River Bend Reflections
1985-1986

By
Stan
Dorman

WELCOME TO RBR

In late August of 1984 I negotiated the sale of a business I had spent the greater part of my life nurturing and managing. I did so for many reasons, but chief among them was the lure of freedom - freedom to enjoy, confront and exercize a lifetime of dreams and avocations. A great number of diverse pursuits have consumed joyful stolen hours over many years. What would happen with the quality and content of my life if I grabbed this first real opportunity to cash in my chips? In what ways would I be able to fulfill the responsibility such an abundant gift of freedom placed upon me to "pay back to the spirit of man"?

By January I had, in the main, extricated myself from full-time involvement in my business. I had fantasized, for many years, about writing a monthly journal which would keep friends and family in touch with both the experiences in my life and and the context in which I held them. I also felt certain that I needed to put my ego on the line in order to muster the discipline to write as well as I could month after month.

And so, in February, 1985, River Bend Reflections (RBR) was born. My original "conscription" list consisted of fifty copies sent to unsuspecting friends and relatives. These priveleged few receive their monthly copies free of charge forever (or until suspension of publication - whichever comes first). The response has been varied. It ranges from those who really look forward to my monthly offerings, to those who, I suspect, think me a presumptuous fool. Following Vol. 1, #2 I had a few requests from people who wished to send gift subscriptions of RBR to friends. I decided at that point that if I had already taken on the risk of exposing myself so blatently, I may as well go for a nomination to the Asses Hall of Fame. At this time I have a delightfully surprising number of subscriptions and expend many happy hours each month in putting the next issue together.

As you enter the arena, RBR is very much an evolutionary publication. Content varies from life at River Bend Farm (where I live) to bits and pieces on various fleights of fancy. Every month I have been dissatisfied with the overall result, and every month I have liked parts of what I've written. I am encouraged by my belief that each issue continues to provide me with a better sense of what I'm after.

I love hearing from readers and hope you both enjoy your subscription and come to trust that open comment - positive, negative, or both - is truly welcome. Until last month I included all back issues (there were only two) with new subscriptions. I have chosen to switch to an introductory letter because the mailing costs have gotten obscene and the bulk has increased every month. Back issues are available to subscribers, however, at a dollar each, should you find you can't bear to be without them.

Stan Dorman

RIVER BEND REFLECTIONS

February, 1985 Vol 1, No. 1

This is the first issue - as far as I know, the first issue in the history of the universe - of River Bend Reflections. You have been singled out to be tested in this fashion because you are among those with whom I have - in joy and sorrow - shared part of my life and thought. I find myself on the edge of a new world of experience that I seem to have deliberately created. I have sold my interest in my business and must now come to know myself (or recreate myself, perhaps) in ways that are very new to me. It has been easy, at first, to flit around within the options for fun, and see myself as in a very enviable position. But quickly a sense of sobriety taps me on my metaphysical shoulder and hollers in my metaphysical ear, "Now, Stanley" - it always calls me Stanley because it knows I prefer Stan - "you know there are lots of other vantage points" - it uses words like "vantage points" a lot - "from which to look at your situation....." And then it goes on to point out that whatever has best filled what for me is an unsatisfied longing for God, requires that to at least some extent one give back, as Carlos Castaneda very nicely put it, to the Spirit of Man. It also reminds me that until I emerse myself in a new lifestyle I am likely to be a more solitary being than I would choose to be and that extending oneself into the world requires both risk and action. It is a bit like my fairy Godmother has suddenly turned me into a housewife whose children have grown and flown. I have many skills which are not terribly marketable and a great deal of time in which to figure out how to either use them or develop others.

I have tentatively concluded that I know a Truth. It is that the best possibility an individual can count on to assure knowing there is some - albeit small - meaning to his existence, is to raise (and welcome the raising of his own) levels of consciousness. The doing of River Bend Reflections (hereafter called RBR) is an act of madness and an act of joy. There is an exercise that was used in a communications workshop I once took in which you tell someone that you "celebrate" your relationship with "hit".

... I cannot, forgive me, resist a slight digression from this profound soliloquy: For some time the women's movement has sought the missing pronoun that would make "his" and "him" sexually neutral. They take offense - and rightly so, in my opinion (a minor thing, but valid) - that in sentences like, "When one confronts his own mortality, he is in a lonely landscape," the words "his" and "he" are clearly sexual and should not be. For a brief and very unsuccessful period, they touted "hisr" as the answer to this dilemma. I suggest that "hit" and "hits" does the job perfectly. "Hit" takes the impersonal "it" and both masculinizes, femininizes, and humanizes it all at once.

The example above would then read, "When one confronts hits own immortality, hit is in a lonely landscape." Remember, you heard it here first! ...

So, this is a celebration of our relationship. I feel comfortable enough to risk doing this with you - because you are you - and you will, for your part, have to figure out for yourself how to deal with it.

My intention is for RBR to be mailed to you periodically, at no charge, forever (or until the suspension of publication - whichever comes first). Should I have the discipline to do this monthly, and should it be so good that others wish to receive it, they will have to pay, but you will remain on my conscription list (short of your informing me that you already receive enough junk-mail) for every single issue. I welcome comments and responses and make no promises beyond their actual welcome.

I have approached doing this with a great deal of consideration. I have a great desire to do it well. My greatest joy is in sharing my way of being in the world with others who will not only travel there with me, but will take me to visit their highground as well. If I can make RBR a touchstone in raising levels of consciousness it seems to me that neither of us is likely to lose in the process. This is, I realize, a presumptuous ambition. If you'll promise not to judge me too harshly while I learn how to do this well, I'll promise to remember that I can't possibly succeed without your support and good wishes.

NEWSBRIEFS 1990:

Washington, D.C.: The President announced today that installation of the $500 billion Laser Space Defense system (LSD) has been completed. This system, seven years in creation and our country's most guarded technological accomplishment since the Manhattan Project, is capable of destroying any enemy missile in flight by aiming a powerful earth-based laser beam at it through a network of computer operated mirror sattelites. Mr. Kennedy hailed the operational completion of this project as a landmark for mankind in forcing negotiation to replace weaponry as the primary tool for resolving international conflict.

Moscow: Soviet Premier Gromyko responded to the President's comments by announcing that the USSR has just completed installation of a laser-reflective mirror coating on its missiles making them impervious to U.S. lasers. In addition, he announced completion of the USSR's concurrent effort to create revolutionary new weapons delivery systems. Mr. Gromyko announced that nuclear weapons had, over the last seven years, been smuggled into every major U.S. population center and that he would like to begin some negotiations of his own promptly.

DOWN ON THE FARM:

Several years ago, Josh caught some carp in the river and put them in the little pond (the one that is about a thirty-foot-long oval and fills from the outflow of the big pond) where the ducks were penned. It became a favorite pastime to throw duck feed to the carp whenever any of us filled their feeder. The carp would come up to the edge of the water and suck the food off the bottom where you could see them. As a result of this priveleged diet, they got very big. For reasons that now escape me, when I had to empty the little pond three years ago to work on it, I put the now-large carp in the big pond.

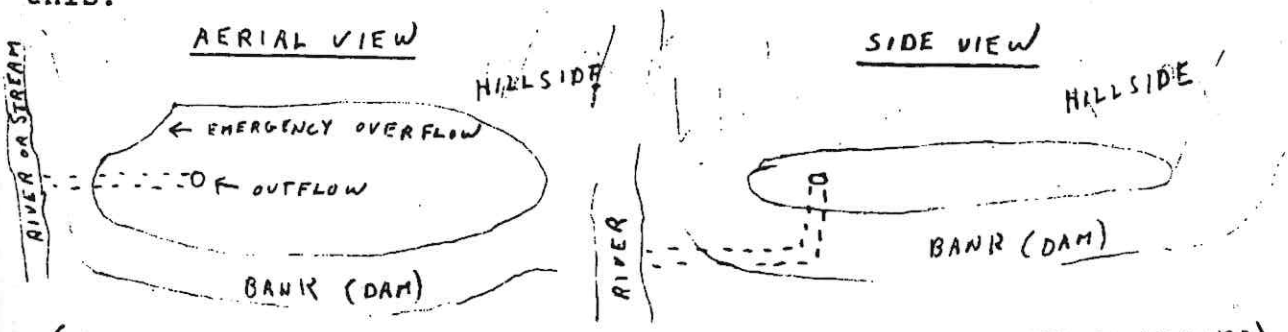
I never really thought much about them until last summer when the pond was noticeably muddier than usual. Carp accomplish their meagre subsistence by scavanging usually-disgusting bits of organic matter from mud. In order to do so they must filter huge quantities of mud - mud which has a propensity to stay in suspension and settle slowly. My subconscious mulled over the muddy water mystery for several weeks and then, in a flash of brilliant insight, I had a thesis so impeccably sound that it took on the spirit of absolute truth: The thing that needed to be done to make the pond water clear again was to rid the pond of carp. There had obviously been a population explosion.

The pond - like the distinction between yachts, boats, and ships, the distiction between ponds and lakes is vague - covers an acre and removing an unknown quantity of carp from its confines appeared to be a task that would require careful planning. Carp don't come when called, and they rarely even let you know their numbers or whereabouts. My first task, it seemed clear, was to lower the water level to a manageably large puddle.

Ponds are created from one of three conditions. If you think about it, you will realize that swamps are also small lakes filled with soil. If you remove the soil, you are left with a hole that fills with water from springs which fed the swamp and now feed a pond. In most cases there are also springs near a swamp which become small streams (all streams - except run-off streams which are fed by melting snow or run only when it rains - begin with a spring and increase their flow by gathering the output of other springs as they course their way through the valleys or lowlands in which they inevitably flow) that run from higher ground into the swamp. So, one way ponds are made is by dredging swamps, taking what is dug out to form a bank on the low side, and allowing the springs and inflow streams to fill the hole with water. (Do you really care about any of this?) Another way ponds are made is by damming a stream at a point which allows elevation of the empounded water - like, in the case of a lake, between two mountains that have a stream or river flowing in their valley. The third possibility is to dig a hole - preferably in a place where the soil is heavily clay - at a point where run off from rain or snow will fill the pond at wet times of year and where you will tolerate a

severe drop in water level at dry times of year. The pond at river bend is of all three types - sort of. It is essentially a spring fed run-off pond which can be optionally stream fed. When we moved here, the pond's water level was a foot lower than it is now and in the dry summer it would evaporate still lower. There is a stream that runs across the lawn above the pond. I diverted it (actually I can send it either way) to increase the water available in the pond. I'm afraid you have to know a little bit about outflows before I continue. Sorry.

In order to maintain a fixed water level ponds and lakes must have outflows. The dams like Liberty, Pretty Boy, and Grand Cooley are outflows - the lowest point at which water can evacuate a man-made empoundment. In small ponds water is usually evacuated through a pipe. The pipe is the vertical member of a continuous pipe that allows the water to rejoin the flow you interrupted by building a pond or lake. Pond's don't usually evacuate over dams because earth dams tend to erode when flow is heavy. A low point - a point between the maintained water level and the top of the bank - is, however, usually cut into the bank for emergency run-off in extreme conditions. So, the configuration of most pond outflows - and of the pond at River Bend is like this:



(I AM BETTER AT DRAWING BOA CONSTRICTORS WHICH HAVE JUST SWALLOWED ELEPHANTS)

In order to lower the water level - remember, we're trying to get rid of the carp - I created a siphon which fed into the outflow pipe. As you most certainly know a siphon is created when a column of water in a hose is long enough below the water level in a container to "pull" water from the container from the weight of its fall. The first siphon I used was a vacuum hose, about one-and-a-half inches in diameter. This first siphon was taking so painfully long to make a difference that I devised a second and much more ingenious siphon. It was a three inch diameter, one-hundred foot long hose. Being too big to work in the outflow pipe, I theorized that I would simply run it over the bank to a lower point than the pond's waterlevel. Well, think about starting a siphon in a three inch hose. Although I did consider who I might call to help, sucking was too absurd to consider. What eventually worked (and be grateful that I am sparing several very wet details) was filling the hose with water by submerging it in the pond (no mean task in itself) and hauling the filled hose in a loop - both ends had to remain in the water - over the bank to a point below the water level. This worked only for a few hours at a time, however, because

there was a small hole in the hose which allowed air into the top of the loop and eventually killed the siphon.

While all this was going on, Shawn was feeding me advice from a fisheries expert at Cornell. My questions related to what I should do once the pond was a big puddle. The options that occurred to me were to tranquilize the puddle and collect the carp which would be lying around in a carpy stupor on the bottom, or to net out the carp, or to net out the bass, bluegills, and catfish I wanted to keep, put them in the little pond, and then poison the puddle thereby killing the carp. It turned out that the last possibility was, for many reasons - among which were that if the pond were really overrun with carp the possibility of my missing two sexually active ones was extreme - the only viable one. The question then became what poison to use in my organic pond on my organic farm. Much research led to the discovery that swimming-pool chlorine would be the least harmful chemical that could be absolutely counted on to mete out death to the enemy.

Once this final solution (so to speak) was derived, I rented a pump and, during the final - and mercifully warm - week of November, reduced the remaining water to a large puddle. All that remained to do, aside from building the island that suddenly found its way into my imagination, was to net out the good fish and poison the puddle. You may rest assured that I will tell you about the island in a future issue; but, lest this become a book, I will not do so now.

For one-hundred dollars and two two-by-twos I had myself a fifty foot seine net with 1/4 inch holes. Now all I needed was a game fisherman for the other side of the net. Art Gompf enthusiastically volunteered and, in that Art is superb assistance for any strange and slightly-mad project, I enthusiastically accepted. Sunday came, and Art showed up as promised with his two children and a pair of knee boots. Our first unexpected realization was that the mud in the puddle would allow us to sink above the knee before it would grudgingly support our weight. So much for wearing jeans and boots. Shorts, cold water, and mud everywhere quickly became the accepted uniform. We made four hauls in which we pulled out a reasonable abundance of bass, blue gills, and catfish. We slithered and slimed through two feet of mud - which is exhausting - with each pass, and only stopped to pray now and then that our luck would hold out and that we would not step on a snapping-turtle. The expected quantities of carp - I had convinced myself by this time that some had to be fifty pounders by now - never materialized. In all, there were about fifteen, and there were no fingerlings (baby carp) at all.

I then sprinkled on the chlorine and we all went to the house to shower - clothes and all. Of the remaining details worth mentioning, one stands out. Before abandoning our task I wanted to wash out the net which was filthy with mud. The pond was

a stirred-up mud-puddle, so the Gunpowder - which flows through the valley the farm occupies - became the only alternative. There I was standing in the Gunpowder in late November washing out my new seine net, when a canoe came by. Few people canoe the river in November, and even fewer see people washing out seine nets when they do. The occupants turned out to be friends of my sister - who didn't even know I had a place on the Gunpowder. See, miracles surround us!

The chlorine worked. Everything water-breathing that remained in the puddle died. Winnie (my incorrigibly fat and slightly retarded Golden Retriever) ate most of it and smelled foul for weeks. I netted out a couple of bushels of smelly dead fish - no carp - which Wayne unceremoniously buried (one fish per stalk of corn). And next summer if the pond is muddier than usual, I will know that carp are not the cause.

It was not, I swear, my intention to subject you to five pages of ponds and carp. I will try to do better next issue. Perhaps a simple one-line statement condensing 44 years of profound thought... If you have not found this discourse to be consciousness-raising, you can look forward to what would have been included had I not gotten carried away and had I used other copy already written but mercifully withheld; such items as: Reagan's Star Wars - Folly or Genius?, Update on Evolution, The North Star's influence on Western civilization, Ann Lander's recent poll revealing that 70% of all women would rather be fondled than fornicate, The Vogelzang Wood Burning Stove, and much more.

Thanks for listening. See you next issue. Should anyone out there wish to comment, take issue, cancel their conscription or send flowers, hit should use the following address: River Bend Reflections, 1449 Corbett Road, Monkton Md. 21111.

RIVER BEND REFLECTIONS

March, 1985 Vol 1, No. 2

Some one among you whimsically (and anonymously) send a copy of Vol. 1,#1 to Casper Weinbergers office at the Pentagon. Hit highlined in yellow the Newsbriefs 1990 section in which I talked about the USSR smuggling nuclear weapons into the U.S. as a foolproof weapons delivery system. To say that the Defense Department official who visited me was unpleasant would be to grossly understate the case. After convincing him (I think) that I was not a foreign agent and that I was merely playing, he seemed satisfied. Before leaving, however, he insisted that I give him the few remaining copies I had of RBR (see, Vol.1, #1 is already a collectors item), the diskette on which the copy had been stored, and a copy of my complete mailing list. So, forewarned is forearmed...

OPENERS:

Concentration camp survisors almost universally noticed an unusual phenomenon in their perception of time: the minutes seemed to take hours to pass, yet the months and years seemed to take minutes. The reason appears to be that flat, changeless routine makes present time pass very slowly; while day after day of sameness - even if experiencially painful - makes retrospective time seem to pass very quickly. On the other side of the same coin lies the fact that present time often flies by for children because so much that they experience is new and the landscape of their experience is alive with a freshness that is lost to adults. The past month has drifted slowly by with meteoric speed...

Two weeks of skiing and being in the Aspen/Snowmass area of Colorado with friends took my head on a complete and uninvited flight through my entire universe and finally landed in that most familiar to me of all gardens. It is that garden in which grow the thorns and roses of life itself. You walk its pathways in lovely bright sunshine smelling nature's ambrosia and, as you bend to sniff a particularly lovely flower, a bee stings you on the ass. But the pain dissipates and you continue again to dwell in happiness (or humanness, if you like) and on you go until a thorn catches your smile or a rainbow brightens your ugliness. It is the garden of doubt, and I have even come to love it (may as well!).

My return marks the official beginning of my disassociation from my business - an event I have looked forward to with more glee than glum, but certainly some of both. Being at work in recent weeks has been a bit like having the dubious privelege of dying and seeing that the world would continue to turn without me. I have so effectively divested myself of responsibility that I have almost nothing to do. My plans and other involvements,

however, leave me wondering how I ever got anything done.

I returned from Aspen to find that a huge one hundred and nine year old oak (I counted the rings) had fallen across the lane and had been sufficiently dealt with by a friend of a friend to make the lane passable. When I left we were deep in the February blahs of cold and ice everywhere. When I returned the ground was clear and the promise of Spring was everywhere. On my first morning home I set out on a tour of River Bend to make a list of things to do. First among them was to remove the rest of the fallen oak by cutting it into sections and splitting it for firewood (great exercise). As luck would have it the tree fell on a part of the hayfield that has been fallow for two years and is not only overgrown with Multiflora (a particularly obnoxious plant that was ill-advisably introduced as cattle fencing by the Department of Agriculture in the 30's because its thorns are sufficiently devestating so as to make it impenetrable even to cows) but is also the sight of a weed-infested pile of brush that has been building in anticipation of burning for the same period of time. I attached the Bush Hog (a 6 foot rotary mower capable of cutting through almost anything) to my ageing but faithful John Deere tractor, threw my chainsaw along with other possibly necessary tools in the bucket and set off for a morning of looked-forward-to sweat and strain. After pulling the brush out of the weeds at a cost of several major cuts and scratches I began bushhogging the area to clear a workspace for tree butchery. Suddenly an almost imperceptible whiff of smoke became a cloud that was emanating from the battery box and was soon accompanied by noises akin to fire and boiling liquid. I turned off the ignition but the machine kept trying to start and the smoke continued. My first thought was to get off the tractor but the only way I could keep it from running was to gear down and keep my foot on the brake. I had visions of ending my brief retirement in a mutilating accident that would signify the god's displeasure at my entire game-plan. Finally I disconnected one of the battery cables and appraised the finally-benign situation. There had been an electrical fire involving the ignition switch and most of the wiring harness. The tractor has now been hauled to a John Deere dealer and all the work planned for the next few weeks is suspended. One finds on farms that fate is often a fickle friend!

Aside from fairly firm plans to sail from Maine to Saint Thomas in August I remain in a speculative mode as to my more long-term future. School applications are strewn all over my desk - law schools, MBA programs, Hebrew College, etc. It seems I also have the option to be investing as much time as I choose working in a major Baltimore restaurant as a non-paid consultant/apprentice and learning how interested I really am in the restaurant business. I am several weeks into a diesel mechanics course that is lifting the fog in what I've never understood about diesel engines. I knew, for example, that diesels didn't need sparkplugs because their higher compression ratios caused ignition (therefore totally eliminating bothersome ignition systems) but I didn't know that

at the time fuel is injected into the cylinder the compressed air therein has already reached a temperature of 600 degrees F. My seeds - three small cartons from Park, Burpee and Bean Seed Co. in Vermont (the least expensive) - have all arrived portending spring and deliciously including a pound of mixed wildflower seeds for the back field. ...and that scratches the surface.

Keep those cards and letters coming! Needless to say, I love receiving them! To M.B. I would like to point out that the hun is the lowest porm of fumor; to M.S., that anyone with enough time to outprofound the profound over three handwritten pages should examine how hit is spending hits time, and to Hit Anon - who be you? To the others of you with comments ranging from flattery to suspicions of impending madness I comment only that we each seem to have our separate and unique methods to affirm our being (whatever its condition)...

RBR, for the many who have inquired, has a subscription price of $20.00/year and, yes, a handwritten note is sent with the first issue of gift subscriptions. Although the team of artists working on the logo has not quite completed their assignment, we estimate that it will be ready for the April or May issue. A full line of T-shirts and other RBR paraphernalia will also be available by early summer. Somehow within the process that I have become will emerge, I feel certain, what I want to do should I grow up!

DOWNEAST:

(Editorial note: After deep reflection I have decided that the telling of tales using the real names of the players could compromise my own privacy or that of others. As a matter of policy I will henceforth substitute fictional names for the real where I deem it appropriate to do so. In the true story that follows I feel no responsibility to protect Sylvan Feldman.)

The breakfast dishes had been cleared from the cockpit as we motored east from Moscongus Bay on the inside route toward Penobscot. Over the past four summers of cruising in Maine waters I had made this passage a dozen times. The charts remained in their locker in all but the foulest weather. It was one of those cool, calm, August mornings with a friendly light mist beginning to yield to the warming sunshine. A dozen lobster boats lazily plied the coves and shelves of the islands we were approaching. Carol and Susie were cleaning up the dishes while Sylvan was at the helm and I was luxuriating in a hot shower below. My instructions to Van had been simple, "Keep Nun 2 at Jenks Ledge wide to starbr'd and head toward Cl off McGee Island." I knew I'd be back on deck before he needed to know more.

Showering aboard **Aurora** is always, for me, a bit like entering

a temple. I can step into the head filthy from working on the engine, or cold and gamie from finally making anchor after a hard sail in foul weather, and know I will emerge refreshed and renewed. On this particular morning I was treating my crew to **Oh What A Beautiful Morning** from **Oklahoma** as I began to dry off.

I didn't, as I reflect back on it, know what we had hit but that we had hit something - something much more attached to the planet than **Aurora** - was unmistakably clear. Following the thud all twenty-or-so thousand pounds of the boat stopped dead in the water for just an instant before it decided to list sickeningly to port. I tumbled from the shower in time to grab a view of Sylvan sitting in a paralysed stupor with his hands frozen to the wheel. By the time I reached the cockpit, which couldn't have been more than three seconds from impact, **Aurora** had righted herself and seemed to be out of trouble. The scene around me was spectacular. Dishes and silverware were strewn all about the cabin. Carol and Susie were staring in my direction in a sort of stupefied fascination; Van (who I had tried to reassure by saying, "I think we're all right") was expending a great deal of energy in trying to look cool; and I was amazed at realizing that we had hit a granite ledge at full speed and suffered no apparent damage.

I was, by now calm, standing in the cockpit sizing up the situation and asking Van how he had managed to hit the only rock - which was clearly awash, no less - within five hundred yards. I noticed a few amused lobster boat crews pointing in our direction and felt a certain relief in that I, at least, had not been at the helm. As Sylvan was absolving himself of responsibility by making it more clear to me than he realized that he didn't even know what a "wash" was, Susie broke her mesmerized silence by asking me if I knew that I was very naked.

We've recreated these events a dozen times by now but the funiest part of the story has become Sylvan's memory of his clarity, calm and composure under circumstances in which his faultlessness make Job pale by comparison. He was so composed in fact, that he never noticed my all-togetherness until someone else mentioned it!

"There is nothing - absolutely nothing - half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats."

DOWN ON THE FARM:

Anticipating spending more time in my unheated shop in the barn I bought myself a two barrel stove kit from Vogelzang out in Holland Michigan. They advertise in **Organic Gardening** every month knowing that at some time in the life of every reader a barrel stove will be required. Vogelzang (since 1922) makes a kit that turns a steel drum (or two drums on top of one another

if you fly first class) into a woodstove that puts out 240,000 BTU/hr! The kit consists of a cast iron door, legs, stove pipe flanges, and all other fittings required to make a stove out of a barrel. And all for the delivered-to-your-door-price of $59.76 (not including the drums).

Well, Wayne - Wayne is the fellow who worked on the farm two days a week until recently - has this brother with a car dealership, so he arranged to get the drums at 25 bucks apiece. They showed up soon after the kit arrived (turning out to be "Kendall" transmission fluid drums, and although I would have preferred John Deere or Quaker State I've come to like them) with the explanation that, "you just can't get drums that aren't dented any more". We spent a little time reckoning on where the dents ought to be positioned and then started cutting the necessary holes in the barrels.

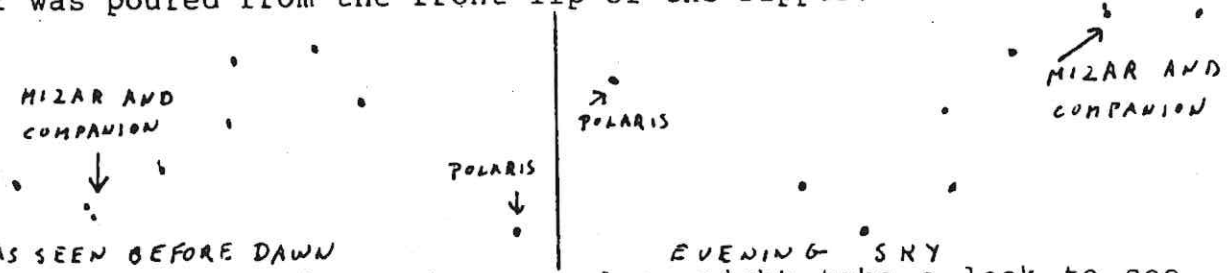
The jig saw worked fine except that the blades kept falling out because the allen screw that tightens the mounting arbor was stripped (actually, for those of you into such things, the hole that the allen wrench fits into was stripped - and if anyone knows the word for the hole in an allen screw, let me know). The blade kept falling into a puddle - there is, trust me on this, no way to completely empty a barrel that has been filled with a non-evaporating liquid - of red transmission fluid in the unreachable bottom of the barrel. I would then turn the barrel upside-down and fish around in the now-reachable puddle for the blade. It was after this procedure had been repeated too many times that I broke the last blade I owned on a particularly tight corner cut that Wayne and I ran up to Foster's hardware in Hereford, reinforced ourselves with an Italian cold-cut sub at Mentzer's and returned to our task. By the time I got the door-hole cut I had had enough of the jig-saw so I got out my oxy-acetylene welding gear. Anybody know if transmission fluid burns? Is explosive? I learned when I built my pond-feed-stream-diverter from another steel drum some years ago that it's a good idea to know if what's been kept in a barrel is explosive - but that's another story. Anyway, after tests revealed that transmission fluid is not flammable I burned out the three remaining holes with a cutting-torch, drilled the holes for the bolts that hold the fittings to the barrel, and set it on a pad it in the shop. It is now completely installed, stove pipe and all. So far I have fired it up six times and each time I have been both warm and impressed. Listening to the boiling transmission fluid that was never completely emptied from the top barrel is a bit disquieting; but, like the old Persian rug makers who always tied one incorrect knot in each carpet to signify that perfection belongs to Allah alone, I am coming to feel that my Vogelzang would be less uniquely mine were the spitting and sputter to go away.

SKY LORE:

The clarity of the night sky in the Rockies is awesome. It brought back to mind some of the wonderful lure of astronomy. Anthropologists have long wondered why the development of thought and technology was so notably more dramatic in the northern rather than in the southern hemisphere. An interesting recent theory posits that the North Star gets all the credit (or blame, depending on your view of human progress). Polaris, the pole star, is the only fixed object in the heavens. It lies directly above the North Pole on a line through the earth's axis of rotation. As a result, its position is always at the same angle (actually it is a few degrees off of true north but this is more due to the earth's slight wobble on its axis than to the position of Polaris) from any latitude in the Northern Hemisphere. All other objects in the sky appear to rotate, like the Sun and Moon, from east to west, but good old Polaris is always at exactly the same place.

There is no similar phenomenon in the Southern Hemisphere. The theory postulates that the ability to identify True North led to both the art of navigation and the invention of the compass. These in turn enabled greater feats in exploration and provided the impetus for more daring cosmological speculation.

The Big Dipper (Ursa Major) is one of the most easily identified star formations and provides the key to finding Polaris. The Big Dipper is made up of seven stars and provides enough ancient history to fill a book in itself. Among its most interesting members is Mizar, the second star in the handle, and the first double star to ever be detected (in 1650). Doubles are stars bound to one another in gravitational orbit and comprise more than half of all stars in the heavens. An interesting aside is that the very recent discovery of earthly waves of extinction which have occurred in 26 million year cycles have led scientists to speculate and search for a companion star to the Sun which has a rotational cycle of this same time span. Mezar is bright but its companion is so dim that it requires excellent vision to be seen. It was used by the ancients as an eye test. As the Big Dipper moves through the night sky it always remains in the same relative position to Polaris. It is as if the North Star was poured from the front lip of the Dipper. Like this:



So, next time you're out on a clear night take a look to see if you can spot both Mizar's companion and Polaris. Once you've learned the trick you'll always know which way is north and if you were able to measure the angle from the horizon to Polaris (which is what a sextant does) you'd also know the latitude from which you were gazing.

RIVER BEND REFLECTIONS

April, 1985 Vol 1, No. 3

There is simply not enough time to get it all done. And I am talking about life, the farm, school, managing finances, writing RBR and everything else. My life thus far has happened in the wink of an eye and in another it will be history. I definitely do not like knowing that I am mortal and I intend to do someting about it! There are sperm banks, liquid nitrogen freezing processes, and religions to deal with this feeling but somehow none seem very satisfying. I deeply resent the fact that ultimately everything I know and care for - including myself - will pass. Suggestions are welcome...

PERHAPS YOU HAD TO BE THERE:

The best one-liners seem to come as spontaneous emissions at a time when they unexpectedly delight both their author and those in hits company. While luxuriating over a lazy and slightly intoxicated dinner in Aspen with Morty, Jake, and Art just such an event occurred.

Some years ago Jake and I canoed down the Gunpowder on a delicious spring afternoon. Some time shortly after emerging from the rapids adjacent to Bluemount Quarry, a large bass leaped out of the water, landed in Jake's lap, and then began a series of spactacular flips at his terrified feet. After recovering from our initial shock (Jake, as I recall the event, very nearly leaped from the canoe when the bass first presented itself) we entered into a long discussion on the odds of such an event occurring and on whether we should eat the bass or free it. We speculated that the odds were about a billion-to-one and that to eat such a miraculous gift from the gods would be sacrilege. At the time the event seemed extraordinarily unusual but after a brief period of time in which we both related the story to a few friends, it was forgotten.

Seeing bass on the menu that night in Aspen triggered our memory of the incident and we related the story to Morty and Art over dinner. After a few chuckles the conversation turned to other things.

Later, we happened to be chatting about some of the spectacular success stories in the business world in recent years - Lee Iacoca of Chrysler, Watson of IBM, Frank Perdue, Crock of McDonalds and so on. Someone mentioned that the odds of starting a company that rises to the spectacular success of a McDonalds or an IBM are about a billion-to-one. Drifting in the subconscious of each of us at the time was a vague connection to the previously mentioned billion-to-one shot.

Jake then posited a brilliant philisophical thesis: Perhaps

every one of us gets just one of these billion-to-one events in a lifetime. A billion preordained mini-miracles, from accidentally rolling down the steps of the congressional library in a wheel-chair to being elected President, happen only once to only one of us. An indian who had a fish jump into his canoe under the right circumstances a few hundred years ago might have become tribal chief. The value of the one miracle we each get is a function of circumstances and the historical time in which we live.

"Yeah", Jake exclaimed, "Crock got McDonalds, Watson got IBM, and I... got the fish!"

DOWN ON THE FARM:

Today was one of those days when I wonder how I've convinced myself that I love farming. The entire day, after weeks of planning, was set aside for preparing the old hayfield to be reseeded. Last years hay finally reached a state of quality so poor that even Lin's sheep turned up their noses at it. Because weeds inevitably grow in hayfields, reseeding is required about every four years. The hayfield at River Bend has not been reseeded in ten years. In the past few weeks I have managed to collect a two-bottom plow, a disk, and a seed spreader that is like a huge Cyclone or Whirleybird and mounts on back of the tractor. This morning at the crack of nine I was on the field and ready to plow the first furrow I have ever plowed.

A plow is simply a giant knife that slices a six or eight inch deep layer of soil about fourteen inches wide and lays the slice upside-down in the cut made by the previous furrow. Plows come in various widths by ganging more than one of them side by side. A plow of more than one gang has the moldboards arranged next to, and also behind, one another so that the leading blade cuts a furrow that the trailing blade lays its swathe into.

As reflection will reveal, the first slice must lay over on top of unplowed ground and the last furrow will leave an unfilled trench that runs the length of the field. Because of this phenomenon it is necessary to plow in a particular pattern that is reversed with each plowing so that the swathes - imagine them as venetian blind slats that flip back and forth with each plowing - from one year will fill the trench from the previous year. The layers all fall to the right so you have - I learned the hard way - only two choices of patterns. You can start in the middle and gradually move toward the outside of the field in a clockwise direction or you can start at the perimeter and move toward the middle in a counterclockwise direction.

In response to a logic that now escapes me, I chose a pattern that was neither of the above. I started in the middle and then went to one of the outsides. It became apparent that my scheme was unworkable when I approached the outside cut for

the second pass and realized that if my new cut was to lay in the furrow of the old, I would very soon be in the river. I then proceeded to repeat the exact same mistake on the other side of the field, discovering as I approaced for the second pass, that I'd soon be climbing the hill toward the lane (the field lies between the lane and the river).

Each time I realized my folly, I, of course, didn't cut the second furrow. Finally I returned to the middle, realized the truth of the situation, and began a pattern working in a clockwise circle from the middle toward the edges. It was not until then that I discovered that if the distance of my second cut from the first was not precisely controlled I would have mounds and valleys and patches of unplowed ground. It was also then that soil began clogging between the two plow-bottoms for the first of what was to be many times. By ten, nature thoroughly iced the cake of my frustration by beginning to rain on me. In addition to seeing that I had made a complete mess of the field (I had essentially managed to tear it up in a very irregular pattern) I had to deal with an additional insult - each time the soil clogged (which was every hundred feet or so) I had to raise the plow, stop the tractor, get off and dig the dirt out with a large screwdrived which was the only useable implement I had aboard. I quit!

A call to the Baltimore County Extention Service yielded no solution but the promise of help some time next week. When the weather unexpectedly cleared and I received a call telling me someone would be out within the hour, I was delighted. The gentleman who appeared in a very official Extention Service vehicle left his briefcase in the car as I gave him a tour of my work and the implement I had used to accomplish it. He surveyed the situation contemplatively and then informed me that he had never seen or used a plow in his life.

I have learned, through 44 years of existence on this planet, to roll with the punches and to take lifes' occasional absurdities philisophically. I suggested we mull the situation over in the kitchen where we had access to both a beer and a phone. A call to his office yielded another agent who immediately asked me what kind of "colters" I was using on my plow. I have also learned in my 44 years of existence on this planet, that when flatly confronted with my own ignorance it is less risky to admit it than to feign knowledge. He explained that a colter is a disk that mounts in front of the plowshares and slits the sod so that the plow won't bind. This particular plow was purchased used from Miller's in Stewartstown (a wonderful place with a very gentle and tolerant owner who has taught me a great deal) and had no colters. I called Dean Miller and, lo and behold, he not only remembered the plow but also happened to have colters that would fit it for 65 dollars apiece. Off to Stewartstown.

While waiting to talk to Dean - I always spend a pleasant half-hour or so chatting with Dean when I have occasion to go to

Miller's - I struck up a conversation with one of the shop mechanics. I learned a lot: they use colters in Maryland but not in Pennsylvania (that's truth); a plow has to be angled forward slightly (not level) to cut properly; the probable cause of my problem was that the plow was not rigidly attached to the three-point-hitch on the tractor and could wander right and left as I used it.

I had a sorrowful (Miller's is on the verge of going out of business after 30 years because agribusiness is so depressed) conversation with Dean Miller, told him I wanted to try to use my new knowledge before investing in colters, bought a hundred dollars of sorely needed bits and pieces of chain, fittings, oil, etc., and headed home.

Since then it has been too wet to plow and the grass needs mowing, the garden needs planting, two felled trees need cutting and splitting, the brush pile needs burning, the riding mowers need spring servicing, the Spring House needs repointing, seven hundred pages of **The Brothers Karamazov** need reading, the bridge to the island needs building, ...and I need resting. Unfortunately, I have to see hy previous handiwork every time I enter or leave River Bend and I am none to proud of displaying to any who pass that I have viciously raped the land. Tomorrow I am set and ready to try again...

BAIR FACTS:

Among the first things that became apparent to me upon attaining bachelorhood several years ago, was the fact that living quarters did not clean themselves. No matter how much I resented this intrusion upon time I considered more valuably spent in other persuits, the facts of the matter were too obvious to be ignored. As I learned to deal with laundry and kitchens and vacuum cleaners I became reasonably efficient and got it all done in odd moments that really cost litte time and trouble. So, as with most things of that kind, the pain decreased in direct proportion to the experience.

The first time I tackled my bathroom, however, I found myself dealing with a mystery I have yet to fully unravel. I was wiping the floor with a sponge and kept coming up with a remarkable collection of stuff that I have since come to know is called "bair". Bair (a combinym for "bathroom hair" first coined, according to The Oxford Dictionery, by John Crapper - inventor of the toilet - in 1878) is the collection of powdery, linty, hairy stuff that grows in the secret and undisturbed areas that surround pipes, toilets, baseboards, and toe spaces in bathrooms. I was dumbfounded. Right there under my unsuspecting eyes was a veritable garden of flora and fauna that I never knew existed.

It has long been my custom to powder my most precious appendages with Johnson's Baby Powder after showering. The amount of powder

that was interspersed within the collection of bair led me to believe that talcum must be the primary sustaining element in bair's food-chain. My first attempt at eliminating this curious scourge was to do my powdering in the kitchen. I figured I'd starve the bair into extinction. Every day I would check the places that I knew were most supportive of bair growth, but to my dismay, the bair continued to thrive.

It then occurred to me that light might be required for bairs' prosperity so I taped over the light switch and covered the windows with black paper. I took to showering, washing, using Crapper's invention and brushing my teeth in total darkness. To forego reading in the bathroom was a heavy price to pay, but I was determined, regardless of the inconvenience, to beat this new-found adversary. Imagine my disappointment when cleaning day came and I discovered that bair continued to thrive even without light.

The next step, obviously, was to expose my bathroom to bright light 24 hours a day testing the reverse hypothesis that bair could not survive constant bright light. I removed the paper from the windows, left the venetian blinds open, put in higher wattage light bulbs and left the lights on around the clock. The only thing this phase of my research accomplished was to give the bair a wonderful new place to grow - on the slats of the venetian blinds.

My curiosity was, by now, taking on obsessive proportions. I began asking other people who had more bathroom-cleaning experience if they had a bair problem and how they dealt with it. It seemed that everyone took bair for granted and that no one knew what it was or where it came from. It was then that I began asking slightly-dumbfounded friends to save their bair so that I would have greater quantities to study and experiment with. If bair grew so incorrigibly under such deprived circumstances, I figured it might have potential as a third-world food source. To my disappointment, however, I found that bair did not grow in closed containers and that - without exception - people found the prospect of eating it totally disgusting.

Well, years have passed and I have not bothered to save bair or give it much thought for a long time now. The jars I collected lie on a remote shelf in the basement and I feel, I guess, that neither science nor human curiosity are yet ready to unlock the marvelous mystery of its existence.

The reason I mention it now is that I have recently lost my housekeeper - her dog bit Pooh and me in the same evening and I suggested that it or they leave - and have rediscovered the stuff. It seems to be breeding in much greater profusion than it did in the past and I am worried... I have tentatively concluded that it may be planning to replace the cockroach as civilization's most insufferable pest or perhaps even to take over the world. Please, I beg you, take appropriate measures to control your

bair - the future of our species may well hang in the balance.

DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS:

Preparing myself and **Aurora** for our trips in August to Bermuda (5 to 7 days on the ocean) and then on to Saint Thomas (7 to 10 days) has taken on magnificent proportions. My celestial navigation is rusty, my Morse Code is non-existent and the options within which I must choose what equipment to have aboard are endless. **Aurora** is a 36 foot ketch built in 1972. We plied every nook and cranny of the Chesapeake Bay for about eight years and have spent the balance of our thirteen years together going back and forth from Maine and cruising Maine and Cape Cod waters.

Among the reasons I elected to opt out of the work-a-day world was the opportunity doing so afforded me to do more extensive sailing. Among my first thoughts after making the major decision were flirtations with buying a larger boat. A 36 foot boat is comfortably in the acceptible range for making safe ocean passages anywhere on the globe. Most of the legendary yachts (Josh Slocum's **Spray**, for example), have, in fact, been smaller. The only thing **Aurora** lacks that I truly lust after is a navigator's station. All my life I have navigated (which is primarily plotting progress on a chart or figuring out where you are or how to best get from one point to another) across the hinge of a top-opening ice box. Having a navigator's station is like having an office aboard. All instruments (both electronic and otherwise) are in one place, charts don't have to be stowed each time someone wants a beer or a peach, and there is a large desktop for writing or working with charts or books (the ideal ship's library becomes another delightfully monumental process). There is no way to create a navigator's station aboard **Aurora** without destroying her ability to sleep six. On the other hand, I know every inch of her and have single-handed her in the worst of conditions. I decided, to sum it up, that I'd stay with **Aurora** at least until I know I want to more extensively ply the globe.

My current arsenal of navigational equipment includes a compass, a sextant and related necessary astrological tables, a LORAN set (Long Range Aid to Navigation - a device that measures and displays exact geographical coordinates by reading delays in the receipt of radio emissions from a series of stations the United States and other nations have established around the globe), a speed log which measures distance traveled through the water, and an RDF (Radio Direction Finder - a device which provides direction toward a known radio station or radio-wave emitting navigation aid).

I have already purchased an Aries Wind Vane and plan to install a SATNAV set. RADAR is a strong temptation. The Aries wind gear will stear the boat unattended (allowing comfortable single-handing and more leasure time for all aboard) by moving the

rudder as it translates changes in the boats angle to the wind into mechanical movement of the rudder, thereby keeping the boat on course. SATNAV (Sattelite Navigation) reads a signal from a precisely cyclical sattelite and, through a microcomputer, provides precise position in longitude and latitude.

The reason for this array of complicated gear is fear. It is very disquieting to be at sea for a week, expect a tiny target like Bermuda to appear at any moment on the horizon, and instead see only sea for hour after hour. Or worse to have the ill fortune of approaching a landfall in fog or a storm. Bermuda has very treacherous reefs on its northern perimeter and I have every intention of avoiding them.

Aurora carries only 60 hours of fuel (her Perkin's diesel burns three-quarters of a gallon per hour at top speed of 6 knots) so almost all of our time at sea must be under sail. The only equipment I've described that is not dependent on ship's power is the RDF (which has its own batteries), the sextant, the compass, and me. A question then becomes whether a small gasoline generator is a necessary item. If the engine fails the batteries run down and none of the sophisticated electronic stuff is worth more than ballast. With a generator you can charge your batteries. Communications gear leads to similar decisions as to back-up and additional equipment.

As June approaches - the time when I will begin spending a lot of time in Maine working and playing aboard - my anticipation increases. I'm sure my focus will be more nautically directed at that time so I'll leave further exposition on **Aurora** until then...

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Name: _____

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RIVER BEND REFLECTIONS

May, 1985 Vol. 1, No. 4

May, full of promises, is upon us. I was beginning to think it (philosophers have spent a great deal of time trying to determine exactly what "it" refers to when used this way) was never going to rain again, but today the sky opened, and all things that live anchored to the earth seemed to breathe a sigh of relief. River Bend has gobbled up time as if in an insatiable feeding frenzy, but, finally, I am respectably caught up. Two more attempts at plowing (after being certain with each new attempt that I now had the answer) have left me knowing, with great clarity, that I do not yet know how to plow. A half-acre of wildflowers are planted, the garden is in, asparagus, in abundant measure, is up, the algae in the pond has been treated, the flower beds and herb garden are done, and, as if in acknowledgment of my labor, "It" has given me a beautiful pair of Canada Geese who have chosen the pond for their summer residence.

I'm sure next month's issue will be full of next month's activity because next month's activity is pregnant with the likelihood of adventure. On the thirteenth of May I leave for the Carribean to crew on a Hinkley 41 from St. Thomas to Puerta Plata, Dominican Republic, and then on to Morehead City by way of the Bahamas. Much of the run from the Bahamas to North Carolina is in the Gulf Stream (I would mention that much of it is also through the Bermuda Triangle were my mother - whose primary avocation is worry - not an RBR reader.) The ocean passage will be about six days... and all with a neat group of guys. Back in Monkton on about the twenty sixth for Hopkins graduation (I didn't go to my undergraduate commencement and I decided to make myself attend this one - cap, gown, and full regalia included) on the 31st, and a fun family wedding on the 1st of June.

School is over and I trust "The Tragic Sense of Life" (last samester's course) will take its place in my literary memory rather than in empathic immersion. I am now a certified diesel mechanic! Second only to receiving new RBR subscriptions, I take greatest delight in that accomplishment.

A small group of friends and Hopkins classmates have decided to begin a literary group which we anticipate will meet four to six times a year. Our first meeting will be on Wednesday, June 26th, at 7:30 P.M., at River Bend. I hope the offering on beekeeping will tease you into joining us, as we are doing Robert Persig's Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance and welcome anyone who reads the book to join us. Early arrivals are welcome to swim, tube the Gunpowder, have a picnic, or simply wander around. If you care to attend, please advise your intention by phone or note and I'll provide directions and additional information.

BERNIE'S CASE OF SHINGLES:

Occasionally, we have the good fortune to know someone whose life has taken on a remarkable quality of fiction. The noteworthy aspect of the kind of life I have in mind may be spectacular success in business, in athletics or in intellectual pursuits. The content hardly matters; the distinguishing characteristic is that fate seems to have chosen such a person to stand out above the crowd. Such a person is Bernie Kablish.

I met Bernie while on a business trip to Houston several years ago. It was two A.M. on a Wednesday evening and I was dragging myself back to my room after a very long day. As I walked through the lobby of the Hyatt, I spotted a frantic figure waving spastically while beating with a key on the glass walls of an elevator that was stopped between floors three and four. Bernie had been trapped for half an hour and the emergency alarm was not working. I alerted the front desk and amusedly watched as a crew of tradesmen assembled and took an hour to finally free Bernie.

When his disheveled form emerged from the belatedly descended elevator, his gratitude was only exceeded by his need for company and a stiff drink. I learned, over the course of the next hour and breakfast the next morning, that Bernie had been singled out by fate to suffer, with a regularity that made for great humor but was hard to believe, minor disasters that rang true if only because no human imagination could possibly create them.

I have seen Bernie only once since then (he lives in Chicago) but have maintained contact with him through phone calls and letters over the intervening years. The last letter I recieved was written by Claire, Bernie's wife, and told a story that conjures up a visual image so funny, that I (forgive me Bernie) feel compelled to repeat it.

Bernie, among his other endearing qualities, considers himself a very capable handyman. A storm had torn some shingles from the roof of the carport which adjoins the kitchen of his lovely suburban home. After securing a case of matching shingles he was ready to effect repairs. The roof is steep, and after a few non-fatal slips, he realized that a method had to be devised to insure his safety. After a bit of creative thinking, he devised the following system: he tied a rope to the top rung of a ladder, threw the rope over the roof (it was a peaked roof and he was working on the back side), pulled the ladder up onto the roof and securely tied off the rope to a stationary point near the front edge of the carport.

He then mounted the ladder which provided a firm foothold on the steep slope on which he was working. The system worked beautifully except for one minor flaw: the stationary point to which he had secured the rope was the rear bumper of Claire's car. Well, what's coming will not escape the imaginative, but

the semi-conscious fog that surrounded any attempt at thought, that this was an opportunity not likely to be repeated for some time, I got up, dressed, and joined them.

In the Student Union building we entered a cave-like world inhabited by great numbers of strangely dressed young people of every immaginable type and description - all noisily drinking, conversing, arguing, playing video games and bumper pool, and generally being college students. It seems that this ritual is repeated universally (or at least by those who wish to remain sane) as a break between study and bed-time, which occurs, on average, at 2 A.M.

Our first class was at 10:10 A.M. so I still had, after returning an hour later, further exhausted and feeling a tad older than those around me, the possibility of eight hours sleep ahead of me. My trips to the bathroom two stories below at 3 and 6 A.M. (beer does that to me) were made - although somehow I clothed enough of myself to avoid arrest - while still essentially asleep, and even after the second trip I had three hours of additional sleep ahead. Alas, it was not to be.

At 7:40 the bells began ringing. There are seventeen in all, and they are played from a keyboard - attached by rope to striking-hammers - which sits beneath them some 300 steps above the ground. I know this because we climbed it later in the day (my knees reminded me - as if I needed a reminder - for a few hours thereafter, that I was physically, at best, a step beyond my prime.) The songs were tasteful and of good cheer, but I had not been forewarned, and, although the university population seems able to sleep through them, I was not. My attempt to do so was rendered even more hopeless by the cacaphony of drills, power-saws, and hammers that joined in, five minutes, later below our windows.

Finally, a bagel and coffee (made with warm tap-water because the hot-plate takes too long) later, we were off to Social Psychology. We arrived five minutes early to the sound of Fleetwood Mack being broadcast throughout the lecture hall. This particular Professor enlivens his lecture with a prelude of current popular selections every day. It was a good lecture. The content most interresting revealed that basketball players do not have hot streaks following cold streaks. The probability of a player making a shot after several misses is exactly the same as his normal percentage of hits.

From there we went to Russian. This particular class is conversational and not a word of english was spoken for the entire hour. After being duly impressed with Shawn's command of the language, I napped, as inconspicuously as possible, in my chair. We had over an hour before "Government" so we went to lunch in the cafeteria. I was, throughout my time on campus, impressed with the number of good-looking young (very young, relatively!) women wandering around as if they were not in need of protection. If I have one criticism to direct at the University's

I'll spell it out for you anyway because the thought of it has kept me chuckling for two weeks.

Claire very innocently emerged from the front door to go on a few errands. She got in the car (an old, heavy, and still fairly peppy Pontiac) and sped out of the driveway. Bernie couldn't remember - when he finally came-to in the hospital - exactly what went through his mind as the ladder started to move, but it was, in spirit at least, something like, "Oh, shit!"

The picture that tickles me is the one of the ladder flying over the peak of the roof with Bernie hanging on for dear life and knowing that, within seconds, the hard macadam, toward which he was irretrievably soaring, would spell out, in very gory detail, how this latest misadventure would end.

Claire wrote the letter from Bernie's hopital room. Aside from his broken arm and collar bone, it seems that Bernie broke three fingers as the ladder tore its way accross the peak of the roof and also scraped a fair measure of flesh from his back when his imaginative sled slid under the car as Claire slammed on the brakes after hearing screams and the sound of something dragging along the asphault behind the car.

When I asked Bernie's permission to share this story with RBR readers, he reluctantly acceded, provided that I not use his real name and that I tell the tale with at least a semblance of empathy. On my first pledge, at least, I have lived by the letter of our agreement.

FAR ABOVE CAYUGA'S WATERS:

Cornell, where my daughter Shawn is a Soviet Studies major, has a bell tower, workman who diligently begin drilling and hammering promptly at 7:45 A.M., a pub in the basement of the Student Union building, a men's bathroom two floors below Shawn's rooms, a magnificent campus, a remarkable number of very cute coeds, and a great number of inspired and inspiring instructors.

I visited her on my way to Skidmore, where my son, Josh, who is a budding studio artist and scholar, was to have his personal effects packed and ready for me to bring home. Skidmore finishes a bit earlier than Cornell so I grabbed the opportunity to attend classes with Shawn on Monday. My arrival at 6 P.M. on Sunday followed four hours sleep Saturday night. I was exhausted before I left home, and after the five-hour drive to Ithaca I was looking forward to a long nights sleep in Shawn's dorm room. After dinner and a look at next year's off-campus apartment I was undressed and in sofa, about to settle into a deep coma - it was midnight and I thought everyone was about to crash - when Shawn invited me to join her and her roommate for what I learned was their nightly ritual of visiting the pub. Realizing, in

administration, it is that there is a noticeable absence of any attempt to protect these succulent creatures from others who freely wander the campus with unknown levels of testosterone circulating through their veins. At lunch we sat a few seats away from one such creature who was passionately arguing with friends about divestment. Divestment is a big thing at Cornell. A group of students have gone to the trouble of building a "shantytown" in one of the quads. Sorry-looking wood-framed structures, draped with plastic and newspaper to keep out the rain and cold, are scattered around and are being lived in by way of protesting Cornell's endowment investments in South Africa.

Finally, preceding my late-afternoon departure for Skidmore, we attended a wonderful lecture on Civil Liberties. The main thrust premised that justice, as meted out by the Supreme Court, is often a function of the justices appraisal of our societies willingness to tolerate unpopular positions. The suburban limits of bussing provided a salient example.

All in all, I was delighted with Shawn's choices in her curriculum, the quality of instruction, and the passion of the participants. It is true that college campuses today are more conservative than they were in the sixties, and that an alarming number of students are motivated entirely by mercantile considerations. There still seem to be, however, a refreshing number among them who fervently worship in the temples of philosophy, literature, history - all those areas of human thought, imagination, and uncertainty that some of us think are really the most important games in town.

ON BEEING:

In 1974, Robert Persig published a first novel which he titled Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (his second, the product of a Guggenheim grant, is expected shortly). It was an unfortunate title selection because, although the book reached the N.Y. Times best seller list, its title discouraged many readers who would have liked it. Persig's book came to mind as I was reflecting on this month's RBR and realized that there was a lot I wanted to say about beekeeping, and that to talk about beekeeping without first talking about zen is like talking about prayer without first talking about meditation.

In his book, Persig leads his readers through several simultaneous "Chatauquas" ("...an old time series of popular talks intended to edify and entertain..."). He travels across the country on a motorcycle with his emotionally estranged (and disturbed) 12 year old son, and, in the process, visits friends and places he has been afraid to get near for years. He dares (after years of severe memory loss and fearful avoidance) to confront the man he was before receiving ECT (Electro Convulsive Therapy - shock treatment) and losing almost all memory of his previous self. He shares, in both a present and reflective mode, his

insanity and his fears of its reawakening, and, perhaps most importantly, he looks hard and unflinchingly at "arete" - a Greek word which is currently translated as "quality," but meant both quality and excellence when it was used in Homeric Greece.

Persig uses the simultaneous journeys in his story to focus our attention on thoughts he's had about human modes of perception. He divides our perceptual preferences into "romantic" and "classic." "A classical understanding sees the world as underlying form itself. A romantic understanding sees it primarily in terms of immediate appearance." Or, some of us drive cars without ever understanding (or caring about) the difference between a piston and a crankshaft, and others of of us see the "underlying form" of a car - engine, chassis, electrical system, fuel system, etc., which, he claims, enables a different kind of communion. A problem arises in that (and no one fits consistently into either mode) each mode provides different rewards and rarely do we realize both. That's where Zen comes in.

The achievement of technical understanding and expertise often poisons our ability to appreciate immediate appearance. Many technically brilliant musicians, for example, are only mediocre because technique has blinded them to the emotional or romantic quality of a composition. Persig uses his motorcycle to speculate about how these modes can be integrated, and realizes that the point at which they meet is really Zen. It would be easy to go on and on about Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance - I won't, and if you haven't read it, you'll do yourself a favor to do so when time allows.

Zen is a process in which "self" is lost (or given up, perhaps). One becomes part of something other than self - be it a motorcycle, golf, meditation, skiing, being in real communication with a friend, poet or author, or ..... a colony of bees. There is something very enlivening about the kind of activity I'm trying to describe. There are times - in doing almost anything - when we know we are performing superbly and effortlessly. Beekeeping is an activity that I love because it has consistenly provided me with very high quality time.

Most activities provide rewards in direct proportion to one's curiosity about them and physical and emotional enjoyment of them. Involvements provide, however, differing levels of, and different kinds of, feedback. Your score in golf is feedback. Your grade on a paper is feedback. How much you earn and how your relationships work (or don't) is feedback. You can get lost in almost anything if you're self-indulgent enough to allow it, and to get lost in nothing is to miss a great deal.

Beekeeping provides a kind of feedback that I particularly enjoy because it can't be misunderstood or intellectualized. On a particular day (from April through mid-July I visit my colonies about every ten days) I am either in tune with the bees or I am not - and there is no mistaking the difference. I have been

stung as many as 26 times and as few as none during the hour-and-a-half or two I spend in my apiary. Somehow the bees know if I've become the task or if I'm out-of-tune and awkward. A wonderful feeling of well being is attained when my motions are smooth; the bees are unaware of my doings, and every task I perform goes perfectly and effortlessly. I find myself finishing as if I had just begun, and feeling as if the few intervening hours were nestled gently in a delicious timewarp. On other occasions, anyone watching would think there was a war in progress. I parry and thrust, I attack with smoke billowing about me and my hive tool doing its work in a slashing frenzy. I will myself onward while dozens of bees do all they can to both unnerve me and eviscerate themselves. And, make no mistake, having a bee or two in your bonnet (and I have) definitely tests mettle!

And, as if this were not enough pay-back for a few hours every few weeks, there is the honey and, more important, the excuse to study these fascinating insects in inexhaustible detail.

It seemed more important to explain the why of beekeeping before explaining the how. I'll do some of that as the season progresses and this year's honey crop unfolds for its success or failure. Most important is the fact that my Spring beekeeping rites have begun and I still relish both the ritual and the process. And, as if to affirm that spring's hope's eternal, each year I think that this may be my year to become an unstung hero!

NOTE: I have loved receiving comments and letters from readers. Often they warrant sharing for their humor, insight, or adversity. Future issues may occasionally include credited comments, so if you particularly want a thought mentioned or if you consider a communication confidential, advise me of your wishes.

River Bend Reflections is published monthly by Stanley Dorman from River Bend Farm, 1449 Corbett Rd., Monkton, MD 21111. Annual subscriptions are welcome at twenty dollars per year (a note and letter of introduction are enclosed with first issues of gift subscriptions). Sample issues will be mailed upon request.

RIVER BEND REFLECTIONS

June, 1985 Vol 1, No. 5

The past month has been filled with sailing, boats, and exotic places. I am currently sitting in a room at Fisherman's Wharf,in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, trying to get my thoughts together for June's RBR. After returning from two weeks of crewing on a voyage from Saint Thomas to Palm Beach, I spent a frenzied five days at home - the farm is like a jungle and the garden is beyond belief - then left for Maine with a friend, to work on Aurora before she was put in the water. After an exhausting day we have just consumed a wonderful dinner of clam chowder, boiled lobster and steamed clams, and a desert of blueberry pie buried under vanilla ice cream. We deserve a mellow movie on the tube and a relaxing evening of slow, gentle love making. I look over at my friend (a perfect choice for this kind of work-time in Maine); there, nestled there among the three pillows on one of our double beds, snoring softly, lies Steve Glick. Well, nothing is perfect!

Steve, aside from being a wonderful friend for over 25 years, decided to join me on this junket for three reasons. First, he was ripe for escaping from his business for a few days. Second, he is watching my "retirement" (in that he could easily create a similar option for himself) with a combination of fascination and scepticism and wanted to get a look at my head, first hand and close up. third, he is a previous boat-owner and has been toying with the idea of getting reinvolved.

Today, we removed the Lecri-san sanitation device that was connected to the head five years ago to meet Coast Guard requirements for effluent emmissions. The Coast Guard is currently ignoring these requirements, as environmentalists have pretty much proven that the processed waste is more harmful than the raw sewage it replaces; and the unit, aside from the risk of malfunction, takes up a lot of very valuable space and consumes a great deal of battery power.

The battle is now history and turned out to be an education in the fine art of honey-dipping. Our first discovery was that the unit had not been properly winterized and had two gallons of sludge in it (I'm being delicate in my choice of words). Opening the inspection port in the top of the unit yielded odors familiar only to those unfortunates who live downwind from a sewage treatment plant. Amidst cursing and gagging, I pumped the thick mess into a bucket and carried it out of the forepeak, across the deck, and down the ladder for disposal. Efforts at this point to lure yard personnel into completing the job failed miserably. Three bucketsfull later, the initial phase was complete - as was my belief that I could remain untainted. Handling the pump, the bucket, and the rags involved, had left their mark upon me.

At this juncture Steve and I engaged in a series of animated discussions as to methodology. His approach seemed to be that deliberation of any kind was far safer than any form of action. He wanted to wait until the boat was in the water so that if we wound up with a bilge full of waste we could at least flush it overboard. He wanted to find plugs for every line and fitting as we disconnected them. He wanted to go back to the varnishing he had started earlier. He wanted, most of all to be out of the cabin and restored to saner pursuits. While he was chasing these various lines of thought, I continued to forge on.

The Lectri-san was connected to the head by a seven-foot line that led from the toilet bowl to the unit. From the other side of the unit, a second line - both of two-inch diameter and unwieldy - connected the unit to a thru-hull discharge fitting. As I eased the clamps on these lines and began to break the connections, they responded by presenting me with more of the goop for which I had already developed a singular distaste. More pumping ensued and then the realization that with one of us elevating each end, we could keep the stuff in the middle. Steve gamely reentered the fray, and we managed to get the hoses disconnected and off the boat with little mishap. All that remained to be removed was the unit itself.

Rather than explain how the unit had been very cleverly installed in the small compartment that housed it by a panel cut in an adjoining bulkhead, and how it could only be removed by first turning it on its side, and how doing so caused the little that remained of its precious contents to dribble unexpectedly down my sleeve, I will simply say that the job was successfully completed. Aside from being treated like a leper for the rest of the day by Steve, and all of yard personel who had the misfortune to cross my path, I felt grateful that this long-dreaded job was finished. I feel certain I'll be boarded by some zealous Coastguardsmen some time this summer in Maine and be forced to reinstall this device, but, at least I now know the ins and outs of the job.

AT SEA:

I recently stumbled across a word that I have need to use appropriately at least once in my literary life. I think I am a thalassophiliac. Being at sea for twelve days, with only two overnight landfalls for reprovisioning, was delightful. Quickly, concerns of landbased life disappeared, and the business of standing watch, of navigation, of a heightened awareness of wind and weather, of the need for providing daily meals for five (I quickly became chief chef in self-defense), of stolen hours of sleep, of salt water showers in the cockpit, of shipbaord life in general with all its confined detail, took over and became routine.

The first leg of our journey took us from Saint Thomas to Hispaniolia via the Southern shore of Puerto Rico. Our original plan called

for departure shortly after arrival on the 14th. We found the boat, however, in a state of considerable disarray and felt a delay was warranted in order that we improve our chances of survival. Much chasing around scantily-marine-supplied Saint Thomas eventually yielded a man-overboard pole, a new LORAN antenna, strobe lights for nighttime watches, new emergency pump lines, and an endless list of foodstuffs, beverages, and other equipment. Finally, two days after arrival on the 16th, we gleefully pulled out of the harbor of Charlotte Amalia despite the presence of weather that was, at best, shaky.

Long distance sailing becomes a bit like stepping back in time to our agrarian ancestors day-to-day concern with weather. One tends to hover around the radio when a weather forecast is found, to look at the barometer several times a day, to talk endlessly about the shifts in wind and cloud formations, to watch sunrises and sunsets as if they really portended what was to come - "red sky at night, sailors delight; red sky at morning, sailors take warning". And everyone becomes an overnight meteorological wizard with all kinds of theoretically absurd premises and much ego investment in the outcome.

We carried only enough fuel for about twenty hours of motoring (we forgot to top off the tank and half our fuel capacity would certainly be enough for so short a voyage!) on what turned out to be a 72 hour voyage, so we had no choice but to sail most of the time. The usually dependable trade winds lured us into believing that we had just over forty-eight hours ahead of us (at the Skipper's misguided estimate of 6.5 knots average speed). As it turned out, we had fickle winds - mostly from the worst possible directions - for the entire three days, and averaged four knots.

Our first destination was a small port on Hispanolia some 360 miles away. Two replacement crew members were meeting us on the 19th, so we only needed to sail 120 miles per day to make the rendezvous as scheduled. Our delayed departure precluded the overnight tropical anchorage and afternoon of swimming we had looked forward to. There were four of us aboard.

We divided the watch schedule into five segments: 6 A.M. to noon, noon to 6 P.M., 6 P.M. to 10 P.M., 10 P.M. to 2 A.M., and 2 A.M. to 6 A.M. It works out with a crew of four that each man must stand watch 12 hours per day for the ship to be manned by two people at all times. The schedule we used is a slight variation, in that you stand watch in each 24 hour period for 10 hours and fourteen hours, alternatively. The advantage over a schedule that would simply specify six hours on and six hours off lies in the division of the night time watches in four hour rather than in six hour segments.

The nighttime watches (10 P.M. to 2 A.M. and 2 A.M. to 6 A.M.) provide the single element of change that most separates life at sea from normal routine on land. The requirements of being

on watch are minimal. Other than plotting progress on a chart, watching for the rare passage of another vessel, and an occasional sail change, there is little that demands much attention. Steering (with one eye always on the compass) for alternating periods of half an hour or an hour with your watch-mate were a drudge, but much of this, even, was relieved by the self steering gear which was only inoperable when the winds were very light. So, you often find yourself with four hours facing you and nothing but the sky, your thoughts, and the desire to stuff your face, to occupy your attention. The first things that make their presence felt in the cockpit of a small boat at sea on a clear night are the clarity and vastness of the Milky Way (which, incidentally, is really a side view of the constellation in which the Sun resides - we are about a third of the way out from the center), and that constellations either very low on the horizon at home or not visible at all dominate the heavens in this more Southern latitiude. The Southern Cross, for example, is high in the sky during most of the night, but is never visible at home. During a four hour watch, heavenly bodies appear to move westward in the sky by sixty degrees (360 degrees divided by 24 hours equals 15 degrees/hour), so there is always a constantly changing show in progress. Star watching and identification, a land-based activity rarely indulged, consumed many very pleasant nighttime hours.

A most interesting byproduct of the artificial division of time created by watch schedules is the loss of distinction between days. Normally one experiences morning and evening as times marking transition between one phase of daily existence and another. With watch schedules going round the clock, there are sunrises and sunsets, but they do not mark any change in routine. We found that no one ever knew what day it was without looking at his calendar watch. Time became a continuum that passed in ceaseless procession - sometimes rapidly, sometimes slowly.

Our first landfall after leaving Saint Thomas was Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic. There, we dropped off one crew member and picked up two others who had flown in from the States to join us for the duration of the voyage. Puerto Plata is an impoverished port town on the northern coast of the island of Hispaniolia. The island is about ninety miles long, lies in an East-West orientation between Puerto Rico and The Bahamas, and is home to the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Upon docking at the customs dock - downwind from a power plant which spewed fly-ash in such abundance that the boat was black and our eyes sore by time of our departure the next day - we were quickly cleared and ready to see the sights. We were met at the entrance to the fenced-in Customs compound by several teen-aged males who declared themselves our guides. No matter how we tried to discourage them, they would not be dissuaded from their mission. And, dispite our pleading and occasional anger, it became apparent that we were definitely in need of help. It was Sunday, and it was almost dark. We needed to change money, and no banks

were open. We needed to find a restaurant, and didn't even know if it was safe to walk the streets. So, with the help of Julio, Raphael, Juan, Miguel, and a few others, we managed, looking much like a street gang, to accomplish the business of the evening.

After dinner our guides insisted that we visit several local hotspots. Never having been in a brothel before, I felt a responsibility to my readers to take a look. Aside from the amazing abundance of religious art (really), it seemed much like a sorority house at the University of Maryland in the early sixties. Lovely maidens (the Dominicans are dark skinned and have, in general, beautiful features - we all found the women very attractive) greeted us at every doorway with gererous invitations to join them. Having finally seen a brothel, and knowing that Haiti is just next door with its reputation for some bad diseases, we managed to exit without incident, and headed for a bar, famous (in Puerto Plata, at least), for being the nightspot for the affluent visitor and featuring live country-western music. The live Country-Western turned out to be provided by the proprietor - a young retiree from the States who is heavily invested in real estate because he is certain that Puerto Plata is the soon-to-be-discovered playground for the western world. His music was infinitely better than his constant John Wayne imitations, but neither would warrant a guest appearance on The Prarie Home Companion.

Morning found us setting off with two of our guides who were waiting as we came ashore to find enough food to provide five days of meals for our crew. For the equivalent of about 20 U.S. dollars we bought an enormous quantity of fruits and vegetables - all of superb quality and locally grown. The flavor of Puerto Plata is a strange mix of prostitution and pride. The degree of poverty - whole streets are lined with makeshift shanties; and labor, from sawing wood to carrying building supplies to construction sites, is almost all done manually. Children swarm around you to carry packages - in the major produce market children actually fought for the privelege of carrying our purchases from the stalls we visited to the staging point at which we were collecting it all to take back to the boat - and yet nothing was stolen; and a high sense of honor seems to define clear boundaries between charity and earned tips. Prostitution abounds, but even the prostitutes seem a prideful lot who choose their work without resentment or bitterness. Of course, I wonder at the fabric and sustainability of a society so structured, but I was surprised at how my initial pity turned to respect by the time we took again to the high seas.

SEMPER PARATUS:

From Puerto Plata we set sail for the Bahamas, where, depending on our speed, we would jump off for either Florida or one of the Carolinas. We left in the late evening and were off the

Caicos - a small group of islands between the Bahamas and Hispaniolia - at about noon the next day when we noticed a ship closing on us from astern at noticibly high speed. Someone looking through binoculars informed the rest of us that we were being approached by a U.S. Coast Guard cutter which had a very big cannon on its foredeck and a lot of guys wearing 45's and battle helmets on the bridge.

Communication over our hand-held VHF radio ensued. We were told to be prepared for boarding in half an hour, and that all aboard were to be in the aft end of the cockpit at the appropriate time. (The Bahamas, for those of you distant from such information, have become a major drop point for cocaine coming out of South America and destined for the Eastern United States). Shortly thereafter, as the cutter plied a parallel course about 100 yards to port, we saw a boat being lowered into the water.

As the launch got closer a voice through a bullhorn advised us to be well aft in the cockpit and to make no sudden moves. Finally, the boarding process began. There were six men (actually boys - the oldest couldn't have been over 21) on the launch, and four were to board Shenandoah while the other two stood off in the launch in case machine guns or grenades became necessary. the first three boarded without incident. Two of them kept us under close scrutiny - they must take courses in looking severe and scowling - as the third assisted the fourth onto our boat. A very unseamanlike leap by this Coastguardsman situated him with one hand on Shenandoah, one hand on the launch, and most of the rest of him in the drink. We violated our instructions to remain stationery by helping to haul him aboard.

As two of the boarding party held us at bay in the cockpit, the other two went below and conducted a pretty thorough search of the boat. After realizing that we were a pretty benign group (at least in terms of major drug trafficing) things lightened up and we had a friendly and informative chat.

The Cutter Dauntless sails out of Miami and is usually as sea for six weeks to three months at a time. Most of the time things are pretty dull, so the sighting of a U.S. vessel is a cause for celebration. It means everyone can don battle dress and break the monotony by launching a boat, aiming the cannon, and doing a boarding. Rarely have incidents occurred, although Dauntless has found drugs and has even confiscated a few boats.

There have not been any major incidents in which cruising people have been involved for almost two years. The greatest danger, it seems, occurs when someone accidentally picks an ill-fated anchorage and sees a drug deal go down. Usually there are aircraft and water craft involved and the participants are not anxious to have observers.

Following this high-seas adventure we made a landfall at a tiny Bahamian port called Spanish Wells. We docked at the yacht

club, had a few drinks at the bar - the Spanish Wells Yacht Club seemed to be peopled entirely by teeny-boppers - and set of for dinny at Rudy's, which was reputed to be the only quality restaurant on the island. A mistake in place-names found us dining instead at Rody's. Rody's would require too much space to describe in all its amazing detail. The meal consisted of very thin and very burnt hamburgers and the Skipper got off very easy that night.

Two days later we landed in Palm Beach, cleared Customs by phone and prepared for our return to Baltimore. I understand how people become addicted to being at sea. A small boat has an attainable kind of perfection about it. There's always something that needs doing but there are also frequent times when doing nothing is forced upon you by weather or a miriad of other circumstances. I'm looking forward to my own passage from Maine to The Virgin Islands later this summer.

FOOD SUPPLEMENT #1:

With the Fourth of July just around the corner I thought it appropriate to include RBR's first Food Supplement. The dish selected for inclusion lends itself well to barbeques, and is steeped in patriotic tradition.

It is not generally known that the pilgrims celebrated the Fourth of July with some dishes that were particularly American in character. Hot dogs, steaks, and crabs were difficult to get in those days, but shrimp from the Gulf Coast were plentiful and cheap. The recipe that follows is modified slightly from the original, but I assure you it is well worth the trouble.

Ingredients:
SHRIMP - figure about 1/3 pound per person for adults, 1/2 pound for teenagers, 1/4 pound for children under five, and none for people who don't eat shrimp. Ideally the shrimp should be medium size - about 15 to 20 per pound but anything will do. This recipe is for two pounds. Double it for four pounds, triple it for six pounds, halve it for one pound, devide by 2/6ths for 2/3rd pounds.

ROSEMARY - 2 tbsp.
GARLIC - 10 large cloves cut in half or equal.
BAY LEAVES - 3
SALT - 1/2 tsp.
TOBASCO - 4 drops
BUTTER - 1 stick
OLIVE OIL - 6 Tbsp.
BLACK PEPPER - To cover. About 4 tbsp. coarsely ground
DRY WHITE WINE - 1/2 cup

Heat the oil and butter with all the seasonings (except the wine) and simmer on medium heat for about ten minutes. Stir

frequently. Remove the seasonings (leave the oil) to a bowl. Add the shrimp (in the shell) and cook at very high heat for about three minutes. Remove from heat. The shrimp should be almost scorched so that the feet (or whatever shrimp feet are properly called), in particular, are crisp. Remove from heat and recite the following blessing over the mixture:

"Neptune, Neptune, shining bright,
In the forest of the sea,
Thank you for the lovely shrimp."

After the shrimp have reached room temperature (or almost - this is a recipe in which precision is to be scorned, and the individual whims of the chef should prevail) reinroduce the seasonings and put on medium heat. Add the wine and reduce until the sauce is thick - about the consistancy of cream. Serve.

Eating this dish is half the fun of it. Although the following instructions may sound strange, I am speaking truth here. Pick up a whole shrimp in the shell. Suck on and then chew off the feet. The sauce and seasonings entwined therein are delicious. The feet, after being chewed off, allow the shell to be easily removed and discarded or sucked on as one's instincts dictate. Then eat the shrimp. A bowl for shells and other various chewed up parts should be present. You will find the temptation to use the shrimp (or French bread) to slop up the sauce overwhelming, and I suggest you throw inhibition to the wind and go all the way with the experience.

This recipe is a variation (worked out over many years of experimentation) of Shrimp Mosca which was named for its creator who was chef at a recently burned-down plantation in New Orleans. It has been renamed Shrimp Moscador, but you may feel free to call it anything you like. More pepper and garlic than you would think reasonable is required. If you follow the above instructions (the blessing is really optional) I guarantee that the result will please all who partake.

P.S. As food supplements should be edible, I suggest the following alternative use for this page: Preheat oven to 500 degrees. Place page on a baking sheet for ten minutes or until reduced to ash. Crush ashes, along with fresh garlic and pepper, with a mortar and pestle until a thick paste results. Use mixture liberally in barbequing hamburgers and steaks.

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