

Brazil News



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Editorializing

Honor Thy (Grand)Father and Thy (Grand)Mother

Why is it that as we grow older we think of so many things we wish we would have asked our parents and grandparents? So many things we wish we would have told them? Why would we spend so much more time with them—listening instead of talking? Why is it that today we would ask for their advice, instead of shrugging it off—or, indeed, informing them we really don't need it? Why do we at times mercilessly wound those to whom we owe the most? Why must these loved ones pass on before we think about this, when it is too late to give them the honor due? To make amends?

Your reaction to these questions will be directly proportional to your age. If your children have left home, your grandparents are no longer with you and your parents are aged, or possibly gone too, you may feel yourself qualified to write the Second Book of Lamentations—or add another verse to the stirring song, *If I Could Live Over*.

For those of you who are in the “age of regret,” all is not lost. It may be poetical to go to the cemetery and confess to a tombstone, and who knows, it may actually bring a certain emotional relief, but it won't undo the past. Down deep you feel you owe an unpayable debt.

One of the great lessons of life is that we can't always pay our debts to those whom we owe. Not always is it possible to ask forgiveness of those whom we have injured. If our regret is pure and complete, we may be given the privilege of forgiving those who injure us—and will not ask our pardon.

The grace to do this does not free us of all regret, but is a heaven-sent balm that soothes the pain of our self-inflicted wounds.

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Obviously, not everyone is in this category. So we now direct our words to those who are confidently stalking through the “know-better” phase of life.

The first rule to observe is that we are seldom as smart as we think we are and our parents are seldom as dumb as we have them chalked up to be. Yes, they are from another generation, from a time when people’s cup of knowledge wasn’t running over as it is today—sometimes torrentially. In a word, their outlook on life, their approach to problems—especially monetary—is a bit musty. They had their day, now we’ll have ours. The new generation tends to prefer the new wine of wisdom over the old.

That said, the opinions you have just heard are from yesterday, so, I suppose, they can be disregarded. I ask just one favor. Before wadding up this copy of BN and tossing it in the trash, let half a dozen men and/or ladies whose hair is gray, whose pace is slower, read this little editorial and ask them for their comments. That’s all.

Grandparents. We have one set of parents and two of grandparents. Sometimes, if we are fortunate, there are great-grandparents in our lives. It is most understandable that we have probably had a more serene relationship with them than with our parents. It makes sense. It’s kind of like buying a horse that has been broken. And they certainly deserve a break. (and again, no pun.) With grandparents we probably have more fond memories than regrets.

Fiction writers entertain their readers with the proverbial time capsule that can speed passengers forward or backward in time. If such a voyage were actually possible and I could regress for one day, I would unhesitatingly get a ticket to my grandparent’s home.

My parents graciously permitted me to spend a lot of time with my grandparents. If there is such a thing as a children’s heaven on earth, that was mine. They freely shared their experiences going back to the beginning of the last century.

In spite of all they told me, today I would have a bushel of questions to ask them. I would carefully take note of their answers. I would show them to my children and grandchildren.

In a nutshell...

You wish you could undo the past. If the ones you feel you have treated unjustly are still alive, go back—today—and make amends. If that is no longer an option, show others the kindness you neglected to show to your loved one.

You are in the exact age in which it seems to come so natural to feel superior to those who care most for you. Stop! Think! Change! You will never, ever regret it.

You feel a special love and respect for those whose blood you share. Speak to them often, to your parents, your grandparents, to your great-grandparents, your uncles and aunts. Ask their advice. Ask them to tell their story. Write it down. Keep it in a safe place. Share it with your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. If you share the story of your great-grandparents with your great-grandchildren, you will create a link between five generations.

You have only one life in which to love. ▲

Then & Now

Raising Chickens

Recently four trucks delivered nearly 200,000 chicks to our eight barns. I remembered the days when Faith and I raised jungle fowl. To be perfectly honest, there was a greater thrill to raising less than 200 of these exotic creatures than in the shipment of 200,000 identical little creatures—but less profitable.

Today Brazil Foods (known as Perdigão until its fusion with Sadia) wants us to have our fryers ready for market in 38 days. For a jungle fowl to reach the same weight can take up to six months.

In BN no. 14, dated July 1992, I wrote the following article. A composite article, it reflects what we experienced, as well as many other Brazilians who had the privilege of raising domesticated jungle fowl, known as *galinha caipira*, back those days.

Prateada

Quite a few years ago, when I still had my store, Richard Mininger ordered a few chicks to raise as fryers. I delivered them to his place. We took them out of the box and placed them in the little enclosure prepared for them. When Richard saw how the tiny little creatures went straight for the waterer and took a long, first drink, he became all excited. I still hear him exclaiming, “Just look at that! Who taught them how to drink water?”

The chicks I sold in my store were identical fluffy little yellow creatures. Though I never tired of opening a new box of little chicks, they were a pale comparison to *galinha caipira* chicks, each one with its own distinct markings. Each one a separate personality.

When we first moved to Brazil, a lot of Brazilians raised *galinha caipira*—even city dwellers in their spacious backyards.

The *galinha caipira* must have some Indian blood. They are meant to be free. Pen them up like an ordinary chicken and just about that quick they quit laying. Soon they get sick and die.

We used to raise *galinhas caipiras*, but to give you a better idea of what it’s like, we’ll tell in a composite story how Elídia, Roberto’s wife, raises *galinha caipira*:

Roberto has been milking for an hour and a half – it’s now 4:30 in the morning – when the old rooster, *o rei dos galos* (king of the roosters), that roosts on the top corral log flaps its wings, stretches its long neck, and emits a drawn-out cock-a-doodle-do. As king of the roost, this is his sovereign privilege. Now his subordinates may take their turns. Which they do. Their voices echo from nearby trees, from on top of the granary, and from the woods.

As the first rays of dawn begin leaping from the eastern horizon, the king again flaps his wings, stretches his neck and loudly proclaims a new day. With a few more flaps of his wings, he hops to the ground and begins strutting around.

There is a rustling in nearby trees as both roosters and hens begin fluttering to the earth. Their day has begun. They must scratch for a living.

Roberto finishes turning out the cows and calves, when suddenly Elídia hears him calling. He sounds excited. “Elídia! Vem cá Elídia! Depressa!” (Come Elídia! Quickly!)

Suspecting what it’s all about, Elídia drops what she is doing and runs to the corral. She looks where Roberto is raptly looking. Even though they have witnessed this scene many times in their life, it never ceases to thrill them. There, coming up from the spring, is *Prateada* (Silver), the hen that has been missing for almost a month. She is surrounded by a dozen little chicks.

As she slowly walks, *Prateada* stops every little bit to scratch beside the path. Each time a morsel is found, ever the unselfish mother, she clucks rapidly and the chicks converge on the spot. Just like a chick is born knowing water is for drinking, they also know that insects are for eating.

Arm in arm, Roberto and Elídia watch entranced. Suddenly *Prateada* calls her chicks with a low urgent clucking. Even though it is the first time these 12 little chicks have ever heard that voice, they understand. *Prateada*, partly hidden by tall grass, has her wings extended. In the twinkling of an eye, the chicks are under her wings, which drop as two canopies. And all is silent. Not one peep. Not one cluck. Just the gliding shadow of a hawk looking for a meal.

Even the keen eyes of the hawk are unable to detect *Prateada*, now so perfectly camouflaged, to make her indistinguishable from the vegetation in which she has taken shelter.

When *Prateada* senses there is no longer any danger, she relaxes her wings somewhat. Her children notice the change and one by one, little heads begin peeping out. A black head. A brown head. A spotted head.

As *Prateada* arises, her brood begins scurrying about. That was fun.

Elídia now does what she has done many times before. She goes to the kitchen and get’s a kettle of leftover rice. She returns to where Roberto continues with his eyes glued on *Prateada* and her brood. She tosses out a small handful of cooked rice.

Again that quick clucking that says, “Look what I have found for you this time.” In a moment the little chicks are stuffing themselves. Even *Prateada* eats. She knows there is enough to go around.

Close up, Roberto and Elídia are able to observe each chick individually. Two of them are pitch black. Three of them have chipmunk markings down the back. Two are fluffy gray. Two are yellow. Three are spotted black and white.

Even though some of them have similar markings, none are identical. Even the black ones have different markings on their legs.

Roberto and Elídia head for the house. It’s past 7 o’clock and both are ready for the first meal of the day.

After breakfast, Elídia quickly does the dishes. Then, while Roberto is out checking the fences, she checks her chickens. This is a job. Counting everything, from the oldest to the youngest, there are over 200.

First of all she goes to the palm hut where they store their corn. Hanging under

the long drooping palm leaf eaves, is a hollowed out palm tree trunk, split in half. Spaced at regular intervals are a half dozen hens setting on eggs. Gently she pushes the hens aside enough to check the eggs. In the last nest the hen seems to be especially feisty. The reason is soon apparent. A pecking sound can be heard, as well as a faint cheeping. Three of the eggs have hatched. Another eight are in the hatching stage. Several eggs are obviously rotten. These she tosses out.

Elídia spots something of interest. Eating corn near the granary is a hen that she hasn't seen for nearly two weeks. She is sure the chicken has a nest out in the bush. After hungrily eating for several minutes, the hen heads back to the bush. Elídia follows. They go through a swampy area. Suddenly the hen makes a 90 degree turn to the left and heads toward dry ground. Elídia follows. Now the hen turns again, once again to the left. And then again.

Elídia laughs softly to herself, "Okay, okay," she says, "You win. You're going in circles to confuse me. I'll leave you alone." Once Elídia is out of sight, the hen makes a bee-line to her nest.

Now Elídia begins gathering eggs. There are nests under bushes, in the marsh, under clumps of grass, alongside fallen logs.

The eggs are shades of brown, blue, green. Some are speckled and others almost pink. Everything except white.

As Elídia walks back to the house, her apron heavy with eggs, she counts seven hens with chicks of varying sizes.

After dropping off the eggs in the house, she goes to the granary and with a stick bangs on an old rim hanging from the eaves. The chickens recognize the signal and come running. Taking ears of corn from the crib, she husks and shells them, throwing the corn to the chickens. It doesn't take a lot to satisfy them. They weren't very hungry to start with. Slowly the chickens begin wandering back to the woods. ☒

Readers Contribute

(This was written by my niece, Leanna Dirks, presently teaching school on the Goiânia Mission.

She sent me this little poem. I answered her:

*Lady,
You are a poet,
(Even if you don't know it)
Your rimes show it;
BN will be better
Because of your letter,
Congrats! my dear niece.
cb*

She replied:

I'm no poet... I just have bouts of rhyme's disease. The inspiration for that one was a very rough night [while on the mission] in Mozambique...

Good night

It is thirty degrees Celsius [86° F],
And nary a breeze.
I creep into bed,
With pounding head,
And hope to sleep
with nothing to keep
Me awake.

But what's this I feel?
It must be the peel
Of an old tangerine.
I wish I had seen
The horrid fellow
Slipped this 'neath my pillow!
It stinks.

Now 'silence is golden',
But the dogs in their pen
Have set up a howling
A barking and growling.
I know I will never
Drift off like a feather
To sleep.

The thing went away
Be it what it may.
The dogs all quit barking,
Now soon I'll be dreaming
Of a houseful of fishes
Or a lake full of wishes-
Who cares?

How drowsy I am!
I will sleep like a clam...
But someone's shower
Is lasting forever.

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Say! What a plinking
The water is making...
It's odd!

Now wait a minute!
Just what time is it?
It is one a.m.
And certain I am
That no one would shower
At this crazy hour!
No way.

I flip on the light -
Ow! But it's bright!
I peer out the door
For a minute before
I can see much at all
Out there in the hall.
It's dark.

I've stepped into water!
Something's the matter
With the plumbing somewhere.
Ah! It's that hose there,
Right under the sink.
I will fix it, I think.
Right now!

I will hurry, and soon,
With a yellow balloon
The hose I shall mend!
But that's not the end-
I look in distress
At the terrible mess.
And groan.

It's almost morning
As I finish the cleaning,
And creep into bed
To rest my poor head.
I say!! What's that ringing?
Unmercifully beeping?
My alarm...!



Book Review

Inside Marine One

By Colonel Ray “Frenchy” L’Heureux, with Lee Kelley

Before we get to the book review proper, Please take the time to (re)read *The One Hoss Shay*, by Oliver Wendell Holmes (29 August 1809 – 7 October 1894), an American physician, poet, professor and lecturer—not to be confused with his son, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr, a distinguished Supreme Court Justice.

Have you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then of a sudden it — ah, but stay,
I’ll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits, —
Have you ever heard of that, I say?
Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive, —
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock’s army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.
It was on that terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.
Now in building of shaises, I tell you what,
There is always a weakest spot, —
In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
In pannel or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, throughbrace, — lurking still,
Find it somewhere you must and will, —
Above or below, or within or without, —
And that’s the reason, beyond a doubt,
That a chaise breaks down, but doesn’t wear out.

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But the Deacon swore (as deacons do,
With an “I dew vum,” or an “I tell yeou”)
He would build one shay to beat the taown
‘n’ the keounty ‘n’ all the kentry raoun’;
It should be so built that it couldn’ break daown:
“Fer,” said the Deacon, “t’s mighty plain
Thut the weakes’ place mus’ stan’ the strain;
‘n’ the way t’ fix it, uz I maintain, is only jest
‘T’ make that place uz strong uz the rest.”
So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
Where he could find the strongest oak,
That couldn’t be split nor bent nor broke, —
That was for spokes and floor and sills;
He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
The crossbars were ash, from the the straightest trees
The pannels of whitewood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these;
The hubs of logs from the “Settler’s ellum,” —
Last of its timber, — they couldn’t sell ‘em,
Never no axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
Throughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.
That was the way he “put her through,”
“There!” said the Deacon, “naow she’ll dew!”
Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wonder, and nothing less!
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren — where were they?

But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED; — it came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.
Eighteen hundred increased by ten; —
“Hahnsum kerridge” they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came; —
Running as usual; much the same.
Thirty and forty at last arive,
And then come fifty and FIFTY-FIVE.
Little of of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large;
Take it. — You're welcome. — No extra charge.)
FIRST OF NOVEMBER, — the Earthquake-day, —
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
A general flavor of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.
There couldn't be, — for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there wasn't a chance for one to start.
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whippletree neither less or more,
And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,
And the spring and axle and hub encore.
And yet, as a whole, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be worn out!
First of November, fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys get out of the way!

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Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
“Huddup!” said the parson. — Off went they.
The parson was working his Sunday’s text, —
Had got to fifthly, and stopped perplexed
At what the — Moses — was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet’n’-house on the hill.
First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill, —
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half past nine by the meet’n’-house clock, —
Just the hour of the earthquake shock!
What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground!
You see, of course, if you’re not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once, —
All at once, and nothing first, —
Just as bubbles do when they burst.
End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
Logic is logic. That’s all I say.

It would be interesting to know how much time an American president spends in the air (not to be confused with “up in the air”), either in Air Force One or Marine One. Here we insert that Air Force One and Marine One do not refer to one particular fixed wing or rotor aircraft. The moment the President of the United States boards an aircraft, it becomes “One.” In reality there is no single Boeing 747 or “White Top” helicopter, as they are known, but a number of similar, identical craft. Theoretically, if the President of the United States should ever fly in a little twin-engine Cessna, it would become Air Force One while he was aboard.

In all the years since the president has taken to the air, there has never been a life-threatening accident. This is no accident (call it a pun) and nothing short of miraculous. The explanation Colonel “Frenchy” gives for this actually translates into a modern version of the One Hoss Shay, in which “logic is logic” gives way to “maintenance is maintenance.”

Just a word on the author. So far as pilots go, “Frenchy” is one of the best. He

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has to be. Colonel “Frenchy” didn’t get his wings by sitting around. Contrary to so many coveted positions in today’s world, to be chosen as pilot of Marine One, or of Air Force One, for that matter, is based exclusively on merit, and not on favoritism or elbowing. Too much is at stake for that. No one pilots Marine One without impeccable credentials. Maybe it would be almost too much to expect that human flesh could hold such a distinction and not become a wee bit inflated. Unfortunately, occasionally he apparently feels compelled to assert his masculinity by tossing in a few “naughty words”, which the reader should dutifully ignore.

In addition to four presidents who flew under his care (either as pilot or co-pilot), he is especially proud to have had Pope John Paul II as a passenger. Colonel “Frenchy” tells of the bond that developed between pilot and president.

The Colonel tells of having flown President H. W. Bush (aka Bush 41) to Camp David. Prior to this it was tacitly understood that Marine pilots were to remain invisible while on the ground. Imagine “Frenchy’s” surprise when the president sent word that at 1600 (4:00 p.m.) there was to be a game of wallyball (volleyball played on a racquetball court) and the president wanted the pilot and co-pilot of Marine One to be on the team playing against his team.

Both “Frenchy” and another co-pilot, a huge Argentinian weighing 250 pounds, quickly agreed not to spike the ball. Sensing what was happening, the president stopped the game. “Hold up. Hold up, guys.” Looking the co-pilot in the eye, Bush ordered, “Look, son, if you’re not going to play the game, I can get someone in here that will.” The message was clear: the president wanted no special treatment.

Alex, the co-pilot, didn’t need to be told twice. A particularly severe spike sent the president’s glasses askew and he lost his balance. Near to panic, Alex waited to see what would happen, but when he heard the Secret Service agents stationed around the court chuckling, he realized his neck was not on the block. Regaining his balance, Bush told Alex, “Now that’s what I’m talking about.”

After Bush 41 came President Bill Clinton. He reminds us of one of Clinton’s gaffes. Whenever Marine One lands, there is a Marine officer at the foot of the stairs who salutes the Chief Executive. The President returns the salute. Unaware of this custom, Clinton failed to return the salute. Only once—which did not keep reporters from having their heyday airing the incident on national television that evening.

The two classic presidential helicopters are modified versions of the VH-3 (Sea King) and VH-60 (White Hawk). Interestingly, rivets are an outstanding characteristic of the Sea King. In most aircraft the rivets are worn down by attrition and obscured by repeated coats of paint. Not so in the presidential helicopter in which a special paint is used that preserves their original shape and gives it a distinctive visual.

For all practical purposes, Marine One (as Air Force One) becomes a miniature aerial Oval Office or Situation Room. The cabin soundproofing permits normal conversation. Together with his chief advisors the president can make strategic decisions while shuttling from one point to another—including, God forbid, order a nuclear strike should the US come under attack.

For the Marine One helicopters to remain in a perpetual state of youth, or if

you will, a modern One-Hoss Shay, “Frenchy” places the laurels on the heads of the mechanics, all specialists in a particular area of the craft. He says that at each routine maintenance, “Every single part is checked, essentially resulting in having a brand-new aircraft at all times that is in a state of 1200 percent maintenance and repair.” Components are replaced at half their manufacturer’s recommendation. The price of perpetual youth is unending maintenance.

The president of the United States travels in Marine One when needing a helicopter lift—no matter where he is, in the next county, in another state, or in any country of the world, a presidential helicopter, and possibly a backup, is awaiting him on arrival. In the case of the larger VH3 craft, the white top must be removed to fit in the C-17 transports. Needless to say, this means a small army of maintenance personnel must accompany the entourage together with all the tools and parts that they possibly could need to reassemble the craft for flight.

An afterthought...

We are told that democratic nations are ruled by three powers: the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary. In reality, there is a fourth power: the Press. Increasingly, it is “the hand that rocks the [press] that rules the nation.” It raises up and casts down whom it will. What Colonel “Frenchy” says about President George W. Bush agrees entirely with what others closely associated with him have to say—especially Condoleezza Rice. Those who know him best, who have worked for him, portray him as kind, caring, forgiving and deeply religious. The liberal press, on the other hand, never missed a chance to paint him as arrogant, aggressive and uncaring. Reading this book with an open mind will bring to light a little-known side of President George Bush.

If you think Oliver Wendell Holmes’ One Hoss Shay has a bit too much logic to be believable, then read **Inside Marine One**, which tells about the President’s One Hoss Shay.



Life on the Colony

Foreign Trade (Un)balance

A few issues back I wrote about a bridal trade unbalance we are experiencing here in Brazil. I pointed out that we are exporting more brides than we are importing. This can be attributed to one of two factors—or both: The product being exported is of superior quality and/or the price is competitive.

Well folks, as of right now we have six weddings on the assembly line (actually, one rolled off last Sunday), a third of them with foreign grooms. In a country in which we probably averaged no more than two or three weddings a year, this can only be described as tsunamic.

In olden times when the membership at the Lone Tree Congregation in Central Kansas was over half a thousand, Sunday School at times seemed to be going the way

of the Mohicans as weddings stacked up.

An in-depth analysis of our situation here will quickly show that our trade unbalance is definitely not due to competitive pricing. It is expensive as all getting-out for a N American young man to pick up a peacetime bride in S America. So...

Anyway, here's the bottom line. 83% of these weddings will take place at the Monte Alegre Congregation. In the name of descriptiveness, we now have the option of going from *Monte Alegre* Congregation to *Montree Alegre* or *Lonete Alegre*. Take your pick. ▲

This & That

August 5th our local town of Rio Verde turned 166 years of age. My sister's birthday is also on August 5th. She is younger.

In the Romance languages, to "give birth" is often expressed as "to give to light (dar à luz)." In our tropical climate when Mother Nature sees fit to give birth to a new rainy season, often instead of "giving to light," it gives to darkness. After 3-4 months of little or no rain, our sandy soil loses its capacity to absorb lightening strikes which means a lot of fuses are blown, fridges, microwave ovens, etc. at times turned into toasters. The big problem is when the large transformers in the electrical substations turn to toast. That happened a few days ago and we were without electricity for 24 hours, and then for a few shorter periods. For those of us who raise chickens or hogs and have large generators, we actually get along quite well. So, while others wail about the darkness, we complain about the diesel fuel we are burning. (Incidentally, the "Romance" in Romance Languages has nothing to do with romance.)

Every year our local Lions Club hosts an enormous flower show on the concrete slab in front of the Catholic church in the middle of town. The flowers come from the southern part of the country. A large tent is set up, probably a thousand square meters (ten thousand square feet). Needless to say, many of the flowers and shrubs are of a tropical variety, with every imaginable kind of orchid. Anyone taking his wife to one of these affairs must be very sure his love for her is equal to, or greater, than the amount of flowers she carries out.

Since the subject of love has somehow slipped in, this comes as sort of an afterthought on our bridal trade unbalance. True, it is quite romantic for N American youth to cross the Equator and ask for the hand of a Brazilian senhorita. As we have mentioned, it isn't cheap. And especially for American boys, it can easily take six months or more for officials to issue a visa AFTER the wedding for the bride to travel to the US with her husband. Thus, intercontinental love must have the backing of a hefty dose of patience and a smiley face bank account.

I have set my Davis weather station to recognize September first as the beginning of the new rainy season. Thus, in the 13/14 meteorological year we had 1,081 mm (42.5 inches) of rain. Our average rainfall runs between 40-60 inches. So far this month of September we have had 29 mm (1.14 inches) of rain.