months after the elections, the Israeli Ministry of Justice came to a conclusion in the course of a question-and-answer period in the Israeli Parliament, on the basis of even more documents. The Israeli

WELL, I'VE GONE BACK TO DRINKING, SO HERE IS MY WOBBLY VERSION OF

COStAGUNA

Volume Seven, Number 8

April 1, 1987

Hello there, hic. This is CoStAGUNA a magazine journal of postal DIPLOMACY and other discussing things published by Conrad von Wetzke, PO Box 4374 Donald Ave San, Diego, CA 92117-3813 usa (belch). In these pages we run games of postal diplomacy and their variants and also a few games of Railway Rivals which is the invention of Wails's David Whatts, and maybe with a little lucke (heh heh) and some money we can run John Luecke's RAILS THROUGH THE ROCKIES one of these days, but don't hold your breath unless you're prepared to play, which I hope you will please.

Subscriptions are at cost, send a deposit and a deduction will be made per issue according to what I have to pay the bloody printer and post office. ALL MONEY GOES TO DOUG GROWN. He lives at POBox 584, Penngrove, CA 94951, which is a hell of a funny place to live considering that the P.O. Box is roughly 3x4 inches and Doug is roughly 72x28 inches. Perhaps Lynne uses a crowbar?

GAME OPENINGS I don't have any but if you want I can open seventy-three sections of Diplomacy with a game fee of oh what the heck pay what you feel or feel like paying to Doug. and we can also have railway Rivals until we are blue in the face (that's slightly up above the collarbone) because DAVE HAVE whoops SENT me every bloody map in existence and my closet are oops is overflowing. (Did you know that 'oops' is a legitimate command in TRINITY?) (Did you know also that 'Go git yo' ass in gear!' is a legitimate command in slavery?) and so lets ' get on to the games.

ILL CRESCENDO game US 48600+ oh who gives a flying one....

DYFED D(avid Watts, quasi-purplish-puce): A54-A53. A53-A54. A54-A53. and so forth

PISTOLS PULLERS Paul)(Gardnergreen: A54-A53A53oh, I said that well Q12 then, and if you don't like it go back to A53 and stuff it.

DEUTSCH (Brian Incredibly-Extended-Sexual-Appendage): RedA2:-A3-A9-A10-A11-A12-A13-A14-A15 goddamn it Brian why don't you just list the end-point? - A16-A17-A18 oh well okay, Brian ends at A99. Not bad work for throws of 2-2-2) .

HOHO--HO (Dugg Brown, brown- oh kee-RIST how obvious can you get?!)-
Butte to A54 oops wrong; m,pp

HO HO HO (Doug Brown, brown) (how obvious can you get!?) H9-H32
and you figure out ~~how~~, I'M busy.
How

WITH THIS ISSUE comes a second copy of the Bunestone Poll ballot. This may seem like an extravagant waste of paper - I just sent one of these last issue - but there is a serious point to it. It occurs to me that the nature of my previous issue may have led a lot of people to toss away or put aside the "filler" while they coped with my Big Bombshell - writing messages of support, worrying about the future of your games, trying to figure how to avoid losing sub credit, trying to find the (unpublished) address for Doug Brown - in other words, the immediate problems, not the ones due in June. So - to avoid any loss of potential votes via this syndrome (which at least three people have specifically confirmed as valid) - I enclose a second ballot. If you haven't used the first one, or someone's reprinting in another xyn, please use this one now.

I am not reprinting the Cancer Society pledge sheet, but I would remind you of it as well. Make a pledge (either a fixed amount or a per-ballot-cast amount, keeping in mind that we may see 250-300 ballots cast); help fight America's #1 disease. (AIDS may be catching up, but it ain't there yet.) My own pledge is 10c per ballot cast, and I sincerely hope you follow my lead. You don't need a formal "application" to pledge; just drop a note to Linda Courtemanche, 1021 Penn Cir., Apt. E-402, King of Prussia, PA 19406, stating your pledge. She'll do the rest.

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A SPECIAL BIT OF JOYFUL NEWS

Joan Extrom and Ken Corbin are expecting their second child later this year. (September, is it?) This means, of course, that Samantha will soon have a little twerp to torture and blame for everything that happens in the house. But, for Ken and Joan, it also means a lot of diapers, a lot of sleepless nights, a lot of re-childproofing, and a hell of a lot of fun and joy. I take great pleasure in publicly wishing them well on their transition from an odd-digit to an even-digit family.

// //

DEDICATION

Occasionally I dedicate issues. I do so rarely, and only when some extra-special emotion wells up when I sit down to compile the masters. Such an event has occurred, and will be chronicled here.

This particular dedication has a great deal of background, but substantial portions of it are very private, and so we won't have one of my usual glowing expansive essays. What we will have is this mere statement: When, over the many years, I've needed a friend for ANY reason, I had one. Whether I used him or not is irrelevant; I knew he was there, and he knew I knew. And the reciprocal is every bit as true.

There are those who insist that this hobby has something to do with games. Of course. But for quite a few of us, that is the least of our worries; the friends, the relationships, the reciprocity of support in good and bad times, all things of that sort are paramount.

I am a man of many acquaintances and few deep friends - I'm too much a loner for the latter. But I do have a few, and they are universally wonderful people. And they mean a lot to me, as I hope I do to them.

This issue is respectfully dedicated to the longest-standing friend I've made through this hobby - twenty years now, give or take. And after all this time, he deserves at least some expression of my warmth and admiration.

FRED C. DAVIS, JR. - I salute and embrace you.

ON ENCOUNTERING A SLICE OF MY CHILDHOOD

When I was two or three years old, and continuing until we left San Francisco in my tenth year, one of the great "thrill" outings I loved to share with my father was a trip to the Oakland railroad yards. We'd ride the ferry to the East Bay, wander into the rail terminal, and watch the trains arrive. Though my dad travelled a lot, we'd manage one of those trips every few weeks, and I grew to look forward to them with a real passion. In the interim weeks, I'd watch the street-cars pop their noses in and out of Twin Peaks Tunnel (in Central S.F.) and dream of the next trip my dad would make to the Oakland "real trains."

When I was five, I took my first (and only, for another 30 years) trip on a train - from San Francisco to the Nevada border. At the age of 43 I do not have very many clear, personal memories of my early childhood, but of this trip I have several. Fear of the overhead bunks. The bright white jackets of the porters against their universally dark faces. The endless fields of green grass and cows - my God, are there really that many cows? - east of Stockton. (I was not, of course, sophisticated enough yet to look at all the cows and realize how "Stockton" got its name.) And, for one stretch of the trip, I was permitted to go up and ride in the locomotive with the engineer - I even got to blow the whistle! Ah, how liability insurance has changed the world....

When I was six, I got my first model train set. That was also the year I learned that there was no Santa Claus, because I caught my dad in the garage making the train platform. He covered up, of course, but when I wandered out Christmas morning and saw the same silver-painted plyboard that he'd been working on a week before.... Anyway, that Lionel set (operating cattle-car; operating crossing-gate - courtesy of our best friends, Esther and the late Phil Dutton; operating semaphore signal - courtesy of my aunt and uncle, the late Gretchen and Dwight Gray - and speaking of 'late,' I distinctly recall that Gretchen and Dwight were inevitably late to everything, thus that was the final present I received that Christmas) stayed with me into my mid-teens, at which time - my interests having shifted - I somehow arranged a 'trade' of the train for two ten-gallon aquariums and some accessories to enhance my burgeoning empire as a breeder of tropical fish. For the nonce, the train bug was dead.

Let us now shift our scene to San Diego. Aside from cities without rail service at all (are there any?), San Diego has got to be the least train-oriented place on earth. Although it is the eighth-largest city in the U.S., with a population above one million, it is served by exactly one (count it, one) railroad track, which in turn goes exactly one - count it, one - place: Los Angeles. A visit to our rail depot is equivalent to a tour of the morgue. You can, LITERALLY - I once tried it - drop a dime and hear it reverberate. And yet, any city with a million people is going to have a few train buffs running around, if only by coincidence - retired rail employees, people living an historic fantasy, people who were given Lionels when they were six....

For those types, in the beginning, was the Balboa Park Miniature Railroad. This is a train ride, adjacent to our famous zoo, on which adults (\$1) and children (50c) can putt about a small corner of our huge central Balboa Park along a 3/4-mile, figure '8' track in an electric passenger train - open-air cars, open-air locomotive, approx. 1/10 scale, and somewhat reminiscent of an amusement park ride. Wind round the trees, go over one simulated trestle, go through one simulated tunnel while the 'engineer' blows a simulated whistle, keep your hands and feet inside at all times. Fun. A lot of fun, even, on a nice day with small kids. But this is not a train, it is a ride. Afterward, one can go next door to the merry-go-round and have even more fun, but one has still not re-lived the thrill of the rails as they once were....

Then came the San Diego Model Railroad Museum, a fabulous exhibit set up in an old exhibition hall in the middle of the same park, where a gathering of model train clubs has pooled resources to establish a monumental working showpiece. Model train layouts of every description and every known track gauge are on exhibit, and club members run the trains for the edification of spectators and the glee of young and old alike. There are sixteen separate layouts, the largest of which (twelve separate trains) covers 2000 square feet. Practically everything is built from scratch by club members; aside from the Lionel layout, there is very little commercial purchasing in evidence. It is an immensely rewarding moment.

And finally, there was the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum. With the accidental advent of this institution in ca. 1977, all scale models were put aside, all amusement park concepts were discarded. This, my friends, is the real thing. This one is a TRAIN. No replicas. No imitations. No recreations. Only full-size actual rolling stock, the same things that I remember from my ride to Lake Tahoe in 1949. And, owing to an Act of God ten years ago, it is possible not only to look at these things, it is possible also to ride on them. Comes complete with guided instructional tour and a volunteer to answer queries.

Here's how. I stated earlier that San Diego is served by just one rail line, from Los Angeles. Until 1976, this was not true. Back then, a second track served the city, a "spur" line originating in San Diego and winding over the mountains to Yuma, Arizona, with stops in several places on both sides of the Mexical border. It was strictly a freight line, though until about 1968 a few passengers were occasionally allowed in the caboose. The train ran twice a week - out on Monday and Thursday, back on Wednesday and Saturday. Known as the San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railway ("Shortest Line East"), it was nicknamed "The Impossible Line" because of the many spectacular bridges that traversed the many steep rock canyons in the high mountain desert of central San Diego County. The largest and most famous, across Carrizo Gorge near Jacumba, sported a bridge over a mile long (in a sweeping curve) and 700 feet high in the centre.

But for all its spectacle and ambition, the "Shortest Line East" was never a real commercial success. It was built against the belief that San Diego would become a major port of entry, or exit, for goods entering or leaving through our harbor. To this day, this dream has never materialized; Los Angeles is, and always has been, the major point of entry/exit for southeastern California. "The Impossible Line" was built against a future that never happened. At first, it held its own as a minor enterprise waiting for the big time, but as costs escalated and revenues didn't, it became a distinct drain on the owners' pocket-books. Toward the end, repeated proposals surfaced to shut down the operation, all of which were vetoed by various regulatory authorities.

All, that is, until the Year of the Great Flood.

1976 was not really that wet a year in San Diego; against an average annual rainfall of just below ten inches, 1976 brought only a bit more than eleven. The trouble was, in 1976 the rain came all at once; four of the eleven inches fell in the space of one week, and to top it off they fell near the end of the season, meaning that all natural drainage channels were already soaked when the deluge hit. In those mountain canyons through which "The Impossible Line" ran, heavy runoff could easily prove disastrous, and in February 1976 it did. Flash floods developed suddenly and descended out of the hills; they triggered mudslides that killed eight people, washed out half of the main highway east (Interstate 8), and destroyed two of the railroad bridges that carried the trains. After filing a cost-analysis of reconstruction vs. anticipated revenue, the San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railroad was granted permission to cease to be.

(Note: In late 1977, the rights to "The Impossible Line" were sold to a rather flighty consortium of investors; this conglomerate proceeded to rebuild

the bridges and attempt a restoration of service. But the hiatus had taken its toll of an already-iffy operation, and the revival died in late 1978. Rumor has it that it was intended as a tax write-off all along; if so, it was certainly a speedy one.)

Following the unsuccessful revival, the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum came on the scene in full force. This non-profit group of rail buffs had in fact been around for some while; dedicated to preserving "railroad heritage," they had been responsible for publishing a few quality books and pamphlets (including an excellent history of "The Impossible Line"), and for acquiring and exhibiting in various places a few pieces of classic rolling stock. But now the trustees saw a chance to do something Really Big. They saw an entire real railroad more or less up for grabs, and they wanted it. So they scratched about for some serious funding - and got it - and then applied to take over the San Diego and Arizona Eastern in its entirety. Track, right-of-way, stock and all.

They did not succeed entirely, but they wound up with a whale of a compromise. Those portions of track in metropolitan San Diego were denied them, owing to plans - since fulfilled - to establish an inter-urban trolley line on the old route. Further, the track over the border in Mexico could not be acquired for (it is claimed) reasons of outrageous prices and unacceptable access terms being demanded. Or maybe it was the idiotic bureaucracy of the Immigration Service. Whatever....

But they did get all the rolling stock (much of which they later re-sold), outright title to 27 miles of track, twenty-nine acres of land adjacent, and long-term options on up to about 50 miles more of the existing line. And they got right-of-way in perpetuity to use the otherwise committed track for purposes of acquiring new exhibits and bringing it up the mountains to the new museum.

This was plenty. On the land they had, they built a workshop, museum building and roundhouse. By agreement with the donors, the leftover money (remember they had originally bid to buy the whole railroad) was used to construct buildings, improve track, and buy exhibits. They even had enough to purchase four mini-switch engines for yard work, and a 50-ton stationary crane for lifting inoperative material. Operating almost entirely with volunteer labor, the Society set about restoring its possessions and providing a viable exhibit complete with real-life train ride (weekends year-round, expanded to five days in the summer) as both an "attraction" and a fund-raiser (tickets are \$5.50). There is also a gift shop and bookstore, and donations are actively accepted. So are supporting memberships. With the exception of the obvious support professionals - accountant, attorney, secretary, etc. - and basic overhead - lights, postage - all funds revert to the Museum. The result is one of this area's more exotic, yet massive, success stories.

A visit to the museum, assuming one has an interest in railroads (because that's all they have!) is a fascinating outing. Aside from the train ride, one can view (and climb about) a dozen variegated locomotives and a wide variety of rail cars. One can visit the workshop, and see the restoration process in action. And, on any given day, there will likely be a plethora of long-time members hovering about, eagerly awaiting any questions thrust at them; they have answers, and they have an interest in conveying them; and they are not all old codgers waiting for some poor sucker to listen to a drivelling about the "good old days." They are articulate, and knowledgable, and fascinating. One of the most interesting gentlemen we met during our visit was a fellow who cannot be more than thirty; his personal recollections of the "age of steam" (or coal, or oil) are obviously nil. And yet, for about half an hour, he sat with us on a bench outside the museum - Ross sat on his lap, Eric sat on mine - and told us about the trains we were seeing, their uses, their history, their place in the museum. Ross and I were enthralled. Eric was bored, but that's Eric for you...

In the museum these days are: One steam locomotive (non-operative); two coal-burning locos with tenders (one operative, but the price of coal is so outrageous these days that it cannot realistically be run); four oil-burning locos (two operational); and five electric diesels. Of the latter, all five work just fine, and two of them alternate as the power behind (or perhaps in front of) the train rides.

The train ride itself is quite an experience, whether or not one has ever ridden the rails. The museum is located in the town of Campo, fifty miles from the centre of San Diego; it is there that the Museum owns all its acreage, has its displays, and begins its rides. Trains depart thrice a day, and the ride lasts the better part of two hours. First, one boards - and finds a seat on one of the four passenger cars in use on the ride: A former army troop car, an old military-train kitchen-car (signs designate the immense cast-iron oven as "capable of cooking for six hundred"), a 1950's daylighter, and a 1957 Pullman with berths sealed and seats added. The ride goes a mere seven miles at this writing, from Campo to the mountain pass known as Miller's Creek (population zero, but there is a crystal-clear stream under a trestle here). First, the train backs off the siding in front of the museum. Then, the riders sit for twenty minutes while the engine runs five miles west to the runaround at Potrero, reverses, and comes back to re-couple at the front of the train. And then it is up the hill to Miller's Creek - maximum speed twelve m.p.h., owing both to the steep incline and the non-professional status of the engineers (all are unpaid Museum members, who get 12 hours of training before taking the train on its run). Stop again. Ten minutes for the engine to uncouple and go to the Carrizo run-around, then back to re-couple at the front (formerly the rear) and take us back to Campo. And as we go - either way, no matter - the sights are spectacular! Wildflowers galore, all over everywhere! Rolling high desert hills, stark and rugged yet gorgeous in their sporadic greenery; the occasional isolated farmhouse, invariably white with a brownish-red roof, reminding us that people live here too; and, as we close in on Campo again, three crossings of the main highway, with the locals in their pickups tooting horns and waving and wishing us urban tourists well as we traverse the countryside and soak up the unpolluted air (note: there are no windows in the coaches on the train-ride; nevertheless, they do run in the rain - I can imagine it now!).

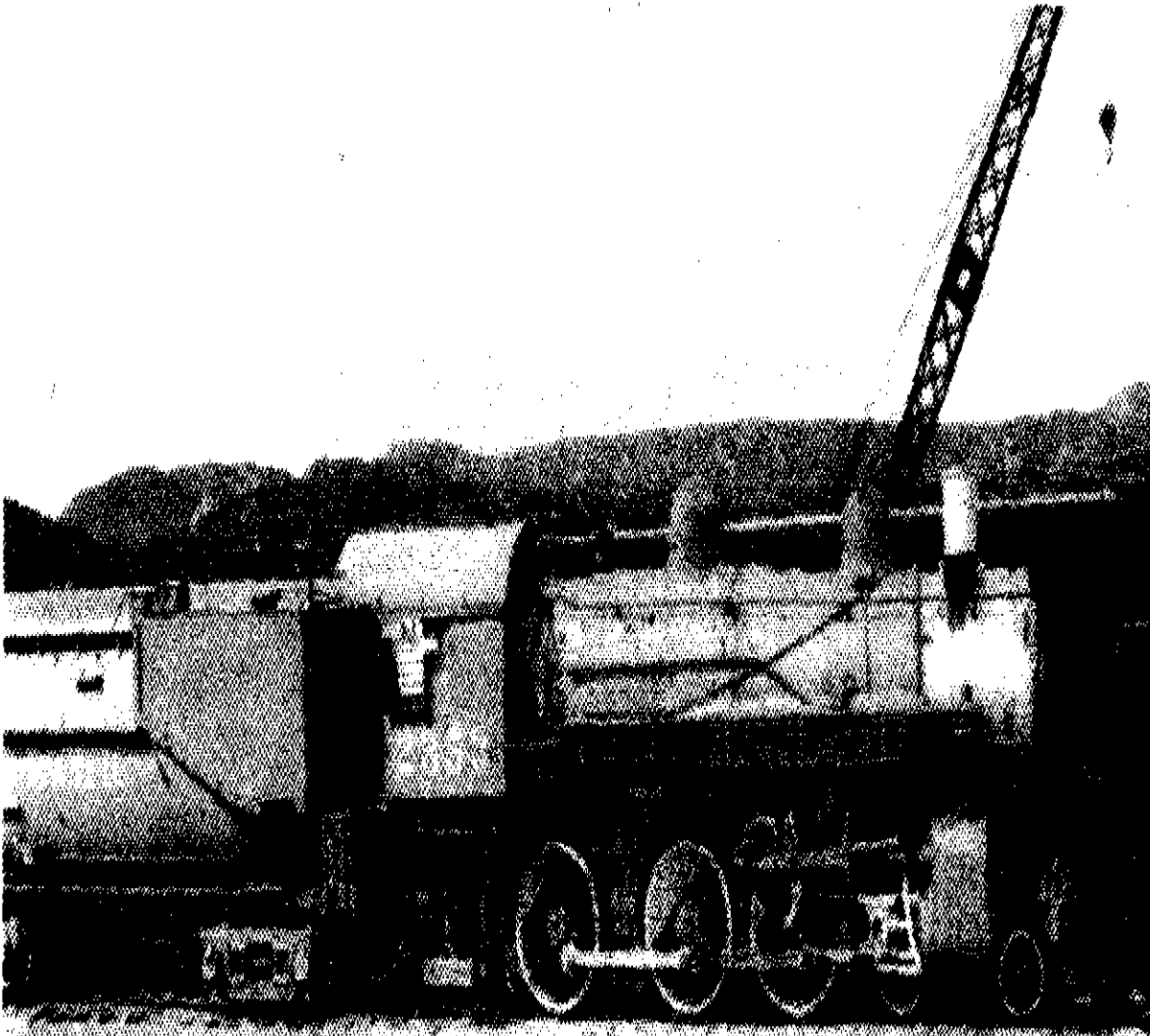
This issue's photo-essay (you've just read the essay) involves simply a few shots of some of the Museum's better, more unusual items. Essays could be written on each item; the Museum, in fact, has them already written and available in booklet form. For our purposes, leave it at this; Quick captions underneath amateur shots of the possessions of a noble and fascinating institution. In America at least, the rails will never really live again; but through the dedication of such groups as the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum, the rails will be remembered and kept as vital as possible.

SMOKERS, Demand your rights! Be stupid,
even if it kills you and your family and friends.

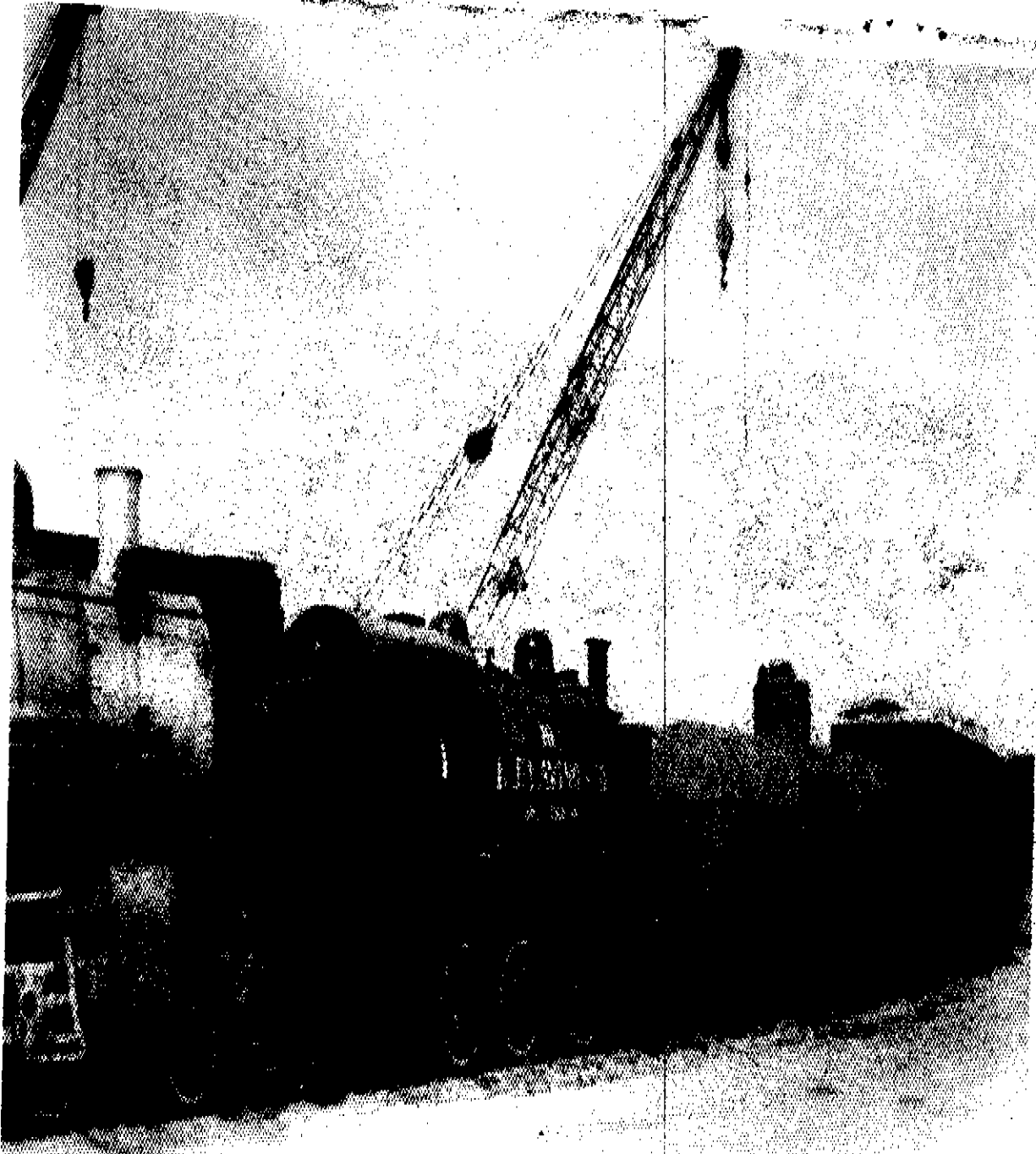
ON THE COVER

Retired from service many years before the entire line shut down, "Old 104" was the San Diego and Arizona Eastern's mainstay oil-burning locomotive for many years. Some of the older residents of Campo remember it in service, and the local cafe has some photos on the wall of "Old 104" passing behind the cafe.

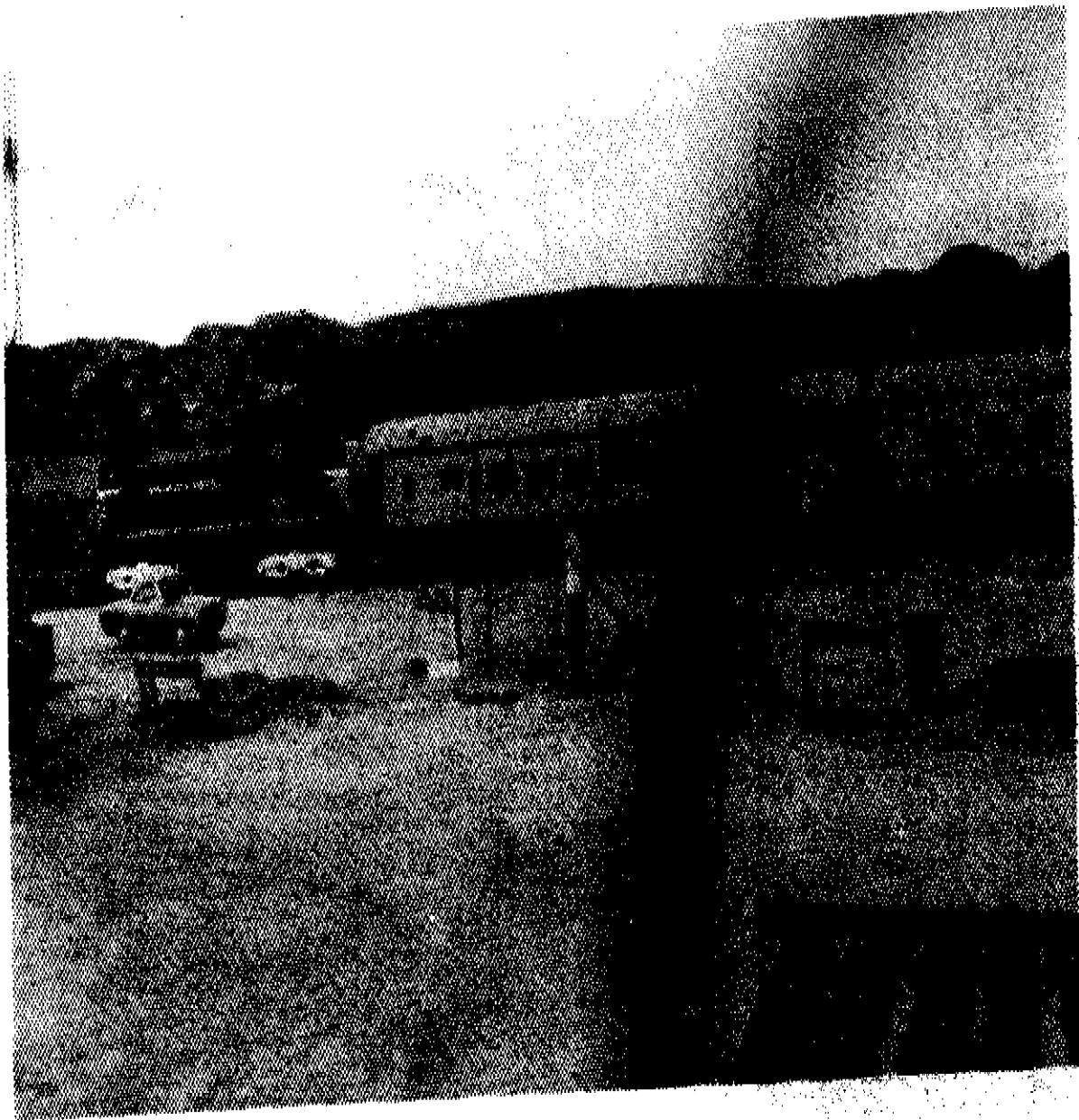
Amazing, really, that this original Museum exhibit (they've owned it for thirty years) is so poorly restored. Plates are cracked, the paint is badly peeled, oil lines are broken and dangling, and the trucks are in spots very rusty. The problem is that the required repairs are so utterly massive when compared with those required for other items; welding a cracked boiler, for example, is a monumental (and very expensive) undertaking. But every year a bit more is done, and nothing - once restored - is permitted to deteriorate again. As one veteran of the museum told me, "You should have seen this thing ten years ago - you could barely figure out what it was!" From some old photos in the museum buildings, I suspect he's right.



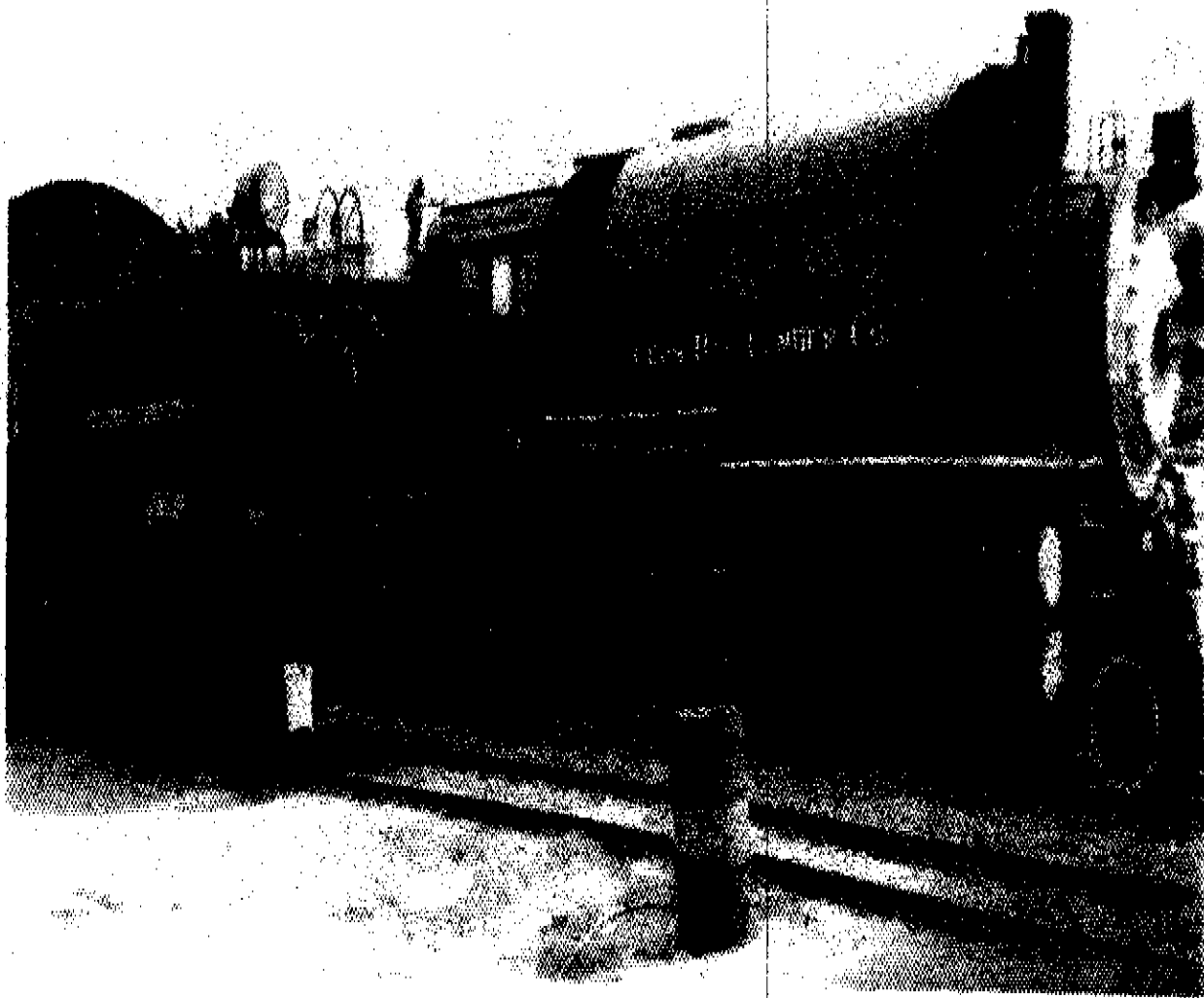
I was never too clear on the source of this magnificent old locomotive; it is long since retired from Southern Pacific, and sits here now awaiting some loving care. It looks quite grand at a distance, but up close it is a badly deteriorating wreck. Knowing the tireless Museum people, however, they will get to it soon.



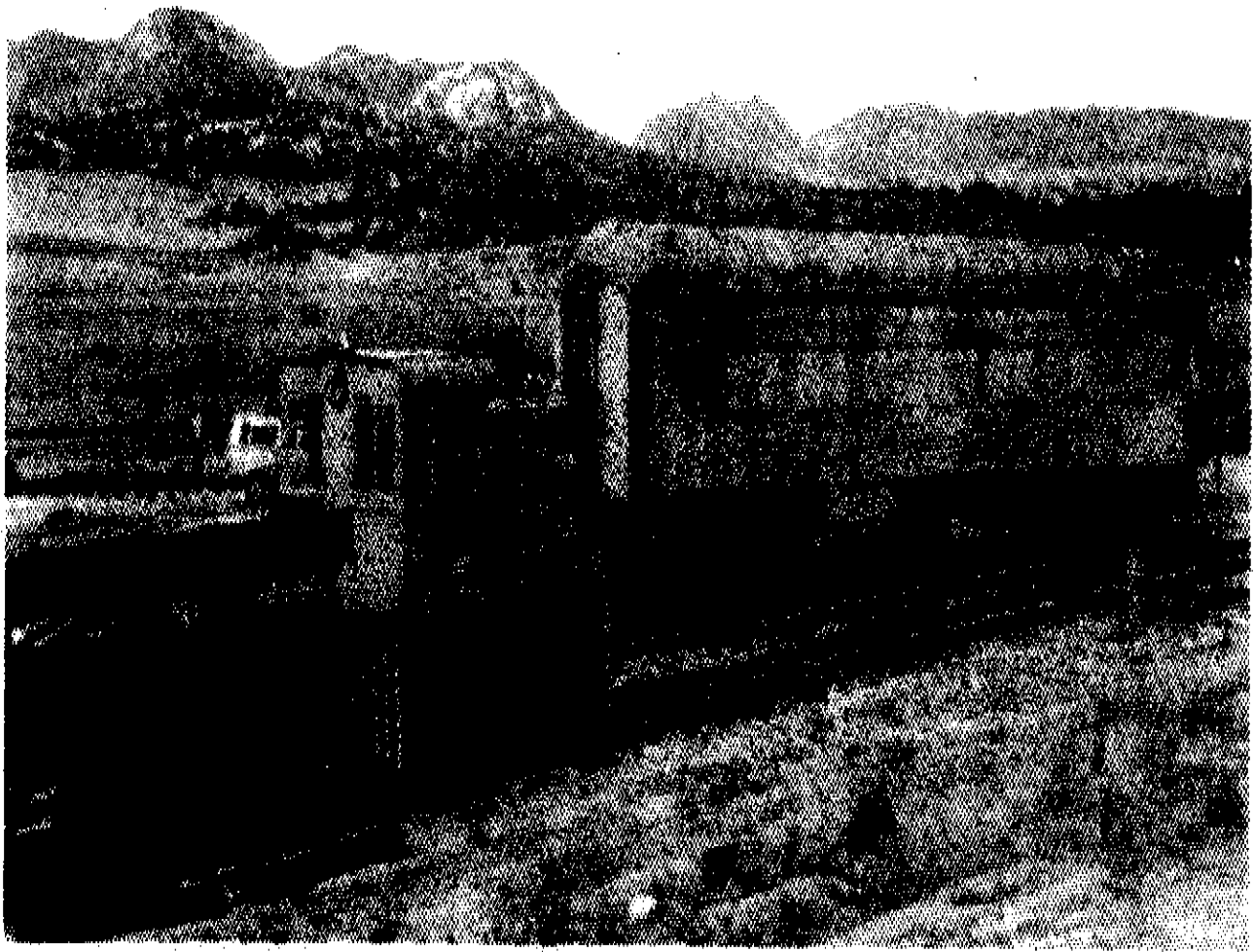
The museum's oldest relic, this 1860s coal-burning locomotive ("E.J. Lavino, Sheridan, PA") remains inoperative but is in the restoration process. However, the virtual impossibility of obtaining coal means it will probably never be run again. Surrounding this classic are several other soon-to-be-restored cars, and two of the three huge cranes the yard now has.



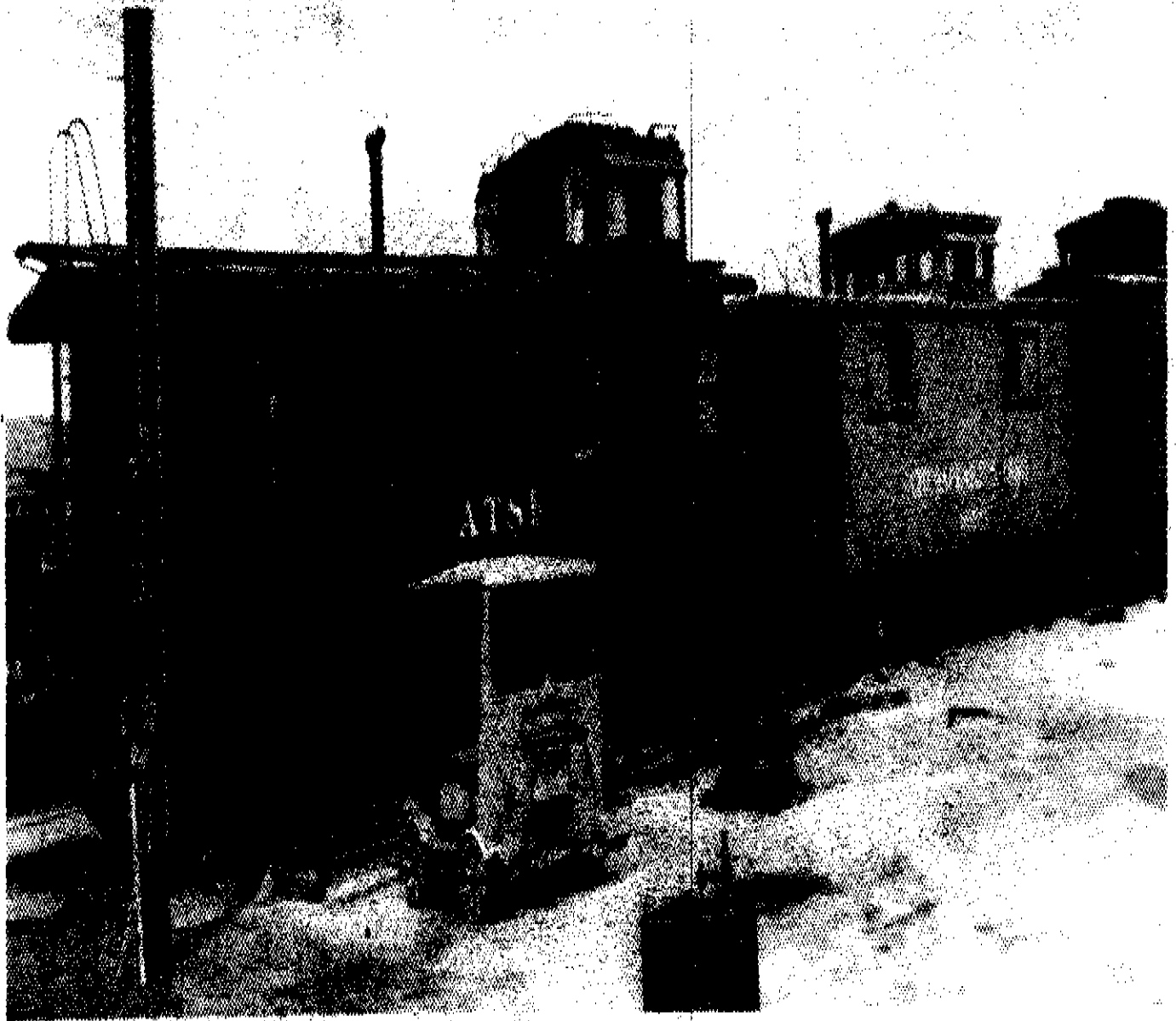
The toughest shot proved to be that of the most ordinary item of all - the train ride. Fences, buildings, clusters of people, the sun - all were wrong. This was the best I managed, showing the engine and two of the cars. Since the train is facing west and the ride goes east, the first part of the ride is a 20-30 minute wait while the engine runs around and hooks up to the other end.



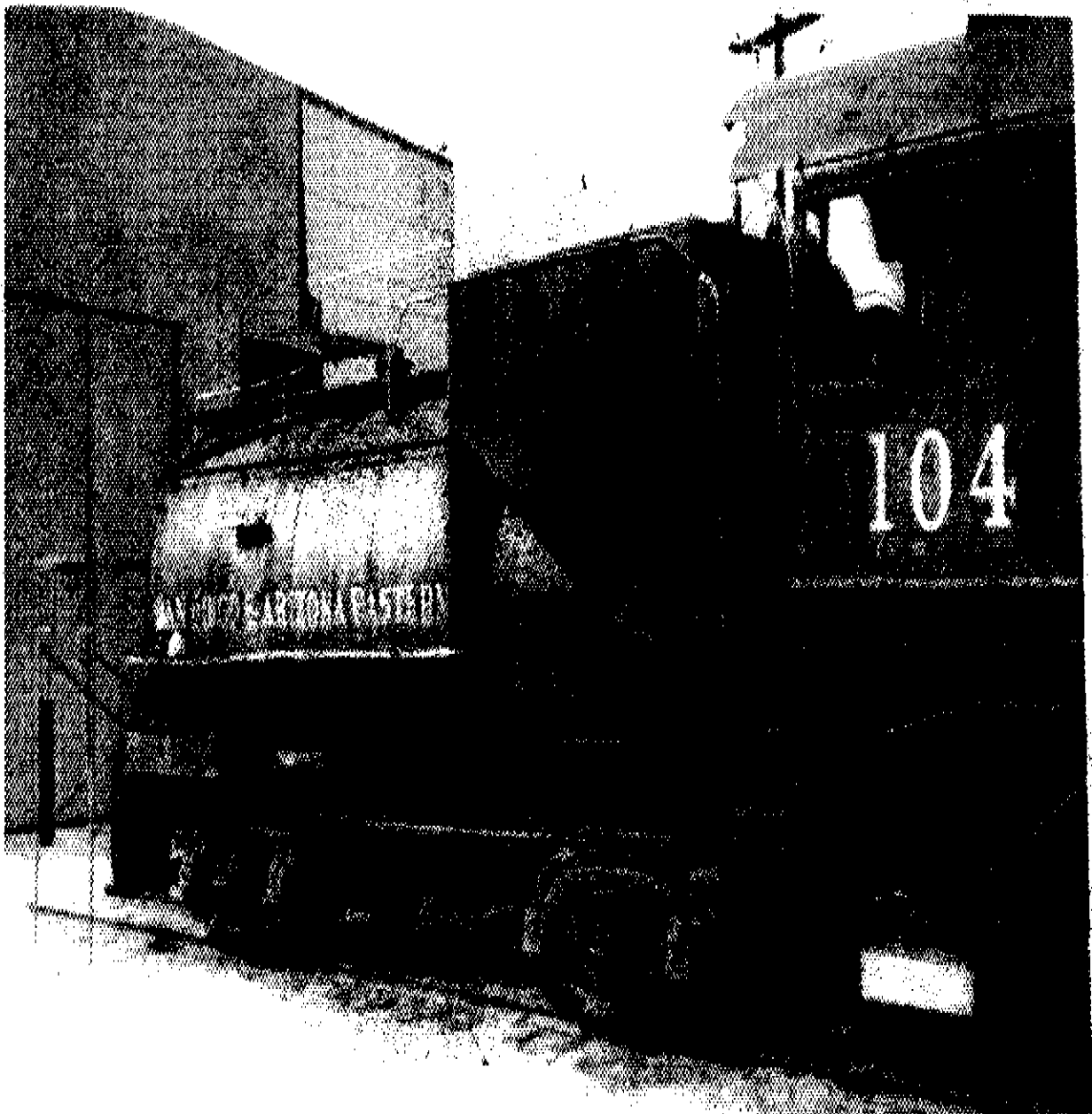
One of the Museum's prides, and easily their best-maintained gems: A rare Oregon lumber locomotive, nearly 100 years old but lovingly restored to a near-new lustre. It is kept so well polished that you can see your reflection in the boiler. To the left, the oil tender of another classic old lumber locomotive.



One of the mini-switch engines the Museum had made for its use. The old relic of a passenger car is a wholly unrestored W.W.II troop transport, in grievous disrepair; work is scheduled to begin on this one this summer.



The Museum has, I believe, six cabooses, all fairly recent models - the oldest is about 1940. The two in this picture are both partly restored, and the public is allowed to go through the AT&SF and see how the crews actually lived. (I never imagined the bunks were so small!) This AT&SF, by the way, was one of the SD&Ariz. Eastern items taken over when the Museum first acquired the line.



On the cover was "Old 104." This is its tender, substantially better restored than the locomotive. Apparently this is because the SD&AE had a batch of spare parts left over for the tender, but none for the loco. This was the very first piece that the Museum ever acquired, long before it ever envisioned having a track of its own.

Dear Conrad:

My typer has been in for its annual physical and bath, so have delayed writing. I do have a stone-age implement (called "electric typewriter") about, but hate using it. Most (if not all) of this letter will be a reply to Craig Mills' two letters. That's not going to be easy. Although the words are in English (and very often the same words), the language of faith and the language of logical empiricism have very little in common. If you apply these two languages to a topic such as the Bible, you're going to get very different answers. In the case of faith, you're going to get only answers, because it's a language which questions nothing. That's true whether you have the simplistic faith of a traditional Christian or the equally simplistic faith of a traditional atheist. It's difficult to look at such a document while putting aside the assumptions, presumptions, and traditions you've been handed (or are being handed) by authority figures.

That's essential in these days. We have learned to deal with the entire universe in the language of logical empiricism. (In a more limited sense, this is called "science".) During the Enlightenment, and also during the heady days of Victorian Progressivism, it was fashionable to believe that empiricism negated faith. That is too simplistic. It's more a matter of putting the two in perspective. In the age prior to the 18th Century, people assumed that Truth must conform to Faith. That opinion is still widely held today -- indeed, it is an unstated assumption that underlies all of Craig's letters. A believer who nonetheless embraces logical empiricism must perforce adhere to the doctrine that Faith must conform to Truth.

This is actually a sort of dangerous middle ground. On one hand are the traditionalist crowd and their allies who hold a sort of traditional faith, not thinking about it overmuch, nor allowing it to have any impact on how they view the rest of the world. On the other hand is the crowd that holds that truth exists only if established by "science". The middle ground is dangerous because it acknowledges a certain degree of uncertainty; the possibility that phenomena may be experienced, and may be nonetheless real even though they do not seem logical, or have no empirical manifestation, or both. As a concrete example, take a Gospel "miracle" story. It isn't enough for the traditionalist to say, "it happened because the Bible says so." Untrue things appear in print with great regularity. Nor is it enough for the skeptic to say, "It didn't happen because it's impossible." Too many "impossible" things have become manifest for us to buy that argument--but beware the believer's curious counter-argument: namely, that the fact that something is not impossible is proof that it occurred.

That said, we can look at what Craig calls "a central issue in Christian faith: the reliability of its documents". Textual criticism of ancient writings is a very technical and sophisticated science. The Bible is not only not exempt from such analysis, the Bible is one of its principal targets. With respect to the many text-critical ideas about the Bible, these were established by men who not only had open minds, but were inclined toward faith rather than logic.

The Pentateuch, and Genesis in particular, is a superb example. Tradition, rather than the actual text, attributes authorship to Moses. The first person to express doubt about the tradition was no skeptic, but a 12th-Century Rabbi. Abraham ibn-Ezra said in very guarded language that at least some of the passages in the Torah must be post-Mosaic (not least of which is the section describing Moses' death as a past event and in very circumstantial detail; a man may predict his death, but not write about it afterward). The Graf-Wellhausen theory of 4 sources for the Pentateuch has long since been superseded by more precise ones. But it's hardly something Julius Wellhausen simply made up. The theory is really a very simple one. In 1753 Jean Astruc suggested that Genesis was made up of at least 2 previously independent narratives. He observed that parts of the text used "Yahweh" (in those days mistransliterated as "Jehovah") as the name for God, while others avoided it and used "Elohim" instead. It was later seen that these different names were associated with different styles, concerns, and points of view; they are the E and J sources. A very major strand is P, the Priestly source, with yet a different style. Not found in Genesis, but found in (principally) Deuteronomy is the D source. Many passages in Genesis (including virtually the whole of Chapter XIV) are not attributable to E, J, or P, and are usually referred to as R (Remainder or Redactor -- a term for an editor or transmission source). Parts of Genesis XIV, in fact, show signs of having been translated from another language (probably Babylonian). The most likely source for such a document would be the library at Babylon, to which Jews would have had access particularly during the Exile; this makes that chapter both one of the most recent insertions into Genesis and one of its most authentically contemporary passages. In fact, this view of Genesis

XIV gives us the best proof we have that Abraham was an historical character -- quite the opposite result than the one we'd expect if textual criticism were a put-on by nasty old atheists.

The Graf-Wellhausen theory (and its more recent refinements) works because it's the only which fits and explains the observed facts. The single-author (much less the Mosaic) theory doesn't. The different styles from section to section are only one set of such facts; another is the multiplicity of stories told in different versions, the frank disagreements between certain passages, and so on. You want a list? Ask me. Anyone who studies Genesis without any preconceived notions about it will perforce conclude that it's a composite document. Many pious men over the last two hundred years have come to the same conclusion.

I'm dubious, though, as to what this has to do with Christianity. The OT is an essential background to the NT, but it could be a collection of the merest fabrications and fairy tales for all that it mattered. The real question is whether the NT is as reliable as its apologists want us to believe. By the NT, I mean the Gospels (and Acts), not [for the most part] all the glosses that got added afterward.

Textual criticism of the Gospels reveals the most obvious sources as: Mark, Q (Quelle, the "teaching document"), M (a source peculiar to the writer of Matthew), L (ditto, Luke), and at least 2 additional sources found in John (3, if you count the antiphonal hymn with which the book opens). At another level, behind those sources, were earlier documents (some written, some oral): collections of logia (sayings), collections of "proof texts" (deeds of Jesus and OT passages viewed as prophecies of the same), stories (collected and individual), and other items -- such as genealogies, of which 2 very different ones, both in defective texts, appear in Matthew and Luke. One scholar has identified two possible subsidiary sources, which are interwoven into the Passion narratives in Mark and Luke, called M (Messiah source) and T (Temple source) [Donald F. Robinson, Jesus Son of Joseph, 1964]. The theory of Gospel sources is, of course, not ipso facto an evaluation of the accuracy of the texts as they come down to us. Of course, ipso facto, one does expect some problems.

And problems we've got. These difficulties present challenging mysteries with respect to Jesus. If these documents are not hopelessly distorted, they represent our best (and, in any event, our only) hope of restoring and learning what Jesus really did and said, stripped of layers of editorial meddling, pious invention, muddled and superstitious thinking, and silly verbal hair-splitting from such church-political conventions as the Councils of Chalcedon and Nicaea.

Be that as it may, the NT texts present many difficulties. There are two very contradictory Nativity stories, one set during the reign of King Herod the Great, the other set about 10 years after his death. These stories agree in very few details (it's really instructive to note, for instance, that in Matthew the angels speak only to Joseph, whereas in Luke they speak to Mary, but not to Joseph). Similarly, the Gospels present Resurrection narratives that differ in significant detail, and these in turn differ significantly from a brief narrative provided by Paul, who wrote his letters before any of the Gospels reached its present form. Of course, the Gospels don't pretend to be histories, but rather documents of faith, so that many things they say have the character of myth (a word that describes the function, not the veracity, of a story). The more clearly historical-narrative portions present fewer obvious "flaws", but many, many more problems. So many that Albert Schweitzer was to conclude in 1910 that the "Quest for the Historical Jesus" was doomed to failure. Scholarly efforts in the Quest have continued, however, and with interesting and valuable results. But what emerges from the Quest is not the traditional or fundamentalist Jesus. The view of the "historic Jesus" varies from scholar to scholar, of course; that's true even of scholarly views of major modern personalities, including Stalin and Roosevelt. And we have mountains of documentation on them. We mustn't be surprised at diversity of opinion -- and the variances of modern historiography should alert us to the fact that we can't expect the Gospel writers to be accurate or consistent, either.

It doesn't seem productive to argue a number of points I raised and which Craig discussed. I made a few hyperbolic statements for literary effect, to which he properly applied some straight-faced comeuppance. He also makes some appropriate comments on the rule of the church in modifying antisocial behavior. I only wish it were more successful. I fear, however, that all the stuff about "sin" and "atonement" and the what-have-you of traditional Christian dogma is so much post-Easter theology. Jesus showed a keen understanding and a clear contempt for the theological dogmas and disputes of his own day; I see no reason for his reaction to be any different, were he to show up now.

This seems to be a good point to suggest how I see the "historical Jesus". Jesus the Nazarene was the eldest son of a moderately wealthy Galilean family. His father, Joseph, is called in the Bible a tekton, which could mean "carpenter" but is more accurately translated "builder"; he could have been an architect. Jesus was born most probably in the first year or so of the 1st Century. He lived unremarkably in or near Nazareth until the Fall/Winter of AD 33/34. At that time he was baptized by John the Baptist and, when John was arrested by Herod Antipas for sedition, began a public career of his own. Throughout this career, Jesus was conscious of a special, intimate relationship with an entity he identified as God and addressed by the unusual (and controversial) title, abba (best translated as "daddy" or "papa"). During his career Jesus performed surprising acts of power, particularly the healing of disease and infirmity. These acts were invariably followed by requests to keep them secret, and Jesus made no claims of status as a result of them. They were surprising, but scarcely unique, since several of his contemporaries and near-contemporaries did similar things (Appollonius of Tyana, Onias the Circle-Drawer, and others).

In his career, Jesus not only did surprising things; his teachings were equally surprising. He taught that the greatest commandments were (a) to love God and (b) to love your neighbor (that is, any human being whom you encounter). These are the "essence of the Law and the Prophets; all else is commentary", to quote his near-contemporary, Hillel. Sure enough, Jesus was remarkably free with the Law. He was a pious Jew; of that there is no doubt; yet even so he retained and asserted the freedom to go beyond the Law in the service of its essence. He further taught that something called the "Kingdom of God" had dawned with his advent, and that this Kingdom was a thing interior to each person. He presented the aspect of a completely free person within his own cultural context, emphasizing that the Kingdom was both commitment and freedom. His teachings did not fall on particularly receptive ears, even among his closest associates. They, in turn, may have followed him primarily in the anticipation that he was the promised meshakh ("messiah"), a term of extremely variable and disputed meaning in the 1st Century). Nonetheless it's clear that Jesus presented the aspect of a major prophet, speaking directly for (and to) God (or at least the abba entity).

Shortly after Passover in AD 36, Jesus was arrested by the Temple authorities and then crucified by order of Pontius Pilate, for the crime of laesa majestas, all under circumstances which are not entirely clear. He was buried before sundown on Friday (that is, immediately before the Sabbath began). Early in the morning the following Sunday his tomb as found opened and empty. Shortly thereafter, certain of his followers, relatives, and friends claimed that he had "appeared" to them. [This word, "appear", is precisely the word used by Paul (ephtean). Interestingly, he applies this term not only to the post-Easter experience, but to his own experience on the road to Damascus. This latter, however, was clearly a vision and not a physical encounter. The Gospels therefore clearly show us a later stage, and Paul's letter an earlier stage, in the development of a "resurrection" myth. Remember, however, that a myth is a story which is told for a purpose, not because it is necessarily true or false in any factual/historical sense.

The Church has embroidered an immensely more complex superstructure on this story. Much, in the beginning, was probably due to the linguistic limitations of the time (Paul Van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel, 1963, Chapter II). A good part, however, was due to a straitjacketing of Jesus into the traditional theological and conceptual patterns of the time. The traditional Hebrew royal title, "son of God", for instance, suggested something quite different to the Graeco-Roman mind (the actual coronation formula is, "Thou art my beloved son; this day have I begotten thee.") The idea that Jesus was not conscious of his special relationship with God/abba until the day of his baptism is entirely biblical; we may safely ignore the neo-Gnostic philosophical fancies of John on this point.

Historically, man is a being who carries with him a human veneer over an animal past. Jesus (and not he alone) has shown us the way away from that past and toward a more human future. In many respects the Church hasn't diverted the main thrust of his teaching. But it has erected walls and bars around the freedom which he had and which he sought to share. If you want to look at the man through the Church's eyes, I don't know that you'll be all that badly off. I can only remind you that when the Church says, "God is love", we must remember that there are no conditions on that love. Recall always that Jesus never demanded that "sinners" repent before he ate and drank with them. The Church dangles a carrot which Jesus says you have already got. The Kingdom, Jesus says, is within; but once you enter it, you find it all around you. That might have been an incomprehensible notion in his time, but in the Age of Einstein, we can begin

to see how this is no paradox at all. It's important here to note that neither John nor his disciple Jesus used the word "atonement." They said, "repent." That means to regret wrongful acts and to resolve to avoid them in the future. It means to live by the Two Commandments. The Church has spent over 1900 years waiting for a non-event. The Kingdom ain't "coming"; it's here, if you choose it. I share Frank's pessimism about humanity, though. But never fear, God is patient, and Her concern is with all of us collectively as well as with each of us individually. Assuming that we don't wipe ourselves out, our species still has (presumably) a few thousand generations left. Despite my more negative statements, I'd say quite a bit of progress has been made in 19 centuries. Someday, perhaps, the Church itself might accidentally stumble upon the Kingdom. God knows, Jesus is there -- has been all this time, despite all the embroidery -- to show the way.

* * * * *

Appendix

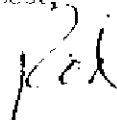
There may be some curiosity about my statement (among others) about two conflicting Nativity stories. Most people are only familiar, really, with the homogenized version concocted for Christmas pageants. The actual dichotomy is interesting.

Matthew: Joseph and Mary reside in Bethlehem. Joseph is told by an angel that Mary's pregnancy is a miracle. When Jesus is born, a star appears and three astrologers come out of the East looking for "the King of the Jews". They tell King Herod about this. He consults his own astrologers and soothsayers. The easterners go on to Bethlehem where they present Jesus with various gifts. An angel warns Joseph about Herod, and he flees with his family into Egypt. They stay there until Herod is dead. Returning, they find Herod's son Archelaus on the throne, so instead of returning to Bethlehem, they trek on to Galilee, eventually settling in Nazareth.

Luke: Joseph and Mary reside in Nazareth. They are forced by peculiar rules of the Augustan Census of 8AD (10 years after Herod died) to trek to Bethlehem, where Jesus is born. That night, angels announce the birth to shepherds, who pay a visit. After the prescribed period (7-8 days), Joseph takes Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to be "presented". An offering for Mary's purification is made. They then go back home to Nazareth.

These are interesting stories. One of them may even be true (although I suspect not). But they can't both be true. Any attempt to reconcile them immediately involves one in a labyrinth of apologetics and special pleadings. It is better to accept these stories for what they clearly are: two divergent traditions regarding Jesus which were picked up by two different writers. This poses no problem for a logical approach to the Gospels: the Nativity stories were inserted for purposes unconnected with "history" as we understand the term. First-century readers would not ask of such a story, "Is it true?", but rather, "What does it mean?" In terms of historical fact, we don't know where Jesus was born, and can only guess at when (my guess is 1 or 2 AD). But the reader may wish to contemplate this fact: about 5 miles WEST of the small town of Nazareth in Galilee is an even smaller town. Its name, just coincidentally, is also "Bethlehem".

This has run on about as long as I thought it would; that is to say, too long. I'll use that as an excuse to forgo RFBP? at this time, although I have some true constraints involved as well. Next time, no doubt. I trust this will be forgiven, inasmuch as I have done so much blathering already.

Best,


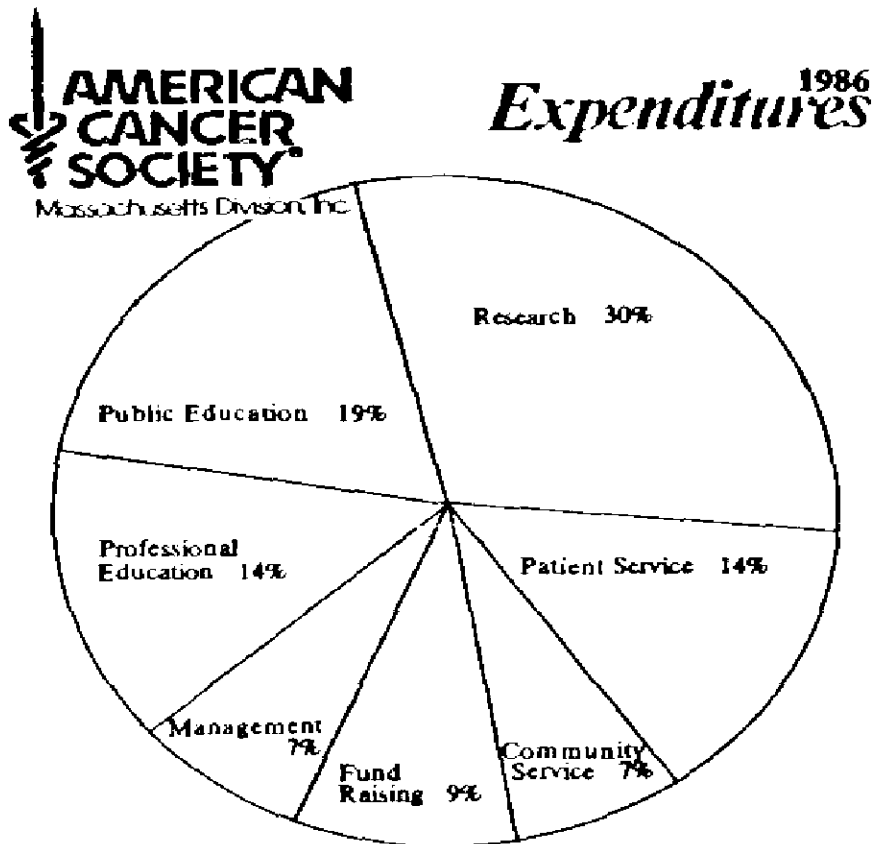
SPECIAL BOTTOM-OF-ROD'S PAGE FILLER: No jokes, no Frank-and-Ernest, no nothing. Just a few pointless likes to make it appear that this page has been evened out. (It hasn't, really.)

FROM:

Bruce Linsey Conrad, when I read your statement that you hoped the Diplomacy Alliance Against Cancer would raise over \$1000 for cancer research, my initial reaction was, "Oh oh, talk about your impossible goals!" However, it is likely that we will be raising several hundred dollars for the cause, given the ballots and pledges that have recently been coming in. I'd like to urge all Costaguana readers one final time to please send in a ballot and, if you're so inclined, a pledge. Thank to Conrad's boundless generosity, another copy of the ballot should be included in this issue.

In the latest issue of his zine, John Caruso has raised a good point about the cancer pledge drive. He notes that some charities are not legitimate, and has reprinted a newspaper article citing one so-called charity, the "United Cancer Council, Incorporated", which turned out to be spending 93% of its funding on mail solicitations.

It was for just this reason that Linda Courtemanche and I were careful to select a legitimate and efficient charity organization, which uses its funding wisely. My research revealed the following breakdown of expenditures for the American Cancer Society. (These are the Massachusetts figures; the national percentages will vary slightly.)



These figures clearly indicate that the funding for the ACS is well spent (only 16% for management and solicitation, hardly an excessive amount). So to anyone who may have worried about our selection: please be assured that it is a carefully considered choice. And many thanks to John for expressing a valid concern.

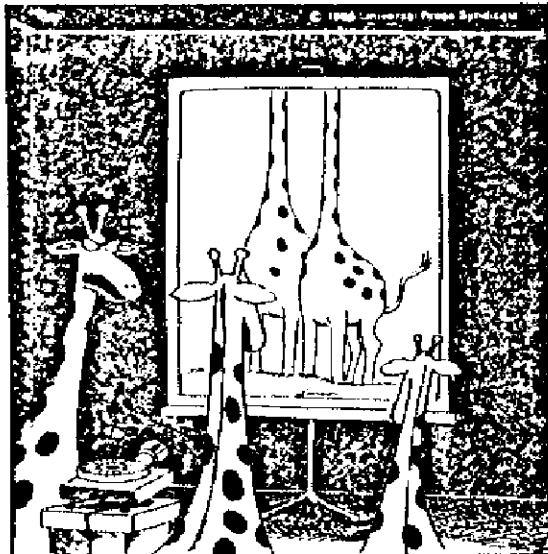
"JIHAD" (Thomas Marshall)

This game is cancelled. I'm truly sorry, but it has proved not to be viable, and I am convinced that I am not an appropriate Gamesmaster for it at this time. The long start-up process took its toll, and the fact that I no longer have access to the inventor (he's off on a long-term dig in Mexico) plus the inferior game material I have to hand, makes me think this is the best course.

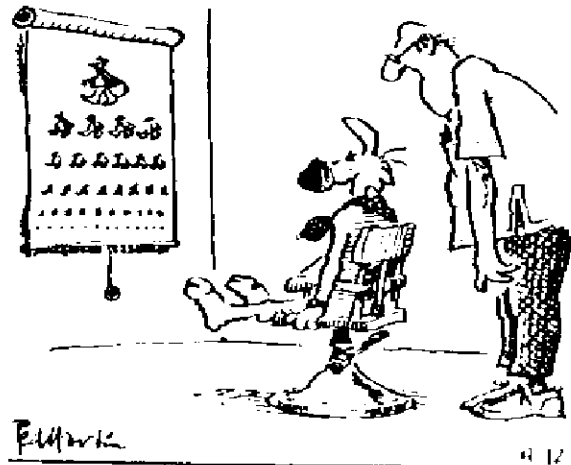
Obviously, I started this game with wholly inadequate preparation. But as it stands, we're down to four active players, and that's after just one move. There is no way a game can be rendered viable under those conditions.

Please accept my apologies. In addition, if anyone is a COSTA subber solely on the basis of this game, I do hereby offer a full refund of any sub fees paid, plus reimbursement for your estimate of actual expenses in trying to play.

On the other hand - that is the END OF THE REALLY BAD NEWS....



"Oh, lovely—just the hundredth time you've managed to cut everyone's head off"



"OK. How many mailmen on the fifth line?"

WORLD WAR IIIb (Wilson S. Bissell) - Winter 2110

As stated last time, this game is under new management. The Guest Gamesmaster is DAVID ANDERSON, P.O. Box 3761, Pontiac, MI 48059-3761.

Owing to a few errors last time - mainly very stupid ones on my part (I'm Conrad, by the way) - it was decided to hold the current print to just adjustments. This will undoubtedly make the transition a bit smoother.

Last time, I miscredited three supply centres, and the builds change accordingly. Sudan belongs to Warsaw Pact, not Union of S.Af.; and Hungary and Poland (didn't I just finish screwing one of those up the year before?) also belong to Warsaw, not USSR. So - U.S.A. removes two, Warsaw builds 3 and USSR builds three. All other evaluations were correct as shown.

AUSTRALIA (Eric Ozog): builds f n.s.w., f w.austr.

BRAZIL (James Wall): builds a mato grosso, a belem. Tries also to build f bahia, but there's already an army there, so plays one short.

CANADA (Konrad Baumeister?): NMR, GM removes f lab.sea, f den.str., a ore. This position now lapses into civil disorder.

PERU (Jim Burgess): build f ecuador, f inca.

UNION OF S.AF. (Don Swartz): Removes f moz.ch., f w.ind.o.

USSR (Marc Peters): builds f russia (NC), f georgia. One short.

WARSAW (Mark Frueh): builds f yugo, f poland. One short.

WEST AFRICA (Andy Lischett): no change.

EUR,COMMON MKT. (Mark S. Keller): no change. (I knew I skipped a line!)

Draw proposals last time were wiped out. New proposals for Spring 2111:

USSR/PERU/BRAZIL/AUSTRALIA

USSR/PERU/BRAZIL/AUSTRALIA/U.S.AF./WARSAW

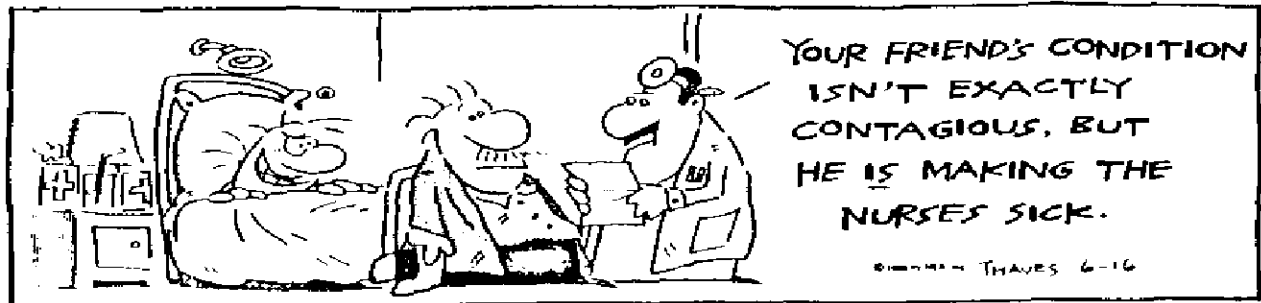
USSR/PERU/BRAZIL/AUSTRALIA/WARSAW

USSR/PERU/BRAZIL/AUSTRALIA/U.S.AF./WARSAW/EUR.COM.MKT (so how come you're mad at Andy?)

GUEST G.M. TO WORLD: Hi, guys. If you would like to telephone orders in, then call (313) 338-7969 between 5-9 p.m. Eastern time weekdays - on weekends, you take your chances. But if you call when I'm not home, then leave your number; and then I'll call back collect, you refuse the charges, and call me back. It works for me! If you don't have your orders in on deadline day, then I'll collect-call you to get them. On deadline day, I'll accept calls until 10 p.m. Eastern, just in case. On mail orders - orders must be in by deadline day. I will do the game on deadline day, or the day after at worst, and mail to Conrad. 'Nuff said?

FRANK AND ERNEST

Bob Thaves



GAME US486B (Railway Rivals, "Il Crescendo") - Build round 5

A few notes (also applicable to "Pimmalione" and, eventually, "Hotellerie") before we start:

1. Builds are allowed during the operating rounds. The amount allowed for builds will be specified per turn.
2. Special runs do come up from time to time; you definitely do need to allow for them. As an example, in 'Pimmalione,' Paul Gardner has on this move set himself in the driver's seat for any special runs to Mexico. There is a very strong probability that he will, at some point, gain a real advantage from this.
3. I freely confess that, at this point, I don't know very much about running the operating stages. However, by the time we get there, I will.

Now - last move in 'Crescendo' saw one slight mis-computation of revenue. For Hex I14, Dyfed pays 3 (2 for the half-hex plus 1 for junction) to Ho-Ho. It's all a question of track built in the same round (1 per half-hex) versus track in place from a prior round (2 per half-hex). Credits adjusted.

HO-HO-HO (Doug Brown, brown): 5 a. (F59) - H60; (M17) - J18. 5b. (J18) - Wolverhampton; (Nottingham) - D52 - E52. 5c. (E52) - E48 - Doncaster; (A56) - Derby.

PISTOL'S MULLERS (Paul Gardner, green): 5a. (I20) - I21 - H21 - H24. 5b. (H24) - D26. 5c. (D26) - D27 - A29 - Newport.

DEUTSCH (Brian Longstaff, red): 5a. (I44) - J44 - Hull; (Manchester) - H6 - G6 - Bolton. 5b. (B52) - D53 - Nottingham. 5c. (Preston) - B4 - Liverpool.

PYTHON (Don Del Grande, black): 5a. (E64) - E65 - D65 - D67 - C68. 5b. (C68) - B68 - Oxford; (Nottingham) - D52. 5c. (L9) - Manchester.

DYFED (David Watts, quasi-bluish-pace): 5a. (Stoke) - E11 - E10. 5b. (E10) - C9. 5c. (B64) - B67; (D9) - D7; (D60) - Leicester.

REVENUE: DEUTSCH, 47 +6 (Hull) +3 (Python I8) -1 (Pistol C53) -1 (HoHoHo D53) +1 (Python D53) = 55. PYTHON, 48 -3 (Deutsch I8) -1 (Deutsch D53) -3 (HoHoHo D52/3) = 41. DYFED, 45 -2 (HoHoHo (E11 and D7)) = 43. PISTOL, 34 +6 (Newport) +1 (HoHoHo E50) +1 (Deutsch C53) = 42. HOHOHO, 58 +2 (Dyfed E11 and D7) +1(Deutsch D53) +3 (Python I8) -1 (Pistol E50) = 63.

Note my interpretation of payments in D53. Both Deutsch and HoHo got to that hex on the seventh move this round, thus cancelling reciprocal payment for the junction. On the 8th move, Deutsch built into Nottingham alongside HoHo's half-hex of track in D53 built on the 7th move, thus paying one to the latter. Similarly on the eighth move, Python came up from Nottingham while Deutsch came into it; thus, again, the payment for the junction cancels, but Python owes Deutsch one for the parallel half-hex in D53, whereas Deutsch does not pay for the simultaneous half-hex built inside the Nottingham hex. And note also that Python is following HoHo by a mere one turn through D53 and into D54, a total of three half-hexes paid - but no payment for the junction, which occurred in Nottingham.

Wasn't that fun?

ROUND SIX THROWS: 6-6-5. And then we can all go unpack that rolling stock and start running over stray cows....

PRESS FROM HO-HO: Especially love the English map! By the way, Stoke is such a big rail center because HoHoHo founded a center there and Deutsch and Dyfed and Pistol all joined in. Why else, Uncle Connie?

THE SECOND, AND WHOLLY UNIMPORTANT IN LIGHT OF THE FOREGOING: There will be two games briefly stalled in these pages; I think they will both appear by flyer rather quickly once I notify people of the items lacking:

L'HOTELLERIE PORTUGAISE (Railway Rivals US 511X) - One player is having a problem with the start-up. I have clarified his questions by return mail, and await his orders. When they arrive - it shouldn't be long - I will print a flyer and get this thing rolling. Rough guess, a week.

RETURN J. MEIGS (Rather Silly) - Having now worked out all the moves on file for all games, it appears that only this one suffers from a possible "stolen" move, per the burglary announcement earlier. In addition, John Walker will need to be stood in for. So I beg a brief indulgence (yes, I know, I've already had this one on stall for a bit) while I sort things out. Please be patient.

/ / / / // / / / // / / / // / / / // / / / //

GAME US487C (Railway Rivals, "Pimmallone") - Build round 5

DGW (David Watts, almost-aqua): 5a. (T11) - V10 - W11 - Y10 ((1 short)).
5b. (Y10) - C48 - C46. 5c. (T29) - Omaha - V29 - Z31.
DOCTOR (Don Del Grande, Black): 5a. (M9) - M8 - K7; (W15) - W14. 5b. (K7) -
Los Angeles; (W14) - X13 - Y14. 5c. (Y14) - A53 - B53 - Butte; (W33) -
Y32.
ACHTUNG (Brian Longstaff, red): 5a. (L9) - L7. 5b. (L7) - L5 - N4. 5c.
(N4) - O4 - O2 - San Francisco; (O3) - Sacramento.
HOBOKEN HOBO HOMES (Doug Brown, brown): 5a. (Portland) - Y3 - X3; (Milwaukee) -
Chicago. 5b. (Chicago) - V39 - St.Louis. 5c. (Minneapolis) - V29 -
Omaha.
HOG WILD (Paul Gardner, Green): (L.A.) - J5 - K5; (K29) - Okla.City - M30.
5b. (K5) - L5 - O4 - O2. 5c. (O2) - San Francisco; (San Diego) -
F7; (M30) - Q32.

Paul, note how I realigned your moves to match the actual throws? Makes no practical difference, but looks better. Also in 5c you ordered to Q31 and Q33, which wouldn't work - I compromised on Q32.

We have, of course, long since given up worrying about penalties for mis-written orders, inasmuch as (a) this game is a learning experience for many of us, and (b) Brian has been operating all along with the wrong map. (David thinks you have the German Schmidt version, which has several flaws and many alterations, though I gather those flaws do not include the omission of Santa Fe, which makes me wonder exactly which map you did have....)

REVENUE: ACHTUNG, 31 +6 (Sacto) -12 (HogWild L5/S.F.) -1 (Doctor, L7) = 24.
HOBOKEN, 68 +1 (DGW, Z31) +1 (DGW, B48) = 70. DGW, 39 +1 (HogWild, Q32) -1
(Hoboken, Z31) -1 (Hoboken, B48) = 38. DOCTOR, 38 +1 (Achtung, L7) = 39.
HOG WILD, 56 +6 (San Francisco) +12 (Achtung, L5/S.F.) -1 (DGW, Q32) = 73.

Note the computation for the parallel builds Omaha/Minneapolis. As I compute it, all payments precisely cancel until the very last move; at that point, DGW parallels Hoboken for half a hex in Z31, whereas Hoboken's parallel is in the city of Omaha. Thus the net difference is 1 to Hoboken. A very cheap parallel, if you ask me - nothing at all like Nottingham in "Crescendo."

ROUND SIX THROWS: Use a 14-sided die, and you get: 9 - 13 - 7.
Ideally, of course, we'd have had larger throws all along, thus obviating the necessity for these massive terminal digits - but, hey, we're learning,

and it would seem increasingly obvious that the one doing most of the learning is your humble "photocopy engineer."

FROM DAVID: With DOCTOR heading SW from Salt Lake, that means he, HOG WILD and ACHTUNG will be getting in each other's way, so I have to go both NE and NW. This not only cracks HOBOKEN's Great Northern monopoly, but may bring a big bonus if DOCTOR heads NW from W15 as well. It leaves me with a lot of loose ends to be tied into cities or other people's networks, but our kind C.M. is now giving big rolls so I should be able to anchor most of them in Round 6.

((Oh - did I neglect to remark that, for you, round 6 rolls are 2-1- $\frac{1}{4}$??))

.. ; ; .. ; ; .. ; ; .. ; ; .. ; ; .. ; ; .. ; ; .. ; ; .. ; ; .. ; ; .. ; ;

GAME 1986Bcn05 (Cline 9-Man, "William Rufus deVane King") - Fall 1905

AUSTRIA (Kevin Tighe): a ser-rum. a bul s ser-rum. a bud-gal.
 BARBARY (Jake Walters): a lib-alg. w w.atl - iri. f mid s w.at - iri.
f por-spa ((no coast spec.)) f ant.s. - w.atl.
 ENGLAND (David Anderson): f nth-den. f nwg c edi-nwy. a edi-nwy. f bot
s GER den-swe. f eng-bre.
 FRANCE (Jeff Hoffman): a par-bre. a bur-mar.
 GERMANY (Michael Pustilnik): a vie s ITA adr-tri. a bel h. a ruh s bel.
a den h. f hel-nth. f nwy s hel-nth. f hol s hel-nth.
 ITALY (Robert Acheson): f w.me-ion. f tyn-nap. f aeg-bul sc. a gre s aeg-
bul. a tri-ser. f adr-tri. a pie-mar. a spa s pie-mar.
 PERSIA (John Crosby): f ara ec - in.o. a egy s ion-lib. f ion-lib. f eth
h. f s.med - cre.
 RUSSIA (Conrad von Metzke): f mos h. a rum s gal-bud. a gal-bud. a ukr-gal.
 TURKEY (Robert O'Donnell): NMR. f bla, a arm, a geo h.

NOTE NEW ADDRESS: Bob O'Donnell, 615 Front St., Klamath Falls, OR 97601. His miss this time is strictly the result of his move, and Simon's inability to call him; no standby is needed.

RETREATS: Eng F Nth - Ska, Yor, Lon, o.t.b. Aus a bul - con, o.t.b. Adjustments may be conditional.

REGRETTABLY, I am unable to provide a supply centre chart this time. Please be prepared for a special flyer to follow in a few days, at which time the appropriate totals will be revealed.

////////////////////////////////////

THE SUICIDAL SUNI

THE TERGIVERSATORY TAPIR

Game end statements and charts on these two games will have to wait one more issue. They are typed; I simply don't have space owing to poor planning. Please do not have kittens.

ENGLAND TO FRANCE: With your last dying gasp, you may have changed the course of the world forever.

JAMUL: Maybe. But something about that "dying gasp" still seems vital....

ENGLAND TO ITALY: Nice job. A Turkish win now seems possible!

// .. // .. // .. // .. // .. // .. // .. // .. // .. // .. // .. // .. // ..

GAME 1986AC - The Bisexual Bear - Winter 1904

Oh well. So I haven't got that computer down yet....

We seem to have omitted 40% of the English moves. The correct listing would have been:

a pic-bre. f eng s pic-bre. f stp nc s GER nth-den ((sic)).
f por s bre-mid. f bre-mid.

On this basis I am holding the moves at Winter only, BUT with a special condition. All six of you have Spring 1905 moves on file. If on the basis of the corrected English print-out, and the Winter adjustments, you wish to change those moves, you have until a SPECIAL BEAR-ONLY DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10. On that date, I will adjudicate and print the Spring moves; if you've altered what I have, fine, if not, fine also. This will enable us to come to another out-of-synch deadline for Fall, but then re-integrate with Winter without loss of time. Make sense?

Oh, by the way - in Fall '04, the Italian move A Spa-Por failed.

ADJUSTMENTS: Aus + f tri; Ita + f rom.

FRANCE TO G.M.: I wish I could make English units disappear like you did - gee, from 5 to 3 units!....

JAMUL: Easy. (1) Buy a computer. (2) Buy a word-processing program. (3) Don't learn how to use either one of them properly. (4) Try to use them both at once.

ITALY TO ENGLAND: Certainly you have the ability to write. I suggest you use your abilities!

JAMUL: Yeah, well, you know how love is - it stills the pen....

ITALY TO TURKEY: Okay, okay!

ITALY TO AUSTRIA: We shall be fruitful and multiply - or is that fruitless, get AIDS, and die. Tough, eh?

ENGLAND TO TURKEY: Please write. I'm open to suggestions on how I can help you.

ENGLAND TO GERMANY: May Allah be with you, bud!

// // // // // // // // == == == == == == == // // // // // // // // == //

GAME 19860 - The Convolted Cassowary - Winter 1905

Note that Bob O'Donnell is now at 615 Front St.,
Klamath Falls, OR 97601.

From last season, Fre A Mun /r/ o.t.b., Ger & Den
/r/ Hel.



MIG builds a lon. GER removes a pic, a ruh. ITA builds f nap. RUS
builds a mos.

It has been proposed, owing to COSTA's recent irregularity and potential future trouble, that this game be turned over to the Orphan Games Bureau for relocation at this time. A vote on this proposal is hereby called, and I assure you that I won't bat an eye at the result. In fact, just in case, I have already made arrangements for a good, solid alternate home - one in which no fees whatsoever shall be charged to you.

This one will be decided by a simple majority of those actually voting. I assure all of you, there will be no hard feelings; I concede that COSTA has come on hard times of late, and I cannot in all honesty guarantee that we are yet fully out of the woods. So please vote honestly.

IN FACT. To be sure of fair treatment, send your votes to a neutral third party. I hereby appoint as receiver Steve Langley, 2296 Eden Roc Ln., #1, Sacramento, CA 95825. Votes to him before next deadline, please. A tie will result in transfer of the game.

However: To keep the game going as smoothly as possible, please send next moves to me. Even if the game is transferred, I will adjudicate those next moves in a timely fashion to assure reasonable continuity.

ENGLAND TO TURKEY: No, I'm not Sir Lancelot. I'm one of King Arthur's other knights, alias Sir Boss.

TURKEY TO AUSTRIA: You're far too generous! It's far better to give than to receive. Allow me to give it!

RUSSIA TO JAMUL: With some luck I can get back to the 5 units you gave me when I stepped into this mess.

ITALY: General Robert (Mussolini) Greier, speaking at the F-I-A banquet, proclaimed Turkish fleets to be no cause for alarm. "We have bottled her up like a genie, and soon she shall regret the priority she has placed on naval vessels." Turning to leave, he reared and stated, "What damage can one woman hope to wreak upon man?" Leaving the banquet, he remembered - tearfully - to put his child-support check in the mailbox.

ITALY TO FRANCE: Thanks.

ITALY TO RUSSIA: Impressive! You've even managed to get a build! One day I hope to visit with you in this nice bar I know of in Constantinople.

FRANCE TO JAMUL: I shall remind you, Millificent is in this game. Be thankful you don't know "Spacey."

JAMUL: Ah, but I do know "Spacey," and am mightily glad for it. I can only rue the fact that neither of those ladies is single, and I don't live 3000 miles closer....

unless otherwise specified

THE DEADLINE FOR ALL GAMES IS

WEDNESDAY

JUNE 17, 1987

(note the attempt to cut down on lead time?)

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GAMEFINDER:

BEAR	34
BISSEL	27
CASSOWARY	35
COLFAX	32
CRESCENDO	28
DIK-DIK	32
HOTELLERIE	30
JOHNSON	soon
KING	31
MARSHALL	26
MEIGS	30
NILGAI	33
PIMMALIONE	30
SUNI	31
TAPIR	31

And with FANISKA, LODOISKA and THE
AUTISTIC AOUAD to come, this ought to
keep us hopping.

ONWARD!

