

Trade Winds

Jerome Beatty, Jr.

When his wife had to leave town to take care of her ailing mother, Charley Manos of the *Detroit News* looked for someone to take over. He found this ad in his paper: EUROPEAN WOMAN WISHES DAY WORK; EXPERIENCE, GOOD REFERENCE. He called the number listed, and he tells me the interview went this way:

WOMAN: How many in the family?

MANOS: Five, including three children, but one is away.

WOMAN: How many rooms?

MANOS: Uh, three bedrooms and a den, or four bedrooms.

WOMAN: What kind of vacuum cleaner do you have?

MANOS: Standard, I guess. It's electric.

WOMAN: How far is your home from the bus stop?

MANOS: Just two short blocks.

WOMAN: How much do you pay?

MANOS: I don't know. What is the going rate?

WOMAN: I charge sixteen dollars for eight hours, plus bus fare both ways.

MANOS: All right, now can I ask you

some questions—about the reference?

WOMAN: I can't talk now.

MANOS: But your ad said good reference, and—

WOMAN: What happened to the other cleaning woman?

MANOS: She's visiting her mother—I mean, we didn't have one.

WOMAN: I'll call you back.

She never did, and Charley Manos never had the courage to answer another advertisement, so they got along without any help.

I never knew that Jack Johnson, the first black heavyweight boxing champion, had written an autobiography. It has just been published by Chelsea House under the title, *Jack Johnson Was A Dandy*. Some experts claim that Johnson was the greatest. At the age of forty-eight he fought and beat a twenty-four-year-old who had never lost a fight. Johnson himself thought he could have beaten Dempsey or Tunney when he was in his forties and they were in their prime.

It wasn't only his prize-fighting skill that attracted attention, but his private life, too. Three of his four wives were white, and he refused to play the game as the Establishment wanted. That was sixty years ago, so you can imagine the kind of controversy that he engendered. Johnson fled the country to escape a prison term on a rather phony charge, and he lived a high old life abroad. He finally came back to take his medicine. He died in an auto accident in 1946. Johnson had been shipwrecked, robbed by Mexican bandits, presented at court, befriended by Australian bushmen, and had, as he wrote, "mingled with the frivolous in the noted cafés and restaurants of the continent." Compared to him, a Great White Hope would seem pale, indeed.

In his medical column in the *Houston Chronicle*, Dr. T. R. Van Dellen wrote about "How to get out of a car in water." He said, "If it is not possible to open the door, roll down the window. The water will pour in, but be prepared to wait until the compartment is full in order to equalize the pressure. Then take a deep breath and swim out."

Here are some fragments found by Robert Holkeboer while grading papers for the Department of English at Eastern Michigan University over the years:

"Chekhov spent his whole life looking for the piece that would fill the void in his life."

"When we came out of the dressing rooms at the start of the second half, a great ovulation went up from the audience."

"The church condemns to hell anyone engaging in premartial sex."

"The Dark Ages is just another name for the mid-evil period."

"The only subjects Holden did good in was English."

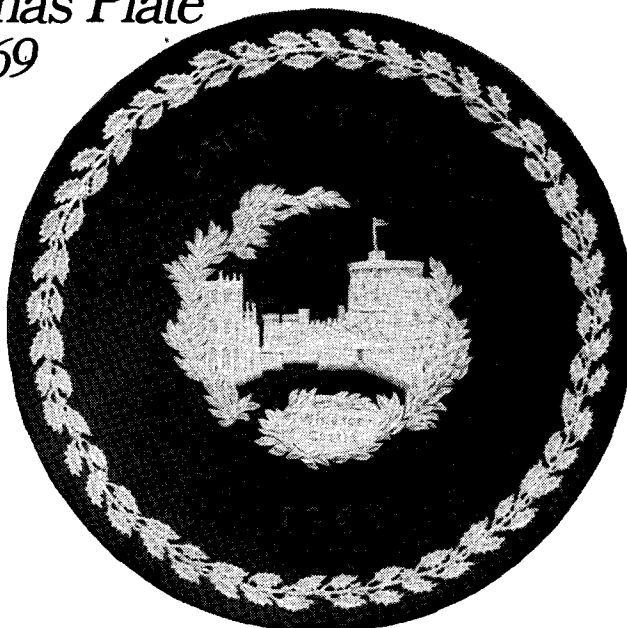
Sharps and Flats: According to the *San Juan Star*, the Ballets de San Juan performed two numbers at the International Theater Festival there in October: "Swam Lake" and "Pas de Dix."

► In a Los Angeles court, a lady's grounds for divorce seemed good enough. She told the judge, "I have reason to believe that my husband is not the father of my last child."

► Robert Lauterborn saw an effective sign in Maine: NO TRESPASSING—SURVIVORS WILL BE PROSECUTED.

► Zander Hollander, who edited *Great American Athletes of the Twentieth Century* (Random), received a fan letter from a young reader that closed with these words: "I hope you write

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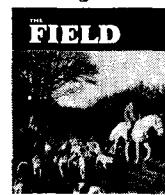
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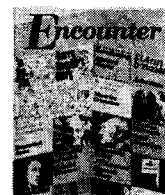
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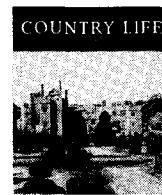
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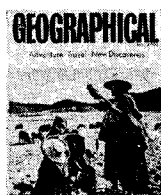
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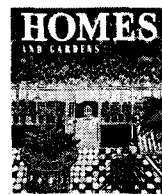
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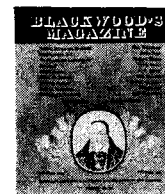
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a book of Great American Athelice of the twenty-first century in years to come."

► I understand we could build thirty schools for what it costs to make one warplane.

► California State Representative Don Mulford's September newsletter to his constituents concluded: "If I can be of further service to you, please do hesitate to contact me."

► *The War in the South* (Crown) by Donald Barr Chidsey points out that the first Declaration of Independence was made more than a year before July 4, 1776. It was in Charlotte, North Carolina, May 31, 1775, that Mecklenburg County representatives gathered in the courthouse and adopted the Mecklenburg Declaration, throwing off British rule.



► At New York's Broadway and 61st Street, Roderick Cook reports, the American Bible Association stands next to the Plaid Stamp Redemption Center.

► If an airline pilot finds himself hijacked to Cuba, he doesn't necessarily have to go to Havana. There is a Cuba in Alabama, in Missouri, in Kansas, in New Mexico, in New York, and in Illinois.

► Hy Brown, general manager of Nathan's Famous, browsed in a Times Square bookstore looking for a book for a sick friend. He found what he wanted, but the jacket was soiled. "This book's a little dirty, isn't it?" he remarked to the clerk. The clerk looked worried, and replied, "If it's only a *little* dirty, we won't sell very many."

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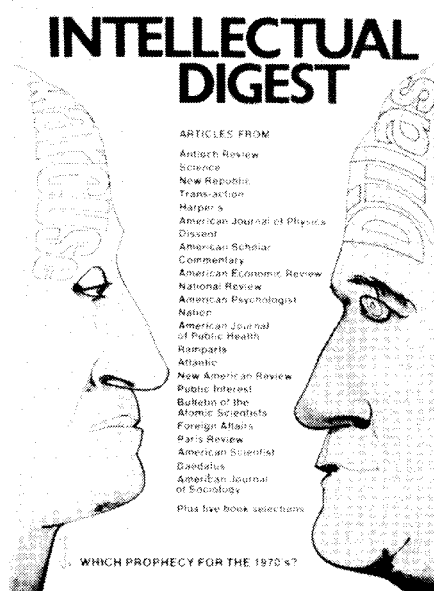
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State of Affairs

Henry Brandon

Overseas Scenes

LONDON.

THE EUROPEAN REACTION to the impressive peace moratorium was surprisingly ambivalent. There was admiration for the objectives of the demonstration's organizers, sympathy for the depth of the anti-war feelings, and much compassion for the restrained anguish of the nation. But because the Europeans instinctively feel that their own destiny very much depends on the United States, there was apprehension that President Nixon might go too far in reacting to public pressure, and that, as a consequence, American prestige would suffer. There is, in other words, a basic concern that the President, if he ceded to public pressure this time, might do the same in a different situation closer to European interests. Doubts as to the fortitude of American leadership could have a destabilizing effect on the Western world.

This does not mean that the allies feel that the terms President Nixon has

offered to Hanoi are good enough to lead to a settlement. As the London *Sunday Times* put it: "Those who fail to win wars cannot expect to make their own price for peace." While the London *Observer*, reflecting the disquiet over the moratorium, wrote: "The tragic irony in the situation is that those Americans who most urgently want an end to the killing and would be most willing to accept a 'Yugoslav' solution may be the very people producing the social pressures which make worse outcomes more likely."

Britain, France, and West Germany are facing some major decisions next year in the fields of defense and economics, yet all three countries are likely to be governed by men with little political elbowroom. In West Germany, the new coalition led by the Social Democrats enjoys only a narrow majority. The Christian Democrats, who expected the Social Democrats to continue the Grand Coalition with them, are bitter and will make it difficult for Chancellor Willy Brandt to ar-

rive at far-reaching decisions. In Paris, Premier Georges Pompidou is very much hamstrung by the opposition on the Left, especially the trade unions, and the ultra-Gaullists on the Right, who are looking over his shoulder to forestall any serious deviations from General de Gaulle's policies.

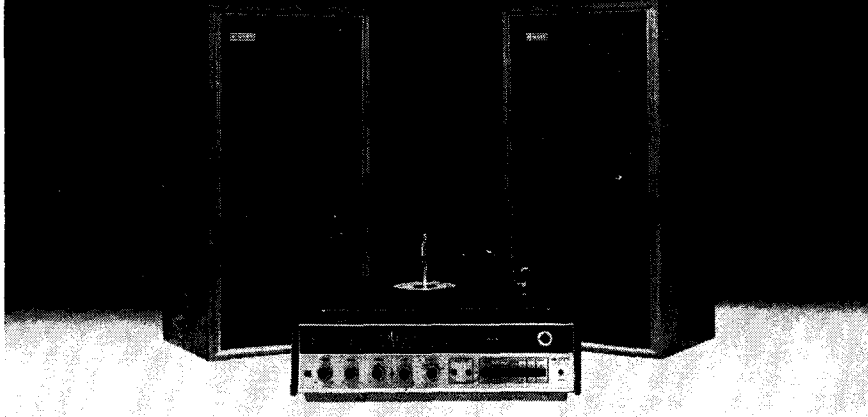
And here in London all politicians are seriously worried by the volatility of the British electorate. Only a few months ago the opinion polls showed the Conservative Party leading Labour by 19 per cent. This lead has now shrunk to 9, even 4 per cent, depending on what poll one wants to believe. Next year's elections, therefore, are expected to be a close race. It is true that both parties are committed to seeking entry into the Common Market, but both parties also sense that the British public is getting less enthusiastic at this prospect now that the chances, since General de Gaulle's demise, have somewhat improved. The party leaders, therefore, have modified their stand. They are now saying that they still want to join the Common Market, but not at any price.

VIENNA.

THE FRANZ JOSEPH railway station is a grimy old place. It looks as if nothing has been done to it since World War II. But then none of the good international trains depart from here, except for the one that goes to Prague. The Vindobona, as it is called, travels fast, yet it still takes longer than the trains of thirty years ago. The reason is the long, drawn-out wait at the border caused by the tedious and suspicious passport and customs officials. The train's four carriages are half-empty, the first-class carriage totally, except for one Austrian government official traveling on business. The Czechoslovak government apparently does not issue first-class tickets to its citizens because of the hard currency costs to Austria.

Why are Czechs returning to Prague? They are not surprised at this question. Some of them obviously thought hard before deciding not to stay and seek refuge in Austria. They all know that their hopes for a better, more liberal political regime in their native country are gone. And they do not expect any real improvements there within the next ten years. But to many the attraction of mother earth Czechoslovakia remains strong. To become a refugee in the Thirties, in the days of the Nazi threat, was different. People were afraid of concentration camps and gas ovens, of being killed. The desire to escape was compelling. Today, as one Czech who dislikes the Husak regime explained to me, if you go about your job and avoid getting in-

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