

When I told my secretary I was reading a book called So Excellent a Fishe, she smiled politely; when I added that the "fishe" was actually a turtle, she laughed nervously

This may tell you something of my secretary's opinion of me, but it doesn't tell you what is really important, which is that there is a new book called So Excellent a Fishe, that its title comes from a Bermuda proclamation of 1620 forbidding the killing of young turtles, that it tells the utterly fascinating story of the lives and achievements of the various breeds of sea turtles, and that it is an excellent example of first-rate nature writing. And by this, I mean that even a professed nature hater (me, for example) will find it exciting and compelling reading.

Archie Carr wrote it. He is a Professor of Zoology at the University of Florida and the author of the much acclaimed "The Windward Road." In his new book he sets down the results of many years of research into the habits of this unusual creature, and he descants upon such puzzling points as the fact that no one (fisherman, mariner, or Professor of Zoology), no one knows where turtles go during their first year of life; that there is a sound biological reason why the females lay a hundred eggs at a time; and that a turtle can navigate unerringly over 1400 miles of open ocean from its feeding grounds to its place of birth to nest without any landmark to guide it.

As I intimated, it is a book that, once started, cannot be put down. If you are a little tired of the games people are playing (and who isn't, these days?), I recommend acquaintance with the games turtles play as described in So Excellent a Fishe: A Natural History of Sea Turtles, published, naturally, by The Natural History Press.

## L.L.Day <br> EDITOR-AT-LARGE

So Excellent a Fishe: A Natural History of Sea Turtles ( $\$ 5.95$ ), by Archie Carr, is a publication of The Natural History Press, which is the publisher for The American Museum of Natural History, and a division of Doubleday \& Company, Inc., 277 Park Avenue, New York 10017. Copies may be obtained from your own bookseller or at any of the 32 Doubleday Book Shops, one of which is located at 934 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach, Florida 33139.

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THE PHOENIX NEST
Edited by Martin Levin

## Tresses and Stresses

## Footnotes to the Hair Explosion

0UR PRIMEVAL ancestors, like our cousin, the ape, grew hair indiscriminately all over their bodies. True, they had naked palms and they walked on hairless soles, but they were otherwise shaggy without interruption.

Since then man has been shedding continuously for thousands of years till now he is, except in Greenwich Village, almost completely devoid of hair. The fact is that we, who regard ourselves as a neat, smooth-skinned species, are merely bald all over.

Now, I would be quite content to let it rest right there. But not Dr. Bentley Glass, a geneticist at New York State University. Dr. Glass, apparently disturbed by the knowledge that the entire surface of his body has turned out to be a scalp, has published an article in Science speculating on the reasons for man's present hairlessness-which, he concludes, was brought about by the invention of clothing. According to him, the earliest trousers, while they pro-
tected man from cold weather and hot seats, were also a powerful depilatory. Similarly, the primordial shirt, fashioned with a gaping hole in the front to permit the survival of chest hair, eventually led to the disappearance of most hair above the waist.

As could be expected, this theory has aroused a lot of discussion among the hair-minded. And most of it has been critical, mainly on the ground that Dr. Glass has disinterred the long-discredited Lamarckian theory which says, rather laughably, that you could breed a strain of scaleless flounders, for example, by having their parents swim around in frogman suits for a few generations. Personally, I can cite at least two hairless, albeit unclothed, animals to refute this theory: the bald eagle, who, as elegant as he is, has never been seen wearing a hat, and the elephant, who, though his hairlessness is more extensive than most, never gets dressedif only because they don't make "stouts" large enough to fit him. No, I'm afraid that Dr. Glass's theory, like our prehis-
toric ancestors, simply will not wash.
Dr. Jack P. Hall, of the Rutgers Institute of Animal Behavior, offers another one that he thinks will. In his opinion, growing hair uses up a considerable amount of body energy, and man, the more he engages in nonhairraising activities, progressively loses the ability to grow hair. By implication, therefore, we were able to develop language and become so dam talkative only because we didn't grow hair on our tongues. All well and good. But, one might ask Dr. Hall, if civilization is so firmly based on falling hair, and if, presumably, teen-agers are part of civilization, what then? What about the millions of teen-agers who spend most of their time furiously growing hair without even getting winded, and then easily muster up the boundless energy needed to comb it? What about that? Cat got your tongue, Dr. Hall?

It seems to me that Philip Mershkovitz, curator at the Field Museum of Natural History, has a better theory. He claims that the race began to grow hairless when man started to reject hairy women. And why not? For eons man had been mating regularly with people whose hairline began at the ankle and who invariably looked like his brother. Suddenly, along came this lovely mutant -hairless and a staunch Darwinian be-sides-to familiarize him with les differences whose existence he had only dimly suspected before. With every male looking for a hairless date and taking a new interest in love and marriage, what a turning point that must have been! I think that easily explains why we have so little hair left; for that matter, I think it also explains why the hair we have left turns gray.
-Murray Macht.

## Bad Bridgework

TTHE British Travel Association is at it again. Every year Americans are tempted with dazzling color photographs to lure them back to the Motherland, and every year these include a picture of a bridge. The particular bridge that is shown varies, but in structure it is always the same: solid stone, handsomely wrought, probably everlasting. And, unfortunately, it is the product of an age which didn't envision the automobile.

My first experience with British bridges came when I rented a car in York. The day was fine, and I wandered from route to route, exploring the green countryside. The roads ambled along, view succeeding view, and then there would be a bridge. Arching above the river, it would be massive, it would give assurance-but it was still unreached. Here came the first rub. The ancient builders had sensibly placed it at right angles to the stream. That, though, was
(Continued on page 8)


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## American Export Isbrandtsen Lines

## Does an Italian wine go with Lamb Curry?

## Bolla does.

Continued from page 4 without knowledge of the future direction of the highway. A modern British road doesn't lead up to a bridge; it finds it lying across its path.

A sudden hard right or left, then the car lurches onto the bridge. But now the driver looks around. The bridge is walled with stone. It is also narrow. In fact, it is exactly one-and-one-half cars wide. What if another car is at this moment twisting onto the other end? Simple enough-look ahead. Easily said, but not easily done. The roadway isn't a graceful arch, repeating the one cresting over the river; it is a flattened, inverted "V," peaking at the center.

Now comes the Anglican moment of truth: one's own car is scaling the upward ramp-but that other car, the one that instinct says is climbing the other slope, is coming, too. Neither driver can see over the center ridge, and--since the road has zigzagged waywardly in its approach to the bridge-neither driver has seen the other's car at a distance.

This realization takes seconds only, and then the crest is reached. Sometimes a car is there, sometimes it isn't. If it is, brakes squeal, gears shift, and each driver skirts the masonry as best he can. Curiously, here the ancient builders have saved the modern motorist. By cleverly putting their bridges at angles to the future road, they have so slowed the onthrust of progress that head-on collision has been averted. The driver survives; the world goes on.

I, too, went on, from obstacle to obstacle, from bridge to bridge. Would I make it over the next one safely? Should I try fording the shallower streams? Should I simply wait until nightfall, when I could see, if not the bridges approaching, the lights of oncoming cars? But I knew that British drivers, still remembering World War II, habitually use only their tiny parking lights. I had to continue, a minor Hannibal crossing man-made Alps, until finally I parked by a pub in late afternoon. Outside was a sleek, red sports car; inside, drinking, was its owner. We started to talk.
"The bridges have got me," I said. "You can't see what's coming."
"Of course not," he said. "Weren't designed for cars. Built for carts. Good high cart, no speed, driver could see what was coming. All very sensible."
"But what about today?" I asked.
He looked me firmly in my shaken eye. "You people do not appreciate that motoring is not simply a way of getting rapidly from one place to another. It is a sport. It is an art." He put down his empty pint and left. A moment later I heard the roar of his engine. Off he went into the evening, to take the bridges resolutely as he found them-a sportsman, perhaps even an artist.
-Robert Gordon.

## You mean you've never even <br>  tried Newsweek?

... or you tried it once years ago? Things change. You've changed since then. So has Newsweek.

If you haven't seen a copy lately, let us quote from some recent issues:

Qe Marijuana, most experts agree, does not result in physical addiction... Unlike the heroin user, the pot smoker does not develop a tolerance to marijuana and demand everincreasing doses for satisfaction. When deprived of marijuana, the user does not suffer the intense craving, chills, and nausea typical of withdrawal from hard narcotics."-From a Newsweek report on the marijuana problem.

Qe A decade ago, the nation's highways were suddenly overrun with hordes of puttputting little cars with names like Volkswagen, Fiat, Renault, and Toyopet. Detroit automakers counterattacked the doodlebug invasion with a sprightly new breed of compact cars all their own. With the dazzling exception of Volkswagen most of the frail little imports couldn't stand the competition, nor the high-speed punishment of the U.S. roads. Import sales fell, dealers disappeared overnight and Detroit went back to building its own standard-size version of the American dream."-From a Newsweek business feature.

Qe There can be little question that the streets were organized, despite official denials. According to one soul brother who guarded
his store, rioters worked in teams to ravage several stores near him. 'First, a couple of boys on motorcycles would ride up and spot a store,' he told me. 'Then they'd leave and a couple of convertibles would drive up and smash in the storefront and grab everything. And, when they were through, one car would drive around the alley and then they'd both drive off. In ten minutes, the place would be in flames.' "-From a Newsweek correspondent's eyewitness report of four days among the Detroit rioters.

Qe In the Middle East, Israel has proved its sovereignty, within and beyond its borders. In Vietnam, the U.S. is struggling to build true sovereignty where none has ever existed. With dazzling irony, one powerful journalistic apologist for U.S. policy in Vietnam has reported a 'first lesson' of the Arab debacle thus: 'No amount of foreign hardware can make a military victor of a nation that lacks effective leadership and the will to win.' Such a depiction of Russian failure in Egypt reads like a precise warning to American fantasy in Vietnam."-From a Newsweek Signed Opinion column by Emmet John Hughes.

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## Top of My Head



Arms and the Disturbed Man

TVHE SECOND Amendment to the Constitution says: "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

The Fifth Commandment says: "Thou shalt not kill."

Congress for five consecutive years has been hearing argument for and against gun control legislation. During that time a President, his assassin, and an American Nazi leader have been among the victims of uncontrolled guns in the hands of uncontrollable citizens. To say nothing of the other vital statistics which show that last year in this country guns were used in 6,400 murders, 10,000 suicides, and 2,000 accidental deaths.

Most of the lobbying against a federal gun control bill has been carried out by the NRA. This is the National Rifle As-
sociation and is not to be confused with the NRA of Franklin Delano Roosevelt: the National Recovery Act. Very few people who have been killed by guns recover.

The thinking in our Congress is divided and not a little obfuscated. For instance, Senator Frank Church of Idaho speaks out against a gun control bill because in his state hunting is a popular sport. In a speech in Congress he is quoted as saying: "A hunting rifle and a gun are kept by most Idaho families for hunting. They are as popular as a fly rod or a spinning reel."

On the other hand, Senator Church came out with a speech against our country's selling guns to underdeveloped nations. Although guns play a great part in the popular sport in most of the underdeveloped countries we've been reading about. There they are even more popular than the fly rod and spinning reel.

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It is not quite clear how a federal law restricting the sale of guns and rifles by issuing permits to those who want to buy them would in any way place restrictions on actual game hunters, as opposed to those who have something else in mind. Such a permit would clear up what the gun or rifle buyer wants to do with the weapon. The salesman at the sports counter has a customer:
"I want to buy a gun or rifle."
"Yes? And what do you want a gun or rifle for?"
"I'm going hunting."
"Hunting what?"
"I'm hunting for the guy that's been running around with my girl."
"Permit for gun or rifle denied."
The NRA claims this is unfair to sporting goods stores. Such a reason for wanting to buy a gun or rifle would cause the store to lose a sale, the NRA feels.

Not at all; depends on the salesman:
"Permit for a gun or rifle denied. But how about a fly rod or a spinning reel, which are just as popular?"
"Naw, I want a gun or a rifle to get this guy I'm after. I'm going to teach him a lesson."
"But look, sir, if you happen to kill him, what kind of a lesson is that? He'll never know about it. But if you get your man with a fly rod or a spinning reel, you can inflict enough damage on him that not only won't he be able to run around with your girl, or anybody else's, but he won't be able to sit down to dinner for months."

A tempting alternative that no man whose girl is being run around with could possibly resist.

When Moses went up Mount Sinaiand he didn't climb it just because it was there-he accepted the Decalogue and didn't ask anyone to chisel into the Tablet an amendment to the Fifth Commandment. There was no dialogue about the NRA or the popularity of guns vs. fly rods and spinning reels; or of amending any of the Commandments.

Our Constitution did not fare as well. The Second Amendment declared that a well-regulated militia was necessary to our security and, therefore, the right of the people to bear arms should not be infringed.

Would you say that the people who have been doing all this sniping in our cities, or the man who shot down innocent people indiscriminately from a tower in Texas-or Oswald-bore arms because they thought through some derangement, that they constituted a wellregulated militia? I wouldn't.

And I'll shoot anyone who does. Or better yet-I'll get out my fly rod and spinning reel. -Goodman Ace.


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