Brazil News

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Editorial

The Hero

Contrary to what we probably believe, after Hitler fell, neither the Allied nor the Soviet armies were welcomed as liberators as they assumed control of their assigned sectors of Berlin. Especially Allied bombing had devastated much of the city. Many civilian lives were lost and even now, after the armistice when peace was supposed to have been restored, the suffering was intense and hunger rampant. It is estimated that a third of Berlin's women sold themselves to occupying soldiers in exchange for food for their families.

Berliners in the Allied section were in an untenable situation. On one hand they deeply resented the American presence. Yet, if it weren't for the Allied troops, they would fall into the hands of the Soviets, whose unspeakable savagery and disregard for human dignity could be worse than death itself.

To understand what happened next, we must remember that Germany was divided into four sectors by the conquering armies, occupied by the Americans, the English, the French and the Soviets. It soon became evident that the Soviets were determined to take control of the entire city, no matter what the cost. Essentially, it was this decision that set in motion a half century of tension that escalated into international proportions and was known as the Cold War.

To reach the American section of Berlin it was necessary to traverse Soviet held territory. With most of its industry and commerce destroyed, the city survived on mammoth daily imports of food, fuel and other essentials, brought in by boat, truck and rail. Using trumped up charges against Allies, the Soviets cut off all access to Berlin, making it, for all practical purposes, a besieged city. Food, fuel and other essentials were available to Berliners willing to sign a document of allegiance to the Soviets and renouncing Yankee imperialism. A very small percentage did.

Without fuel, generators supplying the city with electricity went out one by one.

Sewage could not be processed and was dumped directly into the Spree River. As the supply of coal dwindled, buildings could not be heated and it became increasingly difficult to cook food.

The shortages in Berlin actually began several years before the war's end. Malnutrition and sickness had already taken a heavy toll on the population. Thus for the 2.25 million Berliners barely surviving on 31 million pounds of supplies reaching their city daily by river, rail and road, the blockade was a veritable sentence of death—death by starvation, death by sickness, death by violence, as desperate citizens plundered for a scrap of food. For the living, many with destroyed or heavily damaged homes, the lack of even the basic comforts would turn life into a nightmare.

The psychological suffering was intense. Soviet radio stations spread panic by announcing that Allied forces were firing on the citizenry as a prelude to abandoning them to their own fate. It was understood that then, they, the Soviets, would march in and rescue them from certain death.

At the same time American military leaders were promising Berliners that they would not be abandoned and they would NOT starve; they would be taken care of. It was, at the best, an expression of good intentions. There was no official American policy endorsing this position. Indeed, there was strong resistance to spending money on an enemy that had cost so many American lives and wrecked their economy. The Germans had made their bed; now let them lie in it.

Concurrently, while the crisis deepened, another American presidential campaign was in progress. The Republican candidate, Thomas Dewey, believed America should not become involved in the Berlin problem. Harry S. Truman, the Democrat incumbent, defended an active involvement in the crisis. The reasoning between the two positions was clear. Dewey believed that any resistance to the Soviet position would unleash the Third World War, an atomic cataclysm in which there would be no victors. Let the Soviets have Berlin. Let Europe solve its own problems.

President Truman felt that the intrinsic strength of capitalism and freedom would prevail over the perversity of communism. With his short stature and short fuse, President Truman campaigned for active involvement. He understood that to hand the head of Berliners to the Soviets on a platter would only embolden and strengthen the enemy.

As the campaign progressed, more and more voters chose their candidate based on this issue. Dewey was the pollster's favorite. The race was close. So close, in fact, that as the returns were coming in, the Chicago Tribune splashed DEWEY WINS! on its front page, in one of the biggest newspaper debacles of all times. (Then the famous photo of a jubilant Truman holding high the Chicago Tribune for everyone to see after his own victory was confirmed.)

Even while this was taking place, the Air Force was taking timid steps to airlift supplies to Berlin. More than 10,000 C-47s, a military version of the venerable DC-3 were produced for the war effort, of which a mere 70 were yet operable. These were pressed into service and the first deliveries of coal and other essentials were made, each with a 6,000 pound payload. What was desperately needed was the C-54, with a load capacity of 20,000 pounds.

How the tonnage was gradually increased is a story all of its own which we will not tell here. Suffice it to say that even with Truman's election, the bureaucratic and logistical hurdles were enormous. Eventually some C-54s were pressed into service. Athough there was never an abundance of supplies, deliveries increased to where Berlin was able to survive.

Within this broader story, there is an interesting detail, which is what this article is all about. As mentioned, there was a strong anti-Allied sentiment, which even the most carefully crafted radio announcements were unable to fully dissipate.

Enter Gail S. (Hal) Halvorsen, an ordinary farm boy from Utah.

Born in 1920, a year after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, which ended the Great War, Hal was about as ordinary as anyone can be in America. His parents were poor and work was an accepted fact of life for the children. By the time Hal was six, his proficiency at milking cows was such that he could squirt a stream of milk across the stable directly into the mouth of a waiting cat. He hunted, fished and picked berries, not so much for sport as to help put food on the table. He helped harvest the family sugar beets, which meant he had to crawl down the rows lifting the beets out of the ground. He split wood for the fire, cleaned the chicken coop, fed the hogs apples he knocked down from trees in the orchard. In winter, when the wood-spoked wheels of the Model-T Ford were defenseless against snow drifts, the family traveled by bobsled pulled by horses. Hal had no illusions about what it took to stay alive.

Hal hoped to go on to college after finishing high school, but work on the farm effectively quashed that dream. Then one day while out in the field he heard a strange noise that grew increasingly louder. Looking up he saw something he had never seen in his life — an airplane. As it reached where he was gazing in awe, the biplane suddenly shot up in a vertical climb.

The following week a high school classmate from a wealthy family paid him a visit. He admitted that it was he who had buzzed him the previous week. Hal was full of questions. What would he need to do to get a pilot's license? The answer was discouraging. He would have to attend college and in his sophomore year he would qualify for a special training program.

As rumblings of war with Germany grew louder, the Air Force saw the acute need there would be for pilots, thousands of them—with or without a college degree. Ten were to be chosen from northern Utah. Entering the competition, Hal placed sixth out of 120. He trained at the local airport and after Pearl Harbor, enrolled as an aviation cadet in the Army Air Force. In the meantime, Hal had earned enough money to enroll in college. He began studying and waited for the call from the Army Air Force that would change his life.

Back in those days pilots became instant celebrities. They were the men—usually young men—who did what only the birds could do. They could fly. Charles Lindbergh and Jimmy Doolittle were the Neil Armstrongs of the first half of the 20th century.

Hal began his training on various bases in Texas and Oklahoma. He could fly, but now he was anxious to ship overseas. At the onset of the war, the Air Force had only two types of war planes: fighters and bombers. It was the fighter pilots and the

bombardiers who loomed above all other pilots. Hal's dream was to be a fighter ace, but when orders came, he was assigned to flying a transport plane.

Hal's first assignment was to go to India and fly supplies over the Himalayas. Before he could make his first flight he was reassigned to a base in Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, in the northern part of Brazil. He would make three flights a week to Miami, where he would either carry supplies or ferry over new planes that would be used in the war effort.

The war ended and soldiers were sent back home by the tens of thousands. Hal planned to return to Utah and back to college. Because of Halvorsen's outstanding record as a transport pilot, as he was preparing to return to America, he was approached by a major who offered him a commission if he would remain in the Air Force. Hal didn't hesitate. "No, I have other plans." The major then put the icing on the cake, explaining that if he took a commission, the Army would permit him to continue flying and pay all of his college expenses until he received his degree. He asked for several hours to think and pray about this unexpected proposal. He says, "After a time, I'm not sure how long, I felt a warmth in my bosom and a peaceful, calm assurance that to me was the answer."

Halvorsen returned stateside and was stationed at the Brookfield Air Force base in Mobile, Alabama. He has given short missions in Panama and other foreign countries. He then asked to be transferred to Germany to take part in post-war activities. The Air Force agreed to send him for what was supposed to be a 70-day stint.

Arriving in Europe, he was given a night's rest in makeshift quarters, Hal's first flight to Berlin was in a plane loaded with 300 sacks of flour. The cabin wasn't pressurized and to add to the noise, cold and discomfort, windows in the back of the plane had been left open to suck out the inevitable flour dust. Hal was appalled by the destruction as he flew over Berlin. As he came down for a landing, Hal noticed some 25 children gathered on the grass at the head of the runway, but thought nothing of it at the time.

In his megalomaniac mentality, Hitler built what was the largest airport terminal in the world at the time, but paid scant attention to the runways. One, in fact, was sod, which was used for takeoffs. The main runway was poorly constructed, but held up under moderate traffic. To handle the intense traffic of the Air Force planes hauling supplies, the runway was bolstered by enormous amounts of rubble from the city and covered with pierced steel matting. Even so, the matting constantly broke and potholes developed. The solution was to hire 225 women armed with wheelbarrows and shovels who constantly bordered the runways. Between landings they would rush in and patch the new holes.

(It is a point of interest that some of the airlift pilots only a few years earlier had been flying the bombers that destroyed so much of the city. Right in the glide path to land was a high-rise apartment building that created great difficulties in landing operations. One of the veteran pilots commented that if he would have had any idea of how the building would hinder posterior operations, he would have been sure to level it on one of his bombing raids. Another pilot said, "I flew milk runs [bomber raids] into Berlin during the war in Europe. Now I am flying in milk." Yet another said, "Four

years ago I was trying to kill all these Berliners. Now I am flying myself to death trying to keep them alive." Finally: "First you bomb them, then you feed them. I wonder what my Navigator's widow out in Kansas thinks of it." The fortunes of war.)

For the pilots the pace was hectic. Many were managing seven hours of sleep out of every 36 hours. And when they tried to sleep in barracks so cramped that at times there was only one bed for three flyers, the constant scream of engines made sleep almost impossible. They kept going on enormous amounts of coffee. At times the entire crew would fall asleep while flying and awaken only when the planes' falling altitude would scare them out of their slumber.

On a rare day with a little time on his hands while waiting for his return flight in Berlin, Hal took a walk which took him to the head of the runway where shabbily dressed boys and girls between ages eight and 14 were watching the planes come in for landings. Curious, he walked up to them and spoke the only phrase of German he knew, "Wie geht's" (How are you?). He was answered by a torrent of words that to him were totally unintelligible. Several of the children had studied English in school and through them it was possible to begin a halting conversation. He was amazed to find that the children didn't want to talk about the planes and what they were carrying. They wanted to talk about freedom, to be able to travel and to read the books they desired.

Seeing his time was up, Hal said, "Sorry kids, I have to go." He waved goodbye and turned to leave. After walking a distance he put his hand into his pocket and felt two sticks of Wrigley's Doublemint gum. He needed to get back to his plane, but he couldn't wipe the sincere faces of the children from his mind. On impulse he returned and handed them the gum, which he knew couldn't possibly go around. The children politely took the gum and sniffed it. Just the smell of this gum made them happier than the many gifts that American children receive at Christmas time. And then, acting on impulse again, he blurted out that the next day he would drop them some candy out of his plane. The children shouted, "Jawohl!"

With hundreds of planes coming in daily, how would the children know which was his. He explained that his would be the one that would wiggle the wings. The word wiggle was beyond the English speaking children's vocabulary. Giggling, one little girl asked, "What is a viggle?" Extending his arms, he imitated an airplane wiggling its wings.

As he was jogging the two miles back to his plane, he became uneasy as he recalled that what he had impulsively promised to do was an infraction of rules and could bring a severe punishment. But to Hal a promise was a promise. And especially to those children at the head of the runway.

The following day when he told his crew members of his rash promise, they were unhappy. Reluctantly they went along with Hal's idea. The first flight was in the early hours of the morning. By seven o'clock they were back at base. In three hours they would take to the air again. Hal cajoled his two fellow crew members to let him pick up their weekly allowance of candy and gum. Between his own allowance and theirs, beyond their normal load, they were carrying Wrigley's Doublemint gum as well as Hershey Lyons and Mounds chocolate bars.

And there was yet another problem. Hal knew that gum and candy careening toward earth at 110 miles per hour could injure the children. And certainly, if it landed on the runway, it would be impossible to recover all the splattered contents. He had an idea. Going through his stuff, he found three handkerchiefs. With a bit of string he jury rigged minuscule parachutes, divided the goodies in three bundles and attached them to his brainchild.

The atmosphere was tense in the cockpit and there was none of the usual chat. No one was happy with what was about to happen. Not even Hal himself.

"Bit Easy 495" was cleared by the tower for approach at 2,000 feet. After a brusque maneuver to miss the offending high rise, Hal came in for the landing. He knew that unless the precious cargo was released at exactly the right moment, it would either fall behind a barbed wire fence, or on top of a building where the children would be unable to retrieve it.

Hal laboriously viggled his wings fighting the inertia of his heavily loaded plane. He was filled with elation when he saw the children jumping and shouting at the head of the runway. When Hal shouted, "Now, Elkins! Now!" his third crew member shoved the "handkerchutes" out of the small emergency flare chute in front of the plane's left wing.

They couldn't tell if the chutes fell into the proper drop zone. But apparently they did, for in the coming days the crowd of children grew larger and larger. Aware that they were breaking rules, Hal and his crewmates made every effort to hide what they were doing. Other pilots were totally bewildered by the increasing number of children at the head of the runway. A week later they risked another drop.

Before another flight, Hal walked into the planning room and on the table normally covered with maps and reports, he saw an enormous stack of letters all addressed to Onkel Wackelflugel (Uncle Wiggly Wings) or to Schokoladen Flieger (The Chocolate Flyer), in care of Tempelhof Air Force Base. Shocked, Hal rushed out to his plane and informed his two crew members that there was a whole post office of mail for them. Doubtlessly they would now be discovered—and court-martialed. They decided they had to quit their drops.

But then they decided on just one more drop, this time with six packages of goodies.

The day after this last drop, a stern-faced officer was waiting for him as his plane rolled to a stop. The base commander wanted to see him immediately. His crewmates exchanged worried glances.

As he stepped into the office of Lieutenant Colonel James R. Haun, his commander yelled at him, "Halvorsen, what in the world have you been doing?"

Unable to think of anything more suitable to reply, he meekly answered, "Flying like mad, sir."

The commander didn't buy his answer. "I'm not stupid. What else have you been doing." Reaching under his desk, he pulled out a newspaper and showed him an article telling how he almost hit a reporter on the head with one of his clandestine drops. The news was all over Europe. The reporter had checked out the tail markings on the plane and discovered he was the pilot. "Why didn't you tell me?" the commander wanted to know.

"I didn't think you would approve it, sir."

"You're right. General Tunner wants to see you. Fit him into your schedule."

It wasn't a happy Hal that took a transport to Tunner's headquarters. It was of no comfort to know that Tunner's nickname was "Willy the Whip" because of his sever treatment of those who didn't conform to his standards. He had no doubt but what a court-martial awaited him, or a very severe reprimand at the least.

The general's icy eyes did nothing to dispel his fears when Hal walked into his office. In the best military form, Hal presented himself to the general, waiting for the ax to fall.

It didn't. Instead of a court-martial, the general extended his hand and congratulated him. Instead of being sent to the brig, he was sent to meet the press. In spite of his reputation, the general was a sensible man who understood perfectly well the positive public relations that could be generated with Halvorsen's candy drops.After the interview with the general, Hal was bombarded by questions from the press for half an hour. One of the reporters asked if his project had a name. He replied, "Operation Little Vittles." He mentioned he had run out of handkerchiefs, but that he had an old shirt he could cut up. The reporters couldn't take notes fast enough.

ABC News picked up Halvorsen's story and called it "Operation Yum Yum." He was soon being called the "lollypop bomber." Little did he know that much more awaited him.

When Hal returned to his base, now identified as the mysterious Candy Bomber, he was shocked to see his bunk piled high with candy donated by his fellow pilots. And so, with official sanction, he now began making almost daily candy drops for the children in Berlin. Interestingly, and impressively, had the war not ended, these children would have been part of "Hitler's Youth," the new generation that was to transform the world and be the foundation of a Reich that would last a thousand years. These very youth were now writing loving letters to a mysterious American pilot, simply known as "Uncle Wiggly Wings," who was dropping them candy and gum with handkerchief parachutes.

Halvorsen was again called to see the general. This time he was requested to proceed to New York for interviews on the "We the People" television program. He would also appear on CBS, on NBC and be interviewed on the most popular talk shows, including Candid Camera (then still called Candid Microphone). In the following days his photo appeared in all major newspapers over the nation. Although he had never dreamed of being a celebrity, he now was just that.

The upstart was something totally unexpected. Donations of gum and candy began to pour in. We the People collected 25,000 pieces of gum and 40,000 candy bars. Hershey and other major chocolate producers donated enormous amounts of candy bars. The town of Chicopee, Massachusetts collected 36,000 pounds of candy and 100,000 handkerchief parachutes. Over surplus became a problem.

No one was more amazed at his popularity than Hal himself. He had two secretaries to assist him in the endless bureaucracy of his job. He loved the letter he received from a lad in Berlin asking him to drop candy on the Zimmerman home. "Fly along the big canal…at the second bridge turn right… I live in the bombed out house on the corner. I'll be waiting in the backyard at 2 p.m." Hal did his best to find the house in yet

another flight to Berlin, but was unable. Soon he received another letter from the same boy. "No chocolate yet!... You're a pilot!... I gave you a map!... How did you guys win the war anyway?" Halvorsen mailed him a chocolate bar.

Requests began coming in from towns surrounding Berlin. By now Halvorsen was a lieutenant.

Mr. 1st Lt. Halvorsen,

I have already read in the Telegraf that the little parachutes dropped with candy is by your airplane. We live in Charolottenburg and can not to Tempelhof come. My sister and I like so much chocolate to eat but our mother can us not buy and our father is dead. Please one time something for us to bring?

Healthy greetings,

Gertraud and Brigitte Shuffelhauer

It is impossible to access how much the candy drops contributed to the lifting of the blockade. What we do know is that only 5 percent of the Berliners sold their allegiance to the Soviets in exchange for goods. We also know that by the end of the blockade the relations between the Germans and the Americans were excellent—a relationship that continues to the present. We can safely conclude that the Candy Bomber had a definite influence.

With virtually the entire population against them, the Soviets grudgingly lifted the blockade. Of greater importance—far greater importance—was the knowledge that Western powers would not be pushed around, would not buckle under their threats. The Cold War was a stressful period with a number of hair breath crises, but missiles were never unleashed. After all, that is what really counts. Today Germany is a staunch Western ally.

The hero: Gail S. (Hal) Halvorsen, right? Sort of. Halvorsen was a hero.

The real hero is General Tunner. Halvorsens are rare, but they do exist. What is rare indeed is someone able to see talent and potential in unconventionalism, in unorthodoxy. The general could have court-martialed Hal and that would have been the end of his career—and of this story. The Berlin blockade might have well had a different ending. We lift our hat to Gail S. Halvorsen. And we snap a smart salute to General Tunner.

In our committeeified society in which doubts and fears often becloud vision, we create an atmosphere antagonistic to novel ideas. The words of the poet Whittier take on special meaning:

I trace your lines of argument;
Your logic linked and strong
I weigh as one who dreads dissent,
And fears a doubt as wrong.

In a volatile world in which we must constantly adjust course, we need new ideas. All too often our doubts cause us to perfunctorily rubberstamp new ideas as wrong, believing it is safer to say no than yes. Maybe it is, but how many Halvorsens do we end up court-martialing? ▲

Life in Brazil

Cafezinho

Café means coffee. The "zinho"or "inho" suffixes are diminutives that reduce the size of Portuguese nouns. Thus a casa becomes a casinha—little house, and a menino a menininho—little boy.

Many Americans believe that cafezinho means Brazilian coffee. It doesn't. It refers to the volume of coffee that fits into a tiny cup. And so, technically speaking, any coffee served in homeopathic doses is cafezinho.

The fact that Brazilian coffee is served in small cups would suggest that it is somewhat stronger than N American coffee. Indeed, it isn't unusual to see a Brazilian pour only half a tiny cup, or less, of café.

Foreigners tend to believe that Brazilian café is "ugh" sweet. Wrong again. It can be, but usually isn't. It just packs more punch per cubic centimeter than the coffee "nursed" in N America in quart-sized mugs. Let's say it is the difference between a conventional bomb and an atomic bomb. Less does more.

It is hard to know why the difference between coffee and café. Maybe it's cultural and maybe it's a climatic thing. On a cold day Americans can be seen desperately clutching a steaming mug of coffee. I haven't figured out if it is their way of thawing out freezing fingers and having the beverage as side benefit. Or if it is the other way around. It doesn't matter. A Brazilian seen walking down the street desperately clutching a cup of coffee would hurriedly be committed to an institution for evaluation.

Coffee—and here I refer to the bean that serves as the base of the beverage consumed voluminously in N America and homeopathically in Brazil—is grown on shrub-like trees. The hot tropical sun in countries in which coffee is raised does not roast the coffee. Roasting coffee beans is an art, whether done commercially or in a home setting.

One of the most delicious smells on earth is that of roasting coffee beans. The smoke rises upward as a delicious incense permeating the air. When we moved to Brazil 40 years ago, it was very common for housewives to roast their own coffee. The beans would be placed in a round metal container the size of a basketball mounted on a small frame with a crank. This apparatus would be placed over an open fire and slowly rotated until the rising smoke would have the exactly right smell. These beans were ground in a small hand grinder attached to the side of a table.

The brewing process, though apparently quite primitive, was actually state-of-the-art. The proper amount of water and sugar would be placed in a teakettle, or other container, and heated over a wood fire. Just as the water was coming to a boil, the exact amount of the ground coffee would be added and then stirred briefly before being poured through a cloth strainer into a liter can also setting on the woodstove. The resulting café—hot, very, very hot—was then served in small enamel cups. These

cups, if clasped American style, would have most certainly landed the drinker in a burn trauma center. However, when handled with the necessary precautions, it was coffee at its finest.

In Brazil, where people are not seen roaming about clutching liter mugs of coffee, a half a cup of cafezinho can be a quick shot in the arm. Fifteen seconds are sufficient for an adrenalin boost. But drinking a cafezinho can provide the setting for a prolonged social encounter, with occasional single gulps poured from a thermos. And then there is that warm feeling one gets when a friend says, "Vamos tomar um café." (literally "Let's drink a coffee.")

To understand the importance of café in Brazil, I have loosely translated the contents of an e-mail recently received. The author is Vera Rossi. Governments cannot operate without civil servants. The problem is that most of the work is done by a dedicated few. The rest…well read on.

One night two lions escaped from a zoo in a large city. Each one had its own strategy to avoid detection. One managed to get out of the city limits and hid in a dense woods out in the country. The other one headed for the town's commercial center. The following morning, zoo officials, the police and fire department searched high and low, but the two missing lions were not to be found.

Imagine the surprise of zoo officials a month later when one of the lions returned during the night and was waiting at the front gate to be readmitted to his old cage. It was exactly the lion that had fled to the woods. Seeing how scrubby the lion looked, officials decided to not accept it back.

Knowing he would soon die of starvation, the lion looked up a congressman and explained his plight. A quick phone call solved the problem and the lion was placed back in his old cage.

Another eight months went by and no one even remembered the other lion that had escaped together with the first lion. But then one day there was a knock on the cage door and the second lion was ushered in. Contrary to the first one, the second lion was in beautiful shape.

After chatting briefly, the first lion asked, "What happened? How did you manage to be recaptured after so many months? And how did you manage to stay so fat?"

This is the story he told:

"I decided to hide out in a large government office. Whenever I got hungry I would eat one of the workers. When I noticed that no one missed them, I got bolder. During the time I was there, I ate the director, five of his helpers, two superintendents, a dozen department chiefs, a number of secretaries, and I lost the count on how many common workers…"

The first lion interrupted. "Then what happened? Did you eat everyone up?"

With a rueful smile, the second lion confessed his mistake.

"No. There were still plenty left and no one ever noticed that anyone was missing. I made the stupid mistake of eating the lady who made and served the cafezinho. Within minutes the chase was on and I was caught. So, here I am." ▲

Readers Contribute

One Hundred Years Ago...

Only 8 percent of the homes in America had a telephone.

18 percent of households had at least one full-time servant or domestic help.

There were only 8,000 cars and only 144 miles of paved roads. The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.

The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower.

The average wage in 1909 was 22 cents per hour. The average worker made between $200 and $400 per year. A competent accountant could expect to earn $2000 per year (they sure don't make ten times the average today! [David Ensz, the contributor, is an accountant]), a dentist $2,500 per year, a veterinarian between $1,500 and $4,000 per year, and a mechanical engineer about $5,000 per year. But sugar only cost four cents a pound, eggs were fourteen cents a dozen, and coffee was fifteen cents a pound.

Ninety percent of all doctors had no college education. Instead, they attended so-called medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and by the government as 'substandard'. More than 95 percent of all births took place at home. The five leading causes of death were pneumonia or influenza, tuberculosis, diarrhea, heart disease, and stroke. The average life expectancy was 47 years.

Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used Borax or egg yolks for shampoo. Only 14 percent of the homes had a bathtub.

Canada passed a law that prohibited poor people from entering into their country for any reason.

The American flag had 45 stars. The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was only 30! Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and ice tea had yet to be invented. There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day. Two out of every 10 adults couldn't read or write and only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school.

Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at the local corner drugstores. Back then pharmacists said, "Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health."

There were about 230 reported murders in the entire U.S.A.! ▲

We should always pray, not until we think God hears us, but until we are sure we hear God.

Nothing is out of the reach of prayer, except that which is out of God's will.

Where Are We Headed?

by Gilberto Wiesel

[Mr. Wiesel is a professional lecturer who gives motivational speeches. Several years ago he was in Rio Verde, our local town, and gave a speech at the Perdigão annual meeting that made a deep impression on his listeners. These thoughts come out of his newsletter.]

Life is full of colors that we at times don't notice, sounds that we don't always hear, flavors we have never tasted, traps that we ourselves have set, and paths—many paths—that are still untraveled.

We don't have time to appreciate the details. And so we let time—precious time—slip through our fingers.

Our children grow up and we don't notice, we disregard our loved ones as we fall into vicious routine that robs us of our conscience.

We grow old and abandon our dreams; we go through life complaining. A new year begins and the first thing we know it has come to an end—without our having really lived.

Our prayers are litanies that we endlessly repeat, empty expressions of our own disenchantment. God is up on a distant throne and we wander about on earth.

We don't have time for life, only for obligations that agonize us and can't be postponed. We are shoved about by consumerism, crushed by debts and by the price of life.

The daily battle to survive leaves us no time to live…

No time for poetry, for flowers, to sit on the cool earth, to walk around barefoot, to eat a leisurely snack, to walk the street with a loved one, to be in communion with God.

We are fleeing from the crucial link between ourselves and our dreams, between what we desire and what we don't have, between what we imagine and what we really are. The question hangs in the air…

Where are we headed? ▲

Texas Tech Explores Socialism

An economics professor at Texas Tech said he had never failed a single student before but had, once, failed an entire class. That class had insisted that socialism worked and that no one would be poor and no one would be rich, a great equalizer. The professor then said ok, we will have an experiment in this class on socialism.

All grades would be averaged and everyone would receive the same grade so no one would fail and no one would receive an A. After the first test the grades were averaged and everyone got a B. The students who studied hard were upset and the students who studied little were happy.

But, as the second test rolled around, the students who studied little had studied even

less and the ones who studied hard decided they wanted a free ride too; so they studied little. The second test average was a D! No one was happy.

When the 3rd test rolled around the average was an F.

The scores never increased as bickering, blame, name calling all resulted in hard feelings and no one would study for the benefit of anyone else. All failed, to their great surprise, and the professor told them that socialism would also ultimately fail because when the reward is great, the effort to succeed is great; but when government takes all the reward away; no one will try or want to succeed.

Could it be any simpler than that? ▲

The Price of Love

A farmer had some puppies he needed to sell. He painted a sign advertising the 4 pups. And set about nailing it to a post on the edge of his yard. As he was driving the last nail into the post, he felt a tug on his overalls. He looked down into the eyes of a little boy.

"Mister," he said, "I want to buy one of your puppies."

"Well," said the farmer, As he rubbed the sweat off the back of his neck, "These puppies come from fine parents and cost a good deal of money."

The boy dropped his head for a moment. Then reaching deep into his pocket, He pulled out a handful of change and held it up to the farmer.

"I've got thirty-nine cents. Is that enough to take a look?"

"Sure," said the farmer. And with that he let out a whistle.

"Here, Dolly!" he called. Out from the doghouse and down the ramp ran Dolly followed by four little balls of fur. The little boy pressed his face against the chain link fence. His eyes danced with delight.

As the dogs made their way to the fence, The little boy noticed something else stirring inside the doghouse. Slowly another little ball appeared, this one noticeably smaller. Down the ramp it slid. Then in a somewhat awkward manner, the little pup began hobbling toward the others, doing its best to catch up....

"I want that one," the little boy said, pointing to the runt. The farmer knelt down at the boy's side and said, "Son, you don't want that puppy. He will never be able to run and play with you like these other dogs would."

With that the little boy stepped back from the fence, reached down, and began rolling up one leg of his trousers. In doing so he revealed a steel brace running down both sides of his leg attaching itself to a specially made shoe. Looking back up at the farmer, he said, "You see sir, I don't run too well myself and he will need someone who understands."

With tears in his eyes, the farmer reached down and picked up the little pup. Holding it carefully he handed it to the little boy.

"How much?" asked the little boy. "No charge," answered the farmer, "There's no charge for love."

The world is full of people who need someone who understands. ▲

This & That

OUR RAINY SEASON normally begins at the middle of October and runs into April. During this period we have several "invernadas", when it rains steadily for a week or more (one December we averaged an inch a day) or "estiadas", dry spells that can be a week or more. This year the rains began the middle of September and we have had neither excess nor lack of rain. Since rains began we have had 51.5 inches. On a broader scale, the weather has not been so well-behaved. The city of São Paulo has had heavy rains that have flooded the streets a number of times in recent months.

FARMERS HAVE PLANTED mainly soybeans this year. Harvest is about over and second crops, planted immediately after harvest, are looking beautiful. Because of the favorable weather, a few farmers have planted a second crop of soybeans instead of the traditional corn or milo. Yields have been good, but because of an unfavorable exchange rate, prices are not the best.

ROADS ARE AWFUL. The highway from the Colony to Rio Verde, some 15 miles, is the worst it has ever been.Depending on the traffic, it can easily take 25 minutes to travel these 15 miles as cars and trucks zigzag all over the road trying to miss the holes. Highway crews have done some emergency repair work, but until the road is resurfaced, eventually it will take half an hour or more of hole dodging to travel this stretch.

INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES in Brazil have a new complication. It used to be that the couple would get married, the Brazilian spouse would apply for a green card at the US Consulate and within two months, more or less, the papers would come through. Now application must be made in the US (by a relative living there) and then, if everything goes well, within six months the couple can travel. A young man willing for this extended tropical honeymoon must surely be in love.

PRODUCTION OF ETHANOL continues to be a priority in Brazil. New distilleries are constantly being built. Most of the cars coming off the assembly line are *flex fuel*, which work with either gasoline, ethanol or a mixure of the two fuels.

COLONY SCHOOLS now follow the Brazilian school year, which begins at the end of January and ends the beginning of December, with a mid-term vacation. The Monte Alegre and Rio Verdinho school have consolidated—sort of, at least, with Rio Verdinho busing their students to Monte Alegre. There are approximately 60 students.

THE DOLLAR EXCHANGE is hanging in at 1.85 Brazilian reals for one US dollar. This creates an unfavorable situation for Brazilian companies that export their products and favors importers, which isn't good for the Brazilian economy. It also means that traveling in the States becomes cheaper for Brazilians, and more expensive for Americans traveling in Brazil.

BRAZIL FOODS—BRF—is the name of the new conglomerate resulting in the fusion of Perdigão and Sadia, the two largest chicken and hog processing companies in Brazil. A tropical climate, cheaper building construction, ready availability of corn, soybean meal, etc., plus cheap labor, will make BRF highly competitive on the world market.