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Christmas Outpost

By RICHARD SETTI



It was Christmas Eve and a hell of a time for celebrating. The rain had been gushing out of the black clouds for days and the whole Vietnamese countryside was a huge irregular lake speckled with tiny islands, some of which were small and bushy and some of which, slightly larger, contained one or several bamboo huts which the rice farmers used for protection at night and for when the feared monsoons came. Smith and McGregor knew the value of these sturdy huts and had crawled into the first one they saw. A small, unused structure, with only one window opening to the northeast — in the direction of the thick, death-infested jungle, it was ample enough to keep the rain from soaking all the way to their skin and hopefully, the several feet of water surrounding the hut would act as a barrier to any enemy pulling a surprise ambush. Smith shivered.

"Jesus, what a place to spend our time while those Charlies hunt us down. Only one window and a leaky roof."

"Yeah," said McGregor, rolling off his regulation boots and letting the muddy water spill to the floor, "But by God we're sure lucky to even be here. I think they got most of the company."

"We gave them a good blow, too. There can't be many left after we got that mine blast at them. We'll have to wait here for morning before we can head back towards Tay Ninh."

And so the two soldiers dug in for the last hours of daylight. Smith perched against a dry, dusty corner of the hut and leaned his rifle barrel through the little window, then gazed tiredly out at the expanse of the flooding rice fields and at the dark rim of the jungle. McGregor used his knife to bore a hole through the south wall and peeked through it at the pelting rain. He was just about to begin prying a chunk out of the south east wall when he noticed something among the cobwebs in the roof rafters.

"Hey Smith, look! A candle hidden away in the roof."

"You crazy? Leave it alone for Chrissake. That's all those goons need is a beacon to tell them we're here."

But McGregor wasn't listening. His face was all grins and his cheeks turned a puffy red as he propped up a strong plank and, dodging his head among the rotting boards supporting the roof, he lunged for the candle, which was stashed on a high shelf, missed and fell to the floor, crashing his body against the door and landing a loose pot of nails on Smith. The wobbly door flew open and in gusted a sheet of rain and wind.

"Damn you, McGregor, we break our necks finding a place to hide and now probably everyone in the area knows we're here. We can't stay here now, guy, thanks to your chasing around in the rafters like a kid."

"Sorry, buddy, but it was seeing the candle made me realize something. This is Christmas and both sides, us and the enemy, agreed to a one day

cease fire, which began tonight an hour ago if I remember right. So I thought while we're here we could light the candle in honor of the occasion."

"You're out of your mind," yelled Smith, "To figure those Reds are going to politely lay down their guns when they realize two scared Yanks, who just helped wipe out one of their crack outfits, are crouching inside an isolated hut. Our only chance now is to make a dash for the bushy country to the south."

"No, that's impossible now. It'll soon be night and we'd get nowhere but lost in the dark and the country is full of booby traps. Remember those ones we cleared away yesterday? No, I think we should rest here for the night and with the candle we can maybe dry out some of our socks."

By now Smith was furious. He'd always admired McGregor for his kind of rustic simplicity, but this was sheer stupidity, not to mention suicide.

"Look guy, this is it. We gotta clear out of here now. Now that you've blundered the door open, we're sitting ducks. At least our chances are better in the countryside."

Suddenly, from the distance, something exploded and, wondering whether it was a gunshot or artillery fire, both men leapt to the window. Then, without a word, Smith grabbed the bar to the door.

"There's your truce, old boy. Now do you come with me or not?"

"How do you know that it's fighting? Maybe someone just took a pot shot at a bird," said McGregor

"Just who the hell do you think you are, God Almighty? I don't mind a guy being stubborn, but when you're so bloody foolhardy to stick your neck out for no goddamn reason, it's your funeral. I'm going."

Slinging his rifle over his shoulder, Smith slipped through the door and began sloshing his way through mud and water, crouching as low as possible and pausing frequently behind large bushes to listen for any noise or movement. Above, the sky was a dark, dark blue and, without a moon, was becoming darker. A ridge of high bushes nearby faded into the black of the night and the flooded fields were now a blur of grey. The rain had stopped and only a faint rustling of the wind broke the still of the hour.

Smith stumbled on, but in several hours made little headway. The uncertainty of the country, plus his apprehension of enemy booby traps,

(Continued on next page)

Hovercraft For Bennett?

By CHARLES A. BOWMAN

Millions of people in Canada will hear of hovercraft this year. They will see hovercraft carrying passengers at Expo '67. There will be a hovercraft service between Montreal and the island where some of Expo's main operations are located.

When more people in British Columbia become informed about the possibilities of hovercraft, Premier Bennett's multi-million dollar investment in surface craft will be in trouble. There is something fundamentally inefficient in a ferry service when it takes as long to travel from Vancouver airport to Victoria as it does to fly from San Francisco to Vancouver.

Many passengers take cars on the slow ferries because of the long drive from the ferry landing to the city. With hovercraft, the ferry passenger will take off within walking distance from the Empress Hotel in Victoria. They will land somewhere on the waterfront near the CPR wharf in Vancouver. The hover-

craft terminal can be as conveniently located as a bus terminal.

Premier Bennett spoke a few months ago of adding a new super-deck to existing ferries, to take more cars, rather than spend more millions on costly new ferries. There has been little more heard of that departure from an elementary rule in ship design to keep the centre of gravity below the centre of buoyancy.

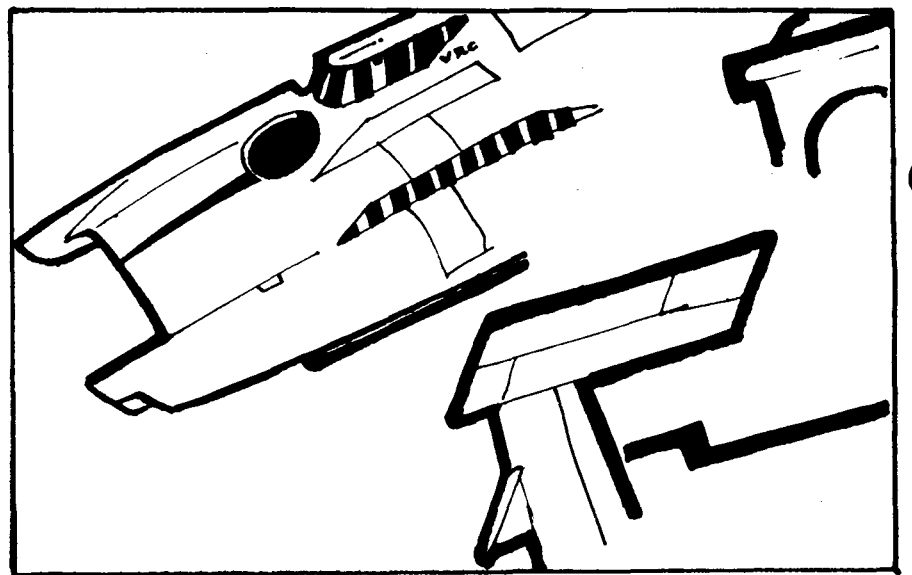
UNSEAWORTHY

Without adding to the superstructure of the Bennett ferries, they are already unseaworthy for operations outside of sheltered water. It is unlikely that Monty Aldous would venture on a trip around Vancouver Island on a Bennett ferry. Incidentally, he is aware of the coming of hovercraft: he spoke of it several years ago.

★

Mr. Bowman is former editor of THE OTTAWA CITIZEN.

There is a strange unawareness of this B.C. ferry situation on the opposition side of the legislature. The



Bennett ferries have been subsidized with millions of dollars from the federal treasurer. When Premier Bennett has complained about Ottawa's parsimony in granting subsidies, there has been no word from opposition members — either NDP or so-called Liberal — about the possible alternative of hovercraft.

British Columbia yards should be working on orders from the provincial ferry authority — to build, at least, an experimental hovercraft. British hovercraft builders have progressed beyond the experimental stage. Vickers associates are building one to carry 350 passengers, or the equivalent weight in passengers and cars.

Hovercraft are in daily operation between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, and across the English Channel from Folkstone to Boulogne. British Railways are investigating possibilities of hovercraft for land transport.

Between Victoria and Vancouver, hovercraft will make three trips in the time it takes to make one on the slow surface ferries. Hovercraft will displace the surface ferry as surely as the motor car has displaced the horse and buggy . . . but the opposition parties in the legislature are still in the horse and buggy state of mentality.

OUTPOST . . .

(Continued from page one)

real or imagined, made him fear to advance too quickly. And it was this that, added to a suddenly revived feeling of comradeship for McGregor, inclined him to think of returning back to the hut. But it wasn't until he heard another explosion and saw the sky in the direction he was heading light up as some missile arched through it leaving a thin trail of soft, glowing whiteness on the cluds, that he turned his steps back towards the hut.

He arrived at the edge of the rice fields in a short time and gasped as he saw framed in the little window of the hut, a small but intense light which, in contrast to the surrounding darkness was brilliant and sharp. It set off the hut from the fields and water and seemed to elevate it as a kind of unnatural and mysterious haven for mythological beasts that might rise from the flood. But anger soon replaced amazement.

"Shut it out," he screamed, "This isn't Christmas in Wales, it's war and they'll kill you without a thought."

There was no answer from the hut. Only a slight murmuring. Smith couldn't make out whether it was singing or not and at times it stopped, but whatever it was it was driving him crazy. And as it continued, Smith's heart pumped nervously and his fingers trembled and tightened on the trigger of his rifle.

"Crazy bastard, if you can't look after yourself then I will," and he fired one and then another shot at the candle in the window. It wouldn't go out. He fired again and again. His eyes were misty, his hands were shaking and the barrel of the gun jumped as shot after shot rang across the fields.

His firing suddenly stopped. Standing at the door of the hut, someone was beckoning to him, waving him to approach.

"McGregor. McGregor. It's me," Smith yelled as he lowered his rifle. "Are you OK?"

There was no reply but when Smith began jogging toward the hut the figure slowly withdrew inside.

Wasting no time, Smith sloshed quickly through the floodwater and bounded onto the long grass of the island. With a bash of the rifle butt the door flung open.

There was no doubt he was dead. A dark stream of blood on the left side of his head and a purple blotch on his chest, McGregor lay slumped with his shoulders half propped up against the wall and his arms spread up and down along the dirty floor.

"All for the sake of a lousy candle," Smith repeated as he wandered away from the hut, never wondering how McGregor was able to wave to him, never noticing the flickering glow of the candle in the window behind him.



OLD GIN

Stitched, squared;
Blue-ripped pants;
A drabby-dappled
sweatshirt;
A robin-grey wrinkled
hat;
That is Old Gin.

A polka-dotted red and white
bag;

A charcoal-burnt
pipe;
A quarter-filled
beer-bottle;
That is Old Gin.

Ransacked, old shack;
Filled with old stoves,
Old springs, old hay,
And a couple million
bills; stashed everywhere;
That was Old Gin.

—YUEN LI

Martlet Magazine

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Unsolicited material, including articles, poems and short stories, should be clearly addressed to the MARTLET MAGAZINE and either mailed to or left at the Martlet office. Contributions should be signed and consist of topical, political or literary material.



In Praise of Younger Women

By ROBIN JEFFREY

I was having coffee in a restaurant the other day, and my eye happened to wander out the window where it spotted a luscious-looking girl.

"Ha-ha," said my eye (it was my lecherous eye) and began to girl-watch shamelessly (which is, after all, the only way).

Then from around the corner ran two bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked children. I couldn't hear them, but I could see what they were saying: "Mummy, mummy."

And that's when it really hit me: I'm getting old.

To girl-watch a woman with two children! The agedness of it!

It would have been unthinkable when I was 19. In those days, I could, by sheer instinct, spot a mother at 50 paces and a married woman at 25.

Mr. Jeffrey, a regular columnist in the Mag, is a fourth-year Arts student at University of Victoria.

Those were the days!

Oh yes, I've heard these chaps talking in praise of older women and lauding the glories of maturity when every woman from 14 to 50 looks attractive and desirable. It broadens the field of vision, they say.

What rot!

Give me back my youth. To be 19 again! When a girl under 16 was a child and one over 20 was on the verge of the change of life.

But I guess I should have seen the signs of old age creeping up. I remember last spring, just after my 21st birthday, I was covering a girls' basketball tournament.

A sweet young thing of about 17 ("a trim little craft both fore and aft", as the bard said) whom my lecherous eye had been leering at all evening, came over and said, "Sir . . ."

I turned around to see whom she was addressing. I felt a tug at my

Wisdom from the past . . .

This week featuring excerpts from the inaugural address of Dr. Malcolm Taylor, November 14, 1964.

"It is the task of a university to graduate students with certain abilities highly developed; primarily the ability to think, to organize thoughts, to be creative, to be critical, and to be imaginative."

★

"If our professors are not high spirited and controversial enough, we'll be getting more who are."

★

"In outlook a university must be eternally young. The youthful outlook encompasses rebellion, the risk-taking, the excitement of youth, and to a degree, the uncertainty of youth."

sleeve. "Sir . . ." she said again. She was talking to me!

"Sir, will you please give us a good write-up, sir?" she blurted out while I turned pale and my knees went hubby.

"Yes, my child," I said, putting my arm around her waist, pattingly, "it shall be done." In 10 seconds I had made the transition from youthful sex-mania to dirty old-manliness.

After that, I should have seen the writing on the wall. But I didn't.

My hopes were buoyed up falsely during the summer when I was coming out of the arena. Two girls of about 22 were a few yards behind me.

"See him," one said, pointing at me (my lecherous eye was in the back of my head at the time), "he works for the paper."

"Oh no, he couldn't" the other said, "he only looks about 16."

I'd have kissed her if she hadn't been too old for a kid of 16.

So I lived an illusion of youth until the other day at the restaurant. But now I see the truth wherever I look.

My lecherous eye has started to water and twitch. Every girl I see seems to be either pregnant, engaged, married or a mother. Sometimes all four.

I think of the dictum about a man at 40 worrying that his daughter will do what he wanted other men's daughters to do when he was 20. And I worry about whether my daughter will. And I don't even have a daughter.

It's pretty depressing.

But enough of an old man's maunderings. It's way past eight o'clock, my warm milk is getting cold, and I must totter off to bed where I am awaited eagerly by my hot water bottle.

INFLATION ?

Erosion of Dollar Must Be Stopped

By N. A. SWAINSON

Currently disturbing is the passive and ubiquitous acceptance — and even aggravation — of the erosion in the value of the dollar which we have experienced for years, and in more acute form recently.

Neo-classic economists notwithstanding, I do believe that there is such a thing as cost-push inflation, and that we are experiencing one right now in Canada. Further, it may well be that there will be a greater erosion of the dollar's value this year than last. Many observers do suggest that the worst of the current pressure on the economy is past, and well it may be. I shall be surprised, however, if we do not see this spring a classic demonstration of the fact that the ameliorative action taken by government to restore or maintain demand often regenerates the inflationary problem.

Mr. Swainson is an associate professor in the Department of Economics and Political Science at the University of Victoria.

There is a very fairly developed review of the problem facing Canada in the Third Report of the Economic Council of Canada. I know it will be regarded as presumptuous for one who is not an economist to suggest that the analysis there has been capped by some faulty conclusions. But this is my belief. The Council argues that an income policy involving guidelines, or officially endorsed (not to say enforced) wage restraint within specific boundaries simply will not work under present circumstances in Canada. I am convinced that we cannot afford not to try.

DISTURBING FEATURES

Three features of the current situation are particularly disturbing. One is the fact that many of the most inflationary wage increases of the last year in Canada were just first instalments of awards providing matching increases for one, two or more subsequent years. Thus some of the most aggressive elements in the Canadian labour force have insured themselves against the action of corrective meas-

ures which the Council assumes will apply to others. A second concern of mine is with the wage settlement patterns set in the construction industry of this province. Canadian construction labour is well aware of the fact that demand in this industry is relatively insensitive to price levels, and has recently insisted on and received wage increases well in excess of advances in productivity. The wage settlements in question have been definitely inflationary, and in this province have come to be the pattern for others. The pacemaking danger which the Economic Council suggests may exist apropos the construction industry is a reality in B.C.

EXCESSIVE SETTLEMENTS

Finally, I am convinced that the Economic Council has failed to sense the extent to which significant sectors of the Canadian economy — in the service trades and local government, to cite two examples — which formerly were prepared to accept modest income advances when others appeared to be far better rewarded for intransigence just won't in future continue to play by these rules. This is one dimension of the current uproar in Quebec, and certainly is a part of the federal civil servants' successful drive for collective bargaining rights. The spillover, in short, from wage settlements which are excessive, and are not the result of genuine market forces, will not be as readily contained in the future as it was in the past.

It is true that regionalism is a very real fact of life in the Canadian economy, that our industries are more sensitive than are those of the U.S. to changes in world price levels, and that

our federal system differs from the American. I defer to no one, furthermore, in acknowledging that we have no real substitute for the market as an efficient allocator of resources. But I still think we are *playing with fire in not taking more direct action to condition or recondition our thinking to levels of wage increases which won't be self-defeating*. The suggested American guidelines were certainly fractured in some notable instances last year, but the Council of Economic Advisers there has not given up the fight. While discontinuing the use of precise figures, the C.E.A. is still saying clearly and vigorously that this year's increases must not exceed productivity gains, and must not seek to compensate for last year's rise in the cost of living. Only via such sanity can some measure of stability be restored in this field. The rationality of this position — so long argued in the U.S. by such journals as *The Economist* — hardly needs emphasizing. It stands in marked contrast to vague pleas by leaders in Canadian government for moderation, and to the recent submission of the Canadian Labour Congress to the Federal Cabinet. That submission, if reported correctly, seems to have equated suggestions of wage restraint with an antagonism to organized labour, and to have reflected the view that any policy endorsed by management must *ipso facto* be anti-thetic to labour.

My plea therefore is that government recognize a real responsibility here; that it had *The Guardian's* recent claim that the public interest has a right to be represented in the bar-

(Continued on next page)

DEATH:
EXTINCTION OF LIFE

I wonder if the first
to die
knew it is classed
under 'd,'
column II,
page 91.

I wonder if
he knew,
knew that
he was performing
a necessary
biological function.

I wonder if
he knew
he was the first
to go
and that
there would
be others,
all others,
after him.

I wonder if
he knew
he was dying . . .

I wonder.

—FARLEY RUSK



VISIONS

white-blue foams
and silver flashes
blue throws white
the silver slashes
back
and green pours pink
across the backdrop black
while cornered
silver-sabered
a morbid sludge of brown
coughs out grey life
flecked through
with hints of universal agony
as spitting emerald
claws to death
the cobalt running red before my eyes
those crimson lacerations
somehow felt
across me
and the galaxy

—STEVE HUME

DOLLAR

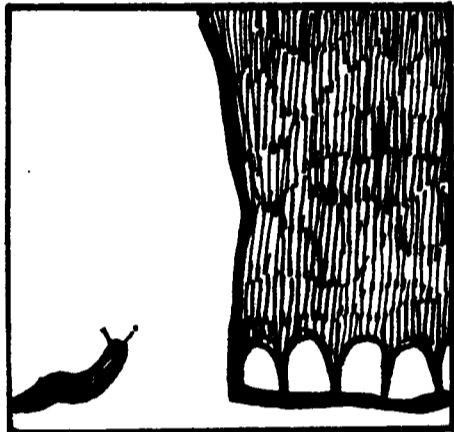
(Continued from page three)

gaining process; that it take seriously
the warning that ". . . a full employ-
ment policy that destroys the stability
of money can end up by destroying
itself." Of course the problem is fan-
tastically complicated, and the experts
are in real disagreement as to what
should be done. (Read the scintillating
article by Gilbert Bruck, from which
the above citation is drawn, in the
October issue of *Fortune*.) Initially
unpopular governmental action will be
required. So also will be a massive
programme of public education (the
Achilles' heel to date of our half-
hearted approach to Keynes). But my
contention is that the public is inher-
ently sensible, and will welcome, not
reject, such action. Unfortunately, to
date, this thesis has not been empiric-
ally tested in Canada.

PICTURE ON SUNDAY

Outside
The rain is building an empire
Of soft blooms and buds
And falls on high evergreens
And salty ocean scuds.
Flowers dried for days by sun
Come again to coloured life
And stand up proudly
In the health of air,
A not so rare
Phenomenon.

—GREGORY ROSCOW



THE SLUG
THAT WOULDN'T BE

There was a time on this earth when
slugs were similar to the rest of all
animals. They were fine upright
animals, respected by all the living,
and were considered as good
candidates for the title, "Ruler of
the Earth." The slug, at this time
was very happy with the situation
and was known to be working hard
at self-improvement so as to be
more fit as one to be holder of the
coveted title. Gradually though,
the slug became increasingly aware
of the mysterious pressures he was
subjected to as a candidate. He
grew listless, scornful, afraid.
His once great enthusiasm for
competition became a weak force in
his life, he almost stopped competing.
The changes in the slug's thinking
soon became apparent in his physical
appearance. He became slow, and
small, with retractable sense organs
so as to be able to ignore those
things which he wished to. His body
became soft and exposed, but at the
same time indestructible in its
ability to yield. His slime, once
an insignificant part of his
personality, became exaggerated and
was noticeable enough to become
a major block to his success. Finally,
and most fittingly, he became
susceptible to a common product
of the animal which had won the
title "Ruler of the Earth," which
was a far superior animal.

—BILL BUCKSNAPPER

blacker than sex
more magical
than young men dying
from ideals
loving
is as complex
as the buttercups of spring
and as simple
as the force that moves the galaxy

—STEVE HUME



BEATLE CRACK

STOMP,
STOMP!
Hands stretched,
And shrunked;
Voices shrilled;
Faces manicured;

UMP,
UMP!
The warpath's on;
Feet kicked;
And pounded;
Ears turned;
Heads fainted;

STOMP,
STOMP!
Sagged;
A figure, vexed;

Crumpled;
A pile
of
shrunked
sausages.

—YUEN LI



Heavens
(Look) above
The clouds are a wonderful sight
To see (the open blue sky)
On a sunny day when
(the moon's day-body) is
Poking through like a saucer
On an azure tablecloth
From the fountains of space
Moving puffing along
They boil toward their home.

—GREGORY ROSCOW

He had forsaken his fellows
At the front.
The cannon boomed, Oh it had
Boomed so near
With splintering crash
And ugly gash
In earth's sound home
That he had
Known but fear.
An impulse
(That's all it was
We cannot judge him
Bad because
For an instant he let
Terror in)
Had jellied his legs
And given spur
To a very real
Sense of fear
The kind that
We all feel.
But though impulse
It must have been
It carried him from
Our trench it seems
And clambering to the rear.
After that we saw
No more of him
(With cannon's blast
That mighty din
We knew one law:
To hold our post).
No, probably most
Were not aware
He'd gone.

Well he was good
Enough with the boys
Around the trench;
In fact he stood
As one of steel who
lived and never
Smelled the stench
Of death.
He liked a smoke
And played cards well
And knew some jokes
I wouldn't tell.
But when fighting
Was the chore
And he heard
The danger bell
Well he would fight
And carry on
The bloody process
Of this war.
That's why we think
It hurt him
Then to know
That he was tried
And given death
By his own side.

—GREGORY ROSCOW